

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 24 AUGUST 1910**

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.**

WEDNESDAY, 24 AUGUST, 1910.

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

**QUESTIONS.**

**CADETS IN PUBLIC SERVICE.**

Mr. BRESLIN (*Port Curtis*) asked the Chief Secretary—

(a) The number of cadet clerks at present employed in the public service?

(b) Under what system and by whom are such cadets selected for appointment?

(c) Do these cadets classify for regular public service by competitive examination with general entrants, or are they admitted under special system?

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

(a) Sixty-two.

(b) They may be recommended by the head of the department or the Public Service Inspector, but the actual appointment is by the Public Service Board.

(c) They are appointed in accordance with examination regulation No. 28, but they cannot receive a greater salary than £39 a year, nor be classed as public servants until they pass the examination prescribed for entrance to the public service.

#### WARDEN'S COURT AT FRIEZLAND.

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

Is it the intention of the department to establish a warden's court at Friezland, thus saving long and expensive journeys to Cloncurry?

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

There is now a mining registrar at Friezland, and by section 106 of the Mining Act the warden is empowered to hold a court there from time to time. The warden has been asked to report on the matter.

#### CLONCURRY MINING FIELD.

Mr. MAY asked the Secretary for Mines—

Is it the intention of the department to incorporate all mines in the vicinity of the Duchess, in the Cloncurry Mining Field, or to create a separate mining field in that district?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES replied—

This matter has been under the consideration of the department, and inquiry is now being made as to the compensation that any action of the kind may involve.

#### ANNUAL ELECTORAL ROLL.

Mr. BOWMAN (*Fortitude Valley*), in the absence of Mr. McLachlan, asked the Home Secretary—

1. Have the police commenced collecting names for the annual electoral roll?

2. What are the instructions issued to the police when being placed on this duty?

3. Is it a fact that, acting under instructions, policemen have refused to place new names on the roll?

4. Will the Minister see that all forms necessary for placing new names on the roll, and for alteration of addresses, are supplied to all policemen when on this duty?

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

1. Yes.

2. To obtain claims for enrolment from qualified persons who are not already on the State rolls.

3. No.

4. This has already been done.

#### PETTY DEBTS COURT AT SELWYN.

Mr. MAY asked the Chief Secretary, for the Attorney-General—

Will he inquire into the advisability of establishing a petty debts court at Selwyn, on account of the large increase in and still increasing population in and around that town?

The PREMIER replied—

Yes.

#### BOWEN DISTRICT COURT CASES.

Mr. FERRICKS (*Bowen*): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary the question standing in my name, the answer to which was held over from Thursday, 11th August.

1. What is the estimated annual cost to the department for the holding of sittings of the District Court at Bowen?

2. What has been the cost to the department for cases taken from Bowen to Townsville during the year ended 30th June, 1910?

The PREMIER replied—

1. The estimated annual cost of a District Court at Bowen, if established, would be £170.

2. The cost to the department of cases taken from Bowen to Townsville during the year ended 30th June, 1910, is nil.

#### CITY OF SOUTH BRISBANE LOAN ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

##### INTRODUCTION.

On the motion of the TREASURER (Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn, *Enoggera*), it was formally resolved—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill to amend the City of South Brisbane Loan Acts, 1901 to 1906, and to enable the council of the city of South Brisbane to raise by debentures a further sum of £10,000 for wharfage purposes.

##### FIRST READING.

At a later stage,

The Bill was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for tomorrow.

#### UNCLASSIFIED PUBLIC OFFICERS.

On the motion of Mr. TOLMIE (*Drayton and Toowoomba*), it was formally resolved—

That there be laid on the table of the House a return showing—

1. The number of officers in each department not on the public service list, exclusive of school teachers, members of the Police Force, warders, nurses, and attendants at asylums, charitable institutions, and prisons, and all railway officers and unclassified officers of the Printing Office.

2. The number of officers in each of the public service departments, or sub-departments, formerly classified, who have been unclassified in (a) 1907, (b) 1908, (c) 1909, (d) 1910.

#### EMOLUMENTS AND DUTIES OF CERTAIN OFFICERS.

On the motion of Mr. TOLMIE, it was formally resolved—

That there be laid on the table of the House a return showing—

1. The emoluments received—

(a) By warders in each class in the prison service;

(b) By attendants in hospitals for mental diseases.

2. The greatest number of extraneous duties any individual police officer in the service is performing; the nature of the duties, the name and rank of the officer, and where he is located.

#### EXEMPTIONS ON CLONCURRY MINING FIELD.

On the motion of Mr. MAY (*Flinders*), it was formally resolved—

That there be laid on the table of the House a tabulated list of the exemptions on the Cloncurry Mining Field showing—

(a) Dates of application for the leases;

(b) Dates of granting the leases;

(c) The causes for exemption;

(d) The fines inflicted for non-compliance in each leasehold;

(e) The reasons for non-forfeiture.

### MEDICAL FUND, CLONCURRY-MOUNT ELLIOTT RAILWAY WORKS.

On the motion of Mr. MAY, it was formally resolved—

That there be laid upon the table of the House—

1. A return showing the amount of money contributed to the medical fund by those working on the Cloncurry-Mount Elliott construction works.
2. The amount of money disbursed from the said medical fund—
  - (a) To hospitals;
  - (b) To sick men and those disabled by accident.
3. The amount of the balance now in hand.

### MEDICAL FUND, RICHMOND AND CLONCURRY RAILWAY WORKS.

On the motion of Mr. MAY, it was formally resolved—

That there be laid upon the table of the House—

1. A return showing the amount of money contributed to the medical fund by those working on the railway construction works between Richmond and Cloncurry.
2. The amount of money so contributed and disbursed—
  - (a) To hospitals, and the amount to each;
  - (b) To sick men or those disabled by accidents.
3. The amount of the balance, if any, and what became of it.

### NEW SESSIONAL ORDERS.

TIME LIMIT OF SPEECHES—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON THE PREMIER'S MOTION (*vide* page 526 of *Hansard*).

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Brisbane North*): I rise to move the amendment in paragraph 2, which I indicated yesterday evening—namely, that after "Bill," in the second paragraph, there be inserted "or to the leader of the Opposition, or any member deputed by him to speak first in reply to such motion, who shall each be at liberty to speak for one hour and a-half." It will be noticed that the amendment puts a limit—

Mr. FOLEY (*Townsville*): Mr. Deputy Speaker,—I wish to call your attention to the fact that I have an amendment which comes previous to that of the hon. member for Brisbane North. I called your attention to it last night when the House was breaking up. You noticed me standing then—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just after the division last night there were so many members on their feet, that although I promised to take the amendment of the hon. member for Brisbane North, I made the remark that I thought the hon. member for Townsville wished to move an amendment. (Hear, hear!) Therefore, as it is a previous amendment to that of the hon. member for Brisbane North, I shall allow it to be moved, and the hon. member for Brisbane North will not lose his right.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FOLEY: The amendment I propose is to add, to the end of paragraph 1, the following words, "and thirty minutes," so that the latter portion of the paragraph will read "when a member shall be at liberty to speak for one hour and thirty minutes." My reason for moving that amendment is that I do not think that on the discussion of a motion of want of confidence or on the Address in Reply a member will have sufficient time to say what he wishes in one hour. Of course,

there are many members who can say what they want in thirty minutes, but if members who are well versed with the question before the House are debarred from giving full expression to their views, it will not only be a loss to this Chamber but to the country as well. When members are sent here to voice the opinions of those who sent them, it is only fair that they should be allowed a reasonable time in which to make themselves heard and felt both in this House and in the country. There was a time when there was no limit to speeches in this Chamber; and it is well known that members of this party stood up and spoke for hours at a stretch when discussing obnoxious measures the then Government wished to impose on the country or on the House. And it has been proved that the country approved of their action. On one occasion a member spoke for eight and a-half hours; another member spoke for six hours and forty minutes; and the country applauded them for it. And some of the members I have in my mind have been raised to a higher sphere for their actions. One is now the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, another Speaker of the House of Representatives, and another the President of the Senate in the Federal Parliament.

Mr. RYLAND: Sir Horace Tozer spoke for eight hours, and got the Agent-Generalship.

Mr. FOLEY: I want the House distinctly to understand that this party are not satisfied that one and a-half hours will be long enough for a member to express himself when he feels very keenly on the subject; but we are in hopes that the extra thirty minutes will be conceded by the Government. We do not think there should be any time limit, but that every member should be at liberty to express himself as long as he has anything sensible to say on the matter under discussion. The argument used by the Premier and other members on the other side that the general consensus of opinion is in favour of a time limit being made the Order of the Day is not borne out by fact; and if we allow one and a-half hours, it does not follow that every member is going to occupy that time. But if members are limited at all, and they wish to spite the Government or to delay business, there is no reason why they should not take the full time allowed, and that would delay business more than was done under the old régime when there was no time limit. During the present session the business has gone on very cheerily, and there has been very little time wasted. The Redistribution of Seats Bill and the Mines Regulation Bill were passed in one night; and so surprised were some of the members on the other side that my worthy colleague, the senior member for Townsville, asked me the next day what was the matter with our people that we did not stonewall or delay the passage of the Bill longer than we did. When I told him we were content to let the Bill go through if we saw nothing contentious in it, he laughed at the idea of the Labour party allowing a Bill to go through so easily. It only shows that the party on this side are not disposed to prevent legislation so long as they think it is reasonable. That being the case, I think we can reasonably ask that members who wish to speak one and a-half hours on questions such as a want of confidence motion or an Address in Reply, should have that length of time granted to them. I have much pleasure in moving the amendment.

The PREMIER: Although this motion stands in my name, I have no particular claim to it. It was sent to the House by the

Hon. W. Kidston.

Standing Orders Committee, and I merely moved it as leader of the House. At the same time, I may just say, in regard to the amendment now proposed, that I think this rule for an hour is fairly liberal. If there is to be any restriction on debate at all, the limitation of an hour is fairly liberal, and will suit the convenience of most members. The hon. gentleman used two arguments—one that he objected to any limitation of debate, and he only accepted one and a-half hours as the best he could get. I think the judgment of the House is that there should be some limitation of debate, whatever the details should be; and it was certainly the unanimous opinion of the Standing Orders Committee that there should be some time limit. The other argument used was that a number of hon. gentlemen who had formerly wearied this House with long speeches had risen to higher positions elsewhere; and the hon. member apparently argued from that that if there had been a time limit in those old ancient days those distinguished gentlemen would not now hold their distinguished positions.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: How do you account for yourself?

The PREMIER: There is no accounting for it. It is an obvious fact which does not require explanation. But I would point out to the hon. gentleman that the making of long speeches is not the only way to distinction, and that good speeches may be an equally sure road to distinction.

Mr. LENNON: "Silence is golden."

The PREMIER: And to limit a member to one hour will not necessarily bar him from all chance of future distinction. He may make that hour so interesting, he [4 p.m.] may make it so instructive, that everyone will be attracted by his abnormal ability; so that it is not an argument for lengthening the time that only long speeches will lead to distinction. A good speech will more surely lead to distinction than a long one. If there is to be any limitation of speeches at all, I am of opinion that the motion as recommended by the Standing Orders Committee is preferable to the amendment proposed by the junior member for Townsville.

Mr. BOWMAN: I intend to support the amendment. One can understand that there is hardly likely to be any support given to any amendment by members on the Government side at the present time, judging by the caucus they have been holding. We have heard a good deal about caucus rule from hon. members on the other side regarding members of this party; but we are not the only party that holds caucuses, because no later than this afternoon a Government caucus has been held, and they have determined upon a certain course of action which makes this a purely party matter so far as they are concerned. We indicated that that was so to some extent, both on Thursday and again yesterday, as it was generally believed this was to be a party question when it was brought before the House.

Mr. HARDACRE: Didn't they hold a caucus to-day?

Mr. BOWMAN: I have just stated that they held a caucus this afternoon, and instructions were given as to what their followers are to do.

The TREASURER: You know what the programme is in your own caucus, I suppose.

[Hon. W. Kidston.

Mr. BOWMAN: We know what yours is, and you cannot dispute it.

Mr. HARDACRE: Then it is the gag?

Mr. BOWMAN: We were told, when this motion was first introduced, that it was to be a non-party motion.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOWMAN: I do not think there is any antagonism on the part of the Opposition, nor has there been any dissent, to the principle of a limitation of speeches. What we have claimed is that there should be a fair limitation.

Mr. FERRICKS: We do not all believe in limitation.

Mr. BOWMAN: As the hon. member says, there are some who do not believe in a limitation at all; but the general consensus of opinion on the part of Opposition members has been that there should be a limitation of speeches. Personally, I have no objection to a limitation; but there is reason in all things, and I do not think that the Government have shown any reason from the very commencement of the debate, and, as foreshadowed by their action in their caucus, they do not intend to show any. Now, that is not going to facilitate the passage of business. If the Government think that, by the majority sitting behind them, they are going to carry things as they like, there may be further trouble in this House than is anticipated.

The PREMIER: No threats; no party feeling.

Mr. BOWMAN: I am not in the habit of mincing my words. What I have to say I will tell the hon. gentleman very plainly; and I tell him that, if he is going to start any high-handed tricks as the leader of this House, then he will find that the Opposition are just as determined to fight him as he is to fight, and he has had some experience in the past in that direction; and, if things go on as they are going, he will get more.

Mr. LENNON: He is trailing his coat.

Mr. BOWMAN: We got some evidence from the hon. member for Clermont last night that even under these Standing Orders, judging by the example of the New Zealand Parliament, if one cared to be obstructive he will have ample opportunity. Now, we do not want to do that, unless obnoxious measures are submitted to us; but, if they should be, we will take advantage of every form of the House to obstruct and prevent that legislation being passed.

The PREMIER: Unless you are not getting your own way.

Mr. BOWMAN: The hon. gentleman is not the one who cares to give anyone very much consideration.

Mr. HARDACRE: And he is not getting his own way, either.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOWMAN: The junior member for Townsville said that certain men in the past had put up some strenuous fights. I would remind the Premier that he was one of those who complimented those men for the fight they put up. Why, he took a hand in it himself when he led this party as deputy leader in 1900, when the big stonewall took place against syndicate railways for seventy-two hours.

Mr. MULCAHY: He was not getting anything out of it then.

Mr. BOWMAN: I do not know whether he is getting anything out of it at the present time—I am not in a position to say.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BOWMAN: The hon. gentleman on that occasion put up one of the most effective stone walls that was ever put up in the history of this House. The hon. gentleman, in criticising the junior member for Townsville, said that those men had got their reward for the long speeches they delivered. They got their reward by merit, and not by treachery to any principles they ever held. Of course, this motion applies to both the Address in Reply and to direct motions of want of confidence. Now, some of the most interesting speeches ever delivered in this House have been delivered on want of confidence motions. I think one of the most interesting speeches I ever listened to was one delivered in 1903 or 1904 by the hon. member for Clermont. It occupied over two hours, and it was admitted to be one of the most trenchant criticisms of the Government then in power that was ever given utterance to. The same remark applies to other speeches. On such an occasion there is a great deal of room for criticism of a Government in whom the Opposition have no confidence, and a limitation of one hour is altogether too great a restriction. We may be told that the temper of the House would naturally concede to any hon. member the right to speak for another half hour, in accordance with the provisions of this resolution; but I repeat that, in discussing a want of confidence motion involving the fate of a Government, it is hardly likely that an Opposition member would get an extension of time from the Government. I would prefer to see the time definitely stated, so that we should be under no compliment to the leader of a Government for the privilege that this resolution will entitle him to. With regard to the two particular questions before the House at the present time—the Address in Reply and want of confidence motion—it does not necessarily follow that if an hour and a-half is granted to discuss either of those subjects that we are going to partake of that advantage to the full as individual members of this House. There are always some members in any deliberative assembly who, perhaps, have a greater fund of knowledge than others, while others are much more limited in their style of speaking, but we should take into consideration the fact that occasions may arise when it is necessary to give a very lengthy speech, and with regard to the debate on a want of confidence motion we are certainly entitled to more than the hour specified in this resolution. I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN (*Kennedy*): In rising to support the amendment moved by the junior member for Townsville, I do so with more pleasure because of the way the anti-Labour Press in this country misrepresents this party here. If we can get the fullest discussion on matters that come before the House extended to one and a-half hours it would very much counteract the attitude taken up by the anti-Labour Press. When a man has so many things to speak about—when he has so many interests in his electorate, where it is, as you might term, a composite electorate and includes different industries—a man cannot do justice to those separate industries in the limited time of one hour. I know that on the Address in Reply I myself might have extended my remarks, as I only went a little

over the hour, but I thought I would have an opportunity, with unlimited time, to speak when the Estimates from the different departments were tabled. Now I find that, if the intentions of the Government are carried out so far as these Standing Orders are concerned, the time will be limited to me to speak on those departments to half an hour, whereas, had I only known that, I could have gone more fully into matters which I really then only touched on. This is the only opportunity that members on this side have for laying their views before their constituents.

Mr. BOWMAN: Our opportunities are too few altogether.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: This is the only way we have of laying these matters before our constituents, owing to the suppression of facts by the anti-Labour Press. The speech which I delivered on the Mines Regulation Bill was actually perverted by one of the Brisbane newspapers; it actually belied what I said. They made it appear that I was against the better regulation of mines in the case of smaller mines, whereas I did not say so, and certainly am not against the better regulation of those mines. That is the way we are treated by the metropolitan Press, and this is the only opportunity we have got to lay our views clearly and emphatically through the medium of the House before the whole country. The Premier tried to be sarcastic when speaking about the people who held high and exalted positions in the Commonwealth Parliament—

Mr. FERRICKS: That is his sore point.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: But I can tell him about those who hold high positions in the Commonwealth—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Chief Secretary has already referred to this matter, and I allowed the leader of the Opposition the fullest opportunity to reply to what he said. I would remind the hon. member that any further reference to that question is distinctly outside the scope of this debate, and he must not discuss it any further.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: The junior member for Townsville pointed out that in the past the tendency was to make long speeches here, and I say that through the long speeches that were then made they were able to expose the jobbery of the then State Government to such an extent that the eyes of the whole country were opened and they could see what was going on in the House at that time. (Hear, hear!) They did a great service to the country at that time, and the country owes them a great deal for it. In future times if we had the same things before this House, the country would back up any party that would do all it could within its power to expose such things as were exposed in those days, should they be brought forward again. I think that one hour is too short a time to allot to members speaking on the Address in Reply or a want of confidence motion. You know how you have to elaborate your arguments, and you may devote the whole of one hour in exposing or leading up to the very thing you want to bring before the House. You have not time to close your remarks in so short a time as one hour. I do not say that all members would need that time; I do not suppose that one-third of the members in this House would take up that time, but others deem it necessary, and therefore they should be allowed to take one and a-half hours. I hope that the good sense of the House will enable members on the other side

*Mr. O'Sullivan.]*

to extend this time to one and a-half hours. I do not think they will regret it if they do, because, as the leader of the Opposition said, if the Government are looking for "lash," and we like to take the fullest opportunities under the Standing Orders, we can keep the House going night after night. Now, none of us are anxious for that. I am anxious to get good measures on the statute-book, that is if we can get such measures from a Government like this. I am anxious that the Mines Regulation Bill should be put on the statute-book, that is if we can get amendments from this side incorporated in the Bill. Therefore, I do not wish to see the business of the country hung up on every trivial matter. As I consider that the time limit should be increased from one hour to an hour and a-half, I will support the amendment.

Mr J. M. HUNTER (*Maranoa*): In speaking to the amendment yesterday afternoon I expressed myself as favourable to a time limitation, but that was for the purpose of getting the best possible result out of the deliberations of this Assembly. It is only natural, however, that any Opposition, or any Government, too, for that matter, should jealously guard the privileges that they have. But while favourable to reasonable limitations of speeches, one must at the same time be very careful that you do not rush to the other extreme and destroy the benefits that must surely come from the deliberations in this Assembly, especially from the Opposition. It is well recognised that Parliament does not meet merely for the purpose of allowing the Government to pass its measures through the Chamber without opposition. Were that so, there would be no need for an Opposition party at all. As a matter of fact, anyone who observes the methods of business transacted in this Assembly cannot help being struck by the fact that measures, as they come into this Assembly from the Cabinet, are measures that would be adopted by the House were it not for the efforts of the Opposition to improve them. The tendency of supporters of the Government appears to be to allow the Government to control the whole of the legislation and administration of the State. Considering that, one can come to no other conclusion than that it is government by Cabinet. (Hear, hear!) If we allow this sort of thing to take place, then further limitations will follow, and eventually we will have nothing else than government by Cabinet.

Mr. BOWMAN: Or by a dictator.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: As the leader of the Opposition remarks, it may mean that the dominant spirit in the Cabinet will dictate both the policy and the administration of this State. For that one reason, while I favour a limitation of speeches, I think it is our business to jealously guard the opportunities we now enjoy of freely and fully criticising the measures that come before us as well as the actions and administration of the Government. The best possible result can only be obtained in that way, and, believing that, I shall support the amendment of the hon. member for Townsville. On a want of confidence motion an hour and a-half is not more than sufficient time to criticise the Administration. If a member on this side wished to exceed the hour proposed, it is not likely that the Government, with a majority behind them, would consent to their being granted an extension of time, knowing that it would mean a further criticism of their conduct from the

[*Mr. O'Sullivan.*

Opposition standpoint. But, in any case, when we are discussing a want of confidence motion, that is not the time to ask favours from the other side of the House, and if we did ask for favours they would be distinctly refused. There is no doubt that members of the Opposition will require the extra thirty minutes asked for in the amendment when a want of confidence motion is before the Assembly. With regard to long speeches, I think the very fact that members will know that their time is limited to an hour and a-half will lead them to prepare their speeches more carefully. They will understand that they cannot take eight hours, or even five or six hours, as in times gone by, and will possibly show more industry in the preparation of their speeches. The result will probably be that the House will get through its business, under ordinary circumstances, in even a shorter time than is now the case, because members will not go so extensively into matters as they now do, nor will they be careless in the preparation of their speeches. With reference to the Address in Reply, I think members should be allowed an additional half-hour. There are a vast number of subjects that members have brought before them during the recess in connection with the administration of departments and the affairs of the State generally, and if speeches are to be limited to an hour, I do not think members will be able to crowd all those subjects into their speeches, particularly as we are now to be limited in our speeches in Committee and also on the Financial Statement. I find that my speech on the Address in Reply this session occupied longer than I thought it did. I fully intended that my remarks dealing with the administration of the various departments should be made on the Estimates, and thought I should not take up more than an hour in dealing with the subjects I discussed. But now I find that, owing to the limitation to be imposed on speeches in Committee, I shall not be permitted to go into departmental matters as I had intended. I do not want to see business rushed through without proper consideration. While I admit that we are on the wrong side in allowing eight-hour speeches, I think we are going to the other extreme in this proposed Sessional Order, and I shall therefore support the amendment.

Mr. MANN (*Cairns*): Like the last speaker, I intend to support the amendment. The member for Kennedy put his finger upon the sore. This House sits for only six months in the year, and the average member during the six months' recess goes round his electorate, sees the men engaged in the various pursuits carried on in his electorate, and hears all their complaints regarding the administration of the Government. Then he comes to this House and voices their wants, wishes, and aspirations on the Address in Reply, as far as it is possible for him to do so. Take my own electorate as a case in point. We have many and varied industries carried on in that electorate, including sugar-growing, mining, timber-getting, maize-growing, dairying, and a dozen others that could be mentioned; and I am supposed on the Address in Reply to deal with those various industries in an hour, and to bring under the notice of the Government the disabilities under which the people labour. If I dealt with the refusal of the Treasurer to grant money to the Cairns Shire Council, and went into other grievances in my electorate, those things would take me a con-

siderable time, even if I condensed my speech as much as possible. No member cares to make a long speech. I do not care to make a speech of an hour and a-half if I can avoid doing so, because it is a severe physical strain. But if I wish to bring under the notice of this House the grievances of selectors in regard to the Agricultural Bank, that would take me more than half the time allotted, and if I deal with that subject fully I must shorten my remarks on other subjects, no matter how important they may be. The only way I see to get over the difficulty is to be continually moving motions of want of confidence in the Government.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: That is what it will end in.

Mr. MANN: If members desire to get sufficient time to discuss such a question as the administration of the Agricultural Bank, they will have to move a motion of want of confidence in the Government.

Mr. LESINA: They can gain their point under the present Standing Orders.

Mr. MANN: But when a motion of want of confidence is proposed, if the Government take it seriously, they suspend all public business, and that is harmful to the country. It will also be very harmful to the country if we are not allowed to discuss the grievances of the people. Members who live in Brisbane very rarely see the country, and the only way in which country members can bring under the notice of the House the grievances and potentialities of the country is by their speeches in this Chamber. Some members who are in touch with the newspapers may get a long report of what is going on in their electorates published, but the average member is denied that opportunity, and therefore wishes to put his views in *Hansard*. I remember that at one time the Hon. the Premier suggested turning *Hansard* into a daily newspaper, because the daily Press was persistently misrepresenting him and other members. His idea then was that *Hansard*, besides reporting the debates of Parliament, should record what was happening in the country, and be issued as a daily newspaper. Having regard to the whole circumstances, I think it would be unwise to limit speeches on the Address in Reply and a direct want of confidence motion to one hour. In the past the Premier himself used to occupy three or four hours in a speech on such occasions, and now the hon. gentleman seeks to deny others the right that he arrogated to himself. I remember him getting up in this Chamber on one occasion because the then Premier, Hon. R. Philp, had committed some little slip, and did not treat the hon. gentleman with courtesy, and the hon. gentleman rose and shouted, "This is atrocious." He protested in the strongest manner possible against the then Premier, Hon. R. Philp, adjourning the House without giving certain information. On this occasion, through the action of the Standing Orders Committee, he [4.30 p.m.] brings down these Sessional Orders and seeks to stifle discussion in this House, and for what purpose? I can surmise or guess that he has some motive—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MANN: For limiting speeches, but I am unable to grasp what it may be. It may be for a fair, legitimate object, or an illegitimate one, but the fact remains that on this occasion he brings down these Sessional Orders. If he made out a case that the hon. member

for Cairns or the hon. member for Herbert or the hon. member for Leichhardt or any other hon. member unduly delayed business, that would be a very good case to put before the House and the country. The only occasion on which I delayed the business in this House was for a couple of hours when the Treasurer refused some information which the House was entitled to receive; and I claim, if I am limited to an hour on the Address in Reply, I must seek and make occasions for voicing and ventilating the wants of my district. For example, I called "Not formal" to the motion of the Treasurer to-day, as I wish to bring in a plea for the harbour of Cairns when he moves his motion to-morrow. I have to make these occasions, and these drastic Sessional Orders will tend to harass the Government and compel hon. members to seek outlets for making their speeches. I told the House yesterday that in future I would give half an hour's speech on the first reading of Bills. That will be a very bad precedent to establish in the House, and I advise the Premier to pause before going on with these Sessional Orders. If he proceeds, and the motion is carried, when he moves a motion that a Bill be printed, I will object to the Bill being printed because there are certain items in it that I do not believe in, and I will make another speech. I will have to take three or four occasions on which to make my speech. I will have to speak for half an hour on the first reading of the Bill, for another half-hour on the motion that the Bill be printed, and every time a motion is made I will make part of my speech.

Mr. RYLAND: To be continued in our next.

Mr. MANN: I have a perfect right to discuss every Bill thoroughly, and if the House does not allow me full time on one occasion, I must take occasion by the hand and speak on several occasions. It will simply mean that we will all the time try to trap the Government into further discussions. This is the worst thing ever I saw a Premier bring down into the House to get the House into good feeling and harmony, and if he had been wise he would never have brought the matter down. A friend of mine asked me to-day if I thought the Premier brought this down for the purpose of wasting time—to have a long discussion on these Sessional Orders and then drop them at the finish, or else put them through by the gag and then claim he had not time to deal with other business, and thereby withdraw the Licensing Bill or some other measure that has been promised.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MANN: I trust the Premier will give due weight to the arguments put forward on this side of the House. He has left the Chamber—he never stops here to hear discussion; and when he comes back he takes for granted that certain statements have been made, and he gets up and argues, when he does not know what has been said—he gets up and says so-and-so has been said, and as a matter of fact no one ever used the arguments the hon. gentleman attributes to them. I think it shows a great lack of courtesy to the House that the leader of the House should be continually away smoking or playing billiards—(Government dissent)—or perhaps he may be attending to public business. If he leaves the House he should let the House know the reason, and if it is to attend public business, I say all the more credit to him; but I think, myself, that the Premier, in putting through these Sessional Orders, should be in his place to hear arguments *pro* and

*Mr. Mann.*]



con, and not simply wave his hand and tell the House that they must accept whatever he brings down without question or cavil. That is a very bad way of doing business. Even the Standing Orders Committee admit that they made mistakes in drafting these Sessional Orders. The hon. member for North Brisbane said he was not there—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MANN: The hon. member for Clermont, who was there, desires to move amendments.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I do not wish to interrupt the hon. member, but the question of the Standing Orders is not before the House. The question is whether the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted.

Mr. MANN: I am just arguing that I believe some of the members of the Standing Orders Committee agree with my arguments in favour of extending the time to an hour and a-half. They have expressed themselves to that effect, and I think their words should have a great deal of weight in this House, because, after all, I take it they gave these Sessional Orders some thought and consideration before bringing them down, and if on second consideration they think they have been too drastic in drafting them, I think they will take it as a good thing if the House refuses to accept all the Orders brought down and makes certain amendments. I think the amendment is a reasonable one. It limits speeches to an hour and a-half. Few members care to exceed that limit, and I am sure that, even if the amendment is carried, no member will get up and speak for a longer period than is necessary—for the mere purpose of talking.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: The speeches on the Address in Reply this session are six times shorter than the record.

Mr. MANN: Yes, and three times shorter than what the Premier used to take in dealing with the Address in Reply or a want of confidence motion. If his effective work in killing the late Government had been compressed into an hour, he would never have been able to repeat himself so often and try and hammer home his points in the effective way he did. I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment, and I trust the Premier will be sufficiently well advised to accept it.

\* Mr. RYLAND (*Gympie*): I rise to support the amendment. I think it very necessary that we should have a further extension than an hour, especially in connection with the Address in Reply and on a want of confidence motion. I do not wish to refer to those old members of this House who have gone to their rewards—terrestrial or celestial spheres. Take the case of the present Government. It would not be possible to enumerate the sins and shortcomings—the sins of omission and the sins of commission of the present Government—in an hour. As regards what the Premier has said about some members on this side believing in a limitation of speeches, there are some that believe in a limitation. I believe in the limitation of speeches myself.

Hon. R. PHILP: You do not practise it.

Mr. RYLAND: I do not think it is necessary for anyone to speak as long as the Premier used to speak—for practically three hours. I suppose that is the average length of his speeches in connection with want of confidence motions or on the Address in Reply or on the Financial Statement. There is a great difference between a three-hour or four-hour speech and one hour. The amend-

ment proposes to make it an hour and a-half, which I consider is a fair thing. I think it was only on one occasion that I spoke for more than two hours, and on that occasion I made a very good speech—(laughter)—a very good speech indeed. I did very well, and put concrete facts before this House. They went out in the country and were read, and I have been complimented on several occasions on that speech. (Renewed laughter.) I dealt with the factory legislation and other very necessary things that the people should know. At the same time, although I may not, if this is carried, ever have an opportunity in this House again of making a two-hours' speech, or even an hour and a-half, as the hon. member for Cairns points out, it can be "continued in our next." I may desire to speak on the big questions which come before this House, and I think it is necessary to have an hour and a-half to do it. Now, take the Opposition at the present time. Their ideas are practically hidden from the outside public on account of not having a Press to express their opinions, and insinuations in the daily Press go forth against them. We have not got a Press in connection with this side of the House at the present time, but I hope we soon will, and then, perhaps, there will not be such a great necessity for long speeches; but it is only through *Hansard* that we can get the expression of the views of the Opposition at the present time. The Premier says we can make good speeches of moderate length, and that they are much better than long speeches. Now, many members on this side may not have the same ability to condense their thoughts that the Premier has. He has so many thoughts that he has succeeded in condensing them into speeches of three or four hours' duration, but still he wants us on this side, although we may not have such great minds, to condense our speeches into one hour. I think we might manage to do it in one and a-half hours. This motion only deals with two subjects which come up before the House—that is, a want of confidence motion and the Address in Reply. The Address in Reply chiefly deals with the measures which are forecasted and likely to be put into concrete form during the session, and, if hon. members have an opportunity on that occasion of giving their opinions, it facilitates the passage of the Bills which come before the House. Now, on a want of confidence motion you have to deal with a good many things in connection with the Governments departments—chiefly with their administration, and we must recollect that the functions of our State Government—in fact, those of local authorities and other public bodies—are increasing daily as regards the carrying out of the work of the country. What at one time solely belonged to private enterprise has now been taken over by our State Governments and our local authorities. On a want of confidence motion we have to deal with our lands administration, our railways, and other things. Now, how can anyone criticise on a want of confidence motion the omissions and commissions of the Government in an hour, seeing that we have seven or eight departments, one after another, to deal with? Take the Public Lands Department alone. Consider the extent of land which the Government have the control of, some of which is held in large pastoral holdings, and some in process of alienation. Then, again, the duties of the Home Secretary's Department are increasing daily. We may have to discuss the position of our Police Force—whether they are doing their duty or whether

[Mr. Mann.

they are not drifting into the state which we see in America at the present time, where the heads of the departments are influenced by outside forces which will not allow them to do their duty when they come to administer Acts of Parliament.

Mr. FORSYTH: Are you stonewalling?

Mr. RYLAND: I am not stonewalling, but I say it is necessary to have an hour and a-half to deal with any of these departments which the Government has to administer. I believe myself that at present, if there was a want of confidence motion in connection with the Home Secretary's Department, it would take a good part of that hour to enumerate all the shortcomings which are apparent. Then there is the Mines Department. As representing a mining constituency, I could take up a good half-hour alone in connection with the injustice which the mining industry is labouring under at the present time. If I were to refer to all the different branches one after the other, without referring to the Treasury, I should require more than an hour. The Premier himself on one occasion spoke for two hours alone on the financial question, and here we are now asked to deal with all these different departments effectively and intelligently in one hour. It is impossible to do it. We know in connection with the Treasury alone the complications which are supposed to exist—it has been insinuated that they do exist; the way the Treasurer has cut down his surplus, when he should have acted honestly, and allowed more money in establishing a sinking fund.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. RYLAND: All these things will come up in discussing a want of confidence motion, and even in discussing the Address in Reply; and how can they be discussed in the time proposed to be given? Then the immigration question is also a very important one, and extending every day. I hope we shall get a longer time allowed for debate, at any rate, in the Committee stage, but I will not refer to that now, as it will be dealt with in Committee, and the time can be extended there. But we do not know whether, when we get there, we shall have the opportunity, or that we shall be able to convince the majority that it is necessary to have an increased time in Committee for dealing with the Estimates; consequently, it will be well to look ahead a bit, and we should have an opportunity on the Address in Reply to mention these questions. The Minister for Education is here now, and I would point out that in not giving every opportunity in regard to education you are mortgaging the children's prospects in after life. That is one of the most serious questions that can come before the House, and we should have an opportunity, if we do not get it in Committee, of mentioning it in the Address in Reply. Our public works are increasing every day, and the amount of money expended in connection therewith is to be considered—whether it is wise to spend the money, and whether it should be defrayed from loan money or from revenue. All these things have to be considered; and if there is no opportunity of getting them into *Hansard*, how is the country to know what we are doing? I am pleased to support the amendment, and I hope it will be carried, although I know we are under caucus rule and that from the caucus we get machine-made politics.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. RYLAND: Everything is fixed up on the "Lucinda," where the Government have an opportunity of discussing things in caucus; and things are done which they have no right to do.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr RYLAND: I will not refer to that further, out of regard to the feelings of members opposite, and out of respect for the Chair. It may be thought by some members that when one or two members have spoken it is not necessary for anything more to be said. I know that the Premier, when he sits down after making a speech, reckons that the last word has been said on the particular subject under discussion, and it is not necessary for any other member to say anything further. Everything else is only a rushlight compared to the great Kidstonian lamp.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: The Kitson lamp!

Mr. RYLAND: Yes; we have it out in the yard, and we have it in the House too. It illuminates to some extent, and we are pleased with the illumination as far as it goes. But though the last word may be said as regards what some members may think, there is this to be considered: Every member represents a constituency, and the constituencies like to know what their own members say. Though some of the best speeches possible may be made by other members, it is the speeches of their own members which get into the local papers, because they want to know what their own members are doing.

Mr. LENNON: Do they publish your speeches in the local paper?

Mr. RYLAND: Yes; and that is why they returned me so many times with increased majorities. But that is beside the question. Two days ago I took up one of the Gympie papers and saw my hon. colleague's speech there reported in full. Perhaps there were more brilliant speeches made, but not more effective; and the fact remains that the Premier's speech was not printed and circulated in the Gympie electorate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member connect his argument with the question of allowing extended time?

Mr. RYLAND: Seeing that it is their own member's speech they give more attention to, it is necessary that their member should have more than an hour to discuss big questions, especially on the Address in Reply and want of confidence motions. Though other members may make superior speeches, it is the speeches of their own members that constituents rely on; and they wish to know whether their members are doing the right thing in trying to put the Government out of office and put another Government on the Treasury benches. I know that is the case in the Gympie electorate, and I take it that it is the case in other electorates. The *Cairns Post*, for instance, will reproduce the speeches of the hon. member for Cairns, but it will not reproduce mine.

Mr. MANN: It will not reproduce mine when it does not suit.

Mr. RYLAND: When it is an important occasion, like the Address in Reply or a want of confidence motion, a member cannot do justice to the question in an hour.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has used the same argument

*Mr. Ryland.]*

several times; I hope he will not continue to repeat himself, or I shall have to restrain him.

Mr. RYLAND: I wish to say there is more need for members of the Opposition to have an opportunity of speaking for more than an hour on these important occasions. It is different with Government members, who, as a rule, can get what they want for their constituents. It is not my intention to speak at greater length, but I hope the amendment will be carried. I will just say, in conclusion, that in providing a limit as regards time, there is a great gulf between a speech of four or five hours and a speech of one and a-half hours; and I think it is only fair that an hour and a-half should be allowed in the cases to which I have referred.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*): It has been said by the Premier that this proposal was the unanimous recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee. As a member of the Standing Orders Committee I wish to say that it was not unanimous.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Did you not support it?

Mr. HARDACRE: No.

The PREMIER: Was there a division?

Mr. HARDACRE: There was no division, but I strongly opposed this time limit all the same. It was violently opposed by me, and the hon. member for Ipswich took the same view as I did. We secured the proviso that the time might be extended; but we did not secure all we desired, nor did we approve of all that was adopted. I do not think the proposed time limit is going to do much to minimise the evil of wasting time in this House. On the one hand it is too little to permit of effective speech, and on the other

[5 p.m.] hand it will not put a stop to the real cause of trouble. The real cause of the waste of time that takes place is when member after member gets up and all say the same thing over and over again. It is only occasionally, when there is an unduly long speech of three or four hours, that there should be a time limit. On the average, members do not speak for more than an hour. When the occasion arises for a member to make a longer speech, he generally goes to a great deal of pains to arrange his speech and to get facts, figures, and information together; and it is only when he speaks long that he really makes an effective and good speech. The real effect of this rule will be that it will cripple some of the ablest and strongest speeches that members make in this House, and that is one of my chief objections to it. The hon. member for Clermont last night supported the half-hour limit because, he said, the days of oratory have gone. Now, I do not believe that the days of oratory are gone. On ordinary, small, everyday measures oratory is not necessary. It is only a big occasion, when some great question is stirring the public mind, when some great principle is at stake, when some pernicious proposal is introduced in this House that oratory is called for.

Mr. LESINA: Demosthenes could not alter a single vote in this House.

Mr. HARDACRE: When such a big occasion arises we shall again have oratory, as has always been the case in the history of the world. I would ask how such a rule will work when a big occasion arises? How would such a rule have worked, for instance, in the British House of Commons during the last

[*Mr. Ryland.*

twelve months, during the great constitutional crisis? The British Parliament is rightly called the "Mother of Parliaments," and we are supposed to follow their procedure. During the debate on the Lloyd-George Budget, how would an hour limit have applied to the speeches of the Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, to the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Balfour, to Mr. Lloyd-George, and to other leading men? How would it have applied in this House about two years ago when the present Premier sat in opposition and raised the great constitutional issue? The proviso allowing an extension of time would also break down on such an occasion. When a leader of the Opposition was making a hostile attack on the Government, the Government would not desire to give him extended time for criticism. By the help of their majority they would refuse to allow him an extension. Imagine the Premier two years ago asking the Philp Government for another half-hour when he was attacking them on the constitutional question! We should endeavour to frame a rule that will not break down in actual practice. We ought to make it elastic enough for an hon. member not to have to be continually asking for permission from the majority to continue his speech. I raised one objection last night which applies with equal force on the present occasion, and that is, that such a rule will make the Cabinet more autocratic than ever. It is going to deprive members of their representative right. It is going practically to deprive Parliament of its right fully and freely to discuss the affairs of the nation. Last night I quoted the opinion of Sidney Low to show that the rules of the House of Commons had had the effect of increasing the power of the Cabinet, and had enabled them to encroach on the time allowed to members. I want now to read a quotation from another constitutional authority—Anson's "Law and Custom of the Constitution"—on the same subject—

Modern rules of procedure give to the Government of the day a large control over the time of the House for the purposes of its own business, while the introduction of the closure leaves the time for the discussion of a Government measure very largely in the hands of the Government. The consequence of these various features of our political life at the present time is to make the House of Commons dependent on the Cabinet rather than the Cabinet on the Commons.

It is this kind of thing that has made the Cabinet the dominant power in Parliament. In olden times kings simply did as they liked, and the tendency in democracies seems to be for power to be getting back into the hands of a few men, who dominate the country and Parliament by the help of the rules of procedure which they pass in Parliament. We are asked to adopt the practice in force in New Zealand—the only portion of the British Empire where such a rule is in force; and I maintain that before we adopt such a drastic rule we should have some report showing how it works there. I believe it has not worked too well. We are trying an experiment, and we should go slowly. If we adopt the amendment, and we find that an hour and a-half is too long, we can reduce it to an hour; but, if we agree to the hour limit now, it will be very hard to increase it to an hour and a-half. On the whole, I think that an hour and a-half for each member is little enough on the two occasions we ask for—namely, the Address in Reply and want of confidence motion, and more particularly on the latter occasion. I have much pleasure, as a member of the Standing Orders Committee, in supporting the amendment.

Mr. MULLAN (*Charters Towers*): I am in favour of the amendment, because I think there is no justification whatever for the Government refusing to concede us an hour and a-half in which to discuss such important questions as a want of confidence debate and the Address in Reply. If ever less justification existed for the introduction of a time limitation of speeches, it certainly existed this session. The temper of the House has been excellent right from the start up to the introduction of these obnoxious Sessional Orders. As proof of the splendid temper of the House, we have only to point out what was rare, and even unique, in parliamentary practice in this House, and that was that in one week we passed the second reading of the Electoral Reform Bill on one afternoon, and on another afternoon the second reading of the Mines Regulation Bill. They were two most contentious measures, yet the temper of the House was so excellent that we put each of them through in one afternoon. At a time when the House was working so well, where was the justification for trying us further by introducing such obnoxious proposals as these? In fact, the result of accepting this amendment will be that the House will become bad tempered, and we will lose much more time under these Standing Orders than would have been the case if we had gone on as we were going. The Premier refused to accept the amendment of our party, because no doubt he thinks, in his wisdom, that he will expedite business by adhering to his proposal. But why should we be limited to a month or two in the year in order to transact the business of this House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The question is not the limitation of time for the House, but the limitation of speeches to an hour or an hour and a-half.

Mr. MULLAN: There is no justification whatever for this limitation if the House were prepared to meet earlier in the year and transact business as it should do.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MULLAN: There would be no occasion to impose any limitation at all if that were done. So far as I can see, the object which the Government have in restricting debate of this House, and refusing to accede to the request of this party for an extension of time, is, I suppose, because they are frightened that when we come to discuss a want of confidence motion this party will expose some of their misdeeds, and will have more time to do so. There is no doubt that the debating power of the Assembly is on this side of the House, and that being so, I suppose they think that they would show up badly in the whole business if we were allowed more time. However, seeing that we have very important matters to discuss during this session, I think the House would be well advised in accepting the reasonable amendment proposed from this side of the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the words proposed to be added be so added.

Mr. ALLEN (*Bullo*) rose in his place.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: As many as are of that opinion, say "Aye"; on the contrary, "No".

Mr. MAUGHAN and other Labour members (rising): Mr. Speaker—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I noticed the hon. member for Bulloo standing in his place, but he did not address the Chair when he rose.

Mr. MANN: Yes; he spoke very low.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, I did not hear him. I must ask members on both sides of the House to speak so that they can be heard, and they must address the Chair as they rise.

Mr. ALLEN: I beg pardon. I did speak very low. I am in accord with the amendment of the junior member for Townsville to a certain extent, and in saying certain extent I mean that I am opposed to limitation of speeches in any shape or form, as we are sent here by our constituents to represent them in Parliament, and we are responsible to our masters for the way we conduct ourselves when we are here. I am going to support the amendment because it is the lesser of two evils, and for that purpose alone. It appears to me that these proposals, if carried, will tend to bring this Chamber down to the level of a debating society, where we will be hedged in by rules and time limits, and then, if these do not prove effective, no doubt we will get others more drastic still. It appears to me that these proposals have not been brought in at all in the interests of members. I am perfectly certain that this Sessional Order will greatly inconvenience members, and the only hon. gentlemen in the House it will suit will be the Government. I contend that any member in the House has got as much right to be heard as any member of the Government. If it is necessary for a Minister introducing a Bill to speak without a time limit, then it is also necessary for any individual member of the House to speak just as long as a Minister, or a little bit longer if he wants to do so. Members are all sent here as the representatives of the people, and no one member should have more privileges than another. If this Standing Order is carried, it will tend to concentrate the debate in the Ministers on the one side, and the leader of the Opposition on the other; and the Government party can always be prepared to so arrange their business that they can get over these limitations by putting up members who specialise on different subjects. The Opposition proper can do the same thing; but suppose there are one or two members attached to no party, where do they stand? There may be members like they have in the Federal Parliament. Why should they be deprived of their rights? Why should their constituents be practically disfranchised, for that is practically what it means? Any party can get round the difficulty, I admit that. But we are infringing on the liberties of members of this House with this Sessional Order. No doubt we might find that an hour will be long enough on ordinary occasions, but what about those great upheavals in political life that occur now and again, when communities are divided into two camps, or even three camps on great questions? Are these questions going to be debated and thrashed out in one hour? I do not think so. Has that been done in the past? Not at all. Then why are we going to try this experiment? Where has it been tried before? Some hon. member opposite says it has been tried in Italy. I think there is no need for us to go to Italy for a precedent in representative government. Italy should be prepared to learn from us, not we, a child of the mother of Parliaments, to take a lesson from one of these new-fangled bodies. If members forfeit their right of speech, and bind themselves down to the short space of one hour for speeches, and then find it does not work, they will find it very hard to regain the privilege they have lost. The Opposition are blamed for long

*Mr. B. F. S. Allen.]*

speeches, but hon. members on the other side were guilty of the same thing when they were in Opposition. I do not think long speeches are to be condemned at all. There are worse things than long speeches. I contend that a member's tongue will always be controlled by public opinion outside. No ordinary member—the exception may prove the rule—will continually talk and talk on every conceivable occasion for two or three, or for four or five hours. I may point out that during last session the Government got through a great amount of business. Every reasonable proposal they brought down the members of the Opposition debated in a most reasonable manner, and I do not know what cause the Premier or any member on the Government side of the House has to complain about Opposition members, either in the last or the present session.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted (*Mr. Foley's amendment*) be so inserted—put; and the House divided:—

## AYES, 27.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Lennon
" Barber	" Mann
" Blair	" Maughan
" Bowman	" May
" Breslin	" Mulcahy
" Collins	" Mullan
" Coyne	" Nevitt
" Crawford	" O'sullivan
" Ferricks	" Payne
" Foley	" Ryan
" Hamilton	" Ryland
" Hardacre	" Theodore
" Hunter, J. M.	" Winstanley
" Land	

Tellers: Mr. Barber and Mr. Winstanley.

## NOES, 35.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Hodge
" Barnes, G. P.	" Hunter, D.
" Barnes, W. H.	" Kidston
" Booker	" Lesina
" Bouchard	" Macartney
" Brennan	" Mackintosh
" Bridges	" Paget
" Corser	" Petrie
" Cottell	" Philp
" Cribb	" Rankin
" Denham	" Roberts
" Forrest	" Somerset
" Forsyth	" Stodart
" Fox	" Swayne
" Grant	" Thorne
" Grayson	" Tolmie
" Gunn	" Walker
" Hawthorn	

Tellers: Mr. Cottell and Mr. Swayne.

## PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Murphy, Mr. McLachlan, and Mr. Douglas.

Noes—Mr. Wienholt, Mr. Morgan, and Mr. White.

Resolved in the negative.

Original question stated.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I beg to move that after the word "Bill," in paragraph 2, the following words be added: "or to the leader of the Opposition or any member deputed by him to speak first in reply to such motion, who shall each be at liberty to speak [5.30 p.m.] for one hour and a-half." It will be noticed that this amendment extends to the leader of the Opposition or some member deputed by him to reply to a motion from this side of the House, the right to speak for one hour and a-half, and it also limits the Ministers to the same time. I do not think it is necessary, in view of the discussion that has taken place, to say anything in support of the amendment. I will content myself with formally moving it.

[*Mr. B. F. S. Allen.*]

Mr. MANN: I agree with the amendment so far as it goes, but it does not apply to any member who may be prepared to speak. A certain matter may affect a particular electorate and the member for that electorate may wish to speak for a longer time than he is allowed, and I am sure the member for Brisbane North will agree that it is advisable that he should be permitted to speak for a longer time than half an hour on a very important measure. There are several measures coming before the House on which members may desire to speak rather longer than the time allowed, and, if the hon. member has no objection, I will move that the following words be added: "or to any other member with the consent of the majority of the House."

The PREMIER: That is provided for in the next paragraph.

Mr. MANN: I see it is provided for in the next paragraph, but we want to make it sure, because we are making exceptions now and we might as well make the exceptions as wide as possible. It will be only by the consent of the House, and I am quite sure no member should wish to curtail the speech of a member having special knowledge on any subject, because the House should get the fullest information possible when passing laws. For example, in the Machinery and Scaffolding Act, a very grave mistake was made owing to the fact that there were very few men in the House who knew anything about it, and they did not think it worth while to put their views before the House. Now, that might very easily have been prevented if the House had full information in regard to the Bill; the same mistakes may crop up again, and I trust the hon. member for Brisbane North will consent to the addition of the words I propose. I beg to move that the words, "or to any other hon. member with the consent of the majority of the House," be inserted after the word "him."

The PREMIER: I did not say anything on the amendment moved by the hon. the junior member for Brisbane North, Mr. Macartney, because it seemed to me so manifestly fair to both sides of the House that it did not require any discussion. It has at least this recommendation—that it puts both sides of the House on exactly the same footing as to time. Whatever may be said about such a limitation, this is able to be said about it, at any rate: That it is equally fair to all members. It allows a Minister an hour and a-half in moving the second reading of a Bill, and it gives the leader of the Opposition an equal opportunity of an hour and a-half in showing the faults of the measures, and then every other hon. member on either side of the House half an hour's discussion. However, the amendment moved by the hon. member for Cairns does not seem to me to be necessary, because of the provision that immediately follows, which reads—

Provided further that with the consent of the House (to be determined without debate) a member may be further heard for a period not exceeding thirty minutes.

In addition to the mover of a second reading having an hour and a-half, and the first speaker in reply having an hour and a-half any member who speaks after that, while his time will be limited to half an hour, may, with the consent of the House, have that half-hour extended to one hour.

Mr. HAMILTON: What do you call "with the consent of the House"?

The PREMIER: Just the same as the hon. member's amendment. The hon. member proposes "with the consent of the House"—I think that is the phraseology of the amendment.

Mr. FERRICKS: With the consent of the majority of the House.

The PREMIER: Both in the amendment and in the same proviso which immediately follows this thing we are discussing, "the consent of the House" means the majority of the House.

Mr. HAMILTON: One man can block it.

The PREMIER: No, no! It is to be determined without debate. If it is proposed that some member who is speaking, whose half-hour is up, be further heard, the Speaker will put it to the House, and if any one objects, there is only one way of settling whether he is to be heard—that is by a vote. That was the intention of the Standing Orders Committee—that a vote should be taken at once without debate. By the amendment of the hon. member for Cairns you could not settle it in any other way than by a vote. All that I am claiming now is that the amendment of the hon. member for Cairns is not necessary, in view of the further provision by the committee that a member's time may be extended to an hour.

Mr. MAY: The Premier does not think the hon. member for Cairns is necessary, at all.

The PREMIER: No; the hon. member for Cairns is not necessary. (Laughter.) I think that the addition proposed by the hon. member for Cairns might be quite safely withdrawn, and the amendment of the hon. member for Brisbane North accepted; and the further proviso that when the House is agreeable a member's time shall be extended to an hour would quite amply meet the case.

Mr. MULCAHY (*Gympie*): Practically the same thing as the amendment of the hon. member for Brisbane North was moved by the hon. member for Townsville and rejected by the Premier, and I must compliment the hon. member for Brisbane North on the Premier allowing him to move his amendment as a salve for the slap on the face he gave him yesterday, when he would not allow him to move it. Although he expressed his opinion that he wished to make this Bill more liberal yesterday, the Premier ordered him outside the bar of the House—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MULCAHY: And he had to go out. (Laughter.)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must obey my call to order. He is very distinctly out of order.

Mr. MULCAHY: I am very glad the hon. member for Brisbane North has had this opportunity of soothing his ruffled feelings. (Laughter.)

Mr. HARDACRE: I understand the amendment puts any member on exactly the same footing as a Minister or the leader of the Opposition in excepting him altogether from any limit. I understand the hon. member for Brisbane North wished to make no limit at all.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: An hour and a-half.

Mr. HARDACRE: If that is the case, the amendment of the hon. member for Cairns is tautology.

The PREMIER: It puts a time limit on the Minister, who can only speak for an hour and a-half, as well as the man who replies to the Minister.

Mr. HARDACRE: In that case, the amendment of the hon. member for Cairns is tautology. It provides no more than what he can already get with the consent of the House.

The PREMIER: It is quite unnecessary with the proviso that follows.

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

Original motion, as amended, stated.

Mr. COYNE: I desire to move an amendment in paragraph 3. The Premier would have us believe that this could be decided on a division of the House, in the event of any objection being raised to it.

The PREMIER: If it does not go on the voices.

Mr. COYNE: I claim that that is not correct, because if there is a Standing Order which says that, if only one member objects, then you, Sir, will decide it without dividing the House at all, because you have got the Standing Order to direct you. The Standing Order says that if one member of the House objects, the House does not give its consent, and you will decide it, and the House will not be divided on it at all. In order that there may be no doubt in the matter, I move the insertion after "of," on the 1st line of paragraph 3, the words, "a majority of." It will then read—

Provided further that with the consent of a majority of the House (to be determined without debate).

The PREMIER: Personally, I have no objection to the amendment. (Opposition laughter.) I do not think it will alter anything. If hon. members opposite think it makes it clearer I am quite willing.

Mr. LENNON: It makes it more intelligible.

Mr. MANN: I agree with the amendment, but I think it might have gone a little further, seeing that the House has carried paragraph 1 before it. It practically compels members to go to one side or the other—there is no room for a third party.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: Your party will go then.

Mr. MANN: I have seen in this House three parties of almost equal numbers, and I may see that again. If there are two parties in opposition each fifteen strong, which party will be the Opposition?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: There will be two Oppositions.

Mr. MANN: Two Oppositions and two leaders, and those leaders should get the same time.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: You are the remnant of the "Gang forward" party.

Mr. MANN: Yes. I think it would be better to provide that a member be further heard if he gets the consent of a certain number of members. In the heat of debate the Government might want to decide a question, and they might insist on stifling the debate; and I think it would be better to allow a member to continue his speech if he had the consent of, say, seven members.

The PREMIER: Seventy!

Mr. MANN: Seven. The adjournment of the House can be moved with the consent of five members, and that would be a convenient number in this case. You must give a minority a chance. For example, on the Government

*Mr. Mann.*]

side there are three or four Kidstonites, and one of them may wish to continue to speak with the consent of his fellow-members. Then there are the farmers' representatives, who may want one man to speak a longer time for them; and it would be only fair, if six or seven members gave their consent, to allow him to do so. When a member leads a section in this House he should get further consideration. There is the Wide Bay party, and there is the Darling Downs party. I think each and every one of those parties are entitled through their acknowledged leaders to certain consideration; and for that reason I would ask the hon. member for Warrego to withdraw his amendment in order that I may move an amendment to the effect that, with the consent of seven members, a member may be further heard.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): Mr. Deputy Speaker,—I think you should rule this amendment out of order, as it is entirely unnecessary. It is a case of "painting the lily and gilding refined gold." It is proposing to do something we have power to do under our Standing Orders, and which has been sanctioned by traditional usage and the constitutional practice of this House ever since there has been a Parliament in Queensland.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: This Government takes no notice of traditional usage.

Mr. LESINA: Any Government must take notice of constitutional practice and traditional usage; and I think there are always enough members who are anxious—sufficiently anxious—to preserve traditional usage to give a warm time to any Government that would attempt to trample on their rights. There has been some allegation about the Standing Orders being trampled under foot and traditional usage being ignored by the Labour Government in the Federal Parliament, and the attempt being made to push legislation down the throats of the Opposition. But the same charge is always made against Governments. My contention is that even at present, if a member desires to continue speaking, and intimates that he has not finished his argument, and appeals to members to permit him to finish his argument, you put the question whether the House approves of an extension of time being granted, and the mere fact of your putting the question makes it the property of the House, and it is determined by the decision of the majority.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: No division is called for.

Mr. LESINA: It never has been, because of the natural courtesy with which members treat each other. (Hear, hear! and laughter.) The bitterness of party conflict to some extent interferes with the exercise of those courtesies that we owe to one another as members, but there is no reason why we should not show one another those courtesies. My contention is that we have sufficient power now to secure the consent of a majority of the members present at any time to a member continuing his speech; and, if the Speaker wants the House to determine the question, the House may be divided, and the majority may determine that the member be further heard. We know also that anyone may move that a member be no longer heard, and that question is decided by the majority of members present. I think the assumption underlying the amendment is this: It has suddenly dawned on the hon. member that never heretofore in the

[*Mr. Mann.*

history of parliamentary government has this thing come up before—a thing that has come up hundreds of times in the hundreds of years during which parliamentary government has existed in the old country, and many times in Australia since we have had responsible government. And provision is made for it in the Standing Orders. I have been speaking for some minutes, and if I wish to continue my remarks you may put the question that I be further heard. If there is an objection on the part of half a dozen members, and there is some noise when the question is put, you may be in doubt as to the voices; and I may call "divide," and get the consent of the majority to continue speaking. There is nothing to prevent this, and the proposal of the hon. member is simply an attempt to "paint the lily and gild refined gold."

Mr. MANN: I ask the hon. member for Warrego to withdraw his amendment in order that I may move the amendment I wish to move.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order!

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

Mr. MANN: I beg to move the insertion, after the word "consent," of the words "of seven members," and the omission, after the word "House," of the words "to be determined without debate."

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The amendment is entirely out of order. It proposes to amend a portion of the proviso which has already been amended.

Mr. MANN: Just before the House adjourned for tea, you, Sir, ruled an amendment proposed by me out of order. I understood that the amendment then before [7 p.m.] the House would be withdrawn to permit me to get my amendment in. However, during the tea hour I drafted another amendment, which I think you will find perfectly in order, and I now move that the following words be added to the paragraph already amended:—

or, with the consent of five members, for a period not exceeding twenty minutes.

We may again see in this House two Opposition parties. Hon. members will remember, that when certain syndicate railways were submitted, the members of one Opposition party agreed with the Government in their proposals, and it was left to the Labour Opposition to fight those railways. Under this Sessional Order the leader of the Labour party, or any member of that party with a special knowledge of the country to be traversed by those syndicate railways, could not have spoken at any length, and that is the motive that animates me in moving this amendment. I think it will appeal to the fair-mindedness of every hon. member, inasmuch as under our present Standing Orders, if a member moves the adjournment of the House and five members rise in their places to support him, he may have the business of the House adjourned while he discusses some question of urgent public importance. If my amendment is adopted—and I trust it will be—it will prevent—or at all events it will go a long way to make members less inclined to move—the adjournment of the House. For that reason I trust the Premier will accept it. After all, it can do no harm, and it will be some guarantee of a member's *bona fides* if five other members support the motion that he be heard

for a further twenty minutes. There are occasions when a subsection of a party may desire to discuss a measure at greater length than the Sessional Order allows. For instance, there are members who represent the mining industry on the Labour side. While a Northern mining member might speak at greater length, the conditions of mining in the North may not be the same as they are in the South, and a mining member representing a Southern constituency might also desire to speak at considerable length. Or, again, a Northern pastoral representative would represent cattle chiefly, whereas a Central or a Southern pastoral representative would be more interested in sheep. It will be a great pity if we hinder even six members from having their views enunciated at greater length than this rule will permit.

The PREMIER: I have a sort of feeling that as we go on there will be nothing but provisos. If a member cannot get the consent of a majority of members to an extension of thirty minutes, he can then appeal for the support of five members, and, if he has their support, he can get an additional twenty minutes.

Mr. LENNON: That shows a keen sense of proportion.

The PREMIER: A keen sense of humour, I think. If he has ascertained beforehand that he has the support of five members, he will have the question put a second time, and there will need to be two divisions to decide whether he shall be further heard or not. I think this is carrying the proviso too far. The proviso, as it stands, is not in the New Zealand Standing Orders.

Mr. BOWMAN: Whatever tempted you to be generous?

The PREMIER: I cannot get the hon. member to understand that it is not I who am generous—it is the Standing Orders Committee that is generous. This is the motion of the Standing Orders Committee, and I am merely moving it *pro forma*.

Mr. BOWMAN: I'll bet you had a hand in it.

The PREMIER: Oh, yes; I had a hand in it. I hardly think it is necessary to make this addition.

Mr. LENNON: I cannot agree with the Premier. I think the amendment shows, as I said by interjection, a keen sense of proportion on the part of the hon. member for Cairns. A member may, with the consent of a majority of the House, get permission to speak for thirty additional minutes; but a man may be so circumstanced that he may be representing a bunch, as depicted by the hon. member for Cairns. He may be a member of a farmer's bunch, or a mining bunch, or of a Downs bunch. He may fail to secure the support of a majority of the House, but he may be so charged with information, and have something to say of such importance to the bunch to which he belongs, that they will have a particular interest in having him speak for another twenty minutes when the rest of the House may be quite indifferent. I think that the hon. member for Cairns made out a very good case. Let that be a matter for further amendment, if it is thought desirable. Two years ago the three parties in this House were pretty equally divided, and on the back Opposition cross-benches sat twenty-three members of the party led by my respected

friend, the senior member for Fortitude Valley. Under similar circumstances to that such an amendment as that proposed by the hon. member for Cairns would be of vital interest to them. I think that, although the Premier regards it as being somewhat ridiculous, there is a good deal in the contention of the hon. member for Cairns.

The PREMIER: I did not say it was ridiculous. I said it was unnecessary.

Mr. LENNON: The Premier was using the shafts of ridicule—which is a very powerful weapon, as we know—in trying to make it appear that this would not be a workable or a necessary scheme. I think that the hon. member for Cairns made out a good case, and his amendment ought to be accepted by the House.

Mr. RYLAND: I think it would be only a fair thing to give this concession to the minority in this Chamber to give them an opportunity of asserting their opinion. The hon. member for Cairns represents a party in this House, and that party should be given that opportunity to express their opinions. It will not lead to any abuse, as a member only wants another twenty minutes, and he must get seven members to rise in their places in support of that extra time being given before he is allowed it. I shall certainly support the amendment.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: I rise to support the amendment of the hon. member for Cairns. I do so because I believe that minorities have rights, and being one of those who from my earliest boyhood have been in minorities, I always have great sympathy with minorities. The only time that I had the enjoyment of sharing in a great majority vote was at the last Federal election. Notwithstanding that, I maintain that minorities should be protected in a deliberative Chamber like this. If you are going to throw away your rights as men, and are going to emasculate the powers of debate in this House, what are we going to say about upholding our State Parliaments? Is this going to uphold the State Parliament, when you will not allow five men to say that another member shall continue speaking on a particular subject for a further term of twenty minutes. It requires five men to move that the House adjourn on any question of public importance; and why, then, should not five members be able to say that a member shall be heard for a further twenty minutes? I think that should be the rule in this respect. As has been said before, there are different sections in the House representing particular interests, and they may be wishing to place before the House their particular interests as against the wishes of the majority, who may want to swamp any little interest that may be springing up. Say that we wanted to go in for a more progressive and up-to-date system of dry farming in our dry areas in Australia, which, unfortunately, have been too long neglected—suppose four or five men of a party wanted one of their number to lay this question before the House, and the rest of the members representing mining, agricultural, and pastoral interests did not want to hear him, then you would have five men who wished to have this matter put before the House in a proper way, and they would get it. That should appeal to the good sense of the House. I have great pleasure, therefore, in supporting the amendment in the interests of the minority.

Mr. O'Sullivan.]



Question—That the words proposed to be inserted (*Mr. Mann's amendment*) be so inserted—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 26.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Lennon
„ Barber	„ Mann
„ Bowman	„ Maughan
„ Breslin	„ May
„ Collins	„ Mulcahy
„ Coyne	„ Mullan
„ Crawford	„ Nevitt
„ Douglas	„ O'Sullivan
„ Ferricks	„ Payne
„ Foley	„ Ryan
„ Hamilton	„ Ryland
„ Hunter, J. M.	„ Theodore
„ Land	„ Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Breslin and Mr. May.

NOES, 32.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Hawthorn
„ Barnes, G. P.	„ Hodge
„ Barnes, W. H.	„ Hunter, D.
„ Rouchard	„ Kidston
„ Brennan	„ Mackintosh
„ Bridges	„ Paget
„ Corser	„ Petrie
„ Cottell	„ Philp
„ Cribb	„ Rankin
„ Denham	„ Roberts
„ Forrest	„ Somerset
„ Forsyth	„ Stodart
„ Fox	„ Swayne
„ Grant	„ Thorn
„ Grayson	„ Tolmie
„ Gunn	„ White

Tellers: Mr. Grayson and Mr. Gunn.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Murphy, Mr. McLachlan, and Mr. Blair.  
Noes—Mr. Wienholt, Mr. Morgan, and Mr. Macartney.

Resolved in the negative.

Original motion, as amended, stated.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: I beg to move that in the fourth paragraph, where the words "three times" occur, the word "three" be omitted, with the view of inserting the word "four." It will be obvious to any person who wishes to see full discussion when we go into Committee on a measure that three times are too few for a member to be allowed to speak. As the Sessional Order now stands a member can speak only three times in Committee. On the first occasion he is to be allowed ten minutes, and on the other two occasions only five minutes. The leader of the Government told us that the Standing Orders Committee took this rule from the New Zealand Standing Orders. But a reference to those Standing Orders will show that the committee have gone further than the New Zealand Assembly, because there they allow each member to speak four times in Committee and to occupy ten minutes each time. The best work of the House is done in Committee, and I think hon. members should seriously consider the restrictions proposed in this paragraph of the rule. There is a tendency in these days to establish what is termed a single-chamber system of government, and when that comes about we shall want all the time we can get to do justice to the legislation submitted to us. If we wish to do proper work, we must have sufficient time for discussion, in order to point out where amendments are necessary and to show the advantages of suggested amendments. To say that a man can do that in five minutes is absurd. A man may occupy five minutes before he gets to the gist of what he desires to say, so that it will not be possible for him to place his views before members in an intelligent manner in that time. I hope the leader of the Government will see

[*Mr. O'Sullivan.*]

the reasonableness of my amendment, which will simply bring this proposed new rule into line with the New Zealand Standing Orders. To do our work properly, so that it will not need any review by a nominee Chamber, we should have full and fair discussion in Committee. Our work should be done so well that there will be no need to bring in amending Bills after six months' experience of the working of an Act, as is done at present through not having them fully discussed. It always puts me in mind of something like the auctioneering method of going [7.30 p.m.] through it—gabbling it over—paid by the piece for every paragraph you get through. That is not a right and proper method to adopt in a deliberative assembly, and this should no longer exist when we go into Committee under these new Sessional Orders. We should have at least ten minutes to point out and marshal our reasons for any amendment proposed, and give the other side ten minutes to point out that the amendments so proposed are not needed. I maintain that this is the most reasonable amendment that has come before the House during this discussion. I am pleased to see there is a bigger assembly here now to listen to this amendment, and I trust that hon. members will not be rushing out to the billiard-room and then run in here and see on which side the Government is dividing. They should stay here and do their work, and then they would hear the arguments advanced pro and con for the necessity of widening these Sessional Orders. I say what has been going on is not at all consistent with the dignity and high position of any deliberative assembly, and I trust that members opposite will assist us in this most reasonable amendment—that is, that we should have four occasions on which to speak in Committee and that each occasion shall be limited to ten minutes. I have much pleasure in proposing the amendment.

The PREMIER: This was part of the recommendation of the committee that received a good deal of discussion. It is a matter of detail, and I cannot say I feel very strongly on it, although I think three times in Committee is quite often enough for members to speak. The idea is that, having settled the general principle of the question, we should go into Committee just to consider details. It is more with that idea than the idea of making speeches that the House goes into Committee, and under the proposed Sessional Orders every member has the right to get up and speak three times on every question. We have been discussing so far about a dozen lines of print, and there have been about a dozen amendments moved.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: It is very contentious.

The PREMIER: And on every amendment proposed every hon. member will have an opportunity of speaking three times. I am not very strong on the point, but I think it is better to take the recommendation of the committee. As I pointed out, the purpose of the committee is not so much for the purpose of making speeches as for the purpose of hearing one another's opinions about details. We do not want a long time to make speeches for that purpose, and every member of the House can speak three times on every question.

Hon. R. PHILP: On every clause.

The PREMIER: On every line of a Bill. The hon. member for Warrego moved an amendment in the first line of paragraph four,

and, when that was dealt with, the hon. member for Cairns immediately rose up to make another amendment on the same line; and every member under this rule—I am not complaining that that should not be done—I am saying it is for the purpose of doing such things that we go into Committee, and in doing such things every member is allowed to make one speech of ten minutes and two speeches of five minutes each. I think the House might very well accept the recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee. I admit that the New Zealand Orders allow four speeches of ten minutes each.

Mr. BOWMAN: That gives twice the time.

Mr. FERRICKS: They have no gag there, either.

The PREMIER: Neither have they the hon. member for Bowen. I think hon. members will admit that very grave abuses might follow if every member of the Committee spoke four times of ten minutes each on every question.

Mr. BOWMAN: To me this clause is the most important one that has yet been discussed. The Premier has told us that the object of going into Committee is not to make speeches—that we really agree with the principle of the Bill during the second-reading debate. I think the hon. gentleman has been sufficiently long in this House to know that it is after we have agreed to the principle of a measure—that the principal work commences when we go into Committee. Any man who has had any experience in this House will agree with that. Take, for instance, the Land Bill. The number of amendments that are usually introduced has resulted in benefit even by their discussion, and I think any hon. member who has had any experience in this House will agree that valuable work has been done in Committee, even by fairly long speeches on important amendments. We have been told in the past, and probably will be told again, that it is useless to waste much time in discussing the principle of a Bill—it is not the principle so much we want to discuss as the details to make that Bill as complete as possible when we have the opportunity. The limitation that has been placed upon us as submitted by the Premier—

The PREMIER: As recommended by the Standing Orders Committee.

Mr. BOWMAN: Will the hon. gentleman allow me to finish? As recommended by the Standing Orders Committee, is, to my mind, one of the most severe curtailments that ever this House has known, with one exception, and that is, of course, the gag and guillotine, which knocks us out in one act, Mr. Speaker, as you know.

The PREMIER: Off goes your head. (Laughter.)

Mr. BOWMAN: Yes; there is no doubt about that. The Premier said he is not very strong on this matter. I reckon he is about the strongest in this House I have ever known. (Laughter.)

Mr. BARBER: As strong as mustard.

Mr. BOWMAN: Very much stronger than mustard. I think, at any rate, he, as head of a Government that has a majority behind him, might have taken a much broader view in regard to these Sessional Orders than he has. Let me come to a Bill which I think I have mentioned before, but it is well that it should be repeated, because I think in that Bill we get one of the best evidences of the value of discussion in Committee. It shows

that sometimes the whole import of a Bill is embodied in one clause, and a great deal of the debate is centred on that clause. In the Wages Board Bill, both in 1907 and 1908, a provision was included to enable all industries to come under the Bill. We sought to bring the farm labourers under that provision, and many members in the House then, and also members here to-day, felt it necessary that they should have an opportunity of explaining why these men should not come under it, and they availed themselves of the opportunity. Some hon. members opposite me to-night were amongst the strongest in that direction. Some very lengthy speeches were made in Committee, and they were centred round the clause relating to the inclusion of farm labourers.

Hon. R. PHILP: They did not avail much.

Mr. BOWMAN: Because the majority believed that the provision should be wider. The majority carried it, but still the minority had their right to try and prevent it.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: The hon. member for Townsville spoke ten times on one subject.

Mr. BOWMAN: He was not the biggest sinner. The present Minister for Education and the Minister for Lands monopolised a good deal of time, and no one blamed them, because they believed they were right. I am bringing this up to show the importance of giving more time than what the Standing Orders Committee propose in the ten minutes for the first time a man speaks, and then five minutes on the second and third occasions. There is something which is even more important to me than the Committee stages of a Bill, and that is the Estimates. It strikes one that the object of this is to curtail members in discussions in Committee while we are on the Estimates.

Mr. MULCAHY: Hear, hear! That is the object.

Mr. BOWMAN: That is one part of our work that demands our special attention. If there is one question that is debated in this House, and where the fullest freedom should be given, it is in regard to the spending of public money; and full opportunity for criticism should be given to show whether the money has been spent wisely or unwisely, as the case may be. Now, twenty minutes is all that a man is allowed on a vote submitted to the Committee for discussion. I ask hon. members opposite if they think that that is a fair time? In dealing with the Estimates it is not really the Standing Orders which guide us so much as the practice. We have usually taken a general discussion on the first vote in a department, and while I think that that general discussion has sometimes led to repetition on further votes on the same Estimate, yet I believe more satisfaction has been given in the past by allowing a fairly full discussion on the first vote of an Estimate, and it has facilitated the passage of the further votes brought before the House. The Premier, during this debate, has stated that he has copied New Zealand, but he has just minimised the limit of time to one-half of what New Zealand allows. If it was good enough to have the Standing Orders of New Zealand to apply for half an hour in the first clause of this motion, surely it is a fair thing that we should have the same right as New Zealand in connection with the different stages of a Bill, or on the Estimates! The only conclusion I can come to—I don't know whether I am right or not—is that the one desire is to check—to unduly check—the criticism of

*Mr. Bowman.]*

hon. members on this side. It has been admitted on more than one occasion—by the time which has been granted to hon. members in discussing certain Estimates—that the Railway Estimates ought to take two days, the Lands Estimates might also well occupy two days, and the Home Secretary's Department, which has a multiplicity of departments attached to it, has been regarded as being entitled to two days for fair criticism. I have known the Lands Estimates take over two days, and I have known the Railway Estimates take three days—it is a very big department. Then we know the importance of criticism on the Home Department, where we deal with, perhaps, thirty or forty different questions. I think that the Premier might well agree with the amendment of the hon. member for Kennedy, and at least have four times instead of three; and, when we have disposed of that, we can consider whether the time is sufficiently long. I would ask the Premier—unless, of course, as I said this afternoon, the matter has been settled by the majority sitting in front of us; if it is, all our talk will perhaps go for very little—but this is not going through without the strongest protest this side can make, because we feel that this is an undue curtailment of the privileges of members of this House.

Mr. MULCAHY: The Premier says he does not feel very strong on this. What we would like to know is how he is going to exercise his power with the members behind him? Is he going to ask them to vote against it? If he is, all the talking we can do will be without avail. Still, I am bound to say that I attach very great importance to this. I am more concerned about the Estimates than I am about any Bill that comes before the Chamber, because in discussing the Estimates we want sufficient time. Take the mining industry, for instance—say a great disaster happened, such as we had in Mount Morgan a short time ago. If you want to review the conduct of the Government officials in any department, you would not be able to do more than touch the fringe of the subject in the time allowed. A mining member might want to criticise the work of the inspectors of the Mines Department in connection with the ventilation of mines and other matters, but there would be no opportunity of doing so properly. And I may point out that it would not be many members who would want to discuss the Mines Estimates. There might be a matter in connection with Charters Towers, and it might be necessary for one of the members of that electorate to speak for half an hour or more; but under this Sessional Order he would have only ten minutes, which is ridiculous. Then there is the administration of the Lands Department—much more than ten minutes would be required to go into that.

Mr. BOWMAN: This is a permanent gag.

Mr. MULCAHY: If this is going through as it is, you might as well say you do not want Parliament at all, and let the Government administer the affairs of the country. I am not an advocate of unification; but if there is anything that will lead to unification, it is this kind of conduct. We shall be asked what we are in Parliament for, seeing that we are not allowed to criticise the working of a department. In connection with the Railway Department, there are such matters as the working of the railways, the building of railways, the administration of the department, the building of railways by day labour

[Mr. Bowman.

and by contract; and you could not touch on those matters in five minutes. If this Sessional Order is carried, the result will be that a member will have to make arrangements with other members to carry on the discussion upon a particular subject after he has occupied the time allowed. Perhaps, the whole of the members will speak on a particular subject, and more time will be occupied than if this Sessional Order were not passed. I believe in leaving the Standing Orders as they are; but, if we are to have any curtailment, let us have a reasonable time. The chances are that members opposite will find themselves over here; and they will regret the action they are now taking when they find that they are unable to criticise the actions of the Government. I ask that in the matter of the Estimates they should take a reasonable view. With regard to the lower-paid officials in the Government service, we shall be asking why they have not received fair treatment, and bring cases to show that through influence certain officers have got big increases, while hard-working officers do not get the same consideration. All these matters want to be gone into in an intelligent way; and I trust the good sense of the House will see that this Sessional Order is not going to have the effect which members opposite suppose. I represent a mining constituency; and if a disaster should happen—which I hope will not be the case—I shall want to go fully into it, and criticise the action of the mining inspectors and other officials, and have the case properly arranged to bring forward here; but how can I do it in five minutes? I hope the good sense of the House will see that it is highly necessary that this amendment should be carried. As representing a mining constituency, I make a strong protest against this curtailment of our privileges in regard to speaking in this House, because I shall not be able to effectively criticise the administration of the Government, or the action of any servant of the Government, if this Sessional Order is carried.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER (*Maranoa*): To my mind this is the most important amendment of the whole lot proposed in connection with this Sessional Order. When a Government Bill is under consideration at the second-reading stage, the Government have their followers well in hand, and carry the measure at any cost; but they are not so particular in Committee, and are, perhaps, in the mind to listen to a little reason. It is at that stage that a Bill is either made or marred; and I contend that five minutes on three occasions is nothing like sufficient time to allow. I say there should be no limit to the number of times a member may rise to make suggestions as to the improvement of any clause, any line, or any word in a Bill. It is only by doing so that we get anything like good legislation. What is the cause of this continued tampering with legislation? Certain Bills become Acts to-day, and in the next session amending Bills are brought down. This session we have no less than eleven amending Bills. Why is that? It is because sufficient care is not

[8 p.m.] taken in the matter of legislation.

I would like to see every member present listening to the discussion of these amendments. I am quite sure they will troop in when the division bell rings, and simply line up alongside the Premier. Sufficient reasons have been advanced to convince any man that a very wrong thing is going to be done if this amendment is not adopted.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Don't forget that your own members are not here.

Mr. BOWMAN: There is a bigger percentage than on your side.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: There is one thing certain about the members of the Opposition—they are going to vote solidly for retaining the privileges they at present enjoy. It frequently happens that the Minister in charge of a Bill asks members on this side not to discuss details during the second-reading debate, but to deal with principles and reserve the details for the Committee stage. Now, how can members do anything like justice to the details of a Bill in Committee in three short speeches?

Mr. BOWMAN: On second readings members have been taken to task by a Speaker for dwelling upon individual clauses.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: That is quite right, and it is in Committee that the best work is done in this Assembly. With regard to the Estimates, the Government are not showing a wise disposition in not allowing the fullest discussion to take place on their administration of the departments, and it will not reflect credit on the Government or on those who support them. I am afraid that the feeling will grow in the country that they are afraid to allow the House the fullest opportunity of dealing with their administration. Another point is that this sort of thing is going to lower the prestige of this House, and the feeling will get abroad that the members of this Chamber are trying to cut down their work, and will not allow each other to deal exhaustively with the business coming before us. People will say that there is no need for this Parliament, and that we should allow the Commonwealth Parliament to do the lot. I am utterly opposed to unification, but this sort of thing is going to bring about unification, or else it will make the people believe that it is time we had unification. I am very much in favour of the amendment. We are asking no concession. All we want is to retain the privileges which we at present enjoy in Committee. There are measures coming before us this session which will require the fullest opportunity the House will allow hon. members to do justice to them and see that proper legislation is turned out instead of inferior legislation, such as this continual tampering with our laws indicates. We have two consolidating Bills to come down, which are the result of this continual tampering with legislation in the past. Governments rush legislation through at such a pace that the closest scrutiny is not given to it, and very often it is passed at all hours of the morning, when hon. members are not in a fit condition to deal with it in an intelligent and efficient manner.

Mr. MANN: I rise for the purpose of supporting the amendment, although one is filled with despair when he realises the fact that when the division bell is rung members will troop in and vote blindly with the Government, although the man who is leading them, and who is in charge of these Sessional Orders, is not in the Chamber listening to the debate.

Mr. BOWMAN: They are like a lot of slaves.

Mr. MANN: In the absence of the Premier, I address myself to the senior member for Toowoomba, because I intend to deal with the question purely from an agricultural standpoint. As I read this paragraph, it says that only the Minister in charge of an Estimate can speak more than three times on any one

question. I take that to mean that I can only speak three times on the vote for the Chief Office of the Agricultural Department. Under that vote are included the Chief Inspector of Stock, the Agricultural Inspector, the Botanist, the Dairy Expert, the Entomologist and Vegetable Pathologist, the Assistant Entomologist, the Instructor in Fruit Culture, the Instructor in Tropical Agriculture, the Tobacco Expert, the Editor of the "Agricultural Journal," the photographer, and various other officers. It means that if I speak for ten minutes with regard to the Chief Inspector of Stock—and there is a very serious disease among stock in my district—I can only speak on two other items for five minutes each. Now, I would ask the hon. member for Cambooya whether he could describe the Kamerunga Nursery in five minutes? It would take an hour to discuss that nursery alone. Then, could the senior member for Toowoomba discuss the Instructor in Tropical Agriculture in five minutes, or could he go into the question of the Entomologist in a similar time? That is a very serious question in my district, where they are troubled with a plague of grubs. Yet, under this Sessional Order, if I get up and speak about grubs for five minutes, I can only speak on two other matters. I can pick out the three most important subjects in the vote for the Chief Office, and I can speak upon one for ten minutes, and upon two others for five minutes each. You are an expert in agriculture yourself, Sir, I understand. I ask you how you would like to be tied down to a period of five minutes to enlarge upon the question of dry farming or maize-growing, or any one of the one thousand and one branches of agriculture, and have only ten minutes in which to do it? For example, could you rise in your place and go fully into the question of butter grading—the question that is of very considerable moment at the present time? I intend to go into the question, although dairying is not a very large factor in the prosperity of the Cairns district at present; but, if I talk on that subject, I must neglect other matters connected with my own district. That is a question that should be thrashed out on the floor of this House, but unfortunately we cannot do it. All the matters appertaining to the dairying industry, which is worth millions of money to Queensland, we are asked to discuss in ten minutes. Can the hon. member for Cambooya say all he has got to say on that subject in ten minutes? Do the members for agricultural constituencies think this is sufficient time for them to discuss matters relating to that department? What about the Vegetable Pathologist and other matters? There is some talk of these Standing Orders being brought down to allow Government members to speak, but I remember having to sit here until 2 o'clock in the morning waiting until the members on the Government side stopped talking about State farms before I could get any show to speak at all. There are a thousand and one things to be spoken about on the Estimates of Agriculture and Stock, and we are not to be allowed to do it. We are merely asked to come here and put our seal of approval on whatever the Government like to do. If the Government appoints a bogus expert, as the hon. member for Cambooya said, to run one of the State farms in Queensland, we have no time to discuss his methods at all. I may take the trouble to go up to the farm and go all over it; I might find that all his methods of running the farm are bad, his stock are bad, his methods of irrigation are bad, and yet when I come into the House I am supposed to

*Mr. Mann.]*

speak on all these subjects on the Estimates of Agriculture and Stock in ten minutes. Did you ever hear of a more ridiculous proposition? Suppose you yourself, Mr. Speaker, were sent with the members of the farmers' party to inspect Gatton Agricultural College, and when you came back you desired to give the House a description of what you saw at the college. Could you really give a graphic and true description of the methods adopted at Gatton College in ten minutes? No member could do it. The only thing you could do would be to rise in your place and say that you disagree with the methods carried on there, that you found the methods up to date or out of date, as the case might be, but you could not go into the question in a sufficiently graphic manner to let the House understand how the thing was being run. Therefore, in the interests of agriculture, in the interests of the State, and in the interests of every farmer and settler in the State, we should have a fair opportunity of discussing every item in the whole of the Agriculture and Stock Estimates. I want at least half an hour to deal with the disease in stock which has broken out in the Cairns district; I want half an hour to deal with the borers in cane, and I want another half an hour to deal with the ravages of the cane grubs. I cannot blame the Premier for bringing in this Sessional Order as I would be out of order, but I must say that we cannot discuss these items as they should be discussed if we are confined to ten minutes on the first occasion, and five minutes each on the two subsequent occasions we are permitted to speak. It is purely a farce asking members to discuss important Estimates in such a short time. Then there is the Lands Department Estimates. I wish to discuss the question of land settlement in the Atherton district, and the various tenures—unconditional, group, and everything else. I wish to know something about the price of timber and the cost of roads there; I want to go into the whole of the matters pertaining to land settlement in my district, and all the time I am allowed is twenty minutes altogether. I can take ten minutes on the first item, and then I must wait until another item comes along, and I can take another five minutes, and then on another item I have another five minutes, and that is all. It is somewhat farcical to expect members of this House to criticise important departments in twenty minutes. Just imagine discussing the Chief Office in the Railway Department in ten minutes! Just fancy discussing all the reports we receive from the Government officials in ten minutes! Take the report of the Railway Commissioner. Just fancy discussing that in ten minutes! I ask hon. members in what language would they couch their speeches so as to be able to discuss the reports of the Railway Commissioner or Under Secretary for Lands or Under Secretary for Public Instruction in ten minutes. There are thousands and thousands of pounds spent on these matters every year, and yet we are supposed to discuss them in twenty minutes. There is something grotesque in the suggestion that we should discuss all these matters in the space of twenty minutes. Take the Marine Department. There is a lot to be said about the question of oyster and pearlshell fisheries, and also about the work connected with navigation and seamanship. To properly discuss the bêche-de-mer and pearlshell fisheries we could easily take a whole day. Most of the Ministers have been in opposition, and they know what it is to criticise the Estimates. I remember on one occasion that the late hon. member for

[Mr. Mann.

Fassfern took three solid hours in discussing the Police vote alone, and the then members of the Opposition, including the senior member for Townsville, the late hon. member for Bulloo, Mr. Leahy, and the present Secretary for Agriculture, all complimented the hon. member for Fassfern on the very lucid and interesting address which he gave on the Police Force, lasting for three or four solid hours. And we are asked to go through all that in twenty minutes! I remember the Minister for Public Instruction waxing indignant on some of the Estimates, and he did not conclude his remarks in twenty minutes. He took up a greater length of time—and he claimed that he was doing it in the interests of his constituents—in giving the fullest possible discussion to the Estimates. Then there are also many matters we should like to speak on in connection with roads on the Estimates of the Works Department. In the Mackay district, for instance, there was a road made there by the Lands Department. We want to discuss the question of the Department of Public Lands making other roads, and as to whether they are getting the best possible results out of the system pursued. Last session the hon. member for Wide Bay had to criticise the department for the work done by the Lands Department in his electorate in providing roads for settlement, and I am asked to deal with such a subject as that in ten minutes. If I deal with that subject, I must leave out some other important matter. This Sessional Order means that a member cannot get up and ask if the man in charge of a lift at the Treasury Buildings has got an increase of salary, or if the servant girls at Parliament House have received the increases in their wages which were promised to them, because, if we speak on those matters, we forfeit the right to speak on matters touching our own electorates, and hon. members will prefer to ventilate grievances connected with their own electorates. I may wish to ask some questions about the pilots and the lightships, but I dare not do it now as I will forfeit my right to speak on something connected with my own electorate. We are told that we can only speak three times in Committee, but I am certain that if this were made a non-party matter only two members would vote for it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is the recommendation of a non-party committee.

Mr. MANN: The Minister for Lands, for whom I have every respect, says this is the recommendation of a non-party committee.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Composed of members from all parties in the House.

Mr. MANN: It may be composed of members from all parties in the House, but I find that some of the members who sat on the committee have voted against some of the provisions in this Sessional Order, so that the committee could not have been unanimous in their recommendation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: All present were unanimous in the recommendation.

Mr. HAMILTON: One member of the committee moved an amendment to-day.

Mr. MANN: It is idle for any member of this House to assure me that this Sessional Order is the unanimous recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee. If it is, all I can say is that the committee have been very lax in the performance of their duty to this House. Do the members of that committee

wish the impression to go abroad that they met in caucus to deliberately stifle discussion on the Estimates? What safeguard have we against misappropriation of the funds of the country, save and except full and ample discussion of the Estimates? A big concession may be given away by the Government, and, with this limitation of speech, we would not have an opportunity of exposing that grant. I remember that on one occasion I had to fight against a concession being given away at Mount Molloy. On inquiry, I found that the Minister had gone over the head of the Director of Forests, and granted that concession without competition. If anything of that kind happened again, I would, under this rule, be allowed ten minutes to speak about it, if I had not previously spoken on the question before the Committee. If I had already spoken, I would be allowed five minutes, and if I had spoken three times when that matter was referred to I would not be allowed to say anything on the subject. Did ever anyone in a civilised country hear of such a ridiculous proposal being made to a Parliament? Members, who are the watchdogs of the people, are to be muzzled and chained, and this proposal is made in face of the fact that members of the Standing Orders Committee were not unanimous in recommending it. I am pleading to-night with members on the other side. They may be in opposition some day, and want to discuss some important question, or some serious grievance, and what will be their position under this Sessional Order? The hon. member for Cambooya may wish to speak about the State Farm at Gatton, and everyone knows that he is an expert on farming matters, but if he rises in his place on this side of the House with the object of discussing the management of that farm, where he has said it costs a guinea apiece to grow pumpkins, what will be his position under the restriction imposed by this proposed new rule? He will be allowed ten minutes to dwell on the management of that State farm. Does the Treasurer mean to say that if he was in opposition he would be satisfied with ten minutes to discuss the question of granting to the Brisbane Electric Tramways Company full running powers in Brisbane? The hon. gentleman would want a full hour to go into that question, and every member of the House who has got a grievance desires to ventilate that grievance in the best possible manner. Every member wants unlimited time to make out the best case possible, and if a member does not make himself understood he should, like the Irishman, be allowed to speak until he is understood.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Like a Scotchman.

Mr. MANN: I beg pardon; a Scotchman should be allowed to speak until he is understood, and an Irishman as long as he likes. Every member should be an Irishman while discussing Estimates—have the right to speak as often and as long as he pleases. After all, the fullest discussion of the Estimates can do no harm. Every Minister who is worth his salt will welcome discussion of the Estimates, as he will wish everything to be open to the light and above board. The increases on the Estimates this year warrant members in rising in their places and protesting in the strongest manner possible. The member who moved this amendment is doing his duty to his electorate and to the country, and his action will redound to his

credit in the future when members look back upon the effect of this Sessional Order on the discussion of the Estimates, and see how discussion had been stifled. Apparently the Government have something behind their desire to limit discussion, and we should know what that is. I am surprised at members opposite supporting this attempt at stifling and gagging discussion at the desire of the Premier, who wishes to become in Queensland what Cromwell was in Ireland—a despot.

Mr. HAMILTON (*Gregory*): My opinion coincides with that of previous speakers on these proposals. The paragraph we are now discussing is the most drastic of all. Anyone who doubted whether it is a fair proposal had only to observe the timid manner in which the Premier rose to reply to the mover of the amendment. The Premier said he was not sure whether it was a fair proposal or not; he was not strong on it, he was not decided with regard to it, and we know from experience that if the hon. gentleman is not decided with regard to a proposal it is a pretty weak one. There is an old saying that it is good to have the strength of a giant, but that it is not good to use it as a giant. The Premier likes to have the strength of a giant and to use that strength like a giant. We have only to look at the silent faces of hon. members opposite to see that they have been gagged on this occasion. We have been told that this Sessional Order is not to be made a party question, but we know that there was a caucus to-day, and we see that not one member on that side is game to rise in his place and protest against this drastic proposal, although they know it is unfair. There is no doubt that it is a deliberate attempt at curtailment of speech in the House. As has been stated by members who have already spoken, the best work in this House has been done in the committee stages of Bills. We have always been advised to curtail our speeches on the second reading of a Bill, and then endeavour to lick the measure into shape in Committee. Supposing we have contentious measures brought before the House, like five or six that are promised for this session, how can any member debate intelligently those measures at either the second reading or Committee stage in the limited time allowed by this Sessional Order? The Premier stated that he would like to keep as close as possible to the New Zealand Standing Orders dealing with the time limit of speeches, but in this proposal he has gone away as far as possible from those Standing Orders. The proposal of the member for Kennedy is the same limitation as that imposed in New Zealand, and I think it is not an unfair proposal to ask the Government to accept. As the Sessional Order now stands, a member will be allowed to speak only three times on one question in Committee. The hon. member for Cairns pointed out that there are five or six different matters in the Agricultural Estimates which it would be impossible to deal with in the limited time at the disposal of a member, if this Sessional Order is carried. I may further point out that in nearly every department there is a vote for "miscellaneous services." In the Estimates for the Agricultural Department the vote for "miscellaneous services" includes agricultural and horticultural societies, reserves, special grants for the approved improvements on reserves, National Agricultural and Industrial Association, subsidies to local authorities for erection of stock dips, refrigeration on

*Mr. Hamilton.]*

Northern steamers. The question of providing refrigeration space on cargo steamers is a very big one for the agriculturists of Queensland, and yet that is included with the other matters I have mentioned, and they all form one question. If a member wanted to speak on each of those items embraced in "miscellaneous services" it would be impossible for him to do so under this Sessional Order. The other items would have to go by the board. Not only is that the case in the Agricultural Department, but also in nearly every other department. In one [8.30 p.m.] subdivision there may be a dozen different questions, and members would not be allowed to speak on them. Whatever virtue there may be in limiting the speeches of hon. members on the Address in Reply and the Financial Statement, or even on the second reading of Bills, I say there is no justification for a proposal like this on the committee stages of a Bill or on the administration of a department. There has been no Premier in this State—no leader has ever been in this House—who has done as much to curtail discussion on the administration of departments as what the leader of the Government has done. We know very well in the past, when members of this party were sitting behind him, we were told not to speak: "You must keep silent on this and let the other side talk." It is quite evident that hon. members opposite have the same instructions to-day, but while he is able to muzzle his immediate supporters, he is not able to muzzle the members of the Opposition, without a big fight, by the introduction of drastic proposals like this. It is all very well to say these are the proposals of the committee. We know it is pretty well a one-man committee—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. HAMILTON: We know very well the individuality of that hon. gentleman; we know what influence he exercises on members sitting here, and what he can do with a number of members sitting on those benches he can pretty well do with half a dozen sitting in committee, and the trail of the leader of the Government can be seen all over the proposals brought down here. While he has the power at the present time to gag his own supporters he has not the power to gag members of the Opposition. It is impossible—it is impracticable—for us to have good legislation if we are confined to five-minute speeches on the Committee stages of any Bill. We know very well that in the case of nearly every measure passed here it is only the next session that an amending measure is brought down. We are promised now many measures to amend measures passed here two or three sessions ago, simply because in the past the time of the House has been wasted, and the bulk of the legislation has been hurried through in the last two or three weeks of the session, and discussion has been limited. In fact, many very important measures have been shoved through this House in the early hours of the morning, when it was almost impossible for members to discuss them intelligently, as many hon. members were asleep, with perhaps half a dozen members awake. We are now asked to do something which even the Premier himself feels is a wrong thing to do. The Premier, when he got up to reply, said he was not very strong on it.

Mr. MANN: He has no conscience.

Mr. HAMILTON: I do not think he has a very big conscience, but what little he has he put aside on this occasion.

[Mr. Hamilton.]

Mr. MANN: It is like indiarubber.

Mr. HAMILTON: Whatever hon. members opposite may do on other occasions, I should like them to use a little independence on this occasion, and let them speak and vote as they think fit. The hon. member for South Brisbane, I know very well, thinks in his mind that this is not a fair proposal, yet he is muzzled. He dare not get up and defend it—he dare not get up and say what he thinks. The hon. member for Burrum, who represents a mining and agricultural community, also thinks this is a drastic proposal. Why does he not stand up in his place and oppose it?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. member is not proceeding in order in singling out hon. members as he is doing, and I must ask him to desist from pursuing that line of argument.

Mr. HAMILTON: It is very plainly to be seen by the action of members opposite that the protest of members on this side is only like beating the air, but as the leader of the party pointed out, whether we are defeated on these proposals or not, we are going to have a fight for it. We know very well they are unjust proposals, and we are not going to sit down and tamely submit to them. I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment moved by the hon. member for Kennedy, and I hope to see a few independent members on the other side get up and do likewise.

Mr. NEVITT: Mr. Speaker—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has already spoken.

Mr. NEVITT: I beg your pardon; I have not spoken on this amendment.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member for Carpentaria seconded the amendment moved by the hon. member for Kennedy.

Mr. BOUCHARD (*Brisbane South*): I have been listening most attentively to hon. members opposite for the last hour and a-half, and I have been wondering whether they are really in earnest and sincere in the opinions which they have given expression to. Hon. members opposite know full well that it is owing to the same exhibition that we have had in this House during the discussion on these Sessional Orders this session that has proved the necessity for bringing down Sessional Orders for the purpose of limiting speeches.

Mr. HARDACRE: When?

Mr. LENNON: Give an instance this session.

Mr. BOUCHARD: Hon. members are complaining that they are going to have their right of speech curtailed, and it is quite time, in my opinion, that these rights were curtailed. I say if hon. members cannot give expression to their views on an ordinary question in the time which is proposed in the Sessional Orders to be allotted to them, then what they have to say is really not worth listening to.

Mr. MANN: If lawyers were tied down in the same way there would not be so many six-and-eightpences.

Mr. BOUCHARD: Hon. members, whilst complaining about the number of vacant seats on this side, took good care not to point out the many seats on their side of the House which were likewise vacant. Hon. members are tired of this thing—the lot of trash spoken here the last two hours.

Mr. MANN: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for South Brisbane in order in calling any speech delivered in this Chamber trash?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. member is not out of order.

Mr. BOUCHARD: I am expressing my opinion of the utterances of members on the other side of the House, and I think when I so designate them, I give a true description of some of the speeches which have been delivered on this amendment. The amendment proposes to give hon. members the right to speak on four occasions in Committee. The original proposal gives the right to speak on three occasions, on the first for ten minutes, and on the second and third for five minutes each. Hon. members complain that they will not, under that Sessional Order, have full opportunity for expressing their views. They have given illustrations in the past of their inability to impress their views on members of measures coming before the House, and I think it has been merely shown that in the past, if an hon. member has not been able to impress members after having spoken three times he is not likely to impress members or convert members if he speaks fifty times. I hope hon. members on the other side, having heard my views, will see fit to come to the conclusion that the original proposal is a reasonable one, and should commend it to the House. The hon. member for Maranoa was rather fearful of what the electors outside might say if a time limitation were placed upon speeches. The electors outside are expressing their disgust at the waste of time which takes place in this Chamber.

Mr. FERRICKS: What about the recess of six months?

Mr. BOUCHARD: The electors want hon. members to get on with the business of the country; they do not want the time of Parliament wasted as it has been ever since Parliament met.

Mr. FERRICKS: They do not want six months' recesses, either.

Mr. BOUCHARD: Under the proposal, as has been pointed out very clearly by the Premier, members have an ample opportunity of expressing their views upon any subject which comes before the House. Not only have they the opportunity of speaking on the original question, but amendments may be moved, and they can speak three times on each amendment. Can members honestly say that they are going to have their privileges unreasonably curtailed? I am surprised at hon. members on the other side attempting to deceive the people outside by such arguments as they have used. I intend to oppose the amendment, and I do hope that hon. members opposite will give up this useless talk, and let us get on with the business-paper, in order that we may transact the business for which we have been called together.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I was in error when I said that the hon. member for Carpentaria had lost his chance to address the Chamber. I call upon the hon. member now.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

\* Mr. NEVITT (*Carpentaria*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I should not have wished to speak only I, with the rest of the members on this side, view this amendment of our Standing Orders as the most important of the whole group. In my estimation, responsible government is practically on its trial here tonight, as far as Queensland is concerned. If

this proposal is carried, it will mean that there is no Parliament in the British Empire that has cut down the rights and privileges of members to such an extent as they are being cut down under this Sessional Order. New Zealand is the only Parliament that I am aware of in which members have a limited number of times to speak in Committee, and a limit specified as to the time which can be occupied in speaking. We find they are allowed double the time that is allowed in the amendment before us. But we find that the Standing Orders Committee, led by the Premier, want to cut that down by 50 per cent., and for the hon. member for South Brisbane to say that they want to get on with business—I quite understand why they want to get on to business when questions of this sort are before us. Why is the hon. member not prepared to defend the rights and privileges which he is sent into this House to maintain?

Mr. BOUCHARD: It is abuse.

Mr. NEVITT: I maintain that there has been no abuse by members this session. Whatever the hon. member may think, I am of a contrary opinion. I have just opened the Estimates, and I find that there are forty-four items under the Civil Engineering Branch, and on those items any member would only be allowed to speak three times. It contains forty-four different items, and the amount involved is £602,957. I maintain that it is absolutely impossible for any man to discuss that item as it should be discussed, and to have placed before the Chamber the innovations that some members on this side have frequently done in items on the Estimates.

Mr. BOWMAN: They don't want to discuss them.

Mr. NEVITT: No, they don't want to discuss them. We are all aware that out of eight Under Secretaries there are six down for an increase of £100 each, and in the same Estimates they tell you they have been giving 6d. a day to the lower-paid public servants. They don't tell you that they gave some of these Under Secretaries a £100 increase last year, and we want an opportunity of discussing this matter in the way we are entitled to discuss it.

Mr. BOWMAN: In the manner that we are expected to discuss them.

Mr. NEVITT: Yes. The members on the other side are not expected to discuss anything. They simply have their programme placed in the Governor's Speech, and they are like recording angels. When the division bell rings they flock in and look where their leader is, and go on the same side. They have not the remotest idea of what has been said on the motion before the House.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. NEVITT: I feel very strongly on this matter, and I do not think we should allow this question to go through. It was suggested to the Premier, "Why don't you let it go through, and there would have been no discussion;" but he feels strong enough to clear out of the Chamber, and not to listen to any argument we may bring forward to continue the Standing Orders as they are, or to get a little extension on what he has proposed. During the debate attention was called from this side to the thin benches on the other side. At that time there were ten members on the other side, and the Minister for Education interjected, "There are not too many on your side." There were nineteen out of twenty-

*Mr. Nevitt.*]



seven on this side, and ten out of forty-one on the other side—that is, 25 per cent. as against 66 per cent. That shows that members on this side are trying to do their duty, and to insist on the rights and privileges of this Chamber being protected. The only way in which a just criticism can take place is by giving us a further number of times, and an extended time on each item. I ask whether it is right for a gentleman who is in charge of these resolutions to be out of the Chamber for over an hour? You cannot find another case in history where a Parliament was treated with greater contempt than the leader of the House is treating us at this time. He is simply depending on his brute force behind him.

Mr. WHITE: That is what the Federal Parliament is depending on too.

Mr. NEVITT: It does not matter about the Federal Parliament, I am defending our rights here, and it is the duty of hon. members on the other side to do it, but we do not find one of them getting up in their place to defend the rights of members in this Chamber. It has been said that the Standing Orders Committee were unanimous on this question, but I am led to believe to the contrary by members of that committee. Two gentlemen took exception to it.

Mr. HARDACRE: They were got through by a trick by the Premier. I will explain that when I get up.

Mr. NEVITT: By whatever method the Premier managed to get them through the Standing Orders Committee, it is certainly the duty of the House to prevent them passing in the form they are placed before us. That is a point I want to emphasise, and I consider that if the Premier had got up when it was moved by the hon. member for Kennedy, we would have been through the rest of the Orders before now.

Mr. HARDACRE: I protested against it in the Standing Orders Committee.

Mr. LESINA: Why did you not have your protest entered on the records?

Mr. NEVITT: I will conclude by saying that I intend to support the amendment.

Mr. LESINA: A statement has been made with regard to the lack of unanimity in the Standing Orders Committee in connection with the proposed new Sessional Orders. It is one of those statements repeatedly made and as repeatedly denied. It is in connection with this particular paragraph allowing a member to speak three times on any question during the consideration of the Estimates, the first time for ten minutes, the second time five minutes, and the third time five minutes—twenty minutes in all. So far as the records show, and so far as my memory serves me, there was no objection taken of a definite character by any member of the Standing Orders Committee to the adoption of this suggestion. I am a member of the committee, and I looked up the matter carefully, and I find that there is a saving of ten minutes as compared with New Zealand, which is not such a great alteration.

Mr. HARDACRE: It was carried by four against three.

Mr. LESINA: That is a matter which members can find out for themselves on reference to the Clerk, or to yourself, Mr. Speaker, as you were in the chair. We made the recommendations to the Chamber, and if the House desires to make them Sessional Orders it is entirely in the hands of the House. All our Sessional Orders and Standing Orders are the

result of the ripe opinion of the majority of the Chamber; and the principle that the majority rules has been accepted so long that it is rather late in the day to question the virtue of majority rule. Though I have often been in the minority and grumbled at the fact, I nevertheless recognise the fact that ultimately it is the majority that must determine matters. Now, let us recognise the basic principle and make the pathway clear. Let each step be made solid under our feet. The first step is that these proposals were recommended by the Standing Orders Committee, and they were proposed for adoption by the Premier as head of the Government. It has been suggested that there might be some better method of putting them before the House whereby the bitterness and rancour of party spirit might be avoided. It has been suggested that you, Mr. Speaker, should lay the recommendations of the committee on the table and members should adopt them; but that would be legislatively impossible. They must be taken charge of by some member, and that member must be a responsible person. As the leader of the Opposition could not take charge of them in the absence of a sufficiently strong party to put them through, it naturally follows that the leader of the Government is the only one who could take the matter in hand.

Mr. BOWMAN: He made it a party question.

Mr. LESINA: I am not certain about that; but I know that we have been considering them three days and have made such progress that we are now at the third or fourth paragraph of the first recommendation providing for the time limit of speeches; and it is now proposed to deal with the time limit of speeches in Committee. In New Zealand, the home of democracy, where more democratic legislation has been placed on the statute-book than has been the case in any other country, they have already adopted as one of their Standing Orders the proposition that four speeches should be allowed in committee of supply.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: That is what we are asking.

Mr. LESINA: We suggested an improvement on that; and we made our recommendation for this reason: We found that in New Zealand, under the operation of this drastic Standing Order, they had a stonewall which lasted sixty-two hours; and we thought that if we adopted an amended Sessional Order, as recommended to the House, we would not be going far astray. We, therefore, recommended that a member should be allowed to speak only on three occasions on any question in Committee—on the first occasion for ten minutes, on the second occasion for five minutes, and on the third occasion five minutes. Now, let us see how that will operate. Members pretend to see in that an attack on the basic principle of responsible government, an insidious attempt to subvert the privileges of members, to wreck civilisation, to undermine the Constitution, and to break up the hearth and the home. I do not see in this simple proposal anything like the troubles which members contend will be brought about. Let us take an illustration and see how it will operate. I open the Estimates at page 9, and I find that one of the first votes is for the Legislative Assembly. The Chairman puts the question that £3,389 be granted for the Legislative Assembly, and I get up and speak for ten minutes, and I have said all I want to say in those ten minutes. It may be said that you cannot say

[Mr. Nevitt.]

all you want to say in ten minutes; but let me tell you what can be done in ten minutes. A column of the *Telegraph* newspaper contains about ten "sticks." An ordinary speaker speaks at the rate of 140 words a minute; I speak at the rate of 200 words a minute. Taking ten "sticks" of brevity to the column, and allowing twenty lines to the "stick," and seven words to the line, that would give me one and a-quarter "sticks" per minute, three-quarters of a column in five minutes, and one and a-half columns in ten minutes. If I speak an hour on any of the matters referred to in the first paragraph of this Sessional Order, or on the Financial Statement, I can speak nine columns of the *Telegraph* in that time. And, surely, in nine columns of the *Telegraph* I can ventilate all the grievances I like to bring forward. Now, we have got to figures which demonstrate the possibility of a member ventilating any matter he likes to bring forward and dealing with anything incidental to the case in the time permitted.

Mr. LENNON: You have not proved it.

Mr. LESINA: I have proved it by statistics, and I think that should convince any ordinary man.

Mr. LENNON: Figures can be made to prove anything.

Mr. LESINA: Let us go further. If the editor of the *Telegraph* desires to deal with some big topic, he can put into one column all he wants to say in favour of the attitude he takes up. The *London Times*, in dealing with the biggest crisis in European affairs, can do it in three-quarters of a column; and I can speak a column in ten minutes. I think that proves that fair opportunity is given of speaking on the subjects embraced in the Estimates, most of which are nothing like equal in importance to many of the matters dealt with in the leading columns of newspapers. Now, does that not demonstrate the need not only for curtailing debate but of inducing members to concentrate their thoughts and arguments into the briefest possible compass? I admit that I have spoken three hours about the grievances of one policeman—(laughter)—and on another occasion I spoke for some time about a policeman's wife—(renewed laughter)—and I deserved six weeks for doing it. There is one other point I would like to notice. As soon as the Minister in charge of these Estimates moves the vote for £3,359 for the Legislative Assembly, and I have finished my ten minutes' speech, some member on this side gets up and speaks for ten minutes, and he concludes by moving a reduction of the vote by £1. I can get up and speak on that for ten minutes. I have also four other occasions on which I can speak if amendments are moved.

[9 p.m.] Mr. BOWMAN: It may not be necessary to move amendments.

Mr. LESINA: It may be unnecessary, but I am proving that there are heaps of opportunities provided under this proposition, for which I am responsible as one member of the Standing Orders Committee, and which I am also courageous enough to vote for here. The proposition will not curtail debate in the slightest degree. If it did, I should be opposed to it. I am just as anxious as any other member to preserve my rights. It may be said that on the Lands Department Estimates and the Mines Department Estimates hon. members will not have time to discuss all their grievances. Well, in that case hon. members should take advantage of the debate

on the Financial Statement. Instead of discussing high finance, which nobody ever reads and which nobody ever listens to, they can take up their hour in dealing with grievances affecting their constituencies, and then they will still have the opportunity afforded by the Estimates for further dealing with the matter. I think hon. members will be well advised if they accept this proposition. If they do not make progress, they may find the Premier getting up later in the session, when they want more time to discuss grievances, and saying, "Well, you took up so much time in dealing with the proposal to limit speeches that you find yourselves without sufficient time to ventilate grievances. My party did not speak. I kept them well in hand"—and there is no doubt that they are being kept well in hand. They are evidently determined not to speak on this question if they can avoid doing so. I do not object to that, because, if we sat over there, we would very likely do the same. It is incidental to party politics that the Government party must be kept well in hand in a discussion of this kind. Very likely the Government, in their caucus, agreed that members of their party were not to discuss this matter at undue length. I think the figures I have given, showing that a member, if reported fully, can fill a column of the *Telegraph* in ten minutes, is a sufficient justification for this recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee. I agreed with the hon. member for Toowoomba and other members of the Committee as to the necessity for limiting speeches being urgent, and our recommendation has met with the almost unanimous approval of the House. There are only one or two dissidents, who think that any limitation of speech is an invasion of the rights of members. As I pointed out the other night, we are living in new times. The times to-day are not out of joint, but they are not what they used to be. An entirely new political scheme of things has been originated by recent developments of triumphant democracy.

Mr. NEVITT: Autocracy, you mean.

Mr. LESINA: Whether you call it democracy or autocracy, in the end it amounts to the same thing. If the party in power attempts to get its business done in a business-like way, it is considered autocratic. If we sat on the other side of the Chamber, we would be accused likewise of being autocratic, of suppressing the liberty of speech, and all that sort of thing. As a matter of fact, the Government have merely demonstrated, as pointed out by the *Telegraph* yesterday, that they are just as determined to support the recommendations of the Standing Orders Committee as if it were made a party question. It has been repeatedly stated by hon. members on this side that it is regrettable that the consideration of the Standing Orders, by which the conduct of our business is governed, should be made the occasion for a display of party warfare and bitterness. You do not find a chamber of commerce quarrelling over the rules which govern its procedure. The chairman of a chamber of commerce, or the president of a big co-operative company, does not find the members or directors divided amongst themselves as to the conduct of business. Their object is to get their business done as speedily and sensibly as possible; and the extraordinary thing is that all down the ages, every kind of business shows a distinct improvement in the direction of saving time, with the single exception of Parliament.

Mr. Lesina.]

Parliament is the only institution which apparently does not care about conserving time.

Mr. MANN: What about the Supreme Court?

Mr. LESINA: The Supreme Court saves time. How many judges talk for an hour when summing up in the most important case, involving, it may be, £100,000, or the life and liberty of some man? Yet a member of Parliament wants an hour to discuss the construction of a bridge over Dead Dog Gully. If he does not get an hour for that purpose, he talks as if the whole superstructure of his political liberty was about to be torn down about his ears. I simply indicate this as worthy of some consideration, before we finally determine to reject or adopt this recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee, that all business institutions to-day have recognised the need for something like concentration and time-saving and business-like methods in connection with debate, except Parliament. Washington Irving, in one of his earlier works, speaks of America as a logocracy—the Greek word “Logos,” meaning a word. He points out that in a country like America, where Logos rules—where talking is everything and doing is little or nothing—at least in his time—if some dire calamity took place, the city fathers would meet and make a speech. If war should break out within their borders, they would meet and make a speech, and so on *ad infinitum*. Apparently, something of that same spirit animates Australian peoples and Australian legislatures. I hope that in the near future we shall act in a wiser manner, and as we grow older we will see more and more advantage from that—

Mr. LENNON: Wait till the Licensing Bill comes on, and you will be tied up then.

Mr. LESINA: I am quite prepared to be tied up. We will be able to concentrate our attention on the business of the House much better than we have done. Finally, I may say that if this Sessional Order is adopted, and is made to apply to this session, then by the time we reach the end of Parliament members will be able to go back to their constituencies, and we will succeed in turning out a body of men who will claim admiration for the concentrated methods—(Opposition laughter)—yes, the concentrated methods for addressing public meetings, which will characterise their utterances. They will find that in addressing meetings they will be able to shear off a lot of superfluous verbiage and high-fluting phrases—

Mr. BOWMAN: Which you yourself are a champion at. (Laughter.)

Mr. LESINA: Which in the past might have been considered necessary for a proper exposition of democratic opinion. (Laughter.) I think that that will be one of the immediate results of the passage of this Sessional Order. It will train members to debate in a more concentrated form. It will mean that if any member wishes to talk about any matters pertaining to the Legislative Assembly, or about the refreshment-room, he will have to say all he has got to say in ten minutes. If he has not made himself quite clear, he can have another five minutes, which means about half a column of a newspaper, and then again, he has another five minutes if he wishes to speak on the same subject. So that a member has plenty of chances of saying all he has got to say. If he is not satisfied with that, he can get some member of his party to move an amendment; he can then speak again, and, if necessary,

[Mr. Lesina.

a further amendment can be moved, and all members can speak again on that amendment—

Mr. BOWMAN: You are offering suggestions for obstruction?

Mr. LESINA: No; I am not offering suggestions for obstruction. But I am pointing out that members might find it desirable to adopt these methods if they do not get in what they want.

Mr. HARDACRE: You are showing how we can break the rule.

Mr. LESINA: Did I not say before that this Sessional Order will not tie you up in any way? It simply indicates the temper of the House. If the House adopts these rules, it simply indicates to members who are apt to break the rules that this restricts long speeches. If you wish to break the rules, you can do it in a roundabout way, as the old parliamentarians know quite well. The hon. member for Leichhardt, the oldest parliamentary hand on this side, knows quite well that the Standing Orders will not prevent him from breaking the rules if he wishes to do so.

Mr. HARDACRE: What is the good of making rules to break?

Mr. LESINA: We have always done that. If any Government wishes to thrust legislation down our throats which is obnoxious to us, and which the people outside have not expressed an opinion on, then we will have a chance of blocking it, and I am prepared to fight this Government as strenuously as ever I did if they attempt anything of that kind. As a member of the Standing Orders Committee, I think we have adopted a Sessional Order which will make the passage of business so much easier through this House, and which will tend to improve the speeches of hon. members.

Mr. BOWMAN: Hear, hear! and laughter. It just suits you. (Laughter.)

Mr. GRANT (Rockhampton): The matter under discussion is the Sessional Orders which we recommended for adoption by the House, and I may say that this was an unanimous recommendation from the members of that committee.

Mr. HARDACRE: That is not true.

Mr. GRANT: It is quite true.

Mr. MANN: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Leichhardt said that a statement which the hon. member for Rockhampton made was not true, and the hon. gentleman should accept his word. I ask the hon. member for Rockhampton to accept the assurance of the hon. member for Leichhardt.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr. MANN: That the hon. member for Rockhampton is out of order in not accepting the statement of the hon. member for Leichhardt.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. It is unparliamentary for the hon. member for Rockhampton to say that it is true, but it is also unparliamentary for the hon. member for Leichhardt to say that anything said by an hon. member is not true.

Mr. GRANT: The other members of the Standing Orders Committee and the Clerk of the House know quite well that the Standing Orders Committee passed a Sessional Order, and they decided unanimously that the Ses-

sional Order as passed by the committee be recommended for the approval of the House for this session.

Mr. LESINA: Hear, hear! It was unanimous.

Mr. GRANT: And we now have the hon. member for Leichhardt coming here and trying to obstruct these resolutions—trying to delay the passage of the very resolutions passed by the committee of which he was a member. Why did he not fight it in committee?

Mr. HARDACRE: You know that I did so.

Mr. GRANT: Not the rules we are now discussing.

Mr. HARDACRE: Yes; the very rules we are now dealing with.

Mr. GRANT: This is news to me, because I fail to remember that the hon. member for Leichhardt ever fought these rules in the committee. He objected to the suggestions so far as the rules relating to the business in the House was concerned, but not to anything else, and we met his objection so far as the House was concerned by passing a provision that a member could continue his speech with the leave of the House. The hon. member for Leichhardt was sitting next to me, and I said, "Will that satisfy you?" and he said "Yes."

Mr. HARDACRE: Don't misrepresent me.

Mr. GRANT: I am detailing facts, and for verification I appeal to the other members of the Standing Orders Committee. In this the hon. member for Leichhardt stands alone.

Mr. HARDACRE: I don't.

Mr. GRANT: I ask other members of the Standing Orders Committee if my statement is not correct?

Mr. MANN: You are entirely out of order.

Mr. GRANT: I think the hon. member for Cairns is entirely out of order in making interjections. One good feature of this Sessional Order will be that members making speeches, knowing that they have a limited time, will take less notice of frivolous interjections such as the hon. member for Cairns is now making.

Mr. MANN: You are the most frivolous man in the House.

Mr. GRANT: The Sessional Order will do good in regard to that. As regards the limiting of speeches, the Labour party put this forward at their Labour conferences, at which they decided not mere matters like this, but matters affecting the whole universe, and they limited their members to five minutes each. (Government laughter.)

Mr. ALLEN: They are only delegates.

Mr. GRANT: At the convention in Rockhampton, at which the resolution was carried which caused several members to leave the Labour party, including my colleague Mr. Kidston, myself, and several others, five minutes each was the time permitted for the discussion of all the questions; so that if five minutes is sufficient to discuss questions like that, which are not only for to-day, but for the whole future of the universe, then ten minutes is sufficient for members to discuss any grievance they may have to discuss about the policeman or the policeman's wife, as the hon. member for Clermont says. (Government laughter.) In Committee a member can speak three times, five minutes on each of the second and third occasions, and in the House he may continue his speech with the

leave of the House. This will not stop discussion at all, as the Opposition will have plenty of opportunities for making their protest and for stonewalling. This will not stop stonewalling. In New Zealand it has not stopped discussion, and on one occasion they stonewalled for sixty-two hours. So we need not be afraid of it.

Mr. RYLAND: Then what is the good of it?

Mr. GRANT: It is good in this respect. One or two members cannot take up the whole time of the House at one sitting. (Hear, hear!) It will break monopoly in speech. Of course, a number of us are so overshadowed by the hon. member for Gympie, who can speak for time and eternity on every subject, that we get no opportunity of speaking at all. Now, the ordinary member will have an opportunity of discussing matters, and will no doubt take advantage of that opportunity. I remember sitting here night after night when the Estimates were being discussed, waiting for an opportunity to deal with a matter in which I was particularly interested, and some member got up and spoke for four or five hours, finishing about 11 o'clock, when there was no chance of my getting publicity for my views.

Mr. ALLEN: You had a chance to speak then.

Mr. GRANT: If every member who speaks spoke as long as the hon. member for Bulloo, there would not be much chance for some members.

Mr. ALLEN: I never spoke for three hours in my life.

Mr. GRANT: The hon. member for Clermont has told us that he speaks at the rate of 200 words per minute. We know the hon. member for Bulloo does not speak at that rate, but he sometimes makes long speeches, and when a few members make two and a-half hour speeches, there is no chance for other members to get their speeches reported, as *Hansard* does not give full reports after 11 o'clock. I would point out that every vote so far given on this proposed Sessional Order has been a party vote. There was no party bias in the Standing Orders Committee. Every member of that committee will tell the House that there was absolutely no party bias shown in discussing the matters before them. On that committee we had the experience of the hon. member for Ipswich, who had occupied the position of Chairman of Committees for some years, the experience of the Deputy Speaker, and the experience of several other members, and we came to a unanimous decision as to what we should recommend for the approval of the House.

Mr. HARDACRE: We deny that.

Mr. GRANT: I am stating what actually took place in the committee. Yet we find that the strongest and most persistent opposition to this proposal is from a member of the Standing Orders Committee. We have been three days discussing this proposed new rule, and we have a fairly good grasp of it. Why then are members stonewalling it?

Mr. RYLAND: Are you stonewalling it?

Mr. GRANT: No; I am simply putting the House in possession of the facts of the case.

Mr. ALLEN: You have been over ten minutes now.

Mr. GRANT: I may have been over ten minutes, but this is the first time I have

*Mr. Grant.*]

spoken on the subject, and I thought that the matters that I have mentioned would be of some interest to the House.

Mr. HARDACRE: It is not fair for a member of the Standing Orders Committee to repeat a statement which has been repeatedly denied by other members of that committee. I deplore the necessity of having to keep on relating what took place at the meetings of the Standing Orders Committee, but I am bound to do it. The hon. member for Rockhampton must remember that I was strongly opposed to one of the proposals made in the Sessional Order, and that in consequence of the attitude taken up by some of us the committee agreed to a provision extending the time during which a member might speak, with the consent of the House. With regard to the proposal for limiting speeches in Committee, I went so far as to ask that a record of the votes should be made. I said I did not want the names taken down, but that I wished to have the votes recorded. The voting was four against three on this time limit in Committee. I am just as strongly opposed to the proposed limitation as I was at that time; in fact, I am even more strongly opposed to it. I should like to say a word or two in reply to the hon. member for Clermont. I could not help thinking of Bret Harte's line, "The heathen Chinese is peculiar," when I heard the hon. member speaking, as it seemed to have an application to the hon. member. There is no doubt that with regard to this matter he is extremely peculiar. When I hear him advocating the limitation of speeches my mind goes back to his old fighting days, on both sides of the House, when he gave us speeches of four and five hours long, some of them very able and brilliant speeches indeed. The hon. member was never in better form than when he was delivering a speech for three hours or longer.

Mr. WHITE: Don't you think that should be stopped?

Mr. HARDACRE: I do. I do not think a member should speak for three hours. The hon. member for Clermont has spoken more and longer than any man in this House, and now he is fighting most strongly for the limitation of speeches to five minutes. That is a very peculiar thing. It is one of those things that, as Lord Dundreary would say, "no fellow can understand." The hon. member for Clermont gave us some figures as to how much a man can say in ten minutes, with the view of showing that ten minutes is ample to discuss even a European complication. I should like to draw attention to the length of time that he occupied on this very question, which is not nearly so important as many questions that will come up on the Estimates. The hon. member spoke for twenty-five minutes by the clock on what, according to him, is a little tinpot amendment, and yet when we come to discuss a big department, or some glaring case of maladministration like the Seaforth Estate business, or the Port Alma Railway—on each of which a member could speak pertinently for twenty minutes or half an hour—he would confine us to ten minutes. Look at the important questions that come up for consideration on the Estimates! In the Chief Secretary's Department there is the big question of immigration, and on that big question of policy the leader of the Opposition will, under this proposed new rule, be limited to ten minutes. I say that is altogether too drastic. It is more drastic than the New Zealand

[Mr. Grant.

Standing Order, and all that is asked by the amendment is that we should adopt the New Zealand limitation. The Government are fighting for something worse than the New Zealand Standing Order.

The PREMIER: This is a recommendation from the Standing Orders Committee.

Mr. HARDACRE: It is quite true that the Standing Orders Committee made this recommendation, but when the leader of the Government moves that the Sessional Order should be adopted he is making it a Government matter. He is taking upon himself the responsibility of asking the House to adopt something that the committee have recommended.

The PREMIER: No; merely submitting it for the consideration of the House.

Mr. HARDACRE: No; the motion is that the Sessional Order be adopted. The hon. gentleman had the alternatives of rejecting or accepting the recommendation of the committee.

The PREMIER: So have you.

Mr. HARDACRE: That is so, and if I moved the adoption of the rule, I should be taking the responsibility of submitting it to the House. As it is, the hon. gentleman has decided to ask the House to adopt the rule and to put it in force this session. In that case he is making it a Government [9.30 p.m.] matter, and not only that, but a party matter, and a caucus matter. I am so sick of being on the Standing Orders Committee that I do not care a snap of the fingers whether I am put there again or not.

The TREASURER: I expect you have had a very bad time.

Mr. HARDACRE: And I am seriously considering whether I will send in my resignation or not. The leader of the Government knows when he was getting this clause through he was the leading influence there. He knows I had to get up and make a protest at the way in which he got them through. I actually had to say that the leader of the Government had acted most unfairly to the Standing Orders Committee in getting them through. First of all, when we discussed the time limitation, the senior member for Rockhampton, Mr. Grant, made a proposal, which, modified, proved much more acceptable to members than a time limit. He did not actually make a formal resolution, but he suggested, supported, and urged that we should adopt the principle in practice in America of borrowing another member's time, and the Premier at once—

The PREMIER: Was quite attracted by the proposal.

Mr. HARDACRE: Yes; he was quite attracted by the proposal.

The PREMIER: Is he not just as honest in this matter as you are?

Mr. HARDACRE: That is a question for himself. I am only saying what appeared to be the case, and I am not too sure of it after his actions on this debate. At any rate, what happened is this: He appeared to be attracted by the proposal.

The PREMIER: He did not go to that committee and then go to a caucus meeting and advocate something else.

Mr. BOWMAN: You went to your caucus to-day.

The PREMIER: And advocated the same thing as I advocated in the committee.

Mr. HARDACRE: I advocated to my party here exactly the same thing that I advocated in the committee. The Premier appeared attracted by the proposal, and instead of dealing with the matter then he suggested that we postpone it until we had discussed the whole resolutions. Then we put the other matters through on the understanding that something of that kind would be proposed with the Premier's support, but he said afterwards, "I have thought better of it, and I do not think I will propose anything at all." That is how these time limit proposals were got through the Standing Orders Committee, and I had occasion to get up and say I did not think he had acted fairly to the committee in getting them through. And then we are told here that the committee was unanimous. As a matter of fact, all through I opposed long speeches such as delivered by the hon. member for Clermont and other hon. members, myself included, but not to bring down a drastic time limit proposal like this. One of the things I am most opposed to in the proposal is this: It is going to deal most unequally with the two sides of the House. It is going to give the Minister in charge of the Estimates, or the Minister in charge of a Bill, unlimited time to talk, and he can talk as often as he likes, and members on this side of the House, the leader of the Opposition included, are to be cut down to three times on the whole—the first time for ten minutes, and on the second and third times, five minutes. I say that is not fair to members on this side of the House. At all events, the limitations should be equal to both sides.

The PREMIER: Where does it say the Minister can speak as often as he likes?

Mr. HARDACRE: The proposal reads—

In Committee of the House, except as hereinafter provided, no member, other than the member in charge of a Bill, or Minister in charge of an Estimate, shall speak for more than three times on any one question, nor more than ten minutes on the first occasion, and five minutes on the second and third occasions.

Which means that the Minister can get up here—

The PREMIER: And answer questions.

Mr. BOWMAN: And make speeches.

Mr. HARDACRE: And make speeches. He can come into the House and defend his position as Minister in charge of the department. The leader of the Opposition may get up and make a serious charge, and he is limited to ten minutes; then the Minister can get up and give an hour's or two hours' speech in reply. That is not a fair thing, and if we are to adopt a time limit at all, there should be some extension with regard to the leader of the Opposition, or some other member deputed by him to speak on his behalf. Also, the same thing should apply in regard to members in charge of amendments to Bills. Take, for instance, the Land Bill, or some other big Bill. We know it has been the custom in the past for some member on this side of the House to practically take charge of the passage of that Bill, as far as this side of the House is concerned, just as a member of the Government does, and there is no proposal here to give that member any extension of time. The Minister can bring in, perhaps, an important amendment. Then the member on the Opposition side of the House can get up and criticise that amendment, and move a further amendment. Then some new aspect will come up, and he has only five minutes to deal with that new aspect, and probably later on a new aspect arises, and his power of

criticism is gone; he has no power of moving any other amendment on that particular clause.

Mr. LESINA: You know we have a worse Standing Order at the present time. At any moment the Premier can get up and move that a member be no longer heard.

Mr. HARDACRE: That may be so, but when the Government does that, the Government takes the responsibility of their action, but in this case we are going to have an automatic gag. My opinion is this: That this time limit proposal is so bad that it is going to absolutely break down in working. It means that the very useful rule that has been adopted in this House, in order to save time, by discussing the whole administration of a department on the first vote of an Estimate is going to be abandoned—absolutely must be abandoned—because, if members cannot get time to discuss the general administration of a department on the first vote sufficiently, they are going to take the opportunity under the new Standing Orders of discussing it seriatim over the whole of the Estimates. That will not conduce to a saving of time, and it will go further than that. As an absolute necessity, we shall have to put up some member to move an amendment in order to give members an opportunity of speaking over again in order to conform to the Standing Orders; and it has been proved, as the hon. member for Clermont pointed out, that in New Zealand it has not led to a saving of time. If any party desires to obstruct, they can do so in a fragmentary way, an ineffective way, and a useless way, by adopting other forms of the House. If we are going to adopt new Standing Orders, we should adopt Standing Orders that do not need to be broken after we have made them. We ought to adopt Standing Orders that will be workable, and not Standing Orders that we have practically to break every five minutes of the day. In order to give members an opportunity of discussing any question all sorts of tricks will be adopted. A time limit of this kind is not going to save time; it is going to stop fruitful and useful discussion by hon. members on any particular thing they desire to talk about. Personally, I am strongly opposed to a time limit proposal; and, if carried, I am strongly of opinion that it will have to be amended.

Mr. MAUGHAN (*Ipswich*): Immediately the hon. member for Kennedy resumed his seat, having moved the amendment, the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government rose in his place, and amongst other things said he was not particularly strong regarding the amendment. I must say quite candidly that after the hon. gentleman made that statement I was prepared to hear him follow it up with another statement that he would accept it. The hon. gentleman said that he was not altogether strong about it.

The PREMIER: I was not prepared to accept it; I have nothing to do with it; the House may accept it. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. MAUGHAN: Are we to understand that this particular portion of the Standing Orders is a non-party matter?—because if it comes within that category, the sooner we know it the better. If the hon. gentleman had said so, we would have saved a lot of valuable time and got on with business.

The PREMIER: You said I said so.

Mr. MAUGHAN: I have got a note that the hon. gentleman said that he was not particularly strong about the matter.

*Mr. Maughan.]*

The PREMIER: That is so. The House can settle it themselves.

Mr. MAUGHAN: Am I to understand that the hon. gentleman does not care two straws whether it is carried or not?

The PREMIER: Not the slightest; I have my own opinion about the matter.

Mr. MAUGHAN: The hon. gentleman has simply to make it quite plain to his followers that he has no particular objection to it. Are we to understand from that interjection that the amendment will be carried on the voices?

The PREMIER: We can find it out in a minute if you sit down.

Mr. MAUGHAN: Before I sit down, I would just like to say that I am quite satisfied that it will not be profitable to discuss here a number of details which took place in the Standing Orders Committee; at the same time, I can assure you that it will be an experience to me, and I am sure to my friend the hon. member for Leichhardt. The next time that the Standing Orders Committee does meet, we shall suggest that the record of the voting be taken down.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MAUGHAN: The hon. member for Musgrave implied by interjection that the hon. member for Leichhardt and myself suffered indignity at the hands of our party. I can assure the hon. member that nothing of the sort happened. The hon. member for Leichhardt and myself felt it our duty to report to our party precisely the result of our deliberations in that committee, and I presume a similar report was made, if not by the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government, by somebody authorised by him, to their particular caucus.

The PREMIER: Not at all.

Mr. MAUGHAN: With regard to one or two matters mentioned by the hon. senior member for Rockhampton, I would like to remind that hon. member that there is absolutely no analogy between the deliberations of a Labour convention and the deliberations of this House.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: No one knows that better than he does; he has been in a good many meetings.

Mr. MAUGHAN: It is quite true that the various Labour Conventions debate with a time limit, but for a very good reason, that those conventions only sit for a few days, but the deliberations of our Assembly last for several months. It must be remembered also that at a Labour Convention we are not dealing with something like £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 of money. I am surprised at an ex-member of the Labour party suggesting for a moment that there is any analogy between the time limit as carried out by the Labour Convention and the time limit proposal now before this Chamber.

The PREMIER: Did the Labour Convention adopt a time limit?

Mr. MAUGHAN: The hon. gentleman knows very well that at all Labour Conventions a time limit has been in force. The hon. member for Clermont is quite right when he says that the Standing Orders Committee were unanimous with regard to the principle of a limitation of speeches.

Mr. HARDACRE: Hear, hear!

Mr. MAUGHAN: We never professed we were not unanimous on that. This is the only time I shall refer to what took place in

[Mr. Maughan.

the committee. What I do protest against in the hon. member's utterance is that he said we were unanimous in the conditions laid down in this particular clause before us at the present time. As a matter of fact, I tell the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government that some of us were far from inclined to adopt the New Zealand proposals *in globo* than the proposals we are now considering.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: I rather think you would.

The PREMIER: I think there was a division on this very matter.

Mr. MAUGHAN: Unfortunately, we have no record of the divisions, so it is unprofitable to waste time talking about it. I think that nothing is to be lost by adopting the New Zealand provisions. It is merely a matter of increasing the time hon. members desire to get, only on the Estimates, and not on every Bill before the House. It is only occasionally that more time is required in regard to a Bill containing, perhaps, 100 clauses, around one of which will be centred the whole of the debate. I think that the modest proposals contained in the New Zealand provisions should appeal to every hon. member. I trust that having regard to the importance of the Estimates, and the hundred and one important matters contained in them—which one hon. member on this side considered as of more importance than the Bills—it is imperative that we should give hon. members every possible opportunity to discuss them as fully and freely as possible. We have the Chief Secretary's Department—a growing vote—this year it is £141,000; the Home Secretary's Department, £563,000; the Department of Public Works, £124,000; the Department of Justice, £73,000; the Treasurer, £168,000; the Department of Public Lands, £209,000; the Department of Agriculture and Stock, £58,000; the Department of Public Instruction, £399,000; the Department of Mines, £51,000, and the Railways, £1,479,000; and then we have our own Estimates on the top of that. There is another thing—it may not be introduced this year—but there is just the danger that by adopting the proposal before the House, we shall probably find, as years go on, that a lot of these items which are now specified in particular sets of Estimates will be lumped together. We will probably find the whole of the Estimates put in one item, and our rights and privileges will be curtailed in that way. I trust that the amendment of the hon. member for Kennedy will be accepted.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): The hon. member for Brisbane South, Mr. Bouchard, this afternoon pointed out that it was the long debates of last session and this session that caused the introduction of these Sessional Orders; but I think that statement cannot be borne out by facts. At the conclusion of last session the Premier congratulated the leader of the Opposition on the reasonable assistance given in getting through the heavy work of the session. There were no prolonged debates last session, and there have been none this session. I think the main cause of introducing these Sessional Orders at this particular juncture is the desire of the Government to get through certain legislation they have forecast without the use of the gag. I am compelled to say it has been planned out that the best way to get through certain measures this session is to introduce these Sessional Orders. The hon. member for Clermont pointed out that in New

Zealand, where they have a time limit, with the opportunity of speaking four times in Committee, they had a debate which lasted sixty-two hours. But they have not the power of the gag in New Zealand, though they may have the power of the guillotine. When we consider that New Zealand is the only Legislative Assembly that has the time limit, and that there is no power of the gag in that Assembly, I think the least the Government can do is to adopt the time limit existing in that country. I agree with the remarks of members on this side that if the Government are not prepared to give a fair field to the Opposition in this particular matter, it is not going to facilitate the business of the House. There is a good deal in the argument that in New Zealand a member is allowed to speak four times in Committee; and, if the Government would accept that, it would assist them in getting their business through much better than if they adopt the particular paragraph now before the Chamber. I remember the Premier speaking on one occasion about the liberties for which our forefathers died; and I say that if these Sessional Orders are carried as introduced, the liberties of the representatives of the people are going to be curtailed too much: I feel that very much; and I feel sure, as I stand on my feet, that if the Government are going to put up their backs and insist on this time limit, which is more drastic than what exists in any part of the world under the British flag, it is not going to assist them. And I may add, as an individual member, though not in the habit of taking up time by making speeches, seeing that the Government mean to insist on curtailing the privileges of members, it would make me more anxious to take up time than I would be at present. It is only human nature. And that would apply to a big majority of members on this side.

The PREMIER: Then this is increasing our privileges?

Mr. PAYNE: The hon. member is misrepresenting me. I say that if you insist on carrying this drastic paragraph it will have a tendency to make me take up more time than I do at present. I say it is not a wise thing or a good thing to try to gag members who want to express their opinions. When it was proposed to introduce the gag in New Zealand it was rejected by forty-one to twelve; and amongst the majority was that great old democrat, Richard Seddon. It has been said that the members opposite may not always be on that side; and I honestly think that if they exercise reasonableness and fair-mindedness they will give the matter honest consideration and agree to the amendment. I agree with a time limit to speeches; but I object to the curtailment of the rights and privileges of the representatives of the people in such a way that it will be an utter impossibility for them to properly express themselves on many of the questions that may come before this Chamber. I trust that, even at this late stage, the Government will see their way to adopt the New Zealand principle.

Mr. COLLINS: I intend to support this amendment. I have been consistently opposed to the limitation of speeches in this House. I regard this as an attack upon the rights and privileges of Parliament. I do not think that the electors of Burke sent me here to speak on Bills in Committee for ten minutes on the first occasion, and

then for five minutes on each of two subsequent occasions. Neither do I think I have been sent here to try to deprive other hon. members of the opportunity of exercising their privileges. I am not one of those who can speak at the rate of 200 words per minute, like the hon. member for Clermont. That is a gift with which Nature has endowed the hon. member, and it is one of which he ought to be proud. There are many members in this House who cannot speak, perhaps, more than 100 words a minute, but they have been sent here to express the opinions of their electors. Why should we attempt to limit speech here? Why did not the Premier propose that we should meet at half-past 2 o'clock instead of at half-past 3? I suppose it would not suit the commercial men on the other side. Then, again, we are not tied down by what this country does or what that country does. I am one of those who believe that every nation has a right to make its own laws, and I am not going to be tied down by what New Zealand does or by what any other country does. I believe there are a lot of spurious democrats even in New Zealand, and I am not going to be tied down by the fact that in the past members have quoted New Zealand as a splendid example of democratic rule. I believe that in Queensland we shall before long be able to show the world what democracy really means. It is not a question of how fast a man can talk. It is a question of how he represents his electors. You cannot deal with a Bill in Committee properly in ten minutes. Some men may be able to compress all they have to say into ten minutes. Since I entered the House I have not occupied more than three-quarters of an hour in any speech, but that does not say that I should try to stop, say, the hon. member for Bulloo expressing the opinions of his electors. This attempt to limit speeches to a few minutes is an attack upon the rights and privileges of the people of Queensland. The senior member for Rockhampton argued very strongly that a man could say all he had to say in ten minutes. Before I came to this House I was a close student of *Hansard*, and, if I remember rightly, all the hon. member used to say for a number of years was "Hear, hear!" to his colleague, the Premier. It was no trouble to the hon. member to say "Hear, hear!" The hon. member for Clermont said that ten minutes was quite sufficient for him to express his opinions in Committee, but we had to listen to him for twenty-five minutes while he was speaking on this little question of deleting the word "three" and inserting the word "four"; and just before he sat down he said that he intended to vote for the Standing Order as it was introduced. I cannot understand the hon. member at all. I know that he made his reputation in Queensland—he had a reputation at one time—I am not too sure that he has one at the present time—but he made his reputation by long speeches. Not only that, but I remember reading some years ago, when I used to be an admirer of the present Premier when he was deputy leader of the Labour party, that he made his reputation to a large extent by long speeches. I am inclined to think he would not be Premier at the present time but for the long speeches he made in opposition to the Callide, Glassford Creek, and other syndicate railway proposals at the time of which I speak. Other hon. members have made long speeches, too. I do not know whether this is aimed at the newer members—whether it is intended that they shall not make reputations. (Laughter.) I am one of those who are not altogether in favour of giving the Premier, the leader of the Labour party, or the deputy leader of the party greater privileges than I possess.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

*Mr. Collins.]*



Mr. COLLINS: It does not follow because a man is either leader or deputy leader of the party that he possesses all the intelligence of the party. We want some opportunity to develop our intelligence. We have a number of young men in this party, and the aim and object of the party is to give those young men an opportunity to develop themselves.

The PREMIER: It is much needed.

Mr. COLLINS: I quite agree that it is much needed that there should be more young men in this Chamber, especially on the other side—natives of the soil. They generally seem to sit on this side. I strongly object to our rights being frittered away little by little. Since I have come into this House I am getting very suspicious of the Premier. (Laughter.) I do not know what he may not propose to do. I do not know that he may not propose to take away all our rights, and therefore I regard him with a great amount of suspicion when he attempts to curtail the privileges of Parliament. I do not want to see the privileges people have been in possession of for a number of years taken away from them; especially, as I said before, we want to develop the talent which we have got on this side of the House. There is no doubt that before many years have passed by we will be sitting over there on the Treasury benches. (Hear, hear!) It may be after the next election. As the hon. member for Maranong says, we have been sent here to put up a fight for the people. I have been sent here to fight for my electors, and to fight for the rights of the people. My electorate is 900 miles from here—in fact, I have to travel 1,100 miles to get here—and when I come here I am to be limited to ten minutes in my speeches. How can I express the views of the electors of Burke in ten minutes? Just fancy an electorate with an area like that of the Burke, and I am to be limited to ten minutes! I am not like the hon. member for Musgrave, who can get a deputation to the Premier in a few minutes at any day in the week, but I have to voice the opinions of my electors to the best of my ability in this House.

Mr. BOWMAN: And you do it well.

Mr. COLLINS: I will do nothing that will curtail the rights and privileges of members of this House.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Charters Towers*): I would like to make one or two remarks on this question before it goes to a division. I am one who thinks that the former part of this resolution is a step in the right direction. While I am a lover of liberty, and believe in giving liberty on every possible occasion, still I think there has been a tendency in the past to abuse that liberty by some members on some occasions. I think it is a wise provision to limit the speeches to some extent, and members should not be allowed to speak for five or six hours unless there is something of an extraordinary character that demands it. From the very commencement of the discussion of this Sessional Order it appeared to me that the clause we are now discussing was one of the most important of the whole lot. The amendment of the hon. member for Kennedy proposes to strike out the word "three" and insert "four." That is the vital point of the whole of the Sessional Order. Something has been said about the amount of words that can be condensed into ten minutes, but when members come to a place like this, of all places, they would like to have every opportunity. While they are anxious to be concise and clear, they do not want to be rushed in any shape or form in stating their opinions. We are not anxious to throw off a whirlwind of words. While it may be possible for the hon.

[*Mr. Collins.*

member for Clermont and one or two others to talk columns in the course of ten minutes, still as regards a number of members in this Chamber, it is not possible for them to state their proposition in ten minutes, much less to develop it and set forth their arguments and draw their conclusions. I am sure that if the Premier was confined to ten minutes, he would have to sit down before he said one-half of what he had to say. We are told a lot about the average time the speeches take, but we are not here to deal with averages. We are here to provide for the exceptional cases that arise from time to time, and men with some specific knowledge and with some specific statement to make should not be denied the opportunity of making that statement. I am sure that in speaking on the Estimates cases may arise where it will not be possible for a member speaking for the first time to deal effectively and efficiently in ten minutes with the matters affecting his electorate. I think, therefore, that the New Zealand proposal, which allows four speeches each in Committee, should be inserted here in place of the three speeches provided. The Premier, in replying to the amendment, said that in Committee the speeches were really of a conversational character and not set speeches at all. For that reason I consider a member should be allowed to speak more than three times. There may be occasions when a member can say all he wants to say in one speech, but there are other occasions where a member may want to get up three or four times in Committee, and perhaps the whole of his remarks will not total five minutes altogether. Still, by this Sessional Order he is to be denied the privilege of speaking more than three times. In cases where the discussion is of a conversational character it would have been well if the Premier had allowed the New Zealand Standing Order to apply—namely, four speeches of ten minutes each, instead of three times as proposed here. I do not think that the time taken up in discussing these Standing Orders has been wasted. A lot of light has been thrown on the Standing Orders, and members not familiar with them have learned something from the discussion which has taken place. It cannot be said that the time is wasted, and, if it is said, then the responsibility cannot be charged to this side at all. The Premier himself is responsible if there has been any waste of time, because, if he had left the business as it was, more other useful business would have been taken, and our time would not have been occupied in discussing these Sessional Orders. The Premier said he was not keen about them, and wanted to evade the responsibility for introducing them, but there is no doubt that he is responsible for their introduction. I failed to see any sound reason why the Sessional Orders were introduced at the present time under present circumstances, and the Premier certainly offered no sound reason why they should have been introduced. A great deal more depends on the temper of the House as to what business goes through than depends on the Standing Orders. No matter how stringent the Standing Orders might be, ways will be found to get round them, and if members are determined to have their say and waste the time of the House, a way will be found of doing so. The hon. member for Clermont pointed out that in New Zealand there was a stonewall of sixty-two hours, and I have no doubt if members of this House desired it they could find methods for putting up a stonewall under the Sessional Orders now before us. It is not the desire of any member of the House to do anything of the kind, and members on this side cannot be accused of doing anything in the shape of a stonewall or

anything tending to waste the time of the House. The business this session, and in other sessions that I have been in the House, has been put through with reasonable despatch, and as far as I can see there does not appear to be any reason for making this change and curtailing the privileges of hon. members. It is a well-known fact that groups of members in this Chamber are keenly interested in some particular part of the Estimates. Some members take a particular interest in the Mines Department, others in the Lands Department, and others, again, in the Railway Department, and those members want to express their opinions on the administration of those several departments. It is only a fair thing that they should have an opportunity of giving expression to their views, and they will not be able to do so if they are limited to three speeches each and are not allowed a longer time than is proposed in this Sessional Order. Whatever may have been the motive or desire of the Premier in introducing these proposals, I do not think he has acted wisely in upsetting the House at the present time by such propositions. By introducing such restrictions on the speech of members he is interfering with the good humour of the House and setting members by the ears, and I am very much inclined to think that he will lose the time he expects to gain under this new Sessional Order. If hon. members are deprived of their rights under this Sessional Order, they will probably take other means to assert themselves and obtain what they think really belongs to them. The hon. gentleman would have been wise had he left things as they were, and if he found that the Standing Orders are not up to date, he could have had them considered and revised during the session and during the recess, and then have submitted them next session, calling Parliament together a month earlier than usual to consider them. For the reasons I have given, among others, I think the Premier should have accepted the amendment. The hon. gentleman said he was not keen about retaining this particular clause; he did not speak strongly against the amendment, but was practically neutral. If he had said he would accept it, he would have saved a good deal of discussion, but he shirked that responsibility, and left the matter to the House to decide.

Mr. BOWMAN: He evaded the responsibility, as he usually does.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Yes; and threw the responsibility on the Chamber. The consequence has been that the discussion has gone for three or four hours. I think that even now, in view of the arguments that have been advanced in favour of the amendment, he might very well accept it, and also substitute the whole of the New Zealand Standing Order for this clause. While that might not give all that members consider they are entitled to, it would certainly be a good deal better than this proposal.

Mr. THEODORE (*Wootahakata*): I was surprised and indeed amused at the attitude taken up by the hon. member for Clermont on this proposed alteration in the rules of debate. Ample arguments have been adduced in favour of the amendment, and those arguments have not been combated by members; so the hon. member for Clermont took up the position of apologist for the Government on this matter. His attitude is most amusing. If that hon. member ever had any character for political consistency, he has now surely forfeited all claim to that particular virtue. I remember that when we were discussing the Estimates for the Home Department last session, that hon. member occu-

ried several hours in dealing with a matter which he no doubt considered was of great importance. I do not now recollect what the question was that the member discussed, but I know that he threw out his chest and delivered his address with much eloquence. If it took him four hours to air his particular grievance at that time, could he now present it within five or ten minutes, even with the greatest condensation possible?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He had an important matter to deal with then, probably.

Mr. THEODORE: And there will be important matters to deal with again. I have often heard of the interesting speeches the Minister for Railways was wont to deliver on the sugar industry when the Estimates for the Agricultural Department were before the Committee. I ask the hon. gentleman, Does he think he could have condensed those utterances to such an extent that he could deliver them within twenty minutes? I am inclined to think that the hon. gentleman could not. There are some of the Estimates that require a very considerable amount of consideration and discussion, and there is no hon. member in this House who can thoroughly discuss them in the space of twenty minutes. Anyhow, the whole system is a bad one. A member may speak for ten minutes, and then sit down and wait for another opportunity to speak, when he will be allowed five minutes to continue his disconnected speech. That is a humbugging way of dealing with business. The hon. member for Clermont has stated that members can find means of ventilating their grievances by moving amendments or reductions to votes. But why should there be any necessity for resorting to those humbugging devices? Why not maintain the privileges of members as they are to-day? I remember the hon. member for Clermont last session discussing one question in a most eloquent and interesting speech, which lasted for a couple of hours, and it is quite probable that the same question will come up for discussion this session. The question I refer to is the Mapeon Mission inquiry. I should like to know if the hon. member for Clermont will be able to give us his late opinions, and all the information he may have gathered in the meantime on that subject, in ten minutes or twenty minutes. Since then there have been other sensational allegations in regard to Yarabah Mission, and the hon. member for Clermont may have something to say on that particular matter. I myself am interested in one department, the Estimates of which will shortly come up for discussion, and I am perfectly sure I [10.30 p.m.] cannot compress my remarks into five minutes. I refer to mining, and the unfortunate position is that on the Mining Estimates a member must confine his remarks to practically the first vote. The vote is divided in such a manner that there is one important division under the heading of "Goldfields," which practically embraces all the subject-matter we want to discuss. First of all it refers to wardens, then inspection of mines, geological surveys, and contingencies. Those four important things are all within one vote, and practically embrace the whole administration of the Department of Mines, and all the grievances we may have to discuss in connection with the department. If there was a serious mining disaster, every mining member in the House would be interested. It might be the result of some obsolete method of mines inspection, or brought about by some maladministration of the department, then the whole discussion would have to take place under this particular vote, and I maintain that no hon. member could give

*Mr. Theodore.]*

all the evidence he might gather in connection with that matter in ten minutes. Of course he might always accept the opportunity allowed of speaking another five minutes, but his remarks would be disconnected, and I am inclined to think that the hon. member for Clermont was not serious in his assurance that he was heartily in favour of the proposal. I think he is in one of his facetious moods—in fact, his usually facetious mood—and he thinks he is having a good rich joke at the expense of the Opposition, or he is “playing to the gallery,” and generally getting a bit of fun out of the matter. At any rate, when the thing begins to pinch him, he will be one of the most effective critics against the altered Standing Orders. I do not know that the hon. member when speaking has been an infliction on the House, but at times his long speeches have been an annoyance to some hon. members who wanted to catch the last train, and there will be some satisfaction in knowing that even he will be effectively gagged under the proposal.

Question—That the word proposed to be omitted (*Mr. O'Sullivan's amendment*) stand part of the Sessional Order—put; and the House divided:—

## AYES, 32.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Hodge
„ Barnes, G. P.	„ Hunter, D.
„ Barnes, W. H.	„ Keogh
„ Booker	„ Kidston
„ Bouchard	„ Lesina
„ Brennan	„ Paget
„ Bridges	„ Petrie
„ Corser	„ Philp
„ Cottell	„ Rankin
„ Cribb	„ Roberts
„ Denham	„ Somerset
„ Forsyth	„ Swayne
„ Grant	„ Thorn
„ Grayson	„ Tolmie
„ Gunn	„ Walker
„ Hawthorn	„ White

Tellers: Mr. Bouchard and Mr. Bridges.

## NOES, 24.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Mann
„ Bowman	„ Maughan
„ Breslin	„ May
„ Collins	„ Mulcahy
„ Crawford	„ Mullan
„ Ferricks	„ Nevitt
„ Foley	„ O'Sullivan
„ Hamilton	„ Payne
„ Hardacre	„ Ryan
„ Hunter, J. M.	„ Ryland
„ Land	„ Theodore
„ Lennon	„ Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Ryan and Mr. Ryland.

## PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Wienholt, Mr. Morgan, Mr. Macartney, Mr. Fox, Mr. Forrest, and Mr. Stodart.

Noes—Mr. Murphy, Mr. McLachlan, Mr. Blair, Mr. Coyne, Mr. B. F. S. Allen, and Mr. Douglas.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. FERRICKS (*Bowen*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

The resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes to 11 o'clock.

[*Mr. Theodore.*]