Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 3 AUGUST 1911

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

QUESTIONS.

POLICE IN SUGAR DISTRICTS.

Mr. FERRICKS (*Bowen*) asked the Home Secretary—

"1. What are the names and the respective terms of service of members of the Police Force who were concerned in the alleged riot at Childers on Saturday last, 28th July?

"2. Who was in charge of the detachment of police on duty at the Childers Railway Station that night?

"3. By whose order was one of the strikers arrested from amidst the assemblage?

"4. Who gave the subsequent order for the police to draw and use their revolvers?

"5. Is not such conduct by the police likely to incite people to rowdyism?

"6. Will he, as administrative head of the Police Department, see that every discretion is exercised in the selection of officers in charge of police detachments in sugar districts during the present industrial trouble?"

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

"1. No good purpose can be served by furnishing the names and respective terms of service of the police who were engaged in suppressing the riot which occurred on the occasion referred to.

"2. An officer of police.

"3. The officer in charge of the detachment.

"4. The officer in charge of the detachment.

"5. The conduct of the police has been most commendable. On the occasion in question they were merely discharging their duty; but the hon. member who asks this question is reported in the Press as follows:—

"(*a*) Mr. Ferricks, on taking his place on the platform, said that in coming from Brisbane he had intended to advise the men to keep order, but when he arrived at the station and found there was a row on, he very soon found himself in the front of the crowd hooting the policemen. He advised the men to continue the strike in the way they had been doing, and they were bound to win. . . .

"(*b*) Mr. Ferricks said that if he did not intend to approve of the men's conduct, he certainly did not condemn it.

"6. The Commissioner of Police details officers for ordinary as well as special duty, and there appears no occasion for my intervention."

Mr. FERRICKS: You sent Inspector Short to take charge.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN STATE SCHOOLS.

Mr. McLACHLAN (*Fortitude Valley*) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"1. In view of the amendment of the State Education Act passed last session, by which provision is made for the inclusion of religious instruction in the school curriculum, will he inform the House if it is intended to add this additional subject to those already set down in Schedule XII. of the Regulations?

"2. If so, is it intended to curtail the time at present allotted to the subjects set down in the Regulations, or to extend the school day?

"3. If not, what provisions are being made to give effect to the clause in the amending Act providing for religious instruction in State schools?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. K. M. Grant, *Rockhampton*) replied—

"1, 2, 3. Provision has been made by which religious instruction may be given in primary schools in accordance with the requirements of the State Education Acts Amendment Act of 1910. Provision has also been made by which not less than half an hour and not more than one hour weekly shall be allotted to instruction in the selected Bible lessons from the reading books which have been supplied by the department. The amendment of Schedule XII. to the Regulations is now under consideration."

FREE LABOURERS IN CHILDERS DISTRICT.

Mr. ALLEN (*Bulloo*) asked the Home Secretary—

"1. Is it a fact that four free labourers were removed from the Childers district last week to the lunatic asylum?

"2. What districts did these men originally come from?"

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

"1. No. One free labourer was sent to reception-house.

"2. The man came from Victoria, and had previously been arrested in that State for lunacy."

FIRING OF GRASS ALONG MAIN TRUNK LINES.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. How many claims have been received by the department for firing grass along the three main trunk lines during the past three years?

"2. Who were the claimants, and what were the respective amounts paid?"

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

"1. Twenty.

"2. It is not advisable to publish the names and amounts, which are really the private business of the persons concerned. The number of claims paid is four."

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: I think you should.

CLERKS IN RAILWAY TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. Is it a fact that clerks in the Traffic Department have no fixed hours to commence or finish work, and not unfrequently work ten to eleven hours per day?

"2. What is the reason for the delay of the annual holidays of these men, which, in some instances, are two and three years overdue?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1. It is not the practice, nor is it the Commissioner's wish, that clerks should frequently work ten or eleven hours per day. If any specific instances are quoted they will be looked into.

"2. Holidays are granted as soon as possible after they are due, and application is made for them. The cases of any particular clerks will be inquired into if the names are given."

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: I won't give you any names.

ALLEGED COERCION BY DIRECTORS OF CENTRAL MILLS.

Mr. THEODORE (*Woothakata*) asked the Treasurer—

"1. Is he aware that coercion is being used by the directors of certain central mills to compel farmers to take the place of the men usually employed in such mills, and who are now on strike?

"2. Will he see that farmers who may be sympathetic with the strikers are not victimised by the central mill directors?"

The TREASURER (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Bulimba*) replied—

"1. I am not aware of any coercion.

"2. See answer to No. 1."

(Opposition laughter.)

PETITION.

RAILWAY EXTENSION TO NORTHERN BURNETT LANDS.

Mr. WHITE (*Musgrave*) presented a petition from 5,014 electors in the Bundaberg, Musgrave, and Mount Perry divisions of the Burnett electorate, praying that immediate consideration be given to the question of railway extension from Wolca on the Bundaberg to Mount Perry Railway westward to the Northern Burnett lands.

Petition read and received.

RAILWAY EXTENSION AND LAND SETTLEMENT.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER (*Maranoa*), in moving—

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

"1. The various agricultural districts into which lines have been passed for construction during the past four years.

"2. (*a*) The respective length of each and estimated cost; (*b*) the mileage completed to date.

"3. (*a*) The area of land held by the Crown within a 15-mile radius of such lines respectively; (*b*) the area of such land resumed two years prior to the authorisation of such railways respectively; (*c*) the area since resumed.

"4. (*a*) The areas and number of each into which these resumptions have been cut; (*b*) the number selected and respective tenures under which they are held.

"5. The number and respective areas of freeholds within a 15-mile radius of such lines having an area of over 500 acres"——

said: I move this motion feeling that this House will recognise the advantage of such information as is asked for being given, not only to members of the House, but to the whole of the people of Queensland. I did not anticipate that there would be any objection raised by the Premier, or any member of the Cabinet, to supplying the information asked for. It has been held by the Government, in the Speech which has just been adopted by this House, that great efforts are being made to settle people on the land, who are generally understood to be of the yeomanry class, and who will ultimately produce the requirements of Queensland, and also a large quantity of produce for export. I have endeavoured, for a considerable time past, to induce the Government to show a greater desire in their lands administration to bring about this object. We have been frequently told that the Government are throwing open lands, and are building railways into agricultural centres, and when one hears of the great acreage of land that is being taken up annually, without stopping to inquire into what class of lands is being disposed of, or what tenures they are being held under, or who is possessing themselves of those lands, one is inclined to think everything is quite well. But I think if the figures I am asking for were given to this House, we would discover that we are certainly deceiving ourselves. I think it is a good thing sometimes for men to stand back and have a look at themselves, or at what they are doing, and see how they are getting on. I think if this Government were to get a view of themselves in this respect——

Hon. R. PHILP: What about the member for Roma?

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: I think the member for Roma makes a self-inspection of his character as often and as carefully as the hon. member. At any rate, I say this Government should do that, and not go along cheerfully misunderstanding what they are doing, or believing they are doing something which they are really not doing. What I have asked for is to know the number of railways that were classed as agricultural lines, that have been passed during the last four years. I do not desire to go too far back, because I do not wish to make this return any more costly or troublesome than is necessary for the purpose I need it. Four years is not too far back to ask for this information. I also ask for the respective length of each line, and the mileage constructed up to date. Not a very difficult or expensive request. Then, again, I ask for the area of land held by the Crown within a 15-mile radius of each line; the area of such land resumed two years prior to the authorisation of such railways, and the area since resumed. My object in asking for the area within a 15-mile radius is that one might know what Crown lands the Government have to dispose of that are suitable for closer settlement. When I speak of closer settlement, I mean purely agricultural settlement, because, I take it, every acre of land within a 15-mile radius of a railway should be used for that purpose. It is quite easy to carry on grazing 50 miles from a railway, or even at a greater distance than that. I was desirous of knowing, when these railways are built, how much land would be brought within the power of the department to make available for agriculture. I also wish to know how long before these lines were built were those lands resumed. My desire for that information was that it would be known whether the land had already been selected, or whether the Crown still held such lands, and whether they would be able to throw them open in areas that would be calculated to be of use for agricultural purposes. The disposition to give lands in big areas is an inducement for people who take them up to immediately go in for grazing. Now, when we construct railways, we should try and build them into Crown lands that could be thrown open in small areas and settle as many people as possible on them. I do not know of any country—and Queensland can certainly be counted amongst them—that can prosper unless they have a fixed population and a prosperous people producing agricultural products. We have such a lot of good land suitable for agriculture, and it is a great pity, I think, that we do not make more use of it. I know in my travels I have seen thousands and thousands of acres of good agricultural lands that should be under the plough, while to-day they are feeding oxen or sheep, and close to a railway at that. I think this is most reprehensible when we find men are compelled to go as far as 20, 30, or 40 miles from a railway to get a bit of good land suitable for agricultural purposes, when we have, on the other hand, a lot of good lands close to

our railways that are not used for agriculture. This is the sort of thing that the Government should try to get away from, and I ask for this return just to show this House what is being done, and, if it is necessary to make some alteration in this connection, to do so. I think it is only by a close examination into these matters that we can correct our faults and do better. I ask also for the areas and number of each into which these resumptions have been cut. In doing that I want to know how many families have found homes on the resumed blocks. It is no satisfaction to me to hear a lot of resumptions read out, such as were read out the other night by the senior member for Maryborough, and to know that ten men have taken up land where there was one man originally. I want 100 to take the place of one if possible. I know a place in my district where there was a resumption. Before that the place was occupied by a station manager, a storekeeper, a head stockman, an assistant stockman, and a number of blackfellows. There were about 20,000 acres resumed; and on the resumed part there are now about 500 people, while on the unresumed part there are the same number as before, except that there are no blackfellows. That shows what can be done if the right class of land is resumed. In the list read by the hon. member for Maryborough there were eight stations on which resumptions are to be made, not in my electorate altogether, but in the land district of Maranoa. They comprise altogether 214 square miles. Some of those lands are excellent agricultural lands, and should be classed as such; but there are none of them within such a distance of railway communication to enable them to be used for agricultural purposes; and they are going to be cut up into big blocks, and will get into the possession of people who will not use them for agricultural purposes. Later on pressure will be brought to bear with the view of having these lands repurchased and made available for agricultural settlement, or men will have to pay big prices, or re-rent them at abnormally high rents. That is a state of things that should not be allowed to take place. In this list I know two or three of the properties to be resumed, and I consider that they should not be cut up until there is railway communication to make them available for agricultural purposes. I do not wish to delay the House. I was hoping that my motion would go through without opposition, and that the information asked for would be furnished. I think it would be valuable information for hon. members and would be instructive to the public outside, and would serve as a mirror as to what was being done.

The PREMIER (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Oxley*): I called "Not formal," not with the idea of depriving the House of the information sought, but to hear the object of the hon. member in moving the motion, and further to point out that it covers three departments—the Railways, the Lands, and the Real Property Office. I would suggest to the hon. member the omission of paragraph 5 of the motion, dealing with freehold property, because the only means of getting that information would be through the Real Property Office. Maps would have to be furnished to the Registrar of Titles, and lines would have to be drawn showing a distance of 15 miles on each side of railways concerned in the motion, and then search would have to be made to find out the owners of over 500 acres, which would be a somewhat difficult matter. For instance, amongst the owners of land there would be quite a number of "Smiths"; and "John Smith" might own more than one freehold; and it would have to be ascertained if the total amounted to over 500 acres. Again, the identity of the individual would have to be ascertained, and this certainly would be tedious, to say the least. If the hon. member would be content with the information asked for in paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 4, that could be speedily furnished, and before I resume my seat I will give information as to—

> "1. The various agricultural districts into which lines have been passed for construction during the past four years.
>
> "2. (*a*) The respective length of each and estimated cost; (*b*) the mileage completed to date."

I am in agreement with him that land beyond a radius of 15 miles of a railway the distance it too great for the carriage of ordinary agricultural produce, although dairying could be carried on; and I would like to see the land within that radius much more largely used for the cultivation of crops; and I think he is right in asking for information that will show just how we are progressing. He was good enough to say that he did not wish to put the departments to too much trouble or cost.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: I think we should have No. 5, too.

The PREMIER: I spoke to the Registrar of Titles, Mr. Mitchell, this morning, so that I might see what it involved; and he said it would certainly involve a staff to replace the men at the counter or the engagement of men specially to do the work; and I doubt very much whether the information would be available this session. It would be of no use to have the information tabled during the recess, and I think it would be far better for the hon. gentleman to be content with the other information for which he is asking, and which can be furnished within a very reasonable time. After all, I do not know just what purpose would be served by No. 5, unless the hon. member has in his mind some means of compelling the freeholder to subdivide his land. The information asked for in paragraphs 1 and 2 can be furnished straight away. The subdivision (*b*) in No. 2 is a little awkward—*i.e.*, the mileage completed to date—because the Railway Department only regard a line as completed when it is actually open to traffic. [4 p.m.] The return which I have here deals with the four years ended respectively 30th June, 1908, 30th June, 1909, 30th June, 1910, and 30th June, 1911. From time to time, when we are passing lines into agricultural districts, we are, perhaps, apt to forget what it means in the aggregate, and it is just as well that the House should know not merely the mileage, but the commitments that the State has made in respect of such lines. In this list I have not included the line from Bullamon to the Moonie, though there is a considerable quantity of land in the vicinity of the line suitable for agricultural settlement. Neither do I include the Boyne Valley line, which was built primarily for mineral purposes, though along the route

there is a good deal of agricultural land which can be utilised. Leaving out those two lines, I will deal with lines which have been projected into strictly agricultural districts.

AGRICULTURAL LINES APPROVED BY PARLIAMENT.

Railway.	Length.	Estimated Cost.	Mileage Completed.
Twelve Months ended 30th June, 1908.			
	M. C.	£	M. C
Caboolture to Woodford	17 60	86,874	Completed. 17 60
New Zealand Gully to Yeppoon	20 12	75,271	20 12
Atherton to Evelyn	31 14	195,689	31 14
Kannangur to Blackbutt	28 29	170,842	28 29
Tolga to the Johnstone River	19 0	72,643	19 0
Dalby to Tara ...	52 35	117,102	
Total ...	168 70	718,421	116 35
Twelve Months ended 30th June, 1909.			
Kingsthorpe towards Main Range	20 60	72,532	Completed. 20 60
Warwick to Maryvale	18 67	61,541	10 60
Total ...	39 27	134,073	31 40
Twelve Months ended 30th June, 1910.			
Pittsworth to Millmerran	26 59·43	75,870	
Kingaroy to Nanango	16 17·00	49,651	
Extension of McGregor Creek Tramway	1 20	5,483	
Extension from Finch Hatton towards Eungella Range	6 54	23,540	
Dawson Valley ...	68 51	264,178	
Oakey to Cooyar ...	38 20	153,540	
Cordalba to Dallarnil	31 5	125,147	
Rosewood to Marburg	8 75	37,628	
Total ...	197 61	735,037	
Twelve Months ended 30th June, 1911.			
Mary Valley Branch	24 30	161,560	
Woodford to Kilcoy...	17 29	95,136	
Allora to Goomburra	8 57·50	19,975	
Gayndah to Mundubbera	23 21	116,710	
Blackbutt to Yarraman	14 62	83,098	
Miles to Juandah ...	44 6	149,545	
Total ...	132 45	626,024	

The coastal railways passed last session admittedly will run through agricultural districts, the least favourable section in that respect probably being from Townsville North towards Cardwell; but, taking the whole stretch of country, the mileage under review will go largely through land suitable for agricultural settlement. The following are the figures in connection with that line:—

Twelve Months ended 30th June, 1911—*continued.*

The North Coast Railway Act of 1910.

Railway.	Length.	Estimated Cost.	Mileage completed.
	M. C.	£	
Section B	122 00	556,200	
Section C	30 00	113,000	
Section D	91 00	382,000	
Section E	88 00	528,000	
	331 00	1,579,200	

The grand total of lines into agricultural districts during the period of four years to which the motion refers—some of which have been completed, some in course of construction but not yet completed, and some not yet started—amounts to no less than 869 miles, and an estimated cost of £3,792,755.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: You did not mention the mileage completed.

The PREMIER: I enumerated the lines which have been completed, and the total mileage of those lines is 147 miles 75 chains.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: What did those 147 miles cost?

The PREMIER: I have not taken out the figures. The information I have given covers paragraphs 1 and 2. Nos. 3 and 4 the Lands Department will be pleased to give their attention to at once and to furnish with the least possible delay; and, if the hon. member will agree to omit No. 5, I think his main purpose will have been served. If he insists on including the information asked for in No. 5, it will be a long time before the return can be completed. I think I can fairly claim the hon. member's support when I ask him to agree to the omission of that part of his motion, as he has said that he does not desire that there should be any undue cost. Mr. Mitchell could not estimate the cost, but he said it would be very costly. Some years ago a similar return was prepared on the motion of the then member for Rockhampton North, Mr. (now Senator) Stewart, and it involved many months of labour, and very considerable cost. I am sure the hon. member does not want that.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: Certainly not.

The PREMIER: If he will be good enough to omit No. 5, I shall be only too glad to get the information he seeks supplied with the least possible delay.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER, speaking by leave of the House, said: With the permission of the House, I beg to omit paragraph 5 on the present occasion. I would like this to go through and for the House to get the information as far as it is possible to get it at the present time. I do not, however, think my object would be gained without the information asked for in paragraph 5. I considered that the obtaining of that information would be the most costly part of the work, and really thought of leaving it out in the first instance, but I fancy that the Premier can get that information from the land officers along the railways, as they know almost every holding within 15 miles of a railway line. If the information had to be obtained from the Real Property Office I would not ask for it, but I believe it can be obtained in the way I suggest, or from the Federal authorities. However, so as to enable the return to be furnished as soon as possible, I will, with the permission of the House, omit paragraph 5.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion be amended by the omission of paragraph 5?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Motion amended accordingly, and passed as amended.

PROPOSED STATE SUGAR REFINERY.

Mr. FERRICKS (*Bowen*), in moving—

"That, in view of the announced intention of the Government to give effect to the recommendation of the Sugar Commission for the establishment of more central sugar-mills, in the opinion of this House it is incumbent upon the Government to establish a State refinery which would be capable, at its establishment, of refining the raw sugar output of the four central mills at present under the direct control of the Government, and any further mills which might be erected from State advances, with provision for subsequent expansion to accommodate the raw sugar from other mills, which might be prepared to do business with a State refinery, as members of this House believe that by the establishment of a State refinery only will the producers of the wealth of the sugar industry receive something approaching the full result of their industry"—

said: I ask the fullest discussion of the question of the establishment of a sugar refinery and the manner of refining sugar. I remember that some years ago when Mr. Givens, the then member for Cairns, and now Senator Tom Givens, moved a motion in connection with this subject, the subsequent discussion degenerated into a controversy as to the merits or demerits of white and black labour, particularly by members on the Government side of the House. I ask and expect that this discussion shall be as far as possible confined to the question of refining sugar, and I will endeavour to set the example by not introducing any matter that might be considered irrelevant. The present is a most opportune time for the Government to take action in the direction indicated in the motion. It has been announced by the Government that it is their intention to erect at least three sugar-mills for the season 1913. I have always held that State enterprise in the manufacture of raw sugar has had beneficial results, and I think the Government should extend their operations in this connection by following out the natural corollary to the manufacture of raw sugar, and that is to establish a refinery to produce the refined article. The benefits of such a policy we scarcely realise to their full extent. For the last twenty years the matter of a State refinery has been a prominent plank in the platform of the party on this side of the House, and we are perhaps somewhat more conversant with the subject than our opponents. Still, I think it is a question upon which we may centre our attention, and that we also might improve our knowledge of it. I do not intend to indulge in any tirade against the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, but it will be necessary for me to refer rather freely to that institution for the purposes of comparison. At the outset I would make reference to the enormous profits made by that concern, as showing undoubtedly that there are huge profits in sugar refining. During the last seven years this company has paid in dividends, at the rate of 10 per cent., no less a sum than £1,888,000. That is the amount that has been declared and announced in dividends at the rate of 10 per cent. But in addition to the dividends, there are other profits which find what I may call their outlet in other directions. It is the custom of the company, year after year, and each half-year, to pile up their unused surpluses in the form of reserves, and those reserves are piled one upon the other until they reach such magnitude that it is absolutely necessary for the company to get rid of them. They do this by what is called watering their stock or capitalising their reserves. During the last four years they have got rid of reserves in this manner to the extent of £575,000. In addition to that the company have, during the past five years, written off £500,000 as depreciation. And notwithstanding all this, after paying their last year's dividend they had some £57,000 to carry forward, which makes their total profits over £3,000,000 during the past seven years. The capitalisation of their reserves during the last four years represents a dividend of 5½ per cent.; they paid dividends at the rate of 10 per cent., and it is safe to say that their undisclosed profits total another 10 per cent. These figures are based on the assumption that the capital of the company prior to the capitalisation of their reserves to the extent of £575,000, which brought their total capital up to £3,000,000, was genuine and bonâ fide subscribed capital. That is far from being the case, and for this reason: During the last twenty-nine years time after time this concern has increased its capital by not only capitalising its reserves, but also by the issue of debenture stock, and these debentures have to be redeemed and the interest which they bore had to be paid out of profits. To such an extent did this hold that at so recent a date as 1901 the Colonial Sugar Refining Company had a capital of only £1,800,000, as against £3,000,000 at the present time. Shortly after that time their capital was increased to £2,000,000 by the creation of £200,000 worth of debenture shares, and, since then, capitalisation brought it up to £2,450,000. The debentures and the interest upon them are paid out of profit. In the year 1914 debentures of this nature to the extent of about £650,000 have to be met. So you see that there has been a great deal of advancement in the capital of this company until at the present day it reaches the enormous sum of £3,000,000, and I am sorry to say that those increases have been brought about by profits out of the sugar industry. I mention these facts in passing to show this House what profits there are in the refining operations of sugar. I would like to say something with regard to this £500,000 sterling which the Colonial Sugar Refining Company has written off as disclosed in its balance-sheet under the heading of depreciation. It is a well-known fact that far from any depreciation occurring in the plant, on the other hand their ramifications are extending and have been extending in all directions. To centre round the question of depreciation strictly, and to refer to their plant and material only, I hold that £500,000 sterling is a most exaggerated sum to have been written off. And I do it for this reason: I have discussed this question with several gentlemen who have been in Fiji and who were brought into close contact with the Colonial Sugar Refining Company over there. They told me that, speaking to personal friends of theirs over in Fiji, they learned that the plants in the Colonial Sugar Refining Company's mills were put upon the scrap-heap when they were practically new, but they were really in such a high-class state of efficiency that in comparison with them much of the machinery in our supposed up-to-date mills in Queens-

land would be considered scrap-iron. But this very large sum has been written off for depreciation in the endeavour to hide their profits, and there is another bearing on that. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company in "scrapping" their new machinery are putting it from one pocket into the other, because the people who supply the machinery very often are Colonial Sugar Refining Company shareholders. I want to draw attention, in addition, to the announced profits of this concern—to the profits which we know exist and which can be proved to have accrued from the extension of their operations in Queensland. About eighteen years ago—in 1893 to be exact—the Colonial Sugar Refining Company had three sugar-mills in Queensland. They had a sugar-mill on the Johnstone River known as Goondi, they had the Victoria Mill in the same locality, and they had also the Homebush Mill in the Mackay district. The Goondi Mill in those days was considered to be one of the largest mills in Queensland, and probably one of the largest in the world. I think its capacity was considerably under 8,000 tons, but for the sake of argument we will take it as 8,000 tons. At the present time the Colonial Sugar Refining Company has six mills in Queensland, and the three mills I have just mentioned—the Goondi, Victoria, and Homebush—are the three smallest they have got. They have now got the Childers Mill, with a capacity of 15,000 tons—the largest mill in Australia. They have also got the Hambledon Mill, of 10,000 tons capacity, and they have got the Macknade Mill, of 12,500 tons capacity; so that these three additional mills between them represent a capacity of 37,500 tons. Taking the tonnage in round figures to be represented at £10 per ton, it seems a great outlay to lay out £375,000 for the erection of three mills, to say nothing of the additions which have been made to the first three mills I mentioned. I think that £10 per ton for raw sugar is rather a moderate estimate in computing the cost of a mill. The company also extended their operations in New South Wales. In the days I speak of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company boasted of a mill on the Clarence River called the Harwood Mill, and they had a raw material treatment plant on the Tweed River which had not then risen to the dignity of a mill. At the present time they have the Harwood on the Clarence River with a capacity of 10,200 tons, the Broadwater Mill on the Richmond River with a capacity of 9,000 tons, and this other mill on the Tweed, called the Condong Mill, which has a capacity of 3,600 tons, or a total raw sugar capacity in New South Wales of 23,500 tons. They have other achievements in Queensland and New South Wales—in fact, right throughout Australia—since that time, and all of these embarkments have been made out of profits. I will enumerate a few of them in passing, just to show the country what the Colonial Sugar Refining Company has done out of profits. In addition to increasing its capital by leaps and bounds since 1893, they erected the Childers Mill in 1894; they purchased the Macknade Estate and Mill on the Herbert River in 1895; they purchased the Hambledon Estate and Mill in the Cairns district in 1897; they purchased the Knockroe Mill, in the Isis district, in 1901; they purchased Messrs. Penny and Co.'s plantation (Isis) in 1901; they purchased Messrs. Walker and Co.'s plantation (Isis) in 1904; they purchased the Ripple Creek Estate and Mill in 1906; and they also considerably enlarged the Brisbane Refinery since its erection in 1893. In New South Wales there has been a gradual absorption of large sugar estates there, and they have time after time increased the Broadwater Mill, which at one time held the proud position of being the largest capacity mill of any in Australia. They increased the Harwood Mill, and in addition to that they increased the Pyrmont Refinery in Sydney almost beyond recognition, in size and in capacity, for the treatment of refined sugar. In Victoria they purchased the Melbourne Refinery, and there they also purchased Poolman's Refinery, which a few years ago gave promise of showing some sort of opposition to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, but it was enveloped and swallowed up by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company in order to block competition. In Fiji, it is well known that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company have commandeered all the estates by building out of profits four large mills with a raw-sugar capacity of 40,000 tons. It is known that they have a refinery in Auckland, and also one in Adelaide, which, I believe, is somewhat like our local refinery at New Farm. In addition to these large achievements they have had others which are not so easily getatable; but there are other achievements by which they hide their profits. But just before coming to that I would like to draw attention to this fact—that it is inconceivable the extent to which its capital is now invested in Australia in raw-sugar mills. I think I am pretty safe in saying that the capital which the Colonial Sugar Refining Company has now invested in raw-sugar mills in Australia amounts to something like £896,000 in Queensland and £271,000 in New South Wales, or a total of £1,167,000 of capital invested in raw-sugar mills in Queensland and New South Wales. That is not a guess, or a mere assertion or assumption. I arrive at that conclusion in this way: According to the chairman of directors of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, that concern manufactures one-third of the raw sugar produced in the Commonwealth, and not one-eighth, as the hon. member for Maryborough said the other night.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is one-third, not one-eighth—one-eighth must be a misprint.

Mr. FERRICKS: If the hon. member for Maryborough had sought to confirm his assumption on that question he could have done so, because we know that last year's production of raw sugar in Australia amounted to 204,000 tons in Queensland and 18,000 tons in New South Wales, or a total of 222,000 tons. Now, the Colonial Sugar Refinery's proportion of that, according to Mr. Knox, the general manager, in his evidence before the Sugar Commission, totalled 74,000 tons, or exactly one-third, as the Secretary for Railways says. Take the Auditor-General's report dealing with our central sugar-mills over, we will say, the eight years from 1901 to 1908, inclusive, and it is found there that these eight mills under the partial control of the Government, and working under the Sugar Works Guarantee Act, have invested in them a capital of £490,000, added to which must be the amount accruing from

renewals, maintenance, additions, etc., making a capital of £700,000 in round figures. These mills have turned out during that time, according to the Auditor-General's report, a total of 356,000 tons of sugar, or an average per annum of 44,000 tons. Now, if it takes a capital of £700,000 in our mills to turn out 44,000 tons of sugar per annum, it will take a capital of £1,168,000 to turn out the raw sugar output which the Colonial Sugar Refining Company manufactured during the last year, on the word of Mr. Knox before the Sugar Commission, and on the authority of the chairman of directors of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company at their half-yearly meeting in March last. Now, the profits of this concern have been put into assets to a very great extent, and from their last balance-sheet we find that they stand in this happy position: They own refineries, mills, etc., valued at £2,400,000; tramways, rolling-stock, £337,000; steamers, £155,000; working accounts, £96,000; office premises, £51,000; stocks of sugar, £504,000; sundry debtors, loans, etc., £649,000; cash at bank and short loans, £539,000, making a capital or an assetable value of £4,800,000—practically assets totalling £5,000,000 sterling. Now, that is all very well. I am not railing against the fact that this company has a capital or an assetable value of £5,000,000; but it is a fair question for us to ask whence come these profits? I do not think that any member in this Chamber, either on this side or the other, will say that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company get their profits out of the cultivation of the cane, because as a matter of fact they do not go in for the cultivation of the cane. We have that on the authority of Mr. Knox before the Sugar Commission again, when the commission sat at Parliament House on 27th February, 1911. At page 184, Mr. Knox gave the following evidence—

"Do you think that the rate of progress would be as rapid as it has been in the past? A good deal depends upon what could be done in the clearing of the land. It is not going to be plain sailing getting land cleared in North Queensland with white labour.

"By Mr. Paddle: They are doing it by contracts? That question could be answered much better by someone with experience; we have no cane cultivation ourselves.

"By the Chairman: You do not cultivate any of your Australian lands? We worked two farms last season that were thrown on our hands. We do not cultivate anything. As a matter of fact, we are parting with all the land in Fiji also.

"Have you any objection to telling us why you do not cultivate? Not in the least; we gave it up in the nineties, because we came to the conclusion that the business was one which ought to be carried out by the independent farmer."

Mr. MANN: No, because the farmer can grow it cheaper than they do themselves.

Mr. FERRICKS: They leave it to the farmer, and they get all the profits themselves. No one, either inside or outside this Chamber, who has given any thought to the question, will contend for a moment that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company make all these millions out of cane cultivation. I contend—and I say I justifiably contend—that they do not make much of these profits out of the manufacture of sugar. During the present industrial upheaval, we have been assured by the manufacturers, or millers, of sugar-cane in Queensland—the manufacturers of raw sugar—that the profits are so small that they would not admit of any improvement in the conditions of the men; but I intend to quote an authority that might appeal to our opponents opposite more forcibly than that fact—that is, the incident which occurred about nine months ago, when the Colonial Sugar Refining Company were endeavouring to cover up their last process of watering their stock, and at the gathering at which the announcement was made, the spokesman or chairman said—

"We are now able to say that our investments in Fiji have been practically paid for out of profits, the amount required for this purpose corresponding with the earnings of business outside Australia during the last fifteen years."

It might be said that that has no connection with the manufacture of sugar, but here is where the connection comes in: When it was made public that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company had done so well in Fiji during the last fifteen years, the Rewa Cane Planters' Association naturally thought that they were entitled to some share, and they waited on the representative of the company and asked for a better price for their cane, and the reply they got was this—

"In order to meet the generally less favourable conditions of cane cultivation in your district, we have hitherto curtailed the margin of profit to such extent that the sugar at normal values the return on our capital invested at Nausori is quite insufficient. I can, therefore, add that if the plant were not already in existence, there would not be a chance of our erecting a mill on the Rewa, still less of any other firm undertaking the work unless the cane could be obtained at a much lower cost than we now pay. Under these circumstances, any advance in the price we now pay for cane is out of the question."

The Colonial Sugar Refining Company's representative tells us there that there is no profit in manufacturing sugar-cane into raw sugar, which leaves the only conclusion that these huge profits to which I have referred come out of the refining process, and I honestly believe they do.

Mr. MANN: No, they do not; I am satisfied they make hundreds of thousands on their mills in Queensland.

Mr. FERRICKS: I will endeavour to show where, in my opinion, those profits come from. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company at the present time is very emphatic in telling us that the profits on milling are not sufficient to allow them the opportunity of bettering the conditions of their employees. But passing that over again, I find, on reference to the Auditor-General's report for 1909-10—the last official figures which are available on this question—that the average price paid for cane in those mill which are wholly under the control or partial control of the Government was 15s. 3d. per ton. In that year, for that season, 1909-10, it took, according to the Auditor-General's report, 8.30 tons of cane to make a ton of sugar, and the farmer who sold that 8.30 tons of cane received £6 7s. per ton for the raw cane. As a matter of fact, at some of the mills the canegrower did not get anything like £6 7s. per ton. At Proserpine he got £5 15s. 3d.; at Gin Gin, £5 15s. 3d.; and at Nerang, £5 12s. 2d.; but the average is £6 7s. per ton. Now, the cost of manufacture, as set down by the Auditor-General, is £1 15s. per ton. People know very well that

when a farmer undertakes the growing of cane, from the time he tackles the virgin country until he loads that 8.30 tons of cane into the mill yard, he has to do a lot of work. I suppose the grower, in the growing of the crop and the preparation of it, has to undertake about fifty different processes all told.

Mr. LENNON: And the risks.

Mr. FERRICKS: And the risks. And when that 8.30 tons of cane are landed at the mills, the farmer received £6 7s.

Mr. WHITE: It is taking 12 tons of cane to make a ton of sugar now at Gin Gin.

Mr. MANN: As a matter of fact, it costs £5 17s.

Mr. FERRICKS: If the hon. member for Musgrave had listened to me he would have known that I am taking the average, and it is 8.30 tons according to the Auditor-General. When the crushing miller receives that 8.30 tons of cane, he also has to put it through twenty or thirty different processes to turn it out as raw sugar, and when it is turned out as raw sugar it is of a purity of 94 net titre, and for doing those twenty or thirty operations, in the transformation, as the case may be, the miller is allowed an average of £5 2s., making a total cost of £11 9s., which the eight mills received from the Colonial Sugar Refining monopoly for sugar of 88 net titre value. I would like also to mention that they do not even get that £11 9s. per ton, because it also includes local sales of molasses, refund of harbour dues, etc.; and, in passing, I would like to express regret that the Auditor-General, or the Sugar Bureau, does not set out a detailed appendix dealing with this matter and giving the actual prices received for sugar at the central mills.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Are you quoting from the Auditor-General's report of 1910?

Mr. FERRICKS: No, the figures for 1909. We have not got the 1910 figures yet. That makes a total of £11 9s., allowing a big margin. Here it is where the refining monopoly comes in. It is then they take a hand. They pay £11 9s. for every ton of sugar on an 88 net titre basis, although it is of a purity of 94 net titre, which means they have not so much work to do to purify it. Further, they pay £4 a ton excise, bringing the total up to £15 9s. per ton. Now, the average price of the sale of the refined article has ranged at £21 5s. per ton. In fact, it goes on the average to £21 10s. per ton. But I will be moderate in calling it £21 5s. per ton, leaving a sum of £5 16s. as the difference between the raw sugar they purchase and the refined article they turn out. Now, I am very moderate in that estimate, because I can safely add another 5s. and say that the difference comes to £6 1s. But I will not do that; I will keep to the assertions made here—that the difference between the raw sugar and the refined article of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company in their operations amounts to £5 16s.

Mr. FORSYTH: You do not allow for cost of refining and freights, etc.

Mr. FERRICKS: The hon. member for Moreton has just anticipated me. I was just coming to the question of cost of refining, and I am also going to be very liberal in my estimate in that when I put it down at £1 10s. a ton. £1 10s. a ton for the cost of refining sugar, allows for a profit for every ton of sugar that is outturned in Australia of £4 6s. at least, to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company.

Mr. FORSYTH: You do not take in the cost of transit, discounts, etc.

Mr. FERRICKS: I am coming to that. £4 6s. profit, which the Colonial Sugar Refining Company have for every ton of sugar refined in Queensland or New South Wales, represents a profit of 10s. per ton on every ton of cane that is crushed, or, at the very absolute minimum, 9s. per ton. That is why I have said on the platform dozens of times that whenever a canecutter or canegrower puts a ton of cane on a truck, he can pat himself on the chest and say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, you have earned 9s. profit for the Colonial Sugar Refining monopoly." Regarding these profits, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company have confessed—absolutely openly confessed—to a profit of £2 per ton in their announced division of profits, because it is known that for the last twelve months of their operations their profits totalled £404,442, and Mr. Knox, on page 183 of the report, in answer to question 1669, said that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company refined something like 200,000 tons of sugar in Australia. They openly confess to £2 per ton profit. Now, I referred just now, in passing, to undisclosed profits, and I will make a further reference to them. The profits of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company go into other avenues of which the public know nothing, and which are almost ungetatable, and one instance, which I might mention, is in regard to the question of freight for the carriage of raw sugar along the Australian coast. We see that it costs somewhere about 7s. 6d. a ton to take sugar from Java to Sydney, and about 12s. 6d. or 15s. a ton to take it from Bundaberg to Sydney. Now, Mr. Tudor, when he was in Bundaberg, said, "You can thank the shipping trust for that." Part of the fault is due to the shipping trust, but in my opinion there is another cause, and it is this: that the Adelaide Steamship Company, which has the contract of carrying raw sugar to the Colonial Sugar Refining concerns is largely composed in its membership of shareholders of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and when the Colonial Sugar Refining Company pays the Adelaide Steamship Company exorbitant freights, it is just taking money out of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company's pocket here and putting it into the Adelaide Shipping Company's pocket there. Those are some of the undisclosed profits, in addition to which there are the questions of stocks, oils, and so forth. Why, it is a common thing to see many of the mills of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company carrying stocks of oil to the extent of thousands of pounds; stocks which they never would have need to use, but stocks which serve to drink up some of their profits so that they will not have their huge concern appear so outrageous in the eyes of the people of Australia. I contend that if the Government of Queensland, at the present time, would establish a refinery that would treat the raw sugar from our four central mills which are at present under the control of the Government—we

will take their output at 10,000 tons per annum—there would be a profit of £20,000, and, including the mills partially under State control, producing 37,000 tons, there is a profit of £75,000 per annum. I believe that even if the Government confined themselves to the mills over which they have jurisdiction, and erected a refinery to treat the output of those mills, and the output of any other mills to be erected by means of State advances, it would be only a matter of time for mills under independent control, by virtue of the better prices that would be offered, to sell their raw product to the State refinery, which would mean enhanced profits to the Government and a lightening of taxation in all directions. Now as to the cost of the refinery. When Mr. Givens introduced his motion for a State refinery, it was estimated by speakers on the other side that the cost would be in the vicinity of £250,000. That was about ten years ago. I contend that a State refinery capable of doing the extreme of what is indicated in my motion could be erected in Queensland at the cost of one central mill. It would really mean a fourth central mill—a fourth works; and it would be a refinery of no mean dimensions and capacity. For purposes of comparison, I looked up some references to the establishment of the refinery at New Farm; and I find from the *Queenslander* of 19th August, 1893, page 373, that the New Farm refinery was even then by no means small potatoes, because this is what the *Queenslander* said about it—

"The refinery buildings consist of a substantial brick building, and another of galvanised iron, containing a raw sugar store capable of holding 8,000 tons of raw sugar, and measuring 125 feet long, 70 feet wide, and 35 feet high; melting-house, 100 feet by 53 feet, containing weighbridge, blow-ups, bag filters, filter presses, tanks, and pumps, the charcoal end containing four dryers for drying the washed charcoal; four kilns, for revivifying the charcoal, and receiving boxes for same, measuring 53 feet long by 45 feet wide; a cistern-house, containing two charcoal bins, capacity 25 tons each tank; twelve charcoal cisterns, 8 feet diameter, 20 feet deep, 50 feet long, 48 feet wide, 116 feet high; a bone-house, containing the receiving tanks, two vacuum pans, two coolers, three centrifugals, and four engines; a refined sugar-room, containing floors capable of holding 2,000 tons of refined sugar. Four Cornish boilers of 40-horse power each will supply the necessary power to carry on operations. A two-storied building contains rooms and appliances for cutting and sewing hessian bags, also manager's offices, general offices, and chemist's laboratory. For the laboratory a small sample is taken from each bag in every shipment to be analysed, which is done on costly instruments of great accuracy, so finely adjusted that one four-million-five-hundred-thousandeth part of a pound of pure saccharine matter can be detected. The works have been so constructed that new additions can very easily be made."

I think it would suit the requirements of the Government if they were to put up a refinery like that—a refinery which could be established at the cost of one central mill. Now I am coming to the cost of that refinery and its capacity at that time; and I hope this will not be considered irrelevant, because I am going to quote the opinion of a gentleman who at that time was pretty high up in the manufacture of sugar in Queensland—Mr. James J. Eastick, manager of the Millaquin Company. He was not the type of man to have any concern or sympathy with the idea of a State refinery. This is from the *Queenslander* of 23rd March, 1901, page 574, under the heading of "One of the effects of Polynesian labour"—

"The manager of the Millaquin and Yengarie Sugar Company, Mr. Eastick, gives some interesting particulars concerning the employment of Polynesian labour and its effect on the industry, both as regards the production of sugar and the subsequent refining process. He says: "When the crisis occurred, due to legislation preventing the kanaka from being employed in the sugar-fields, much land being cleared to supply new mills was allowed to revert to the forest, and contemplated new mills were not proceeded with. Machinery manufactured for the purpose was offered at very low prices without its being removed from the packing-cases. Melbourne capitalists, who had invested in Mackay sugar-fields, foresaw that the industry was doomed in Queensland, and in the year 1890, therefore, joined with others and erected a refinery at Port Melbourne. For four years the company refined sugar grown in Java by forced labour, not only in the sugar-fields, but in the mills. This meant that the wages to white men for manufacturing 60,000 tons of raw sugar were diverted from Queensland to Java, and given to Chinese, Japanese, etc. This amount of raw sugar, it must be remembered, represented 600,000 tons of cane. Had this amount of cane been grown in Queensland in the early nineties, it would have been very useful. These facts are irrefutable. No better evidence could be adduced of the necessity of retaining the Polynesian labour than the increased enterprise that marked the return of the Polynesian to the sugar-fields. Immediately land gone out of cultivation was put under the plough, and the sugar industry, under new conditions, began to expand. The production increased to such extent that it was no longer profitable to import raw sugar from Java for refining in Melbourne. Not only were Queensland sugars used instead of Java sugars, but the Colonial Sugar Refining Company established a refinery at Brisbane, and the Millaquin Company a similar establishment at Bundaberg. Probably these two events increased the capital invested in the industry by £150,000."

"The yearly payments made now by these two refineries are about as follow:—

Cost of raw sugar	£450,000
Cost of coal	17,000
Cost of limestone and chemicals	2,000
Cost of wood, charcoal and bones	2,500
Cost of hessian bags	13,000
General charges	14,000
Cost of syrup tins, cases and boxes	12,000
Cost of horse feed	400
Cost of insurance	3,000
Cost of wages	35,000
	£548,900

That is what I want to come to. The Millaquin and New Farm refineries combined in 1901 with a capital of £150,000 invested in them, according to Mr. Eastick, the manager of one of the concerns.

Mr. WHITE: There is about three times that invested in Millaquin alone.

Mr. FERRICKS: I am quoting the figures for 1901—ten years ago. I know very well that, following on the lines of the mother company—the Colonial Sugar Refining Company—they have gone in for capitalising their reserves. According to the Auditor-General's report of that year I find that the price of raw sugar f.o.b. at various places was £8 1s. a ton; but even taking it at £8 10s. a ton, that shows that an outlay of £450,000 by these two refineries represented over 52,000 tons of raw sugar they were able to refine on a capital of £150,000.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Where did they get the money?

Mr. FERRICKS: I am giving Mr. Eastick's figures to show the capital and the output—it does not matter a hang whether

[5 p.m.] the money was borrowed, or where they got it. According to the manager of one concern, there was a sum of £150,000 invested, and they were capable of treating more than 52,000 tons of raw sugar.

The PREMIER: Invested in machinery and plant?

Mr. FERRICKS: That would include working capital, because Mr. Eastick said—

"Probably these two events——"

that is the erection of the two refineries—

"increased the capital invested in the industry by £150,000."

Those two refineries were capable at that time of treating 50,000 tons of raw sugar, more than the whole of the present Government mills turn out. Mr. Eastick goes on to say—

"From the foregoing it is manifest that those who had capital to invest in subsidiary works connected with sugar manufacture recognised that upon the successful production of the raw material rested their chance of making such works pay, and that the kanaka labourer formed, as it were, the very fulcrum of the industry. The figures quoted, showing that from these two refineries alone over half a million of money is annually expended, convey an idea of the benefit the white workers derive from this source. If we are to accept the statements of the refineries under notice—and there is no reason to doubt them, as the actual facts speak for themselves—it is self-evident that to the removal of the embargo regarding the kanaka was due the establishment of these refineries in Queensland."

I take it that of the 50,000 tons of sugar being refined at that date the Millaquin Refinery would refine about 20,000 tons and the New Farm Refinery about 30,000 tons. I know that at that time the Millaquin Refinery was turning out 700 tons of refined sugar per week, and, in addition, 20,000 tons of raw sugar, and it would be a fair computation that the capital invested in the New Farm Refinery at that date was about £90,000, and in the Millaquin Refinery £60,000, so that there was nothing approaching £250,000 in either of those two propositions. But I can give better evidence than any assumption of my own. I can give evidence which I suppose will be much more acceptable to hon. members on the other side, since it is the evidence of one of themselves. At the function at the opening of the New Farm Refinery on 14th October, 1893, per *Queenslander*, page 156, the Hon. E. B. Forrest, M.L.C.—as he then was—in reply to the toast of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, said—

"For the season's work at the refinery something like 15,000 tons of sugar had been purchased from the planters, not to speak of the cane which the company intended to crush at their own mills. At Pyrmont, Sydney, they had an immense stack of buildings, out of which was turned every week 900 to 1,000 tons of sugar. In Victoria the company had one of the largest refineries in the colony, not far short of the Sydney one in output. In South Australia there was a refinery similar to this one at New Farm. In Auckland there was another refinery of the same dimensions.

"In addition to holding these works, the company were largely interested in the production of sugar. In Queensland alone they had no less than three mills. There was a very large mill on the Johnstone River, probably the largest in Queensland, and probably equal to anything in any other part of the world. At Victoria plantation, on the Herbert River, there was another large mill, and also one at Homebush, near Mackay. They had a mill on the Clarence River, in New South Wales, and a plant for the production of the raw material on the Tweed. As far as Queensland was concerned, they had put their money into the refinery, and it was not their intention to stop at that. Within the past three months a contract had been signed by the farmers in the Isis Scrub for 2,000 acres of cane, and his company intended to put up a mill there. The order for the mill had been signed, and the expenses of the mill would be £30,000. (Applause.) The cost of the refinery they had inspected was £80,000—that was what it stood the company at the present time."

Mr. FORSYTH: That was nearly twenty years ago.

Mr. FERRICKS: It would not matter if it was fifty years ago, the fact remains that they could turn out 15,000 tons of sugar, and it was built, according to the Hon. E. B. Forrest—who was then, as now, the local director of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company—for £80,000. I am prepared to be perfectly fair in my argument, and I admit that the cost of labour, material, and everything else has gone up since then, but, after making every allowance, I contend I am right in asserting that a refinery of the capacity of the New Farm Refinery at its erection could be established in Queensland to-day for less than the cost of a central mill. With regard to the argument of the hon. member for Moreton, I might point out to the hon. member that the rise in the price of labour and material applies to the erection of central mills as well as to the erection of a refinery; and, if it is good business to erect more central mills, then it must follow as a natural corollary that it is equally good business to establish a State refinery. To show that the New Farm refinery was up to date at the time of its erection, this is what was said by Mr. Wright, the manager of the refinery, in response to the toast of his health—

"A chemical analysis of the refined article being turned out showed that the sugar contained 99½ per cent. of pure cane sugar, leaving next to nothing for other matter."

Showing that the works were complete, and in a position to compete with any works in the world. If it be admitted that the cost of erecting works has gone up so much—and I do not admit it—then we come back to the interjection of the hon. member for Moreton that it costs much more to establish a sugar-mill than it does to establish a refinery.

Mr. FORSYTH: The other way about.

Mr. FERRICKS: Does the hon. member say that it costs more to establish a refinery than it does to establish a sugar-mill?

Mr. FORSYTH: Yes.

Mr. FERRICKS: Then I most respectfully beg to differ with the hon. member, and anybody who has gone into a sugar-mill and also into a refinery, and has looked into the question, will agree with what I say.

Mr. D. HUNTER: Have you been in a refinery?

Mr. FERRICKS: Yes. I have been through a sugar-mill and through a sugar refinery, and I made due inquiries into the operations of each. It struck me, as it must strike any man who goes into a refinery—and as it must strike the hon. member for Moreton the next time he goes into one—that there are no ponderous and expensive

rollers in connection with the works. There are no vats there for the boiling of the juice, over the skimming of which men are parboiled. They have filter presses in a refinery, I know, but not nearly to the same extent as in a sugar-mill, because not one-twentieth or one-fortieth part of the muck has to be extracted in the refinery that has to be extracted in a sugar-mill. There are no triple effets boiling pans required in a refinery. All they have in a refinery are tanks to hold the sugar to be melted, in course of being melted, and after it is melted, vacuum pans and centrifugals in which the sugar is boiled and dried respectively. To a layman, to a man who has no mechanical knowledge, it appears that there is really less machinery in a refinery than in a sugar-mill.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That is not so.

Mr. FERRICKS: I know that the only operation that sugar has to go through in a refinery is that of charcoal filtration. That is the whole mystery surrounding the operation of refining sugar, and for that one mystery the Colonial Sugar Refining Company are making a profit of £4 6s. per ton of sugar refined. I promised the hon. member for Moreton that I would make reference to the cost of refining sugar. It has been said that the cost of refining is £1 10s. per ton. Some persons put it down at £1 15s., and others put it as low as £1 5s. per ton. In my computations I have put it down at £1 10s., and I honestly believe that it does not cost the Colonial Sugar Refining Company more than £1 per ton to refine their sugar to-day. The reason I say the cost is probably not more than £1 per ton is because of what I saw in a pertinent article published in a periodical which is now non-existent, that is the "Queensland Sugar Journal," which used to be published at Mackay, but which was squelched by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company because it would insist on publishing the prices of raw and refined sugar in the markets of the world.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That is not true.

Mr. FERRICKS: I find that in the issue of that journal for the 15th June, 1900, there appeared the following article, taken from the *Louisiana Planter*:—

"The question of profit or loss in refining sugar is attracting particular attention just now, and lends special significance to the evidence of the various refiners before the Industrial Commission. According to current quotations, there is a difference in favour of refined sugar of 63.75 cents per 100 lb. (£2 19s. 6d. per ton). But it is evident that the difference between the cost of raw and refined is in fact nearer 50 cents per 100 lb. (£2 6s. 8d. per ton) than 63¾ cents (£2 19s. 6d. per ton). Even at the lower figure the refiners are not selling at a loss, if the sworn evidence of the refiners themselves is to be believed, for it must be taken for granted that, as competent business men, the refiners, in their estimates must have given proper consideration to fixed charges, depreciation of plant, and the numerous other items that readily suggest themselves. . . . The presumption is that when the margin falls below 50 cents per 100 lb. (£2 6s. 8d. per ton) the refiners are not doing a profitable business. This margin includes the cost of refining proper and the loss of weight in refining. Mr. Jarvis made the above as a general statement, but refused to state the precise cost of refining in his own establishment. . . . Mr. Havemeyer said that when the margin is only 50 cents (£2 6s. 8d. per ton) it is a "fair inference" that refiners are running at a loss. Dividends could hardly be paid from profits resulting from such margins, but the witness refused to state the source from which his company now pays 12 per cent. when the margin is below 50 cents. "We may borrow it," he says. . . . Mr. Doscher declares that his refinery has been unable to make any profits from refining at the existing margin of 32 to 51 cents (£1 9s. 6d. to £2 7s. 7d. per ton). He believes that 93 lb. of refined sugar from 100 lb. of raw sugar a better estimate than 92 in figuring the loss of weight in refining. From the same quantity of raw sugar about two gallons of syrup, worth 12 cents (£1 2s. 4d.) a gallon are obtained. . . . Mr. Jas. H. Post, of B. H. Howell, Son, and Co., agents for the Mollenhauer refineries, submitted an estimate prepared by the general manager of the National Sugar Refining Company. This shows that the cost of refining, including the revenue tax of 4.799 cents per 100 lb. (4s. 6d. per ton), amounts to about 35 cents per 100 lb. (£1 12s. 8d. per ton), while the loss of weight in refining amounts to 28 cents per 100 lb. (£1 6s. 1d. per ton); total, 63 cents (£2 18s. 9d. per ton) as the necessary margin. Large refineries, such as Havemeyer and Elder, with 12,000 barrels capacity, and Spreckels, with 8,000, could probably produce at from 3 to 5 cents less."

I quote that to show that, in giving evidence before the Industrial Commission, Mr. Post, who was recognised as a sugar authority in those days, set down the cost of refining sugar at 35 cents per 100 lb., equal to £1 12s. 8d. per ton, less Government revenue tax 4s. 6d., which leaves £1 8s. 2d. Mr. Post puts the loss in weight in refining at 28 cents per 100 lb., or £1 6s. 1d. per ton, and Mr. Doscher states that there are 24 cents worth of syrup per 100 lb., which equals £1 2s. 4d., making the net loss 4 cents per 100 lb., or 3s. 9d. per ton. This makes the total cost £1 11s. 11d. The large refineries do the work for 5 cents per 100 lb. less, which reduces the cost to £1 7s. 3d. That was the cost in the United States eleven years ago. I contend that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company must be doing it for considerably under £1 7s. 3d., less 4s. 8d. for another 5 cents per 100 lbs. on account of huge turnover, or at less than £1 2s. 7d. per ton—that is, allowing 4 cents for loss of weight in refining; and I hold that what could be done in America eleven years ago can be done to-day in Australia by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company with the large quantity of sugar that they handle. I go further, and with regard to the alleged loss in refining sugar, I say that, so far from there being a loss, there is an actual gain in refining. In refining, all that has to be done is to put the sugar through a charcoal filter, boil it, and dry it. In the melting process water is added in large quantities, and it is excluded in the subsequent operations. When the process is completed, and the sugar is dry, there remains a mass of saccharine matter; and there passes off what I may call the soluable, uncrystallisable portions of sugar in the form known as A1 golden syrup, which is sold at a good profit and contains 50 per cent. of water in its weight. I, therefore, think I am safe in saying that, so far from there being a loss, there is an actual gain in the weight and the value of sugar refined. I remember that a few years ago Mr. Pritchard stated in the "Sugar Journal" that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company lost 9d. per ton in the refining process.

Mr. MANN: It was not Pritchard who said it: it was Cribb.

Mr. FERRICKS: Then it was his twin brother, his twin journalistic brother.

(Laughter.) He said the Colonial Sugar Refining Company lost 9d. per ton, but we might ask, if the Colonial Sugar Refining Company lose 9d. per ton on every ton of sugar that they refine, how do they come to pay these dividends, approaching £500,000 sterling every year? I do not want to monopolise the whole afternoon.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Go on.

Mr. LENNON: You are doing very well.

Mr. FERRICKS: But I realise that it is necessary for me to make a reference to what has transpired in the last few days in regard to the prominence which the question of the sugar import duty has received, notably through the utterances of the Acting Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. Hughes. It is a common jibe—if I may use the expression—or a common contention, amongst hon. members opposite, that the black-grown sugar in Java is cheap-grown sugar. On Tuesday, when the senior member for Maryborough was speaking, I ventured the opinion that the £5 per ton protective duty which existed to-day was swallowed up by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and the hon. gentleman retorted, "You do not know what you are talking about." That is a pretty resounding term, but it is not always convincing. With due regard to the maturer years of the senior member for Maryborough, I will give the information I wanted to encompass in my interjection on Tuesday night, and leave it to the House to judge whether it was he or I who did not know what he was talking about. I said that the Java sugar was produced by low-paid labour, but it was not cheap labour. Let me say unhesitatingly that I can assure hon. members that at the present time raw sugar is being produced in Queensland almost, if not entirely, as cheaply as it is produced in Java. I will repeat the interjection that I made to the senior member for Maryborough, and that was that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company were swallowing up the effective £5 per ton protective duty. I can prove that the cost of production of sugar in Java is slightly in excess of the cost of the production of raw sugar in Queensland.

Mr. WHITE: No.

Mr. FERRICKS: I will not give my own opinion, but I will give the opinion of a recognised sugar authority, and the hon. member for Musgrave himself will admit that he is so. I refer to Mr. H. C. Prinsen Geerlig. Writing under the heading of "The Cost of the Production of Sugar in Java," this is what he says in the January (1911) edition of the "International Sugar Journal"—

"In the issue of July, 1904, I set down the cost of production in the year 1902 of an average of forty-two well-equipped factories at £7 5s. 11½d. per metric ton, divided as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Salaries	0	13	4
Cultivation	2	13	4
Transport of cane	0	16	0
Fuel	0	1	1½
Wages	0	3	9
Sundries	0	1	10½
Packing	0	4	3
Commission	0	7	2½
Transport of sugar	0	8	3
Sundry expenses	0	4	6½
Wear and tear	0	8	6½
New machinery	0	15	9
Interest on floating capital ..	0	8	0
Total	£7	5	11½

After calculating the cost of production over a great number of Java factories during the years 1908 and 1909, I find those figures to hold still good. The production of sugar to the acre has increased, but the price of many articles and the rate of wages have followed the same upward movement, so that, on the whole, the cost of raw Java refining crystals, basis 96, packed in bags or baskets, delivered at the buyers' doors at the ports, and including all charges of management, agriculture, transport of cane, machinery, manufacture, carriage to the coast, upkeep and depreciation of plant and buildings, but not including interest on capital invested in the sugar-house and machinery, may be put down at 7s. 6½d. per cwt."

Now, before going any further with that, I will just repeat the cost. The writer refers to the sugar as being on the 96 basis. That does not mean that it is 96 purity. In the value of sugar contents that 96 is not equal to the 94 net titre raw sugar turned out of our mills to-day. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company buy on an 88 net titre basis, but the sugar must be up to 94 net titre.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No, they are paying on the 94 net titre now. They used to pay on the 88 net titre.

Mr. FERRICKS: Yes, it has been increased to 94 net titre, but the tabulated statements are based on 88 net titre.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Only for the Auditor-General.

Mr. FERRICKS: It seems that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company buy on the 94 net titre, having increased it from 88 net titre, but I would point out here that the higher the net titre the greater the cost of extraction and the less work for the refiner to do in removing impurities. So that when Mr. Prinsen Geerlig refers to the 96, it is not 96 net titre on the basis of purity. I take it that it is 96 standard of polarisation, which is quite distinct. Possibly it would not give 92.5 net titre.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you know how the net titre is arrived at?

Mr. FERRICKS: Yes. I want to show that the sugar produced in Java at that cost is not equal in purity to our raw sugar turned out here. It is turned out in Java at £7 5s. 11d. per ton. I would point out that at the Proserpine Central Mill the average cost of cane to 1 ton of 88 net titre of sugar is £5 16s. 3d. The average cost of manufacture, wages, salaries, rations, fuel, mill supplies, and horsefeed is £1 4s. 9d. per ton, which brings the average cost up to £7 1s. per ton. The average cost at Proserpine Mill, with all expenses f.o.b. added, is £7 10s. 8d. per ton, and the total cost, including expenses on maintenance and renewals, mill machinery, tramways, etc., is £8 17s. 2d. This is, of course, exclusive of the import duty and exclusive of the excise and bounty. The Java raw sugar costs £7 5s. 11d. per ton. To this has to be added the interest on the capital invested in mills, plant, additions, maintnance, etc., cost of removal, insurance, and incidentals amounting to £1 12s. 8d., which brings the amount up to £8 18s. 7½d. per ton, and that is the cost of the production of sugar in Java as against £8 17s. 2d. at Proserpine. It is very easy to talk about black-grown sugar in Java and talk about it being cheap labour, but it is not so. According to those figures, supplied by a sugar

authority of many years' standing, it shows that we are producing sugar cheaper at Proserpine than it is produced at Java. I am sorry to have to admit that in the face of our protective duty of £6 per ton, and I repeat my interjection to the senior member for Maryborough that the protective duty of £6 per ton at the present time goes to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. If the threat of the Acting Prime Minister to remove that protective duty were put into effect to-morrow, it would not affect the sugar-grower or the sugar-worker one iota.

Mr. WHITE: Yes, it would. You are making a great mistake.

Mr. FERRICKS: Personally, I believe in protection for Australia, and I am one of those who would be prepared to see a protective duty of £8 per ton put on sugar——

Mr. WHITE: Hear, hear!

Mr. FERRICKS: Provided that the sugar-grower and the sugar-worker got it, and provided that it did not go where the £6 goes at present—to swell the profits of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. I have made a comparison here, and he will have an opportunity of refuting my comparison. I am only too sorry that we have to admit [5.30 p.m.] that the whole of our protective tariff is going into the coffers of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and until we get the system of new protection applied where the Federal Government will have the opportunity and the power of giving the benefit of that protection to the sugar-grower—the sugar producer, the man he employs, and the sugar consumer—then I, for one, will be against any increase of the import duty on black-grown cane coming into Australia, for while I have no love to give or embrace to offer to black-grown sugar, neither have I any love for sugar grown under black-labour conditions. I asked at the outset of this motion that the discussion should be confined to the question of the refining of sugar, and I do not want the question of excise and bounty introduced, or this made a tariff discussion.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do not spoil a good speech.

Mr. FERRICKS: It is necessary for me to refer to the tariff phase of the question. It will be said by some members who will get up, "Look what the Colonial Sugar Refining Company has done for Queensland!" I said at the outset that I would not indulge in a tirade against the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. I admit they have done something for Queensland, but they have done a great deal more for themselves. They have not pioneered one sugar district in Queensland. The style of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company was generally to follow on the lines of somebody else who had gone there.

Mr. MANN: They pioneered Homebush.

Mr. FERRICKS: They Pioneered Homebush, but not the Mackay district. They were late arrivals in Cairns; Swallow and Ariel were there before them; and on the Johnstone River the Mourilyan Sugar Company were before them. They were practically late arrivals in Mackay, and as for Childers they are newchums there.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: Nonsense! Talk of what you know something about.

Mr. FERRICKS: If the hon. gentleman had followed the tenor of my remarks, he would have understood what I meant. I mean comparatively, and I think the hon. member will admit that they are comparatively late arrivals in Childers.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: The second mill started.

Mr. FERRICKS: Yes, in 1894. It will be said that it is the duty of the Federal Government to establish a State refinery. In spite of what I may call my ultra-Australianism, I am one of those who always held, even before the defeat of the referendum—not in any spirit of State provincialism—I have always held that it was the duty of the State Government to establish a State sugar refinery, and I hold this proposition because they have the better opportunity. I think the junior member for Mackay last night said that the Federal Government at the present time had an opportunity of establishing a State refinery, as they had jurisdiction over commerce when it extended beyond the boundaries of one State.

Mr. SWAYNE: I did not say they could establish a State refinery—I said they could deal with it.

Mr. FERRICKS: Well, it must be apparent to the hon. member that all the Colonial Sugar Refining Company would have to do then would be to come to Queensland, and snap their fingers at the Federal Government.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: They would get an asylum in Queensland.

Mr. FERRICKS: Here is where I contend the power and the jurisdiction of the State come in. Talk about freights, and that it is cheaper to take sugar from Java to Sydney than from Bundaberg to Sydney!

Mr. FORSYTH: People can't carry it, because they are simply losing money hand over fist.

Mr. FERRICKS: I was coming to that, but you have anticipated me again. They are able to do that by receiving Dutch subsidies. I want to say that that has no economic application in the argument for or against this State establishing a State sugar refinery. The people will say the Colonial Sugar Refining Company have £5,000,000 invested, and they can fight the Government of Queensland. I say that once a concern is willing or able to spend millions to fight a State, and it becomes a menace to the prosperity of the State, then it is time that that concern had its head cut off. If we set out to fight the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, I am satisfied we can do it in this way: That fortunately, and thanks very greatly to the policy—I do not say initiated by members here, but initiated by this party for the last twenty-five years—fortunately, I say, the State owns the railways, and if it comes to a fight with the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, then the Government of Queensland has the constitutional power, I take it, to make differential rates for the carriage of their own sugar, manufactured at their own factories, and refined at their own State refinery, as against the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, or any other monopolist, and even if they have not specified constitutional power, then they have plenary power. I commend this question to the whole House. I think both of the hon. members for Mackay have said they were tired of hearing about the Colonial Sugar Refining Company; still I

can safely assure them that they are destined to hear a great deal more about the Colonial Sugar Refining Company in the near future. I do not want the Premier to get up and veto this proposal which has been advanced. I know that we have had it in view of the public for the last twenty years. I would ask him to look further into the proposal. I think the Government are, at the present time, in duty bound to put the coping-stone on their system of central mills, and if they do not do that we can only come to one conclusion, that they have no sympathy with the operations of the system into which they have so far gone, and that they have no desire to bump up against people who may be influential and wealthy. I understand that at the time of the Federal referendum hon. members opposite, and the Premier, said, "It is not necessary to give the Federal Government power to nationalise anything; the State has power, and the State will do it." Power was refused to the Federal Government to put these works into effect, and I ask, on behalf of this State, that the Government will comply with their promise and put it into effect.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: At the outset, I desire to very sincerely congratulate the hon. member who has moved this resolution on making a very moderate, a very informative, and a very well prepared speech.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Of course, the hon. member cannot expect me, nor can his party on that side expect me, to be prepared to accept his findings; he cannot expect me, nor can his colleagues, to accept the mass of figures in connection with this refinery business that he has taken the trouble to prepare and to give to the House this afternoon. The hon. member, in opening, said that he had no intention of making a tirade against the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, although he was obliged to refer to them and their business, and I again congratulate him on the fact that he dealt with his figures and expressed his ideas in a very moderate manner—(hear, hear!)—especially when I know that the mere name of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company acts sometimes as a red flag is supposed to act upon a bull upon some members of this House. The hon. member also desired that the fullest discussion should be given to this question. I must say he has followed out his ideas in that direction, for he has left very little time for anybody else to discuss this motion this afternoon.

Mr. LENNON: He was late in beginning, you know.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And he desired also that hon. members who followed him should strictly confine themselves to the question. I again say, that until the hon. member had almost finished his speech, he did strictly confine himself to the question he was advocating, and that was the reason why I interjected just at the end of his speech, when he began to get off the track, and asked him not to spoil a good speech.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: He was speaking as an Australian then.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Whether he was speaking as an Australian or not he began to get off the track of the question which, I think, from his point of view, he was very ably advocating, and I am one of those who think that the effect of a good speech is probably spoilt if one gets off the track and starts—well, something that may lead up to a very hot argument. It is quite impossible for me to follow the whole of the arguments or the figures of the hon. member, but he did refer at very great length, to the profits, or supposed profits, of the greatest sugar refining company in Australia—that is, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company—but he did not touch, in any manner at all, the operations of the Millaquin Refining Company.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: We can judge of that by the other.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I would like to point out that whilst the hon. member for Bowen was speaking, I, and members on this side, very carefully refrained from interjecting, and I do not desire to do anything but give some facts to the House; and if hon. members interject, I shall be drawn off the track probably, and I do not wish to be drawn off the track. The hon. member spoke of the enormous profits that had been made by this company for many years past, and he said the profits for the past seven years amounted to £1,088,000. I presume he was quoting from their balance-sheets, and he said that the reserves, which were formed from profits, had been capitalised in four years to the extent of £575,000, and he also said that the balance-sheet showed depreciation account, which was also made up of profits, £500,000. He followed this up by saying, and proving, probably to his satisfaction and to the satisfaction of hon. members who believe in a State refinery as against private refineries, that they also had undisclosed profits of fully 10 per cent. They had paid 10 per cent. dividend on their capital in the past for a number of years; they had also placed large sums to capital account from profits; they had also a depreciation account of £500,000; and that they also had undisclosed profits of 10 per cent. on their capital.

Mr. FERRICKS: Not exclusive of those items I mentioned.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I do not wish to misquote the hon. member. It is rather difficult to remember the whole of his figures. Even if the undisclosed profits amount to 10 per cent. of their capital in the seven years, I might mention they would amount to £1,088,000. And, further, without following every one of the arguments of the hon. member, he went on to say that nearly the whole of those profits were made from the refining of sugar, and not from the manufacture of raw sugar in the mills.

Mr. FERRICKS: I gave their own evidence. It was not mine.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is my duty, having some little knowledge of the sugar industry, to try and show these arguments are not altogether in accordance with facts, and to show that the profits, at any rate, on the manufacture of raw sugar, enter very considerably indeed into the profits of that company or of people who carry on the business of manufacturing raw sugars only, and not the business of refining. I will not enter into the whole of the questions that the hon. member entered into with respect to debentures, or with respect to the mills that

were owned by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. I shall confine myself to the facts of the present day. The hon. member quite rightly stated that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company do not make any profits at the present time out of canegrowing. I am very well aware that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company in the year 1881 or 1882 had a Bill passed through this House authorising them to acquire certain selections in certain districts, which could not be legally transferred to them at the time, on the understanding that they spent in Queensland a sum, I think, of £500,000. Those selections in the Mackay district were transferred—were sold to the company, as a matter of fact, by the owners—and they erected the Homebush Mill, and although the hon. member wound up his speech by saying, although we claim the Colonial Sugar Refining Company have done a very great deal for the sugar industry in Queensland, they have done a very great deal more for themselves, I have been intimately acquainted for a great number of years with North Queensland, and I say that the advent of the methods and knowledge and the capital of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company into Queensland was of very great benefit to those who were then working by methods of manufacture which were not up to date, and even though they did come and show us with their superior knowledge how to manufacture our sugar more cheaply, of course they were doing it for their own profit. Why should a man come along as a philanthropist? I do think the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, or any other company, or any business man, would be extremely foolish if he poses, when he is carrying on his business, as a philanthropist. But the undoubted fact remains that they were the first people to introduce into Queensland a system that was better than the single crusher, and from that time the economic manufacture of sugar has gone on step by step—to use an expression much favoured by hon. members opposite—until the manufacture of raw sugar in Queensland, I have no hesitation in saying, is in the forefront of economic production in the world. We have not, of course, sugar-mills that are as powerful or as large as some of the mills in Hawaii, in the Sandwich Islands, and in Cuba there are mills of a very large capacity indeed; but for the size of our mills, which range up to a capacity of some 15,000 tons of raw sugar in five months, I have no hesitation in saying, and say it without fear of contradiction, that our extraction of sugar from the cane and subsequent manufacture is equal to anything in the world. I will say that Queensland owes a very great deal to the operations of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company in the direction I have mentioned. At the same time, much as Queensland owes to that company for the knowledge they were able to impart to us who were then single crushing, Queensland does not owe the company such a debt that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, or any other refining company, should crush out either the millowners, the canegrowers, or the labourers.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And if the conditions were such as are freely stated by a number of gentlemen throughout Australia at the present time, including the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, I would say that steps should be taken by this Government, or by any other Government, to protect an industry that could be so crushed out by a private company.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: But I am not prepared to accept such statements, because I have some knowledge of the conditions of the sugar industry, and I desire—unfortunately I cannot do so this evening—I desire to place some figures from my point of view before the House before we come to a decision on this momentous question; and it will, perhaps, be as well if I leave them till some future day. The hon. gentleman distinctly said there was not much profit made out of the manufacture of raws.

Mr. LENNON: He was quoting one of your own friends.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And he went on to say that nearly all the profits are made out of refining. In saying this, I do not wish to think or speak always of the one company; I try to think of it as the refining of sugar by anybody, because if one company can make these profits then all companies with well-equipped establishments and proper management should be able to make them.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. gentleman also acknowledged that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, in purchasing raw sugars from other mills, paid the excise—which is perfectly correct.

Mr. FERRICKS: And they pass it on to the consumer.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is the effective part of the £6 duty that is passed on to the consumer. He also said he considered that the refining cost £1 10s. a ton, and that there was a profit on the refining operations of £4 6s. a ton to the company as a minimum. I think he said that if he so desired he could make it £5 1s. per ton of sugar.

Mr. FORSYTH: They would make £1,000,000 a year at that rate.

Mr. FERRICKS: They are making it, too.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It reminds me somewhat of a motion brought before the House the first year I was here by Mr. Givens, then member for Cairns. It will be found in *Hansard*, vol. lxxxvii., page 567. He claimed an average difference between the value of raws and the value of refines of £6 16s. 10d. a ton.

Mr. FERRICKS: Why is there a difference of more than £6 a ton in Australia and only £3 a ton in America?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I would like to have been able to give the figures, but perhaps it would not be wise to start giving them now, and then have to knock off after giving a few of them. The hon. gentleman said this meant a profit to the refining company of 9s. and 10s. on every ton of cane the farmers grew. It was just at that moment that he began to spoil a very excellent speech. If the Colonial Sugar Refining Company make that profit, which, of course, is absolutely out of all reason from a business point of view, then, of course, they are taking that much out of every ton of cane.

Mr. FERRICKS: Show where the £6 difference goes to.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I prefer deferring the figures until we get to the motion another time. The hon. member also says that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company only confess to a profit of £2 a ton on their refined sugars. I have not been able to see where is the profit of £2 a ton on refining, and I can conclusively prove, when I have the opportunity, that if they make a profit of £2 a ton on the refining of sugar, then the Colonial Sugar Refining Company make no profit at all on the 75,000 odd tons of raw sugar they manufacture in Queensland and New South Wales.

Mr. FERRICKS: Undisclosed profits.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: As a matter of fact, the average profits in the sugar-works guarantee mills in Queensland during the season 1909—the average for 37,000 tons—was £1 12s. 8d. per ton; and I am not prepared to think that the operations of a company such as the Colonial Sugar Refining Company will result in a less profit than £1 12s. 8d. per ton. But I will put it at £1 10s. a ton, because I see from their balance-sheet—of which I got a shareholder to lend me a copy—that the profits shown last year for the six months amounted to £112,000.

At 7 o'clock the House, in accordance with Sessional Order, proceeded with Government business.

SUPPLY.

OPENING OF COMMITTEE.

On the Order of the Day being called for the consideration of the Opening Speech of His Excellency the Governor,

The SPEAKER read to the House so much of the Speech of His Excellency as had been addressed to the House.

The PREMIER said: I beg to move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Supply to be granted to His Majesty."

Question put and passed.

STANDING RULES AND ORDERS.

MOTION TO GO INTO COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. E. H. Macartney, *Brisbane North*) said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that you do now leave the chair.

Mr. HARDACRE: I understood that the Minister in charge of the new Standing Orders intended to address the House and give a general review of the proposed alterations in the new code which is to be submitted to us for consideration. I rise before we go into Committee to give the hon. gentleman an opportunity of doing that. As the hon. gentleman has not done so—he may follow me, of course—I would just like to take this opportunity of saying that whilst the consideration of the new Standing Orders is more a Committee than a matter for second-reading speeches, yet I may be permitted to say that, though there are some of the new Standing Orders which are not quite acceptable to me, and I suppose to many other members—and we will take the proper time to discuss them, and perhaps move amendments in them—yet, on the whole, I think they are a considerable improvement on the Sessional Orders passed last session. Generally speaking, compared with the old Standing Orders, exclusive of the Sessional Orders of last session to which I have alluded, they are an improvement in arrangement and in clearness, and in some respects also in the direction of expediting the business of the House. They leave out practically obsolete rules of procedure, which will sometimes obviate unnecessary delay. The new Standing Orders are really more a matter for discussion in Committee than on the motion to go into Committee, and therefore, with these few remarks, I will allow the motion to pass.

Mr. FERRICKS: Before you leave the chair, Sir, I would like to ask, if I am in order, whether it is within your jurisdiction to authorise the excision from the papers of this sitting the replies given to me to-day by the Home Secretary in reply to my questions. I noticed that in *Hansard*, vol. cvii., for 1910, page 2488, you gave a ruling to this effect—

"Earlier in the session I went to some trouble to lay down what rules should govern questions to be asked by one member addressed to another member in this Chamber. If a question is asked in this Chamber by an hon. member on the strength of a newspaper report, he must be absolutely assured of its accuracy. It is laid down by all authorities that an hon. member asking a question based on a newspaper report must make himself responsible for the accuracy of that report."

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will not be quite in order in raising that question on this motion to go into Committee. I understand a difficulty has arisen, and, if the House will allow him on the motion for the adjournment of the House, the hon. member can raise the question then.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

CHAPTER I.—PROCEEDINGS ON OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS suggested to the deputy leader of the Opposition that they should deal with the Standing Orders by clauses, taking those consecutive clauses in which no alteration was proposed in groups. The hon. member would notice that the number of Standing Orders in the new code was 330, and that the number in the old code was 336. Two of those were repealed in 1893, leaving 334. One was added in 1900, which made the exact number as it actually stood to-day, 335. Of those 335, 284 were retained without alteration of any kind, and it was, perhaps, unnecessary to discuss any of those—at any rate, not to any very great extent. That left 51, of which 27 had been repealed, other rules taking their place, involving very little alteration in some cases. There would be no difficulty in pointing out the differences when they came to the particular Standing Orders. The remaining 24 were amended, but many of the amendments were only verbal. He did not propose to enter into any explanation or discussion of the nature of the alterations unless desired to do so by the Committee, as it would be out of order to do so. He moved that—

"Rules 1 to 5—"Proceedings on Opening of Parliament—a member proposed as Speaker"—be agreed to."

It would be noticed that there were no

alterations in those rules. Before proceeding further he would like to ask the deputy leader of the Opposition if he would be prepared to deal with the rules in the way he suggested. Certainly it would be the most convenient way of having full and fair discussion.

Mr. LENNON: I think so.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If desired, he was prepared to give the Committee a short statement of the various alterations to be proposed. If not, they might proceed with the first five rules straight away.

Mr. LENNON asked why it was that members had only just had placed in their hands copies of the document showing the old and new code in parallel columns?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They were circulated a fortnight ago.

Mr. LENNON: Not in that particular form. It would have facilitated matters very much if members had had that document some days ago. However, he apologised for interrupting the hon. gentleman.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He was not aware that the document had not been circulated, but was under the impression that it had been placed in the hands of hon. members. The question was whether hon. members desired him to give a short statement of the alterations which the Committee proposed should be made in the Standing Orders.

Mr. MAUGHAN: It would be a very good idea.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The alterations made in the present Standing Orders were not very numerous, and they were not particularly far-reaching. The work of the Committee had practically resulted in arranging the Standing Orders in a somewhat better order, and including the Sessional Orders of last session, with improvements which protected the rights of hon. members. The first alteration of any importance was that in connection with the election of Speaker. It would be remembered that in 1897 and 1898 they had some little difficulty in the election of Speaker, owing to the fact that a number of members were proposed for the position, and it had become necessary to submit names a second time. In the new code it was proposed to introduce a system under which the Speaker would be elected by an exhaustive ballot, if necessary. If two or more members were proposed for the position, each member of the House would hand in to the Clerk a paper with the name of the member he thought best fitted for Speaker written upon it.

Mr. ALLEN: Must a member be nominated?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, a member must be proposed and seconded. If more than one member was nominated, then the election would be determined by the process of an exhaustive ballot, and the first member who obtained a majority would be the Speaker of the House. That was provided for in Rule 6. Then in Rule 9 it was provided that if a vacancy occurred in the office of Speaker during the session, or in recess, the same procedure should be followed in electing a member to fill the vacancy. The next alteration of any importance was in Rule 11, which provided for the nomination at the beginning of the session by the Speaker of a panel of not more than five members to relieve the Chairman of Committees, and to act as Deputy Speaker as the exigencies of the business of the House might require. The details of that rule could be discussed when they came to it. Rule 107 dealt with the subject of the time limit of speeches. It practically incorporated in the Standing Orders the Sessional Order of last session, with certain variations. The Sessional Order of last session provided that a member should not speak more than half an hour in the House with certain exceptions. That was considered insufficient, and the Standing Orders Committee arrived at the conclusion that the time might be fixed at 40 minutes, and that was the time stated in the new Standing Order. Again, by the Sessional Order a member was limited in Committee to three speeches of ten, five, and five minutes each respectively. The new rule provided that he might speak for fifteen minutes the first time, and five minutes each on the second and third occasions, but allowed a member, if he so desired, to continue his speech for the full twenty-five minutes allotted. He thought he was correct in saying that the Committee were unanimous in agreeing to those amendments. Rule 306 deals with the days allotted for Supply. This was the Sessional Order of last session, with certain modifications. The time limited for Supply in the Sessional Order was twenty-one days, but that included the time devoted to the discussion of the Financial Statement, which last session occupied something like six days.

Mr. MURPHY: Don't you think it would have been better to have stated a certain time for each department?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That was a matter which they could consider when they came to the rule. At present he was only indicating the alterations proposed. The time fixed by the new rule was seventeen days for the discussion of the Estimates, exclusive of the time devoted to the discussion of the Financial Statement, but the last day was to be devoted to the receipt of the resolutions, with the Speaker in the chair. The report from Committee of Supply must be disposed of on the seventeenth day. The next most important alteration—and he did not think it would be looked upon as objectionable—was in the rule dealing with the formation of Committee of Supply and Committee of Ways and Means. There was a somewhat technical procedure attached to the formation of those Committees under the present Standing Orders. By the new rule it was provided that those Committees could be constituted at any time by motion on notice given in the ordinary way. He thought that alteration would commend itself to the Committee as an improvement; it was the practice adopted in the Imperial Parliament. He did not propose to go further into the various alterations made, but he might indicate just shortly how the fifty-one Standing Orders he had mentioned were affected. Twenty-seven of those were repealed, and twenty-four were amended. Rules 11, 12, and 117 were repealed because they were unnecessary if the new rule relating to the election of Speaker was adopted. Rules 16, 307, and 317 were re-

pealed because the matters to which they related were dealt with in the new rule relating to the constitution of Committee of Supply and Committee of Ways and Means. Rules 25, 27, 30, 167, 168, 169, and 170 related to the matter of a quorum, and the matters they dealt with would be found under one heading in the new code. Rule 38 was repealed, and was replaced by new Rule 40, which was practically the same, there being only a slight modification of the existing rule. Under that rule members would have the right, which they possessed now, of giving fresh notice of a notice of motion. Rule 43 was repealed, and supplanted by new Rule 45. There was only a slight change in the form of the rule. The rule itself dealt with the expunging of unbecoming expressions from notices of motions and questions. Rules 116, 117, 118, 165, 166, and 167 were repealed and replaced by new Rule 122, which dealt with "Order in the House." It would be remembered by hon. members that the Orders at present were scattered all over the place and they were difficult to find, as the index they had at present was by no means perfect. Under the new code the Committee would find that these Orders had all been grouped under the one heading—under Rule 122. Rule 127 was rendered useless in view of Rule 130, which related to the adjournment of the House, and pointed out that a motion for the adjournment of the House should not be entertained except for the purpose of debating a matter of urgent public importance. Rule 136 was a rule which was repealed because there was no record whatever of its having been used. It had reference to the right of a member to reply for half an hour after the question "That the question be now put" had been proposed. It was not right that a member should have the right to speak for half an hour after that question was proposed, and, as he said, it had never been brought into use.

Mr. MURPHY: We tried to bring it into use a couple of times.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That only showed how useless it was.

Mr. MURPHY: It shows how "gaggy" you were. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Rule 136A was repealed and was re-enacted in Rule 251. Rule 286 was the last of the orders repealed. It was repealed because there was a clause in the Constitution Act passed in 1908 which now deals with that matter, and the provisions of that Act could be referred to if necessary later on. There were also twenty-four amended orders, which made up the total of fifty-one which the Standing Orders Committee had dealt with. Rules 40, 103, and 162 were all amended by the addition of the words "except as in these Standing Orders otherwise expressly provided," and that was put in because of the exceptional powers provided in other Standing Orders which might lead to confusion. Rules 40, 44, 47, 49, 90, and 105 had relation to the leave of the House being granted to an hon. member. It would be noticed in many of the Standing Orders that certain acts were permitted to be done by leave of the House. Some of them were to be done by the unanimous leave, and others only apparently required a majority of the House. It had created confusion in the past, and the object of the Standing Orders Committee had been to show in each and every Standing Order what was intended, in order to prevent confusion. Rule 57 was amended to provide that a lapsed order might be restored to the business-paper on motion without notice, to be decided without debate. Rules 73, 107, 108, 126, and 128 all had reference to the adjournment of the House. The alteration to Rule 110 related to dissension from the Speaker's ruling. The alteration in Rule 130 was in reference to a motion for the adjournment of the House, and the notice to move the adjournment must be received by the Speaker not less than one hour before the time appointed for the meeting of the House. The amendment to Rule 132 was consequential. Rule 134 dealt with "tedious repetition," and it related not only to the tedious repetition of the arguments of the hon. member himself, but of the arguments of previous speakers.

Mr. MURPHY: That is a shame. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In Rule 276 it was proposed to omit a form of question which was always put after the third reading of a Bill, and that was the question "That the Bill do now pass." That had been omitted from the proceedings of the Imperial Parliament, and it seemed to him that they could do the same here. Rule 278 was a consequential amendment. Rule 335 was amended to make "Parliament" read "Imperial Parliament." That practically covered all the alterations proposed by the Standing Orders Committee. There were some alterations in reference to disagreement with the rulings of the Speaker and Chairman of Committees. A ruling by the Speaker could only be disagreed with on a notice of motion, which must be considered within three days, and it also provided that if the Chairman's ruling were disagreed with it could only be discussed at the end of the sitting. When they got to those Standing Orders they would go into them more in detail.

Mr. MURPHY: It is a curtailment of the liberty of the Opposition.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Those were all the alterations proposed. He moved that Rules 1 to 5 be agreed to.

Mr. MURPHY (*Croydon*) thought the Standing Orders Committee ought to be congratulated on the work they had done in connection with the Standing Orders. On perusing the report he thought that the committee could be congratulated on arriving at their conclusions without a great deal of dissent. The hon. member for Leichhardt had dissented to some suggestions, but the majority overruled him. As the Government and Opposition were represented on the Standing Orders Committee, he could take it that most of them would be agreed to, but of course there were some matters that were open to discussion, and they must remember that some of the Standing Orders were levelled against the Opposition in Parliament. They knew that in many Parliaments to-day there was a movement for the curtailment of speeches. In old days, before the rigid Standing Orders were introduced, it was very easy for members to put up a stonewall and keep it going for hours, and the Government could not stop them, but nowadays with the alteration of the Standing Orders it made the Opposition keen in looking after their interests,

and they had to devise means by which they could block iniquitous measures that were introduced by the Government. There were some very good Standing Orders introduced by the Committee, including the election of Speaker by ballot, but it would not get away from the question of the [7.30 p.m.] election of Speaker under the party system. The nominee of the party would receive the party vote, no matter what party happened to be in power. So far as Rules 1 to 5 were concerned, nobody was likely to take any exception to them. He was rather late in getting to the House, and had a few words to say, so he had taken advantage of this motion to do it.

Mr. ALLEN was not altogether satisfied with the mode of nomination of Speaker. No. 4 provided—

"After the members present have been sworn, a member, addressing himself to the Clerk, shall propose some member, then present, to the House, for their Speaker."

etc. He understood that the operation of Rule 6 was to overcome a difficulty which arose in the House both in 1907 and 1908, at which time there were three parties in the House, neither of which commanded a majority. Each party sat in caucus, and selected a Speaker, and each in turn was defeated. In his opinion, no real way out of the difficulty was provided; under this new rule they were not absolutely providing for the Speaker being a non-party nomination, they were really preventing the smaller party having any say whatever. In so far as the initial nomination was concerned, the smaller party had no say whatever; they had a second choice, which was limited.

Mr. MURPHY: If a small party has only three members it can nominate a candidate.

Mr. ALLEN: It would mean a solid party vote on the first nomination, and the individual members of the parties would consider themselves bound to vote for the members selected in caucus, and although the best man might be nominated by the smaller party he would not be elected. He would like to see provision made for a wider nomination, as he did not see why the nominee of any particular clique, however small or large, should be practically the voice of the House.

Mr. FORSYTH: How can you do it?

Mr. ALLEN: He would suggest that when the House met a card should be handed to each member on which to write down the name of the member who he thought was fitted for the position of Speaker.

Mr. MURPHY: We would all write down our names. (Laughter.)

Mr. ALLEN: The larger party of the three might have two nominees. If a party had twenty-seven members, and there were sixteen for one man and eleven for the other, under his (Mr. Allen's) suggestion the man who had eleven supporters in his own caucus, if he was the best man, all things being equal, would have just as good a chance as the other man in the open vote of the House.

Mr. MURPHY: Would not the party meet first and pick their man? That is to be got over.

Mr. ALLEN: His suggestion was that when the House met a card should be presented to each member, who should write thereon the name of the person who in his opinion was best fitted for the position of Speaker, and from that they could go on with the details of an exhaustive ballot. As it was now, they were not leaving the position absolutely in the hands of members as distinct from parties.

Mr. MULLAN was afraid that even the suggestions of the hon. member for Bulloo would not eliminate the party element in the election of Speaker, but there was one thing commendable in them, and that was that by avoiding the nomination of Speaker they would evade the undesirable practice of discussing for a whole day the merits or demerits of a candidate. If each member on entering the House was presented with a card, it would be understood on both sides who were to be the likely nominees. (Laughter.) They would not be eliminating party, but saving the time usually taken up in discussion, as if there was nobody nominated there would be no speeches from anybody. He was not prepared to move an amendment, but that was a matter that might be submitted to the Standing Orders Committee.

Mr. MURPHY: Before they could get away from the party element in the election of Speaker they would have to get away from party government altogether. Both parties would meet in caucus, and the man who was selected by the strongest party in the House would get the position. As a member of a very small party in the House, he wished some scheme could be devised under which one of the few members of the Independent party would be able to attain the position of Speaker—(laughter)—but what chance had any small party of getting any position whatever?

Mr. ROBERTS: You have got Buckley's show.

Mr. MURPHY: If the Standing Orders Committee were to sit from now till doomsday, they could not devise any scheme which, under our present system of party government, would eliminate the selection of a party Speaker and a party Chairman of Committees.

Mr. MULLAN: You could avoid having a day for discussion.

Mr. MURPHY: What were they here for but to discuss matters? They had a right to criticise in connection with the election of Speaker, and he was not prepared to do away with the rights of members in that direction. He thought it was the duty of members to criticise the nominations for the Speakership and join in electing the best man. It did not follow that the best man was always elected. The Government nominee would obtain the position, and he was not against a party supporting its own man. The only chance a member of a small party had was when the Government party and the Opposition party were pretty equal. Then the Government would come along and appoint a member of the Independent party to the Speakership. They saw that done in South Australia, and it would probably be done in New South Wales when the New South Wales Parliament met in a few weeks' time. He wished the hon. member for Bulloo could devise some means by which the smallest party in the House would have a chance of electing its nominee to the Speakership.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN quite agreed with the suggestion of the hon. member for Bulloo, and it would be well if the Committee took it into serious consideration. It would be well if it was left to each member to write

on a card the name of the man whom he thought best fitted to be Speaker, as that would do away with a lot of useless discussion. It was a very unpleasant duty to express one's candid opinion of any man, and if it was possible to get away from that system, it would be a good thing. He did not think members would vote for themselves, particularly so if each member was required to sign his name on the back of his nomination card. He did not believe any member would be so foolish as to nominate himself. If he (Mr. O'Sullivan) had the choice of writing the name of the man he wished to be Speaker, he would write the name of the man whom he thought most fitted for the position, even if he was a political opponent.

Mr. MURPHY: Would you? (Laughter.)

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he would, and there were dozens of other members who would do the same. They would have done it at the last election of Speaker had they had a free hand.

Mr. FORSYTH: That argument was very good, but when a member got up and talked about each member giving his honest opinion as to who was the best man for the position of Speaker, he was forced to laugh. He remembered not very long ago when there was some trouble over the question of the election of Speaker. It was not a question of the man's ability, because there could be no doubt about that. It was a question of whether one man was liked better than another man. It was not a party question at that time—he believed it was the only time when the election of Speaker was not a party question—that was the time Sir Arthur Morgan was appointed Speaker in place of Sir Alfred Cowley. It was pretty well understood that each party would stick to their own man. An hon. member had stated that the Government members were bound to vote for the Speaker who was recently elected. He (Mr. Forsyth) did not remember of any caucus meeting at which they were asked to do that. As a matter of fact, he had told Mr. Armstrong weeks before the meeting of Parliament that he would get his vote. The reason he did that was, as far as he could judge, Mr. Armstrong was the best man in the House for the position. He thought it would be just as well to allow Rules 1 to 5 to pass. It might happen that only one man was nominated, and it was only in the event of two men being nominated that they would have to ballot. He did not think the discussion that took place in connection with the election of Speaker was a very long one, and the time wasted did not amount to very much.

Mr. HARDACRE said the hon. member for Bulloo had sprung a surprise on the Committee, and it was a very interesting question. It was a very ingenious suggestion, and he (Mr. Hardacre) would agree with it if it would in any way do away with the party vote in the election of Speaker. He was afraid it would not do that, and would only lead to a long, exhaustive ballot, leading ultimately to the same result. If the suggestion were adopted, and each member, as he entered the House, were handed a paper on which he was asked to write the name of the member whom he wished to be nominated for the position of Speaker, it really meant nomination by card instead of nomination by vote.

Mr. MULLAN: There is no nomination at all.

Mr. HARDACRE: If it meant no nomination at all, it meant an exhaustive ballot. They had not come to the question of an exhaustive ballot. The suggestion really meant nomination in a very difficult and bad way, and would take up the time of the House, and lead to the same result. It would mean that probably twenty members would be nominated, with the result that they would have seventeen or more ballots before they got down to two or three men, who would be the original rival candidates.

Mr. ALLEN: It would not take till midnight.

Mr. HARDACRE: It would mean that they would go through a long process and come to the same result. Then there was another very strong objection to the suggestion. It would, to a large extent, prevent a minority from ever getting its candidate elected Speaker.

Mr. MURPHY: And they have got no chance now.

Mr. HARDACRE: Not a very great chance, but there was a chance now.

Mr. MURPHY: Buckley's. Blair had a good chance.

Mr. HARDACRE: It was quite possible circumstances might arise which would give the Independent Opposition every chance. When they had that triangular contest some years ago there was a very great possibility of the minority getting their candidate elected.

Mr. MURPHY: As a matter of fact, there were three nearly even parties then.

Mr. HARDACRE: There was another vital objection to the suggestion—that it would do away altogether with the possibility of members criticising the merits or demerits of the person proposed to be Speaker of the House, or Chairman. He did not think they should give up the opportunity of criticising the merits or demerits of any member proposed for the position of Speaker, because he had seen several occasions when such criticism had done a great deal of good; therefore, he could not see his way to support the proposal of the hon. member for Bulloo.

Mr. MURPHY saw no possibility of carrying out the suggestion of the hon. member for Bulloo. Nobody could say that the late Speaker was not fitted to occupy the Chair; yet it was said at the time by Opposition members that their nominee would fill the Chair better than Mr. Bell. The fact was that as long as there was party government it would be a party matter, and the party in power would put their man into the Chair and take all the plums of office.

Mr. DOUGLAS did not altogether agree with the hon. member for Leichhardt and the hon. member for Croydon in regard to the criticism of any member proposed for the position of Speaker. No one had any control over the House at the time, and statements might be made which were entirely unwarranted. When the present

Speaker was elected to the Chair it was said that he obtained the position of Chairman as a bribe.

Mr. MURPHY: Don't you know perfectly well that there was a lot in it?

Mr. DOUGLAS: Whether that was so or not, there was no control over the House when a member was proposed as Speaker, and he thought there was something in the suggestion of the hon. member for Bulloo. He thought it would be well to insert the words "without discussion" after the word "proposed."

Mr. MURPHY said he wished to be fair; and he thought he ought to make an explanation in regard to Mr. Armstrong being made Chairman as a bribe. At that time there were thirty-six members on one side and thirty-five on the other. The Opposition were anxious to get an extra vote, and the Government were anxious to keep their supporters. Mr. Armstrong became Chairman of Committees, and some members thought the Government gave him the position to placate him, because he had given them a certain amount of trouble. They did not know it for a fact, and he thought it was hardly fair of him to make the interjection. He went too far when he said the hon. gentleman obtained his position as Chairman as a bribe.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ALLEN: It was apparent that the Committee had decided to adopt this rule; but, seeing that they were limiting the power of nomination, he would call for a division on the next alteration.

Rules 1 to 5 put and passed.

On Rule 6—"Contested election of Speaker"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said this rule had reference to the method of electing a Speaker. If only two members were nominated, the one who got a majority of votes was elected, and there was an end of the matter. If more than two members were proposed, and none of them received a majority of the votes of the members present, the member who obtained the lowest number would be withdrawn, with the view of the votes being given in the same way to the other members nominated; and so on until some member obtained a majority.

Mr. MURPHY asked if there was a possibility of only the proposer and seconder of a member having an opportunity of dealing with the merits or demerits of members proposed for the position? Would they be the only members entitled to speak on the occasion of electing a Speaker?

Mr. ALLEN strongly protested against the passing of the rule. It was all very well for hon. members to talk about an exhaustive ballot, but the rule as it stood left the door open to those members who wished to engineer cliques. They knew that the rule was proposed in con-
[8 p.m.] sequence of what occurred some years ago when there were three parties in the House and a difficulty cropped up over the election of Speaker. Under the old Standing Orders, when the first vote was taken it was a mandate for all the members of the House to lay their heads together and find out the best way out of the difficulty; but, under the proposed rule, the minority would simply be told that they had no choice, but must take what was given to them. They were not going to improve things one iota by agreeing to the proposed change. If there was an open nomination, it might be all right, but they were limiting the nominations to the nominees of cliques, and they should not do anything that would facilitate their workings.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS thought the hon. member was under a misapprehension. There was no intention whatever to limit the nominations. Any member of the House could be nominated.

Mr. MURPHY: I raised the question of the limitation of the right to speak.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS was not like the hon. member; he could not speak of more than one thing at a time, and he was at present dealing with the objection raised by the hon. member for Bulloo. It was open to any member of the House to be nominated, provided he could find a nominator and a seconder. With reference to the limitation of the right of speech, the hon. member for Croydon would see that there was absolutely no change on the present practice involved. The Clerk occupied the chair, and he had no right of control over hon. members. Every member had the right to speak as often as he liked. It was left to the good sense of members themselves as to what was right in the matter. In no part of the Standing Order was there any deprivation of the right of members to speak.

* Mr. NEVITT (*Carpentaria*) was of the opinion that the rule was a considerable improvement on the old Standing Order. It had been stated that it was some years prior to 1907 that the election of a Speaker was last made a party question, but those who were in the House in 1907 would remember that there were three gentlemen nominated for the position, and each of the three got pretty well an equal number of votes, with the result that none of them obtained a majority, and the House had to adjourn for something like a couple of hours to give parties an opportunity of deciding whom they would support. The new rule would do away with that sort of thing to a very considerable extent. He was of the opinion that when the hon. member for Croydon spoke there was nothing in the hon. member's contention, and since then they had the assurance of the Minister that there was nothing in it, and he thought they could reasonably support the rule as it was submitted to them.

Mr. MURPHY: Since he had been in that Chamber he had received a good many assurances from hon. gentlemen in charge of Bills, and after the Bills were passed he found that the assurances were not worth a snap of the fingers. Standing Order 5 provided the method of nomination. The Clerk was in the chair, and one member got up and proposed the name of a member for the office of Speaker and another member seconded the nomination, and then it was competent for any other member to propose some other member. Then the Clerk put the question to the House. Now, was there any provision in the Standing Order under discussion for the Clerk to put the question? None at all.

Mr. NEVITT: You were never prevented from speaking.

Mr. MURPHY: He was never prevented from speaking because the nominations were put from the chair, and he was entitled to speak on every motion submitted from the chair by the Clerk. It was now proposed that when members were nominated and seconded each member should vote by ballot, and they might find, unless the thing was definitely settled now, when they got up to speak they would be told that no discussion was permissible. Certainly the Clerk would be in the chair, so that there was no possibility of any member being turned out if he desired to speak, and perhaps that was a point he had overlooked when he spoke before.

Mr. THEODORE thought there was a good deal in the contention of the hon. member for Croydon, although it did not seem to be generally recognised. It was quite possible that a restriction on discussion after nominations were received might ensue. The Clerk might be in the chair, but the gentleman leading the majority of the members of the House might propose restrictions if the thing was not clearly laid down. He therefore moved—

"The insertion after the word "Speaker" in the second line, of the words "and at the conclusion of the discussion on the nominations."

Mr. LENNON advised the hon. gentleman in charge of the Standing Orders to accept the amendment, as it would do away with all doubt as to the right of hon. members to speak.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS asked the hon. member not to press the amendment, and to accept the assurance of the Standing Orders Committee, who wished to make the Standing Orders as short and concise as possible, that there was no desire to curtail the rights of members to speak. The Clerk would be in the chair during the election of Speaker, and he would have no power to interfere and prevent members speaking. If there was any doubt about the matter, he would not object to an amendment which would make the rule clear, but he thought it was absolutely clear as it was.

Mr. HARDACRE did not think there was any doubt about the right of members to discuss the fitness or otherwise of members nominated for the office of Speaker, or that members would be prevented in any way from discussing a nomination. Under the old Rule 4 the motion had to be made, "That such member do take the chair of the House as Speaker," and that motion had to be seconded, and that rule was not repealed, so that exactly the same procedure would be followed under the new Standing Orders. A nomination made in that form would be a distinct specific motion, and as such would be open to discussion, even if the Speaker was in the chair.

Mr. MURPHY: If the question was put it could be discussed.

Mr. HARDACRE: When a question was proposed it would be open to discussion, as it had been under the old rules. All that was proposed in the new rule was that after the nominations a certain procedure should be followed in electing a Speaker. He did not think there was the slightest danger of any member being prevented from speaking on a nomination, and saw no necessity for the amendment.

Mr. PAYNE was inclined to disagree with the hon. member for Leichhardt on this matter. There was a difference between the old and the new rule, and that difference was that it was distinctly provided in the old rules that "The Clerk of the Assembly shall . . . put the question," whereas there was no such provision in the new Standing Orders. Ever since he had been in the House members had criticised any member who was nominated for the position of Speaker, and he did not think they should be prevented from expressing their opinions as to the fitness or otherwise of a member nominated for the position. He had no reason to doubt the Minister's word that there was no desire to curtail the right of speech, but at the same time he would point out that a radical change was proposed in the mode of electing their Speaker, and it would be wise to accept an amendment which would make it clear that members would have the right to discuss the nominations.

Mr. D. HUNTER (*Woolloongabba*) confessed that he did not like anything in Rule 6. He did not see why members of Parliament should be afraid to give a vote openly.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. D. HUNTER: They should not be afraid to vote for a certain man and take the consequences. He did not believe in the ballot at all by members of Parliament, but preferred open voting. If they altered it, as had been suggested, to include the words "at the conclusion of the discussion," that would mean that they must have a discussion whether they wished to do so or not, otherwise the election of Speaker would be illegal. He had the strongest objection to an election by ballot. They were responsible to their electors, and they should vote openly to put a man in the chair and take the responsibility for it. He objected to the rule altogether and would vote against it.

Mr. MURPHY: The idea of the Standing Orders Committee was that the election of Speaker should take place without any discussion at all, because the rule provided that the Speaker should be balloted for—that members should go up to the table and record their votes.

Mr. HARDACRE: No.

Mr. MURPHY: Then what was the use of having a ballot at all if they were going to have a lot of discussion? (Laughter.) The Standing Orders Committee introduced the rules thinking that they would get away from the party nominee in the election of Speaker by having a ballot, but they would not get away from it at all. If a man got up and criticised a candidate everyone would know how he was going to vote. If the hon. member for Leichhardt were nominated by the Labour party for the position, and a member of the Labour party got up and criticised him, it would be evidence that that man was going to vote against him. The ballot would make no difference to the party voting for their man. The members to the right of the Speaker would vote for their man, the members to the left would vote for their man, and the members on the cross benches would vote how they liked. (Laughter.)

Mr. MANN (*Cairns*) did not agree with the last speaker. (Laughter.) He believed in electing the Speaker by ballot, for reasons which most members could easily understand. A member might think that another member

would make an indifferent Speaker, but if he were friendly with him he would not like to vote against him. The Speakership was the highest gift that the House had to offer, and, if possible, the Speaker should be elected by the majority, and they could only do that by ballot.

Mr. MURPHY: Do you think there is any chance of getting it that way?

Mr. MANN: Yes; if there was no chance of party being introduced into it. If it was a party question, no matter what the nominee was like, the party would sink their prejudices against him and vote for him because he was the nominee of the party. They had a lot of trouble in 1907 over the election of Speaker, when the late Mr. Leahy was nominated by the Philp party, Mr. Jackson by the Kidston party, and Mr. Maughan by the Labour party, and they all received about an equal amount of votes, each receiving the party vote. At that time the feeling was that if they could have taken a ballot that a Speaker would have been elected. A Speaker elected under the party system made him favour his party rather than come into conflict with the party officials and organisers, who might oppose him at the next election. If a Speaker felt that he owed his election to the vote of the House, he would give a fair ruling and not favour one party or the other.

Mr. MAY: That is good logic.

Mr. MANN: He believed in the election being made by ballot.

Mr. WIENHOLT (*Fassifern*) did not believe in the ballot system at all. It would be a great mistake to introduce it and would only be introducing the thin end of the wedge, and by and by they would be asked to decide some other question by balloting. It would be better to give their votes openly, and it would certainly be the manly way.

Mr. McLACHLAN (*Fortitude Valley*): Members seemed to be desirous that provision would be made for ample discussion before the Speaker was elected. There was ample provision for that in the rule before them. The Clerk of the House would be in the chair, and, as he had no control over the House, it rested with the good sense of members whether they prolonged or shortened their remarks on the nominees submitted. So there was no need for the amendment at all.

Mr. DOUGLAS said there was a good deal in the contention of the hon. member for Cairns for a secret ballot. [8.30 p.m.] He thought the Speaker ought to be elected to the position if possible without the party system. If they had a secret ballot, a candidate might know that he would be opposed in certain quarters, but he would not really know to which section of the House he owed his majority. He would go further, and say that a member proposed should not be allowed to refuse nomination. (Hear, hear!) Under the system of election by ballot there would be quite a number of names submitted, and there would be a very fair chance of a non-party nomination being made. If the Minister would put in a new clause to that effect, he would give it his support.

Mr. THEODORE said that as the discussion on the amendment promised to be interminable, and as they had an assurance from the Minister in charge of the Standing Orders that discussion would not be restricted on the nominations, he desired, with the permission of the Committee, to withdraw his amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the Committee that the amendment be withdrawn?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MANN: No. He thought they ought to test the feeling of the Committee on the amendment.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: He has withdrawn it.

Mr. MANN: The hon. member could not withdraw it without the consent of the Committee. Once an amendment was submitted it was the property of the Committee either to accept or reject. He thought the tenor of the amendment was rather to restrict discussion, but it would not succeed, because with the Chairman in the chair every member could rise in his place, and in proposing one member might criticise another who had been proposed.

Mr. HARDACRE: If the amendment went to the vote and the majority decided that the words with regard to discussion should be excluded, it might be taken to mean that the Committee had decided that it should not be under discussion.

Mr. McLACHLAN: Who is to decide, with the Chairman out of the chair?

Mr. HARDACRE: For that reason it would be better to allow the amendment to be withdrawn.

Mr. RYAN supported the amendment. It seemed to him that although they had the assurance of the Secretary for Public Lands that discussion might take place on these nominations, still he could see a way in which there might be no discussion. If there were only two nominations for the position of Speaker, and the nominations had closed, and he chose to get up and discuss the merits of either one or the other, in the meantime the majority of the House might hand in the name of the man they preferred, and the Clerk might direct him (Mr. Ryan) to sit down because the election had taken place. The Secretary for Public Lands would be well advised in accepting the amendment. The hon. gentleman would be able to see, with his legal knowledge, that it would not alter the meaning of the section according to his view of it—at the most it would only be surplusage. As the Standing Orders stood before, there was a right of discussion when the question was put by the Clerk, but if there were only two men nominated, and a majority chose to hand in their papers—he could see nothing compelling every man to vote—the election might take place while a man was still speaking.

Mr. McLACHLAN: Who would count the ballot?

Mr. RYAN: The Clerk would count the ballot. If the majority put their vote in, this Standing Order said, "The member

obtaining such majority shall be declared to be Speaker," and the Clerk was ordered to declare him elected as Speaker.

Mr. MCLACHLAN: Would he not do the same thing under the old system?

Mr. RYAN: No; he said if the nomination had closed. The fact that this discussion was taking place was the best evidence that there was a difference of opinion as to the meaning of the clause, and the clearer they could make it the better. The amendment was not proposed in a hostile spirit, and he was sure the Minister would accept his argument as being based upon what he had said.

Mr. HARDACRE: What was there to prevent, under the old Standing Orders, a vote being taken while a member was speaking, and the member declared elected?

Mr. RYAN: In that case there was a motion put, but there was no motion put in this case at all. The Clerk got up under the old system, and put the question: That Mr. So-and-so do take the chair of the House as Speaker. Under the new system, if a majority of members handed in the name of the man they desired, the election was over, and the Clerk was bound to declare him Speaker.

Mr. MANN congratulated the hon. member for Barcoo on the clear and forcible manner in which he had put the matter before the Committee, which he was sure would have convinced some hon. members that it might possibly happen that a majority of members might nominate a certain member, and they might have the whole thing done under the party system again. It would be wise to have the amendment put in, so that proper discussion might take place before a Speaker was elected. They might desire to get rid of a member who was pertinacious in debate, and thirty-seven members might agree amongst themselves to hand in his nomination, and he would be declared to be duly elected without the House having a say in the matter at all. For that reason, they should take a vote, and insist on the right of debate before electing a Speaker.

Mr. BOUCHARD said he was with a number of members of the Opposition who did not regard the election of Speaker as a party question. There was a good deal in the argument adduced by the hon. member for Barcoo.

Mr. MURPHY: Hear, hear! Two lawyers against one. (Laughter.)

Mr. BOUCHARD: Subclause (*a*) read:—

"In the event of there being two members proposed and seconded, it is the duty of each member to deliver to the Clerk the name of the member he considers should be elected Speaker."

That rule did not contemplate the nomination of more than two members.

Mr. MURPHY: You are quite right.

Mr. BOUCHARD: The hon. member for Barcoo was quite right when he said that immediately two members were proposed, the election might take place. It was quite absurd to ballot for the Speaker at all, as hon. members opposite seemed to think that the election of Speaker by ballot was not going to do away with a party selection. As there was some doubt in the minds of members that the rule as printed might prevent discussion, it would be just as well to settle the matter.

Mr. MURPHY: After listening to the hon. member for Barcoo and the hon. member for Brisbane South, two legal gentlemen, who had stated it was desirable to alter the rule in the direction mentioned by the hon. member for Woothakata, he thought the Secretary for Lands might submit to the majority. Two legal luminaries had decided that the new rule was likely to lead to some trouble on the election of Speaker, and majorities ruled. He could quite understand the Secretary for Lands sticking to his own particular reading of the rule if it was only the member for Barcoo who differed from him, but they had an hon. member on the Government side of the House, who was a very loyal supporter of the party, stating that there was a flaw in the rule, and recommended the Secretary for Public Lands to accept the amendment. What was the use of discussing a small matter like that all night when it could be fixed up in a few moments by accepting the amendment, which was a very reasonable one? He (Mr. Murphy) remembered on a memorable occasion the hon. member for South Brisbane sitting side by side with the Secretary for Public Lands and stating that the Secretary for Public Lands' particular reading of the Audit Act was correct, and, when that hon. member now differed from him, the Secretary for Public Lands might reasonably give way. A barrister on one side of the House and a lawyer on the other side agreed that the rule was defective, and the Secretary for Public Lands should certainly give way.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The rule in question had been considered by the Standing Orders Committee in every aspect and was thoroughly discussed by them, and it was for the Committee to say what was to be done with the rule. The argument of the hon. member for Barcoo was based on the suggestion that once the ballot was closed they might proceed to vote.

Mr. RYAN: There is nothing to say when the ballot is closed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That was where the argument of the hon. member was faulty, because so long as the ballot was not closed—well, it was not closed. (Laughter.) It was open to any member of the House to propose another member, or to propose, if necessary, every member of the House, and the ballot was not closed and could not be taken until the Clerk considered all members were satisfied, when he would proceed to issue to members the papers on which they would vote. It was quite true when that period arrived, hon. members, whose papers had been handed to them, might hand in their votes, but hon. members would admit that it was only by the unanimous consent of members that the Clerk would proceed to take the ballot. The Clerk would be in the chair, and his attention would be directed to the member addressing the House, and under those circumstances he could not issue the ballot-papers. It was not likely that the Clerk, who was an officer of the House, was likely to fly in the face of members by stopping discussion. However, he was not wedded to the new rule. It was the proposition of the Standing Orders Committee, and several members had spoken against it. If

they did not care about the exhaustive ballot, he was not wedded to it. The Standing Orders Committee furnished it, and they had followed the practice laid down in South Australia, but it was entirely in the hands of the Committee to decide the matter. He was sorry he was unable to accept the amendment.

Mr. LENNON said it was not the question of an exhaustive ballot that was under consideration. That was certainly embodied in the rule, but there was no discussion as to the desirableness or otherwise of adopting that principle. That principle would find favour with a majority of members of the Committee. There was a certain ambiguity about the rule, and if the amendment was accepted, it would dispel that ambiguity and make the rule clear. Although he was not a very strong advocate of the amendment, there was certainly some fault about the rule, as had been shown by the amount of discussion that had taken place, and he hoped the Secretary for Lands would give way.

Mr. RYAN said he did not suggest, when he was speaking, that the Clerk of the House was likely to fly in the face of hon. members. He would invite attention to the wording of clause (*a*), also to the remarks made by the hon. member for Brisbane South, Mr. Bouchard. The clause read—

"In the event of there being two members proposed and seconded for the office of Speaker, each member of the House then present shall deliver to the Clerk in writing the name of the member so nominated whom he considers the most fit and proper to be Speaker; and the member receiving the greater number of votes shall be declared elected, and shall be called to the Chair."

That was very plain. What power had the Clerk in that case? This became enforceable by the Supreme Court, and the member with the majority of votes would be placed in the Chair by the Supreme Court, whether members liked it or not. The clause should not be drafted in that way, but should commence in this way—

"If more than one member is proposed to be Speaker."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If you think that will cure it, I will accept that amendment.

Mr. RYAN: He thought that amendment should be made in any case; at the same time, he did not think it would get over the difficulty to the extent to which it would be got over by the amendment of the hon. member for Woothakata; and he failed to see why the Secretary for Public Lands would not accept that hon. member's amendment. He did not think the Clerk was likely to be perverse; but with this machinery discussion would be stifled, and a member put into the Chair without an opportunity being afforded of discussing his merits or demerits.

Mr. HARDACRE said that members who thought they saw the possibility of such an absurd state of things had surely not read the clause. It said that each member present should deliver to the Clerk, in writing, the name of the member nominated whom he considered the most fit and proper to be Speaker. Each member must hand in his paper before the vote was taken; and no member would be likely to hand in his paper until he had said what he wished to say.

Mr. ALLEN: Suppose he would not hand in his paper.

Mr. HARDACRE admitted that that was a defect in the clause. According to its strict interpretation, if a member present refused to hand in his paper, the ballot could not take place. Otherwise, he saw no reason for objecting to the clause as it stood.

Mr. CRAWFORD: He had listened to the discussion without getting any very great enlightenment. He thought the best way out of the difficulty would be to wipe out the proposed new clause and content themselves with the old one. So far as he had heard, only once in the history of Queensland had any great difficulty arisen in connection with the election of Speaker; and then Parliament was able to get over the difficulty by its own common sense. If any difficulty arose in the future, they would be able to get over it in the same way.

Mr. MANN: He was in the House in 1907 when that deadlock arose, and the member who was afterwards elected Speaker had been proposed and rejected by a majority; and the then Clerk, Mr. Bernays, said that according to strict constitutional principle we could not put up the same man again, the House having declared against
[9 p.m.] him. They would have arrived at a deadlock if the then Premier had not been a man of straw and backed down. When he found he had difficulty with the Labour party, he went into the Ministers' room and said he would take the Agent-Generalship.

Mr. BRENNAN: Whom did he say that to?

Mr. MANN: Ask his Ministers. It is absolutely true.

Mr. BRENNAN: You were not present.

Mr. MANN: I was not present, but I can believe what his Ministers said.

Mr. BRENNAN: Mention the name of the Minister from whom you got the information.

Mr. MANN: I challenge contradiction of my statement.

Mr. LENNON: I heard the same thing.

Mr. MANN: It was common report that he first threatened a dissolution of Parliament when he could not get his own way, and then he went into the Ministers' room and said he would throw up the sponge and take the Agent-Generalship.

Mr. BRENNAN: You ought to be ashamed of yourself for saying such a thing.

Mr. MANN: The House ought to know that they were almost threatened with a dissolution over the election of a Speaker, because, if the Premier had taken the Agent-Generalship, Parliament would have been in a state of chaos, and there might have been another election.

Mr. D. HUNTER: And yet you supported him after that? (Laughter.)

Mr. MANN: He supported him after that because he was returned to support him, and as long as he carried out his policy he (Mr. Mann) was satisfied.

Mr. WHITE: It did not matter what he did.

Mr. MANN: He left him afterwards. The discussion was not in order, but they should have some method of preventing a deadlock, and there was no doubt that the members of the Standing Orders Committee clearly understood that a deadlock might

ensue, or they would not have gone to the trouble of drafting that rule. The Premier would have been wise to have let the Standing Orders stand over for a time and go on with other business. They could very well have discussed them at a later stage; but, as they had come before the Chamber, they ought to safeguard the rights of members as much as possible, as if they were to go back to the old system they might have a deadlock. The best way out of the difficulty was to allow the majority of the House to elect the Speaker, and that could only be done by having an exhaustive ballot. If the House was equally divided into two parties, there might be trouble. They saw what was happening in New South Wales at the present time. When Parliament met again, if the two parties were of equal strength, there might be trouble, and it might be necessary to have another election. If they had a system of exhaustive ballot for the election of Speaker, he was quite sure that the best man would be chosen, irrespective of party. He trusted the Minister would stick to the new rule, and allow the Speaker to be elected by ballot.

Mr. D. HUNTER thought they should stick to the present system of election. It seemed that they were placing it in the hands of a few members to block the election of a Speaker altogether. The rule provided that—

"Each member then present shall then deliver to the Clerk in writing the name of the member so nominated whom he considers the most fit and proper to be Speaker."

Supposing half a dozen members refused to put in ballot-papers——

Mr. LENNON: It says that they "shall" do so.

Mr. D. HUNTER: But who was to compel them to do so? There was no Speaker in the chair, and nobody could compel them to deposit their ballot-papers. Further than that, there was no provision declaring when the ballot was to close, and members might be outside the bar when the ballot was to be taken. At present they had a rule providing that when a division was called the bar should be closed, but there was nothing to say what was to be done in this instance, and they would not know where they were. They were going to place it in the hands of a few members to prevent them electing a Speaker at all, and he believed that power might be exercised.

Mr. MURPHY: They were not dealing with the question of an exhaustive ballot at all. They were dealing with the question of whether the Standing Orders Committee were endeavouring to curtail the rights and privileges of hon. members by preventing them discussing the merits or demerits of a candidate for the office of Speaker. Hon. members on the Opposition side had made a reasonable request to the hon. gentleman in charge of the Standing Orders to accept a small amendment, but the Minister stubbornly refused to accept that amendment. The hon. gentleman admitted that though, in his opinion, the amendment was not wanted, it would do no harm, and yet he resolutely refused to accept it. When there was such a diversity of opinion on the matter, the hon. gentleman would have been wise to have given way. That was the first business of which he had been in charge, and he should realise that hon. members were desirous of safeguarding, not their own interests, but the interests of those who came after them, as some of those present might not be there after the next election. Why should they allow the Standing Orders Committee, the Minister, or even the Premier, to curtail the rights of members who were sent there as the representatives of the people? They had it on the authority of the hon. member for Barcoo, who was a competent authority, that the rule was faulty, and hon. members knew to their sorrow that when there was faulty drafting in laws there was a possibility of having to pay big costs. If that Standing Order was faulty, there was a possibility that, when the next Parliament assembled, there would be great trouble over the election of a Speaker. The hon. member for Woothakata had no desire to attack the Standing Orders Committee by his amendment, and it did not follow, because the Standing Orders Committee met weekly and went through the Standing Orders, and decided that there should be an alteration here and an amplification there, that the House was bound to accept the Standing Orders as prepared by the Committee. They were submitted to members, and they were the final arbiters in the matter; and it was the duty of hon. members, especially members of the Opposition, to see that all their interests were safeguarded. Of course, if the majority were of opinion that the Standing Order was perfectly right, and they accepted the assurance of the hon. member for Leichhardt that nothing could go wrong, or the assurance of the Secretary for Lands that everything was all right, and refused to take any notice of the hon. member for Barcoo (Mr. Ryan) or a legal member on the Government side of the House who said the drafting of the clause was faulty, then hon. members were doing a wrong to those who were likely to come after them.

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

AYES, 14.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Mann
,, Barber	,, May
,, Bouchard	,, Mullan
,, Breslin	,, O'Sullivan
,, Ferricks	,, Payne
,, Foley	,, Ryan
,, Lennon	,, Theodore

Tellers: Mr. Bouchard and Mr. Breslin.

NOES, 34.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Hardacre
,, Allan	,, Hunter, D.
,, Appel	,, Macartney
,, Barnes, G. P.	,, Mackintosh
,, Barnes, W. H.	,, McLachlan
,, Booker	,, Morgan
,, Brennan	,, Nevitt
,, Bridges	,, Paget
,, Corser	,, Petrie
,, Crawford	,, Rankin
,, Cribb	,, Swayne
,, Denham	,, Tolmie
,, Douglas	,, Trout
,, Forsyth	,, Walker
,, Fox	,, White
,, Grayson	,, Wienholt
,, Gunn	,, Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Douglas and Mr. Morgan.

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Murphy. No—Mr. Grant.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. Murphy.]

Mr. ALLEN: Before the clause was passed, he desired to direct attention to the phrase in paragraph (*c*) which said that—

"if again there shall be an equality of votes, the Clerk shall determine by lot which member shall be withdrawn, or which shall be deemed to have obtained the greater number of votes, as the case may be."

That introduced an element of gambling into the election of a member to the most important position in the House, and yet the Government had brought before the other Chamber a Police Offences Bill, one of the objects of which was to suppress gambling.

Mr. MURPHY thought there was a great deal in what had been suggested by the hon. member for Bulloo. A Parliament which was prepared to inflict severe penalties on persons who indulged in sweeps or consultations, or other forms of gambling, should be very careful not to introduce anything of the kind into their own procedure. Deciding an election in the way proposed in the rule was in the nature of gambling, and he was surprised at the Treasurer agreeing to such a proposal. The Treasurer was not on the Standing Orders Committee. The Standing Orders Committee was composed of such hon. gentlemen as the hon. member for Leichhardt, who did not take any wild exception to a little bit of a gamble of that nature. There ought to be some safeguard. For instance, who was going to count the ballot, when were they going to count it, and where was it going to be counted? They ought to lay it down definitely that the ballot was to be counted in the Chamber. The Chairman was an old resident of Queensland and he had heard of what was called roll-stuffing in connection with parliamentary elections; for instance, at California Gully. Was it definitely decided that the ballot-box was to be in the custody of the Clerk, or who was to look after it? He just got up to explain that he had paired with the Secretary for Public Instruction, and he was not able to give the Committee any assistance in the matter of a vote in the last division.

Mr. McLACHLAN: There was no provision made in the clause for the counting of the ballot. It was assumed that the Clerk would count the ballot-papers, but they should insert the words and make sure of it. He moved the insertion of the words "The Clerk shall then proceed to count the ballot" after the word "Speaker" on the 5th line.

Mr. MANN thought the rules were drafted in a slipshod way. There was no provision in regard to the ballot-papers. What was to prevent a man from giving in two ballot-papers stuck together? A member who was anxious to get the Speakership could easily do that. When a man contested an election he went out to win, and his conscience was left on one side. The Clerk should initial all ballot-papers, and they would have it in shipshape form. They would not submit to that slipshod way of doing business in a parliamentary election, then why submit to it in the election of the highest officer in the House? As soon as the bar was closed the Clerk should count the number of members present, issue the proper number of ballot-papers, initial them, distribute them, and collect them again, and then count them in the Chamber and announce the result. It would be wise to appoint another committee to go through the Standing Orders again and bring up another report. He would sooner drop the Standing Orders now and get on with business. He would like to see the Premier get on with the Sugar Works Bill and the Liquor Bill. (Hear, hear!) If the Sugar Works Bill were passed, the people concerned in it would be able to get to work straight away. They could leave the Standing Orders over for the present, as there was no hurry for them, and they could pass them in one sitting at the end of the session if they were brought in in a proper form. A committee could be appointed from members on both sides of the House, and it would be better than wasting time now trying to pass the Standing Orders.

Mr. MURPHY could not agree with the suggestion of the hon. member for Cairns that the Premier should withdraw these Standing Orders. The House had had no great choice in the nomination of the members of the Standing Orders Committee, but to suggest that the new Standing [9.30 p.m.] Orders should be withdrawn and referred to another committee, would not lead to a more expeditious result, because the same discussion would take place as was likely to take place now. He did not think it should take more than a couple of days. The rule under discussion, on which they had joined issue to-night, had taken a considerable time, but he did not think there would be much difference of opinion on the other parts of the Standing Orders.

Mr. MANN: That is only your opinion.

Mr. MURPHY: That was only his opinion, but it was based on good grounds. It was necessary that the Standing Orders should be revised and reprinted. The Standing Orders Committee had had many meetings and spent a great deal of time over them, and, therefore, it would be hardly fair to those gentlemen if the Committee now agreed to submit the Standing Orders to a committee of the House.

The CHAIRMAN: I would ask the hon. member to address himself to the amendment before the Committee—to insert certain words.

Mr. MURPHY: He was just coming to that point. The question before the Committee was that the Clerk should take charge of the ballot. The Clerk was a gentleman for whom they all had the highest respect, and there should be no exception taken to his counting the votes. If the Secretary for Public Lands accepted the modest amendment proposed by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, he thought the rule would be passed by the House without undue discussion.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: After hearing what the hon. member for Croydon had said, he had much pleasure in accepting the amendment.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Amendment agreed to.

Question—That new Rule No. 6, as amended, be agreed to—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 35.

Mr.	Adamson	Mr.	Mackintosh
,,	Allan	,,	McLachlan
,,	Appel	,,	Mann
,,	Barber	,,	May
,,	Barnes, W. H.	,,	Morgan
,,	Booker	,,	Mullan
,,	Breslin	,,	Nevitt
,,	Bridges	,,	O'Sullivan
,,	Corser	,,	Paget
,,	Cribb	,,	Payne
,,	Denham	,,	Petrie
,,	Ferricks	,,	Ryan
,,	Foley	,,	Swayne
,,	Fox	,,	Theodore
,,	Grayson	,,	Tolmie
,,	Hardacre	,,	Trout
,,	Lennon	,,	Winstanley
,,	Macartney		

Tellers: Mr. Grayson and Mr. Trout.

NOES, 9.

Mr.	Allen	Mr.	Hunter, D.
,,	Bouchard	,,	Walker
,,	Brennan	,,	White
,,	Forsyth	,,	Wienholt
,,	Gunn		

Tellers: Mr. D. Hunter and Mr. Wienholt.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Grant and Mr. Philp.
Noes—Mr. Murphy and Mr. Crawford.

Resolved in the affirmative.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved that Rules 7 and 8 be agreed to. Those new rules simply embodied the old rules of practice 7 and 8, and were formal ceremonies taken after the election of Speaker. Mr. Speaker presented himself to the Governor and laid claim to the rights and privileges of the House.

Mr. MANN would like the Secretary for Public Lands to give some satisfactory reason for the insertion of the words, "and prays that the most favourable construction be put upon all their proceedings." Perhaps those words were necessary in the time of civil war; or perhaps in the time of the Parliament of Charles I. they might require praying for. That was, if they believed in the doctrine of the divine right of kings. After all, they were free, and there was no need to go to the Governor as representative of the King, or to the King, as the case might be, and pray for the most favourable construction on their proceedings. Whatever the House agreed to, was the law of the people, and the Governor or King who refused to sanction the actions of Parliament would find himself in a very precarious position. He would like the Minister to tell the Committee the necessity for the insertion of those words, and if there were good reasons why they should not be omitted, he (Mr. Mann) would not move an amendment. If there was no reason for the words being there, he did not see why Parliament should humble itself to the King or to anyone else.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MANN: He was perfectly in order in saying so. They were dealing with the question of Parliament praying for the most favourable construction being put on its action. He did not see any use for the words at all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said they had adopted the form which had been in the Standing Orders for years, and it was similar to the Standing Orders of all British Assemblies. The Speaker must at all times claim the rights and privileges of the Assembly; and, if there were any acts that might appear contrary to the interests of the Crown, he prayed that a favourable construction might be put on them. It was, after all, only a respectful formula, to which there could be no real objection.

Mr. MANN: That is quite satisfactory.

New rule agreed to.

New Rule 9—"Vacancy in office of Speaker"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved that new Rule 9 be agreed to. That rule referred to the vacancy in the office of Speaker, and there was practically no alteration to the previous Standing Order. The previous Standing Order was a little amplified. The old Standing Order provided—

"When a vacancy occurs in the office of Speaker, a new Speaker shall be elected in the same manner as hereinbefore provided."

The new rule said—

"9. (*a*) When a vacancy occurs in the office of Speaker during a session, the Clerk shall report the same to the House at its next sitting, and the House shall forthwith proceed to the election of a new Speaker.

"(*b*) When a vacancy in the office of Speaker has occurred during recess, except by dissolution of Parliament, the Chairman of Committees shall take the chair on the first day of the next session for the purpose of proceeding to the Council Chamber to hear the Governor's Speech, but shall not resume the chair on returning to the Assembly Chamber. The Clerk shall then report the vacancy to the House, and the House shall forthwith proceed to the election of a new Speaker."

That was in accordance with the usual practice and was no innovation.

New rule agreed to.

New Rule 10—"Appointment of Chairman of Committees"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved that new Rule No. 10 be agreed to. Standing Order No. 10 was No. 8 in the old code. There was no alteration.

Mr. ALLEN wanted to know why the election of Chairman of Committees was not made the same as was provided for the election of Speaker. The excuse for the fancy style of electing a Speaker was that there was some difficulty a few years ago when there were three parties of nearly equal strength in the House, and there was a deadlock. He would point out that there was a deadlock over the election of Chairman of Committees too; and why had not that position been placed on exactly the same footing as the other? Were they to take it that the majority of the Standing Orders Committee meant the gift of this position to be in the hands of the dominant party in Parliament—that they might bestow it on some loyal follower? If there was danger of a deadlock in the case of choosing a Speaker, there was also danger of a deadlock in the case of choosing a Chairman.

Mr. HARDACRE saw no reason why they should not take the election of Chairman exactly in the same way as the election of Speaker; and he thought the Minister for Lands would be well advised if he would postpone the consideration of this rule with

the view of allowing amendments to be proposed. He proposed first to amend it in the 2nd line by omitting the word "appoint" and inserting the word "elect." Then the method of election would be matter for a subsequent amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In order to give the hon. member an opportunity of formulating his amendment, he moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and passed.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move that this House do now adjourn.

Mr. THEODORE: At this stage I want to draw attention to the manner of answer I received last evening from the Treasurer to a question I addressed to him after notice. I think courtesy was not shown to me. The question was respectfully worded, and I think the Minister deliberately evaded giving the information.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. THEODORE: On one or two occasions I have noticed a deliberate desire to avoid giving information.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in speaking on this motion with regard to an answer given to a question.

Mr. THEODORE: There is a Standing Order which says that members may call attention to facts disclosed in the answer to a question addressed to a Minister; and on that Standing Order I desire to call attention to facts disclosed, or facts not disclosed, in the answer to a question which I contend should have been answered fully.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member will be in order in calling attention to facts disclosed in answer to a question by a Minister when the proper time arrives, but at present he is entirely out of order in doing so. I may say, for the information of the House, that earlier in the evening the hon. member for Bowen, Mr. Ferricks, proposed to ask for an explanation regarding a question, and I suggested to him then that he should let the matter stand over until the adjournment of the House. My reason was this: Although I know that the procedure is entirely irregular, I felt that the House should be placed in possession of some facts regarding questions and answers. The hon. member proposed to ask for an explanation, and as he raised that question, I should be prepared to allow him to proceed, although, as I say, this cannot be accepted as a precedent for the future. My reason for doing so is this: While the Home Secretary was replying to a question addressed to him, the hon. member rose to a point of order. I want the House to understand that the rule in regard to question and answer is this: There is no obligation on a Minister, or on any hon. member of this House, to answer any question put to him. Under Standing Order No. 63, members may ask questions of Ministers, or other members of this House, but there is no obligation that a question shall be answered by the hon. member addressed. It is a pure matter of courtesy to give an answer. The answer may be refused, and if it is refused, it cannot be taken as a breach of privilege.

Mr. FERRICKS: As referring to the answering or the refusing to answer a question, I quite grasp your de-
[10 p.m.] liverance, but I would point out that the Home Secretary, this afternoon, in answering my question, did not confine himself to the lines you have laid down. According to "Votes and Proceedings" for 8th November, 1910, you then ruled, Sir—

"It is not in order to read extracts from a newspaper in asking a question."

and I submit—and I think with every justification—that in the answer to a question it should be compulsory upon the answerer of the question to confine himself to his actual knowledge.

Mr. ALLEN: And to facts.

Mr. FERRICKS: I think it is laid down in the Standing Orders that a member who asks a question based upon a newspaper cutting should himself vouch for the accuracy of the newspaper report. Now, I hold, Sir, that under your ruling the person answering a question should also be guided by that Standing Order, and I think it is a fair thing to ask the Home Secretary, through you, whether he vouches for the accuracy of the newspaper reports which he quoted in the answer he gave to my question this afternoon.

The SPEAKER: I have already pointed out that an hon. member cannot demand an answer to a question. There is no obligation upon any hon. member to answer any question put to him. Although it is usual to reply, I laid down a definition of the practice in this House and in other Legislatures in other parts of the British Dominions on 8th November, 1910. I then defined the practice in the words which the hon. member has quoted—that if an hon. member quotes statements made in a newspaper he should first make himself responsible for the accuracy of the newspaper report (*vide* page 2488, *Hansard*, 1910). It is not my duty to decide—and I do not think at the present juncture it is the wish of the House to discuss—whether the Home Secretary, in making that answer, made himself responsible for the accuracy of the newspaper extracts which he read; but I presume—and I think the House will agree with me—that an hon. member occupying the high official position of the Home Secretary would make himself absolutely responsible for the accuracy of the report which he quoted. I hope the incident will close.

Mr. FERRICKS: Mr. Speaker,—May I be allowed——

The SPEAKER: Order! The question is—That the House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at four minutes past 10 o'clock.