

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 1913**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER, 1913.

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

## PAPER.

The following paper, laid on the table, was ordered to be printed—

Report of the Comptroller-General of Prisons for the year 1912.

## QUESTIONS.

## ACCIDENTS ON QUEENSLAND RAILWAYS.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. The number of accidents that have occurred on the Queensland railways during the financial year 1912-1913 resulting in loss of life or injury to human beings?

"2. The total number of persons killed or injured.

"3. The amount of compensation paid in respect of such accidents?

"4. The number of accidents that have occurred for the same period resulting in damage to rolling-stock or permanent way?

"5. The total cost of such damage?

"6. The number of fires that have occurred causing damage to railway property or rolling-stock?

"7. The total cost of such damage?"

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

"1. 1,190 (moving trains, 374; workshops, 276; construction works, 213; miscellaneous, 327).

"2. 1,207 (moving trains, 389; workshops, 276; construction works, 213; miscellaneous, 329).

"3. £12,877 10s. 2d.

"4. Six resulting in damage involving more than £50 to repair. A number of minor accidents also occurred, but details of cost are not separated from general repairs.

"5. £4,138.

"6. Six.

"7. £8,886."

SHOP ASSISTANTS' INDUSTRIAL BOARD,  
SOUTHERN DIVISION.

Mr. BERTRAM (*Maree*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"1. The number of employers in Warwick, Toowoomba, Ipswich, Gympie, Maryborough, and Bundaberg, respectively, who furnished lists of employees in connection with the 'Shop Assistants' Industrial Board for the Southern division?

"2. The total number of employers who furnished such returns?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Bulimba*) replied—

"1. Warwick, 8; Toowoomba, 15; Ipswich, 10; Gympie, 10; Maryborough, 21; Bundaberg, 8.

"2. Ninety-six."

WOODEN BUILDINGS AT BRISBANE CENTRAL  
RAILWAY STATION.

Mr. FIDELLY (*Paddington*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What was the total cost incurred in the construction of the wood buildings on the land adjoining the Central Railway Station?

"2. What is the estimated life of the buildings?

"3. Was the expenditure charged to loan or revenue?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1. £4,853.

"2. Thirty-five to forty years.

"3. Loan."

## LAND SURVEY DEPARTMENT.

Mr. RYAN (*Barcoo*), for Mr. Theodore, asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Has a departmental inquiry, or inquiry of any other character, recently been held in his department in connection with matters affecting surveys?

"2. As a result of such inquiry, did one surveyor have his license suspended for a period?

"3. Will he lay upon the table of this House all the papers connected with this matter?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. Tohnie, *Toowoomba*) replied—

"1. Such an inquiry was recently held before the Surveyors' Board.

"2. Yes.

"3. Not at this stage, the matter being still sub judice."

## MOTOR-CAR ACCIDENT IN BRISBANE.

Mr. HUXHAM (*Buranda*) asked the Home Secretary—

"1. Will he call for a report from the Commissioner of Police in reference to the death of a woman named Donovan, who was reported to have been knocked down and run over by a motor-car in Mary street recently?

"2. Will he cause special inquiries to be made as to whether the woman was not removed by the Ambulance Brigade to the Brisbane General Hospital; if any statement was made by the Ambulance Brigade to the authorities of the General Hospital as to why the woman had been brought there; also if the medical authorities at the hospital were aware that the woman had been knocked down by a motor-car when a certificate of death was given to the effect that she had died from natural causes?

"3. If, as alleged, the woman was run down by a motor-car, why was not a public inquiry held?"

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

“1, 2, and 3. All particulars connected with this accident will appear at a magisterial inquiry into the cause of death, already ordered, and to be held in due course.”

#### COMPANIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

##### FURTHER CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE.

On clause 2—“Issue and effect of share warrants to bearer”—

Question stated—

That the following new subclause be inserted on page 2, after line 44, to follow subclause (7):—

“(8.) There shall be charged on every share warrant issued in Queensland a stamp duty of an amount equal to three times the amount of the ad valorem stamp duty which would be chargeable on a deed transferring the shares or stock specified in the warrant if the consideration for the transfer were the nominal value of such shares or stock. Such stamp duty shall be collected, recovered, and enforced under the provisions of the Stamp Act, 1894, as if such duty was imposed thereby.

“If a share warrant is issued without being duly stamped, the company issuing the same, and also every person who at the time when it is issued is the managing director or secretary or other principal officer of the company, shall incur a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds.”

Mr. RYAN (*Barcoo*): Since the measure was last before the Committee he had taken the opportunity of making inquiries with regard to the manner in which it was viewed in the district of Mount Morgan and also the effect it was likely to have on the revenue. On the first point, he was satisfied that the measure was not viewed with favour and that the feeling was that there was a desire to run the shares of the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company up and really to encourage a kind of trafficking which would not be to the advantage of those who were employed at Mount Morgan or in the Central district. With regard to the effect on the revenue, he might point out, for the consideration of the Minister, that the duty that was payable on the transfer of scrip on sale would be entirely lost if the share warrants were allowed to be issued. For example, they all knew that on the sale of scrip a certain stamp duty was payable—he thought it was 6d. on every £10. If the share warrants were issued, the duty on all sales of shares subsequent to the first sale would be avoided. In the case of non-dividend-paying companies the transfer was effected by simply handing the scrip from one person to another, and the revenue therefore was no doubt defeated to some extent, but in the case of dividend-paying companies it was necessary for the buyer of the scrip to become registered. He had to get on the register in order to collect his dividends, and therefore the stamp duty was collected. That was so in the case of the Mount Morgan or any other dividend-paying company. But if they passed the proposed new subclause, they would allow that particular company to have share warrants which would

pay stamp duty on a value equal to three times the nominal value of the shares, which in this particular case was less than the actual market value of the shares. The market value was £3 10s., but the stamp duty would be payable on only £3, which was three times the nominal value of the shares. And all future sales would pay no stamp duty at all. They all knew that when it was the desire of large holders to run the shares up, they did not wish to let the public know who were selling. It was a very good thing for the seller if he could say that he was a buyer. He could be a buyer for 100 shares and sell 500 shares. The very fact of his appearing as a buyer would induce others to buy. They would say, “There is a large holder buying; why should not I buy?” But when they got the scrip and found that it was the stock of the large holder who was buying, it was very hard to inflate the values of the shares. Under the share warrant system it would be possible for a man to be selling five times as much as he was buying; in other words the holders would be enabled to sell their shares without letting other people know.

Mr. HAMILTON: And still pretend to be buyers?

Mr. RYAN: Yes; it was easy for them to unload without the public knowing who was unloading. That could not be done under the ordinary law.

Mr. TROUT: They can in the ordinary way with scrip.

Mr. RYAN: That might be done with non-dividend paying concerns where they simply handed over the scrip to the buyer.

Mr. HODGE: They will transfer pretty quickly then.

Mr. MURPHY: A wise man gets a transfer in any case.

Mr. RYAN: In the case of a dividend-paying company it was always possible for the buyer to know who was selling, because the name on the register would show who was the holder. But if they allowed the proposed subclause to be added, it would be possible for large holders of Mount Morgan scrip to run the shares up to a value that was not justified. There was a case once in the history of Queensland when Sir Samuel Griffith found it necessary to cable home a warning to the British public against buying shares at the value they then were, and he thought that cable was sent in connection with the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company itself. It became their duty to see that they should not place in the hands of speculators that power to deceive the British public, because if they did that their financial credit would suffer.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. J. W. Blair, *Ipswich*): The discussion on this clause had been postponed at the instance of the leader of the Opposition in order to allow that hon. member to get further information, but the speech the hon. member had just delivered was practically a repetition of his previous arguments. A distinction was sought to be drawn between dividend-paying companies and non-dividend-paying companies. So far as the clause was concerned, it would only apply to those companies who had fully paid up stock. The question of whether they

[*Mr. Ryan.*]

were paying dividends or not was not material with regard to the clause. Once the shares were fully paid up, an opportunity would be given to issue share warrants. With regard to what might have been an evasion of duty, the question of giving or withholding share warrants could not have the slightest bearing, because up to the present no such thing had ever been known in Queensland, and until the Bill became law no such thing could be known. Therefore, all the arguments with regard to the evasion of stamp duty on shares could only be directed to the necessity of amending the present Stamp Duty Act, and not to the question of whether share warrants were allowed to be issued or not. The hon. member made a further point with regard to the fact that possibly a holder might pretend to be buying shares, and at the same time he might be unloading shares.

Mr. RYAN: They might be actually buying shares, and selling a lot more.

Mr. MURPHY: They could pretend to be selling when it is a dividend-paying concern.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Surely the common-sense thing was to hold on to shares in a dividend-paying concern. Take the other view, that they were selling shares of a dividend-paying concern—that they were forced to sell, or that some other reason existed which was not apparent. How would that affect a clause when the Bill provided that, after the issue by the company of a share warrant, the following particulars must be supplied:—The total amount of shares or stock for which share warrants are outstanding at the date of the summary; and, secondly, the total amount of share warrants which had been issued and surrendered respectively, and the number of shares or amount of stock comprised in each such warrant. Those particulars would give the fullest information of all transactions with regard to scrip, so that the argument of the hon. member was really directed to something which would not arise and which could not arise. The same law was in existence in New South Wales, in Great Britain, in Victoria, and in New Zealand; and in Great Britain, where the stamp duty was chargeable, it had been in existence for something like fifty years, and the only companies that had ever dealt in share warrants were those that required to have parcels of shares ready and handy in order to obtain quick advances. That was the sole reason of the clause. More than nine-tenths of the present companies in Queensland would never issue share warrants. Of that he had not the slightest doubt, because the shares of ninety-nine out of every hundred companies were not fully paid up.

Mr. RYAN: They pay stamp duty on the transfer of shares.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: On the transfer of share warrants they would pay stamp duty on three times the nominal value of the shares. The same stamp duty was chargeable in England, and the text-books said it was considered a heavy stamp duty. The reason for fixing it at that amount was that the shares of some companies might be up to-day and remain up, and the shares of other companies might go down—they might fluctuate from day to day, and it was considered actuarially that three times the nominal value was a fair basis of stamp duty to adopt in order to pro-

tect the revenue. So far from any trafficking in share warrants being concerned, it seemed to him that the reverse would be the case. All that would happen if the Bill was passed was that a company could authorise the issue of share warrants by its articles of association, and, secondly, get the shares fully paid up, and then issue these share warrants to people so that they could obtain advances on them. The revenue would be protected to this extent: that once a share warrant was issued, it became a negotiable instrument, and the Stamp Commissioner collected three times the stamp duty straight away.

Mr. COYNE: Did the Stamp Office advise that they would not lose any revenue?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He had already read the memorandum giving what the Commissioner said.

Mr. HARDACRE: Can you read what you submitted to him?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He had submitted nothing at all. He was dealing with papers that came to him from another department where the Bill originated. The Stamp Commissioner said—

“There does not appear, as the law at present stands, to be any fear or apprehension that the revenue will suffer to any appreciable extent, but there is a possibility that same may be benefited by the proposed change.”

As far as the company was concerned, it did not care much about who its shareholders were. All it cared about was that the amount of the shares was fully paid up. The stamp duty would be payable on what was considered by the greatest experts in the world as the proper actuarial basis of valuation.

Mr. GRANT (*Fitzroy*): The Secretary for Public Instruction had better not go into that matter of the Stock Exchange, because the leader of the Opposition knew more about that business from actual experience than the hon. gentleman. As a matter of fact, the leader of the Opposition was right in his contention that a man might try to bull shares—that was, to send them up beyond their legitimate value by going openly in the market and buying, and at the same time be selling the same shares in an underhand way. That was done frequently, and it did not matter whether it was a dividend-paying concern or not. If the share was paying 10 per cent., they might put up the value to an extent that it would not pay 2 per cent., and a holder might sell thousands of them and actually buy only a few hundred in order to keep up the price. That was done every day on the exchanges of the world, but he doubted very much whether share warrants would ever be seen on the Queensland market. Queenslanders wanted scrip, and he doubted whether they would lose any revenue by the issue of share warrants, because the share warrants were required for the Continental and London markets. Share warrants were more popular there than scrip, and the Mount Morgan Company wanted to get its shares into a form that was acceptable to the people who bought them. They wanted to popularise their stock on the London market, and he did not know that it was a bad thing that Queensland mining stock should be a popular form of investment in London and on

*Mr. Grant.]*

the Continent. At the present time, the small investors in Queensland bought shares simply for an investment, and as soon as they got their shares they had them transferred to their own name; but in London and on the Continent quite a different order of things prevailed. There, if a man wanted to sell stock, he sold a warrant that he had so many shares in a certain company to sell, and that was the reason why the alteration in the law was required. It was nothing very revolutionary, because, in Victoria, New South Wales, and in the old country, share warrants were issued, and he did not know that it had led to any more speculation than had occurred with regard to scrip transactions in Queensland. It seemed to him rather unfair that mining scrip should have to pay stamp duty at all. If a man bought anything else, he did not have to pay stamp duty, the same as he had on mining scrip. No stamp duty was required in Victoria, and he doubted very much whether they required stamp duty on mining scrip in New South Wales, but in Queensland there was a very unfair tax on mining scrip. Mining seemed to be a thing that everyone seemed to try and wear down as much as possible. He saw no reason why the Committee should put up a strenuous fight against share warrants, because they would not affect Queensland one iota.

Mr. MURPHY (*Burke*): The reason he was opposed to the issue of share warrants was because it was likely to injuriously affect the Queensland mining industry. They knew that already French investors were singing out owing to certain things which occurred in connection with a Cloncurry speculation. They said they had shares unloaded on the French market at a much higher value than was justified, and it was the duty of the Committee to inquire whether there was any likelihood of the good name of the mining industry of Queensland being affected. The leader of the Opposition thought there was, and the hon. member who had just resumed his seat had admitted that share warrants would only be used on the London and Continental markets. Why were they going to be used on the London and Continental markets if not for the purpose of taking the Londoners and Continental people down?

Mr. RYAN: That is the idea.

Mr. MURPHY: The Secretary for Public Instruction objected to that statement, but his predecessor in office had pointed out that the hon. gentleman had probably not had much experience on the share market.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I do not affect a knowledge that usually ends in loss.

Mr. MURPHY: No. The hon. gentleman was a lawyer—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: And he ought to know better.

Mr. MURPHY: He presumed the hon. gentleman did know better. It was usually loss to the other fellow when he came into contact with a lawyer. (Laughter.) It seemed to him that there was a desire to have the share warrants introduced in order that shares in small lots might be disposed of on those home markets. The Mines Department had pointed out in the reports that it was more the fact that people had

been able to get "wild cats" floated on the home market that prevented people with genuine mining propositions from afterwards receiving the capital so necessary to help them to develop the resources of the various districts. It must be recognised that the Mines Department had always taken an interest in trying to keep mining clean. Only a couple of sessions ago the department cabled to France, pointing out that there was a certain Queensland proposition upon the London and French markets, which people were advised not to speculate in, and quite a number of people were prevented from putting their money into a venture which the department regarded as likely to end in loss. The people who were particularly interested in the share warrant system at the present time had bought a large parcel of Mount Morgan shares on the time-payment system. It was to their interest to get the shares off as quickly as they could. He did not say that they were going to try and inflate the value of shares, but as far as his experience went—and he had a fair amount of experience in mining speculations—a man who had shares for sale always tried to inflate the values.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That would apply to the sale of anything.

Mr. MURPHY: Yes, except when they were selling horses—they always pointed out the defects of a horse. (Laughter.) It was only the other day that the Premier, in reply to a deputation from Charters Towers asking for a very large subsidy to help that field, reminded them that it was the duty of the Crown to act upon the recommendations of its responsible officer, who had pointed out that it would be very unfair to allow a Charters Towers proposition to go on the London market to raise a large sum of money which he believed was unnecessary to carry out the work proposed. The Minister said that the under the share warrant system they were not likely to lose any revenue, but leaving out that phase of the question, was it likely to do the mining industry any harm? It seemed to him that the introduction of this amendment was not going to do mining any good.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*) considered that the leader of the Opposition was quite justified in having got this matter adjourned until to-day, in view of its importance and of the information he had gathered. There were many aspects from which he thought the proposed amendment objectionable. So far as it affected the mining industry, he would leave mining members to deal with it. He wanted to direct his remarks to the revenue question. The more he considered the question, the more he thought it was entirely out of place to put an amendment of this kind in a Bill of this character. It was a revenue matter. The Minister said that they were really doing something which might be obviated by amending the Stamp Act; and that was exactly what they were doing. It was not merely a question of authorising share warrants to be issued; the amendment said there should be charged a certain amount on share warrants. That ought to be embodied in a Financial Statement. The Minister quoted the Stamp Commissioner as saying that he did not think that there would be any appreciable loss in revenue, but he ought to have given the question submitted to that official, and not merely his answer. No one knew better than the

{*Mr. Grant.*

Minister that it would be quite unfair to quote a witness's answer without quoting the question he was asked, and it was apparent on the face of the amendment that there would be a considerable loss of revenue. They knew that there had been a syndicate, called the Nagrom Syndicate, speculating recently in Mount Morgan shares. The information he had was that there had been 400,000 shares purchased, and there had not been a transfer of those shares made yet. There had merely been a deposit paid upon them. If they were transferred under the existing law, they would pay duty on their present value of £3 10s. a share; but, under the amendment, they would be able to issue share warrants, and pay duty on £3 per share once only—never again would they have to pay duty on any transaction whatever—which would mean a loss to the revenue of duty on 10s. per share on 400,000 shares; or a loss of stamp duty on £200,000. Besides that, the revenue would lose stamp duty on those shares in any future transaction. That was an important question for the Minister and the Treasurer to consider before they adopted the amendment. The Minister had not given them the whole statement of the case. As the Minister said, the share warrant system was in force in Great Britain, where they paid a duty on three times the nominal value of the shares, as they would under the amendment; but he forgot to tell them that that provision was passed no less than twenty-two years ago, and since then many things had happened. In Great Britain they had evidently discovered that three times the nominal amount was not sufficient, and, therefore, they had provided to make up the revenue by a dragnet clause covering every subsequent operation. They proposed here to enact the original provision in the British Act, without taking notice of the subsequent amendment made in Great Britain. He trusted the Minister would follow what he was saying.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Pardon me, I was trying to check one of your calculations.

Mr. HARDACRE: Since they had passed the original measure in Great Britain, they had amended the Act on two different occasions in such a way as to catch the share warrant every time, and there was nothing in this amendment to meet those subsequent amendments. The original Act passed in Great Britain in 1891 provided that share warrants should pay a duty on three times the nominal amount, but in 1899 there was an amending Act which provided that there should be a stamp duty of 1s. on every £10. Then, later on, under Mr. Lloyd George's Budget Finance Act of 1909-10, it was provided that the stamp duty chargeable on share warrants or stock certificates to bearer should be double those specified in the Act of 1899. So that there was now not only duty to be paid on three times the nominal value, but 2s. on every £10, or fraction of £10, of every subsequent transaction.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is not so if you look at it carefully.

Mr. HARDACRE: He would be very pleased to let the Minister disprove that. This was practically a financial measure. The matter ought to have come up in the ordinary way in Committee of Supply, and have been dealt with in the ordinary way of taxation, especially as they were insti-

tuting a new system of share warrants. So far as the Mount Morgan Company was concerned, this was going to mean a dead loss to the Treasury. In the first instance, there would be a loss for every transfer which would otherwise have taken place under the existing law. The share warrants would only be brought into use when the value of the shares amounted to three times their nominal value. As soon as the shares reached to more than three times the nominal value, then the company would revert to stamp warrants in order to evade the stamp duty. Whenever the true value went down below the nominal value, then the company would cease issuing share warrants, and again come under the stamp duty operations. In that way they would play fast and loose with the matter, just as it suited their own convenience. They would issue share warrants so long as it suited them, and when it suited them they would stop issuing the share warrants, and it would all be done at the expense of the Treasury. Before hon. members went any further into the matter, they ought to consider its financial aspect. Seeing that in the case of the Mount Morgan Company they would be bound to lose by the issue of the share warrants if they only charged duty equal to three times the nominal value, he proposed to move the omission of the word "three" with a view to inserting the word "six." If they found in working that that was too much, they could alter it later on, and make it on all-fours with the law of Great Britain. He moved the omission of the word "three" in order to create a blank first of all. He hoped the Minister for Public Instruction would keep his promise to show where the quotation which he (Mr. Hardacre) had given from the British Act was not correct.

Mr. HUNTER (*Maranoa*) supported the amendment. When the blank was created, it would be left for the Committee to consider what figure they should insert in its place if they decided to omit the word "three." So far as the loss of revenue was concerned, the gentlemen on the other side of the House were responsible for the finances of the State, and if the Treasury suffered it would be their funeral; but his reason for opposing the share warrant system was because it was not a good thing for the mining industry of Queensland. What would happen would be that the mines of Queensland would be the playthings of speculators of the worst type in Great Britain. That was an injury that he could see. All sorts of attempts would be made to bull the market, and those cunning gentlemen on the Stock Exchange would do it, because they had done it before and they would do it again if they had the chance. They would buy small quantities of scrip at the market price, while, at the same time, they would be unloading their shares on to someone else, through the medium of share warrants. Trading in the dark in that way was the worst possible thing that could happen. If every transaction could be forced into the open market, and everyone knew who was selling and buying, that would be the more honest way of handling the mining industry of Queensland.

Mr. FORSYTH: Do they do that now?

Mr. HUNTER: Under the present proposal they were certainly not making it any better. It would be better for the mining industry itself to have everything done

*Mr. Hunter.]*

openly. He noticed a reference to this question in "The Australasian Insurance and Banking Record" so far back as the 21st August. On page 703 they would find this paragraph—

"The principal changes may be summarised as follows, viz.:—The right of the directors to refuse to register transfers of fully paid-up shares is to be abandoned in accordance with the best Australian and English practice; the company will no longer be able to claim a lien on fully paid-up shares; shareholders on the Sydney and London registers will be able to vote at general meetings of the company by lodging proxies at branch offices, particulars of which will be telegraphed or cabled to the head office; the company takes powers to issue share warrants so soon as the Queensland law permits this."

Evidently, before that paragraph went in to the Press, it had been practically settled that the Queensland Government was going to do just what the Mount Morgan Company wanted. The company were going to be allowed to place 400,000 shares on the English market. They would fix it up and register the transfer of the whole of the shares by share warrant just as they pleased, and that would mean a loss to the Queensland Treasury, and instead of paying on the value of £3 10s. a share, which was the market value at the present time, they would only pay stamp duty on a value of £3 a share. He did not think it was desirable to allow the Mount Morgan Company to escape the payment of stamp duty in that way. As soon as the shares rose to three times the nominal value, then the company would adopt the system of share warrants. At the present time a company, such as the Mount Morgan Company, which was dividend-paying, would have to register its shares, because they could not collect their dividends unless they were registered. When the shares rose above three times the nominal value, the share warrant system would be adopted, because it would be just as cheap to do that as to register the scrip, and under the share warrant there would be only one payment required. If they could not dispose of the thing altogether, it would be better to increase the amount of the stamp duty for the initial payment. It might be a convenient thing for a man to go to a banker and say, "I have a lot of share warrants on the Mount Morgan Company for so much, and I want an advance against them"; but there was a great possibility of all their mining ventures being made the playthings of unscrupulous speculators in the money market. The most jealous care should be taken by the Government to see that that sort of thing was not done; and one way to prevent it was not to allow the passage of this Bill if possible. The hon. member for Leichhardt referred to the fact that a change had taken place in the law of Great Britain since the first Act was passed, on which the Minister for Public Instruction had based his amendment. He (Mr. Hunter) was not sure if that was correct. It possibly referred to shares outside the United Kingdom. They were entitled to know something from the Minister, who had had an opportunity of ascertaining for himself if the hon. member for Leichhardt was right in that statement. If it was correct, it was a serious allegation, and he (Mr. Hunter) hoped that it

[Mr. Hunter.

would not be borne out by facts. If it was, then it would show gross carelessness and culpability on the part of the Minister to submit a proposal such as this without any regard to the statement made by the hon. member for Leichhardt.

Mr. WELSBY (*Merthyr*) said he had not intended speaking on the matter at all, but as he had a fair amount of experience in the mercantile and mining world, he would give the Committee his views for what they were worth (Hear, hear!) He did not think the Minister thought he was entirely correct when he said that nine-tenths of the companies were floated on contributing shares. He desired to speak openly on this matter, and there seemed to be something behind the measure that they did not know anything about. There were a lot of exceedingly wealthy men who travelled about the South and Great Britain and continually floated companies for £50,000 or £100,000, and if the companies were floated by means of share warrants, they would be able to bull or bear the market in any way they liked without the ordinary shareholder being made aware of it. He held that the making of the stamp duty payable only on the first issue of the share warrants would mean a loss of revenue to Queensland, and also to any other State where the same Act applied. And

[4.30 p.m.] he did not think that it was in any way fair that warrants should be issued without any names on them. He thought there was something hidden, of which he, at any rate, as one of the Government supporters, had not been informed. He was not in favour of bolstering up big companies, and was of the opinion that the proposed Act was not conducive to the welfare of the people of Queensland.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WELSBY: He had had considerable experience in connection with large companies and small companies, and companies doing business with Great Britain, and he knew that the Bill was playing into the hands of the wealthy men who were continually floating companies, just as they were playing into the hands of the trust companies. He ventured to say that there were members on the Government side who were aware of what had happened in the Northern part of Queensland during the last ten or fifteen years. There were men in Melbourne who had made money out of mines time after time, and if share warrants were allowed to be issued they would have a better chance of raising the prices of the shares and "bearing" the market.

Mr. McCORMACK: Without the public knowing?

Mr. WELSBY: And the public would have no chance of knowing. He knew for a fact that there were scores of transactions in which the stamp duty on sales of shares was not paid.

Mr. FORSYTH: You cannot trace them.

Mr. WELSBY: Whether it was in the case of the large or the small company, it was a much better principle that the general public should know who was buying and who was selling. Take the case of a large director of a company who held, say, 10,000 shares. He took the scrip in his own name, but he wanted to "bull" the market and sell those shares, and then immediately after to "bear" the market and buy them back again. He

did not sell those shares in his own name; he damned them. That had been his experience on more than one occasion in the cases of Southern companies. He was afraid that the Bill was being proposed for some specific purpose of which they did not know. It might be for a company near the Tropic of Capricorn or for a company further north still—he would mention no names—but he had had experience out of his own pocket, and he believed that a great amount of harm would be done. He held that a Bill should be brought in for the protection and the general good of the people and the State, but that Bill was not doing it.

Mr. CRAWFORD (*Mount Morgan*): It was not his intention to follow in detail the speeches that had been delivered. Shortly, he did not like the measure at all, for the reason that power was being given to the new directors of the Mount Morgan Company which he feared would be used to the detriment of Mount Morgan. It was strange to him that during the twenty-five years when the old directors were in power the utility of share warrants was not discovered, but so soon as the old family directors disappeared and the new directors, who had only a cash connection with Mount Morgan, appeared, the utility of share warrants was discovered. He was very much afraid that they would only be used to make Mount Morgan a market mine, and he thought anything that would do that would be against the interests of Central Queensland. Without saying any more, he would vote for any amendment which would have the effect of preventing the Bill coming into force.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He was afraid there was a great deal of misconception with regard to this particular clause, and although at the outset he guarded himself from any pretence of knowledge as to what happened on the Stock Exchange, he still thought the authorities which he had quoted were sufficient to show the genuineness of the amendment. His own experience was that those who claimed to have most knowledge of the Stock Exchange were those who had suffered most, but that knowledge had no bearing on that particular clause. It was attacked on the ground that if passed in its present form revenue would be lost to Queensland.

Mr. McCORMACK: And the people will be injured.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That was the chief part of the charge—that the revenue would suffer; but they had the answer of the man who was supposed to know his business, who said that so far from there being a loss the revenue would gain. That was the Commissioner of Stamps. He did not think there was any man who would put himself up as an authority against Mr. Mitchell.

Mr. HARDACRE: Did he initiate it himself?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Did an officer of the public service initiate legislation?

Mr. HARDACRE: Then he had something submitted to him?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Precisely.

Mr. HARDACRE: Then we have a right to know what it was.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He presumed that he had

submitted to him the question whether stamp duty on three times the nominal value of shares would cause a loss to accrue to the State or not, and his answer was that, as the law now stood, he was of opinion that the revenue would gain by the proposed alteration. Now, it was said that the English law had lately been altered, and hon. members had hinted that it would be a great dereliction of duty on his part to introduce the measure under those circumstances. Well, he took the responsibility of whatever he did. He had authority that he thought was sufficient to justify the action he had taken, and he had already given it to the House—a quotation from the latest authority, *Topman's Company Law of 1910*, which was after that of the Act quoted by the hon. member for Leichhardt—

“When shares are fully paid the company may (if authorised by its regulations) issue share warrants under seal, stating that the bearer of the warrant is entitled to the shares therein specified. The shares then become transferable by delivery of the share warrant.

“Such share warrants are (probably) negotiable instruments (*Beechuanaland Exploration Co. v. London Trading Bank, 1898, 2 Q.B. 658, see p. 157*).

“Note that this can only be done when the shares are fully paid. No stamp duty is payable on transfer, but a heavy stamp duty must be paid when the warrants are first issued.”

The Act the hon. member quoted was an Act “To grant certain duties of Customs and Inland Revenue, to alter other duties, to amend the Law relating to Customs and Inland Revenue, and make other provisions for the financial arrangements of the year.” It was dated 20th June, 1899. Subsection (2) of clause 4, Part II, “Stamps,” was as follows:—

“There shall be charged on every instrument to bearer, not being a share warrant or stock certificate to bearer charged under the foregoing provision, by means of which any share or stock of any company or body of persons formed or established out of the United Kingdom is, after the first day of August, 1899, assigned, transferred, or in any manner negotiated, in the United Kingdom, a stamp duty of 3d. for every £25 of the nominal value of the share or stock.”

That was what the hon. member read and what he (Mr. Blair) pointed out had no reference to the matter. The clause which did refer to the share warrants was subclause (1), as follows:—

“There shall be charged . . . . on every share warrant or stock certificate to bearer by means of which any share or stock of any company or body of persons formed or established out of the United Kingdom is, after the first day of August, 1899, assigned, transferred, or in any manner negotiated in the United Kingdom, a stamp duty of 1s. for every £10 and also for any fractional part of £10 in the case of a marketable security of the money thereby secured, and in the case of a share warrant or stock certificate of the nominal value of the share or stock to which the warrant or certificate relates.”

That was the English law of 1909. The law

*Hon. J. W. Blair.]*

now brought in proposed to take a duty of three times the nominal value, and he wished to point out this distinction—that the English duty was on the share warrants of any company “formed or established out of the United Kingdom.” If he looked at the Bill he would find that, instead of decreasing the duty, it was increasing it. Whether they were increasing it sufficiently or should increase it still further was a matter for the Committee. But the Act he had quoted did not show anything for which the hon. member had contended. It showed that under that law share warrants of companies issued out of the United Kingdom paid a less duty than what they were seeking to make share warrants pay under that Bill. The hon. member for Merthyr seemed to think that the issuing of share warrants would turn one company here into a marketing company—marketing its shares. If hon. members would consider what a share warrant really was, they would realise that share warrants would assist mining by enabling people who had parcels of good shares to get advances to allow them to carry on.

Mr. McCORMACK (*Cairns*): It was generally agreed that the payment of stamp duty on three times the nominal value was a fair thing in connection with shares, but would people take up share warrants in a company when they could get scrip? They would utilise the old scrip until the shares were worth three times the nominal value. The Secretary for Public Instruction had stated that he had asked the Commissioner a certain question, but he (Mr. McCormack) would like to ask the hon. gentleman, did he state that a company had bought 400,000 shares at £3 10s. per share, and that he would lose stamp duty on 10s. on each of those shares? Did the hon. gentleman ask the Commissioner that question, or did he ask him a question on general lines? In dealing with this clause, they appeared to be dealing with a special case—the case of the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company, and a concession was going to be given to that company of the stamp duty on £200,000. The amount paid for the 400,000 shares would be £1,400,000, and under the share warrant system they would only pay stamp duty on £1,200,000. Consequently, Queensland would lose a stamp duty on £200,000. Another view of the matter was the injury that would result to the Queensland mining industry. The hon. member for Merthyr spoke very feelingly in regard to the flotation of “wild-cat” schemes on the London market, and the making of huge sums of money by some people. What was the result? Stagnation of the Queensland mining industry. There were any amount of good shows in North Queensland to-day that were languishing for the want of capital, but people would not touch them. Some of those propositions could well do with an increase of capital to enable them to employ a larger amount of labour than they were able to do at present. The other night the Secretary for Public Instruction interjected that a director could not hold share warrants, but a director might be only the figurehead of a man who held a large interest in a mining venture, and the issue of share warrants would enable him to get out, and the small holder would be left to “nurse the baby,” because the director, or big man in the show, got first information. It might not be a dividend-paying concern, but there were mines in Queensland which

were at present paying handsomely, and the shares were very high in the market, but the holders of those shares would take the first opportunity of getting rid of them if they could get anyone to buy. The small holders were not given information regarding the position of such mines. The result would be that the people in England who held large parcels of shares would get rid of them under the share warrant system, and no one would know that the big holder had sold, and the real investor—it was the investor they wanted—would be caught, as he usually was. The newspapers stated they were dividend-paying concerns, and the small investor took the shares at their face value; and he found, after twelve months' working, after paying another dividend, that the mine had petered out, and those people who had invested in various companies would say, “No more Queensland for me.” He admitted that that was being done at present, and always would be done, but still the issuing of share warrants would give those people an easier way of getting out.

HON. R. PHILP (*Townsville*) said he could not follow the arguments of the hon. member for Cairns at all. It seemed to him that the Government were going to make a present to somebody of a big lot of stamp duty. They were asking the Committee to allow a number of shares to be stamped on three times their face value, while those shares at the present time were worth more than three times their face value. Under the present law, a single transfer would bring in more revenue to the Government, as they would have to pay stamp duty on £3 10s., but if the Bill was passed, after once paying stamp duty on £3, they would escape any further taxation. He knew of shares having been transferred twenty or thirty times, and they had paid stamp duty on each occasion, because all shares in a dividend-paying company were immediately transferred on being sold. Nobody collected dividends in another man's name, and he thought the Bill was a mistake. It seemed to him that the present law was fair enough. All transfers were not negotiable until they were stamped. He remembered the time when the Mount Morgan shares were stamped on £15 or £16, and he had paid stamp duty on that amount himself. He could not understand how the Bill would help the Treasurer, and he hoped the Government would reconsider it.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*) said he did not think any hon. member could deny, if the clause was passed as printed, that there might possibly be a loss of revenue in connection with the particular shares that had been mentioned. That must be so, if the shares were worth £3 10s. and the duty was only levied on three times the nominal value, which was £1. The position the Government were placed in was that the clause is not a special clause for any one company. It was an amendment of the Companies Act to meet the requirements of all companies for the time to come, and to bring the laws of Queensland in regard to companies into line with the companies' law in other places. As a legal practitioner, he knew that frequently the question arose as to whether a company should be registered in New South Wales, or Victoria, or in Queensland. It was naturally desired, where it could be arranged, that a company carrying on operations in Queensland should be

[*Hon. J. W. Blair.*]

registered in Queensland, and they were continually faced with the difference between the Queensland laws and the Victorian and other laws. They were told, for instance, that there was no duty at all on transfers of scrip in Victoria. He was not in a position to say whether that was the law or not, but the matter had been frequently brought before him as an argument, and companies which might have become registered in Queensland, and have their head office and management in Queensland, had consequently been registered in New South Wales or Victoria, with great loss of revenue to Queensland, and possibly loss of protection to many people in Queensland. If the clause was passed in its present form, he did not think there was likely to be any great loss of revenue to Queensland, as a share warrant was a dangerous security for any man to handle or to keep in his safe. Being negotiable by delivery, it was like a sovereign or a bank-note—the person who got his hands on it could negotiate it and deprive the owner of his title. If there was any loss of revenue, they always had the power to alter the Stamp Act, and, if necessary, get more revenue from it. There was another matter for consideration. When framing their laws, they should encourage people to come to and carry on business in Queensland, and there was a great deal to be said for the clause from that particular point of view. He could not realise the argument put forward by the hon. member for Cairns and the leader of the Opposition with regard to the Bill being purely a measure for the handling of shares. He could see nothing of that in it. If share warrants had proved such a curse, and had been the means of large swindles being perpetrated in other parts of the world, surely hon. members would realise that details of such could be found in the law reports and instances be quoted. It was a mere bogey, and the clause might be very well passed as printed. Assuming that the duty was increased—personally he had no objection to that—the trouble would be that the increased duty would apply to the shareholders of other companies, who, perhaps, were not able to stand it as well as the shareholders of the company referred to. After all, it was not the company who had to pay; it was the people who invested in the companies' shares. He knew what the convenience of those share warrants was. In London it offered means of raising money at a moment's notice for the benefit of the holders of shares, as they were not called upon to have transfers of shares registered before they could get the use of the money they required. It was a convenience which they appreciated, and which they looked for in companies, and if they could not get it in one form they would probably get it in the other—the other form would be the registration of a company of that kind in London, instead of in Queensland, or the transfer of the undertaking to an English company. So far as the Queensland people were concerned, there was nothing in the world to stop a Queensland shareholder transferring his shares to the London register, and dealing with them on the other side, in which case there would be no duty payable in Queensland at all.

Mr. HUNTER: We could stop that, could we not?

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. member could stop a good deal, but if he stopped

some things they would not come here. They could stop anything—they could kill anything—but he took it that it was not the desire of hon. members to do that. It was a common-sense proposition to give Queensland as good a show in the markets of the world as Victoria and New South Wales.

Mr. RYAN: The speech of the Minister seemed to him to be merely a special plea for a large company. He understood that the share warrant system was adopted in other countries and other States, but he also agreed with the hon. member for Townsville, whose remarks were quite justified when he said that this was intended to make a present to certain people.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Did I contradict?

Mr. RYAN: The hon. member did not contradict, and he understood by his interjection that he agreed; and if he agreed that it was to be a present to this company, he should be prepared to take some steps to prevent that present being made.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. RYAN: What they had objected to from the start was that this measure should be brought in at this juncture to oblige the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company. He had been particularly careful to ask whether any other company had asked for this legislation, and the Chief Secretary was candid, and said "No." So that, because some syndicate had bought a large parcel of shares, they wanted this passed to suit their convenience. He had heard of no demand from any other companies to have a share warrant system in operation here. They were told by the hon. member for Fitzroy, and other members opposite, that the share warrants would not be used much in Queensland. They objected to pass this measure simply to suit the Mount Morgan Company.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If it is a good thing, what does it matter who it is?

Mr. RYAN: If it was a good thing, why not have done it before? Why should they do away with a large amount of stamp duty which should go to the revenue? Let them pay their stamp duty, and if it was necessary to come to a share warrant system they could then do so; but, personally, he did not think it was necessary to have a share warrant system. He had not heard any hon. member say how the interests of Queensland were going to be protected by having share warrants.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Companies will register here, and carry on business here.

Mr. RYAN: He thought they should be registered here, and he had said before that he would have a company law to compel them to be registered here to carry on business.

Mr. HUNTER: That is not what the hon. member for Toowong suggests.

Mr. RYAN: No; the hon. member for Toowong suggested that companies would not register in Queensland at all, that they would carry on business here, but register in London. He would be quite ready and willing to pass a law that they should be compelled to register in Queensland. He would not be at all afraid of the bogey that they were going to take the first ship and clear out, and he did not think that it would frighten the people of Queensland. He knew

*Mr. Ryan.]*

that many fairminded business people were strongly of opinion that companies carrying on business in Queensland should be compelled to register in Queensland.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I was speaking of the main registration—the domicile of the company.

Mr. RYAN: He should make every company have a registered office in Queensland before they could carry on business.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If you can have an office in Brisbane, all the better.

Mr. RYAN: Quite so.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The Mount Morgan Company has its head office in Queensland.

Mr. RYAN: That was for the convenience of the Mount Morgan Company, not for the people of Queensland. It would be a ridiculous thing in connection with a New South Wales company, because it had its head office there, not to allow it to do business here until it established its head office here.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If you can get it it would be a very good thing to have.

Mr. RYAN: If they could get it; but he was quite prepared to take the risk of the Mount Morgan Company shifting its head office to London. He would be quite willing to place a check upon them to see that they did not do it. He could see no reason why this measure should be brought in at the request of the Mount Morgan Company. A cable appeared to have been recently received, which appeared to have been a mandate to the Government, because this measure was listed at the top of the business sheet, and there was important business below it. The hon. member for Maranoa quoted an extract from the "Australasian Insurance and Banking Record" as follows:—

"Shareholders on the Sydney and London registers will be able to vote at general meetings of the company by lodging proxies at branch offices, particulars of which will be telegraphed or cabled to the head office; the company takes power to issue share warrants so soon as the Queensland law permits this."

There was no demand for this amendment of the company law. He was sure hon. members were surprised that such a proposal had been brought in—that because this resolution had been passed, the company would take power to issue share warrants; and that, as soon as the Queensland law permitted, the Queensland Government had to forthwith set about altering the law accordingly. He objected to that. He agreed with the hon. member for Townsville and other hon. members on the opposite side, who had placed the question very fairly, and proved the necessity for having this matter adjourned from last week. There was no urgency about it, and the Government would be well advised to allow the matter to go further down on the list. From the nature of the discussion, they could not think that this was some opposition got up by Opposition members simply to obstruct them; it had been brought up on both sides. The Government had not given any sufficient reason why this legislation should be passed, and without any loss of dignity, and in deference to the wishes expressed on both sides, they could refrain from putting this measure through. If some intimation of that kind were made by the

[Mr. Ryan.

Chief Secretary or the Minister in charge of the Bill it would facilitate matters, and they could get on with business of a more important character.

Mr. HARDACRE did not think the Minister was very clear on the matter, and he would like to quote section 4 of the English Finance Act of 1893, which read as follows:—

"There shall be charged on every marketable security made or issued by or on behalf of any foreign State or Government, or foreign colonial municipal body, corporation, or company, being a security transferable by delivery, which

(a) Is after the 1st day of August, 1893, assigned, transferred, or in any manner negotiated in the United Kingdom, and

(b) Is not under the law existing at the passing of this Act chargeable with stamp duty as a marketable security transferable by delivery,

and on every share warrant or stock certificate to bearer. . ."

There had to be a duty of 1s. for every £10 or fractional part of £10 on every negotiation after the original investment. That had nothing to do with the duty on three times the nominal amount on the original issue. Whether that applied to share warrants in companies formed in Great Britain or to share warrants in companies formed out of Great Britain was not quite clear, because it concluded with a dragnet statement—

"and in the case of a share warrant or stock certificate of the nominal value of the share or stock to which the warrant or certificate relates."

The law was not clear, and they should delay the matter until they knew the position. The hon. member for Toowong said they might as well let this matter go, and they could amend the Stamp Duties Act in two or three weeks, but by that time this transaction would be completed, and this particular company would have issued share warrants, and would not have paid duty on the actual market value. It was a similar case to that in which the Commonwealth Parliament repealed the sugar bounties and excise, when there was a loss to the State of some £120,000. They were liable to make a mistake if they passed this now and tried to amend the Stamp Act later on. If they wanted to amend the stamp duties they should bring down an amendment of the Stamp Duties Act, and include all companies. He hoped the Minister would not go any further with the matter.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: In order to ease the mind of the hon. member for Leichhardt, he had sent for some authorities on the stamp laws. "Highmore on Stamp Laws," third edition, said—

"A duty of an amount equal to three times the amount of the ad valorem stamp duty which would be chargeable on a deed transferring the share or shares or stock specified in the warrant or certificate, if the consideration for the transfer were the nominal value of such share or shares or stock."

Mr. HARDACRE: That is quite correct.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION hoped there would be no further doubt that the English law was what

was included in this Bill—three times the nominal value. "Alpe" said the same as Highmore.

Mr. HARDACRE: I agree with that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member was quoting an English Act of 1899 which, he said, amended what was contained in this Bill.

Mr. HARDACRE: I said it was stamp duty on subsequent negotiations.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That was where the hon. member was confused. The stamp duty on share warrants was afterwards extended to similar negotiable instruments—instruments which resembled share warrants. Under the British law and New Zealand, there was a stamp duty on three times the nominal value. What the hon. member referred to was this—

"The stamp duty charged under the Stamp Act, 1891, on share warrants issued under the provisions of the Companies Act, 1867, shall extend to—"

This was an amendment of the 1891 Act—

"any instrument to bearer issued by or on behalf of any company or body of persons formed or established in the United Kingdom."

Mr. HARDACRE: I did not refer to that section at all. I referred to section 4.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: There was no doubt whatever that in England the law was to charge stamp duty on share warrants equal to three times the nominal value of the share.

Mr. MURPHY: We are all agreed on that.

Mr. HARDACRE: I never disputed that.

Mr. HUNTER hoped that the Minister would be guided by the hon. member for Leichhardt with regard to the advisability of postponing the consideration of this measure to a later date. It seemed to him that the more information the Committee got on the subject the more reason there was for waiting for further information. He thought, after the speech made by the hon. member for Cairns in reference to the "wild cat" method of floating companies in Great Britain, and the injuries inflicted by them on the investing public, who had declined to enter into investments in the North, was very strong reason why this proposal should not be continued. He regarded with a great deal more apprehension the effect that the passage of the Bill would have on the mining industry than the effect it would have on the revenue. It was quite true that the Treasury was handing over stamp duty equal to the difference between the amount paid on £1,200,000 and the amount paid on £1,400,000. To that extent the Queensland Treasury was going to suffer a loss, but that was a small matter compared with the injury that might come to the mining industry, and that was one which the Committee should jealously guard. The syndicate were taking 400,000 shares, and they wanted to make something out of them. The syndicate were not concerned whether Mount Morgan was going to have a prosperous mining future. They were not going to spend money in developmental work, but would make what they could out of it. That was not

the case with the old Mount Morgan Company. That company had spent money in developing the mine, and they treated their employees well. But the scene would be changed at the passing of this Act, because the syndicate would want to make as much money out of it as they could, and the Committee should not give its consent to that sort of thing. It was their plain duty to put every obstacle in the way of such a thing happening. Mount Morgan had been a successful mine all these years, and it was dividend paying. It was a matter of great importance to the State that the company had been an honest, straight-going concern for years. There was a fear that all that would be altered by the passage of this Bill, because the syndicate who took the 400,000 shares could buy and sell as they pleased. They would be actual buyers on the open market, but they would be getting rid of the shares at an inflated value, and they would be doing it silently. They would get out of the whole concern, and that sort of thing would not redound to the credit of Queensland. The Government would be well advised to drop the whole business. It was no argument to state that it was the law in New South Wales or Victoria. They were told by the hon. member for Merthyr that the sharebrokers in the South did not stand on the same high level that they did in the Northern State.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. LENNON (*Herbert*): When this measure was first introduced he regarded it as objectionable, but he thought it was a harmless affair. With the information that had come from both sides of the Committee, particularly with regard to the transaction of the 400,000 shares, it looked as if the Government were at the beck and call of any large syndicate that was out to make money. It was quite clear that the Government was prepared to do everything they could to facilitate the workings of any large syndicate formed for the purpose of manipulating Mount Morgan shares. It was all very well for the Minister for Public Instruction to inform the Committee that the Commissioner of Stamps informed him that there would not be any loss of revenue. He (Mr. Lennon) was at a loss to understand how the Commissioner arrived at that conclusion. That opinion might have been expressed by the Commissioner in a general way, but did the Minister submit to him the question whether this particular proposal would mean a loss of revenue? As a matter of fact, they knew that the revenue would suffer to the extent of £500 by the transaction of the 400,000 shares. If the Bill were passed, it would involve a transaction covering £1,200,000, whereas three times the present market value of Mount Morgan shares would involve a transaction of £1,400,000. That represented a difference of £200,000, and taking the stamp duty at 6d. for every £10, it worked out exactly as a loss of £500. The Government were quite willing to allow this syndicate to get the benefit of that £500, yet they would not assist in the development of some of the decadent mining fields, nor would they assist in prospecting ventures. The Government were extremely niggardly in their prospecting and mining proposals, and yet, with the largeness that was peculiar to them, they

were presenting this company with £500. For that reason, he must certainly oppose it.

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Herbert said the Government was at the beck and call of the syndicate. An insult to a well-organised and well-conducted corporation! It would be generally allowed that the Mount Morgan Company had been conducted with great integrity—of recent years, at any rate. (Hear, hear!) The gambling time had passed by some long time since, and Mount Morgan stock had been investors' stock and not gamblers' stock for many years. There was nothing in the world to indicate that there had been a change of front. Happily, this great mine was held by strong people; otherwise, what was once a great goldmine might have been exploited, and at the present time operations would have ceased. They all knew now that Mount Morgan was not much of a gold proposition; it was now mainly a copper proposition. It was also common knowledge that the Mount Morgan Company were reorganising their works with the view of perpetuating the mine. They had no wish to exploit the people at all. The remodelling of the Mount Morgan works involved a very large expenditure, and it was being done with the view of continuing the mine—as they hoped it would—for many a long year. (Hear, hear!) There was nothing in the nature of a gamble so far as his knowledge of the matter went. A great deal had been said about 400,000 shares having been sold; but he had no knowledge of it.

Mr. RYAN: The Nagrom syndicate.

The PREMIER: Had those shares been transferred yet?

Mr. RYAN: No, not at all.

The PREMIER: The main objection to the clause seemed to be that Queensland would lose some £500 of revenue that they would recover as an ordinary share transfer.

Mr. RYAN: That is to begin with. That is the beginning of the whole trouble.

The PREMIER: That would be met.

Mr. HARDACRE: How?

The PREMIER: They could provide that stamp duty be paid either upon three times the nominal value or upon the market price, whichever of the two be the higher at the time of issuing of the warrant.

Mr. RYAN: Would you introduce an amendment to that effect?

The PREMIER: I think so.

Mr. RYAN: Then that would meet the case.

The PREMIER: But the amendment must be properly drafted, and to have it properly drafted they would have to defer consideration of it. He would not willingly allow any party to get an advantage over the Treasury. The Treasury was not in a position that it could afford to let anyone get at it. If it was true that the Treasury would be deprived of assessment on 10s. a share, then they could meet that with an amendment that would at least protect the revenue.

Mr. RYAN: You are going to give the Draftsman a very hard job.

Mr. MURPHY: It is impossible.

[Mr. Lennon.

The PREMIER: If it was an impossible job, they would have to admit that it was impossible, but as an ordinary layman, it occurred to him that it might be done.

Mr. RYAN: It is not so easy as it looks.

The PREMIER: He was prepared to secure the amount of the market value.

Mr. MURPHY: The trouble is to get at the market value of shares.

The PREMIER: Some members said that the market value was £3 10s.—

Mr. RYAN: You are making a law to meet all companies.

The PREMIER: That was the only way in which he could see that there would be a protection for the revenue. With regard to share warrants being required for the purpose of defrauding the revenue, that had been fully argued by the Minister in charge of the Bill. Reference had been made to the fact that the Mount Morgan Company were the only folk who asked for it.

Mr. RYAN: You told us so yourself.

The PREMIER: He said so; and, so far as his knowledge went, it was perfectly true.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: They are not the only people who will benefit by it.

The PREMIER: He was merely telling the facts as he knew them. He was of opinion that it would be of great benefit to Queensland mines and to Queensland development, because, at the present time, some of the largest Cloncurry concerns were registered in the South, and they could be handled there without paying any stamp duty at all. He concluded that Queensland should come into line with the other States, so as to issue share warrants. In New South Wales and in Victoria they charged no duty at all; in New Zealand and in England duty was charged on three times the nominal value. Were they in Queensland going to arrogate to themselves a superiority over the whole universe with regard to this matter? The real object in view was to enable holders in Great Britain to handle their stock advantageously.

Mr. RYAN: It would be just as well if we had it before this goes through.

The PREMIER: What he meant by the remark was that, if anybody here wanted an advance—£100,000 or £50,000—it took a little negotiation or arrangement; but financiers were accustomed to heavy transactions for a brief period in Great Britain or [5.30 p.m.] on the Continent. If he wanted £50,000, and had warrants on a well-known company, there would be no difficulty in getting immediate assistance, and that was, he believed, the simple reason why the company wanted to get these warrants. The matter was brought to his notice only on those lines. It was never argued that it was going to be "a let out" for them in regard to paying duty. He would like to see the revenue protected at least to the value of the duty that would be payable on the market value of the shares, and the issue of the warrants would mean a difference of duty on £200,000—£500. He did

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES BILL.

CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1 put and passed.

On clause 2—"Interpretation"—

Mr. KIRWAN asked what companies were covered by the definition on page 3, line 21, "Industrial Trading Societies"—

"Societies established for carrying on any labour, trade, or handicraft, whether wholesale or retail (including the business of working mines or quarries, but not including the business of banking), and applying the profits to any lawful purposes."

Was he to understand from that that any friendly society or trade union which chose to register under the Act would be permitted to engage in any trade of that kind? For instance, would such a body be allowed to start a co-operative store?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He understood that there were only three trading societies registered under the section. They carried on in a very small way, and it was better for them to register under the Friendly Societies Act than under the Companies Act. There was no alteration in the wording of the old Act.

Clause 2 put and passed.

Clause 3 put and passed.

On clause 4—"Registrar, etc."—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved an amendment to add the following words to subclause (3) on line 32—

"such salary and allowances as Parliament from time to time appropriates for that purpose."

It was practically fixing the salary, which could not be put in in "another place," and following the wording of the old Act.

Amendment put and passed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved the addition of a new subclause (4), as follows:—

"The expenses incurred in the administration of this Act shall be defrayed out of the moneys to be from time to time appropriated by Parliament for the purpose."

It was only a machinery clause.

Amendment put and passed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved the addition of a new subclause (5), as follows:—

"The Governor in Council may from time to time determine the rates of remuneration (if any) to be paid by societies or branches for the services of such auditors and valuers."

Amendment put and passed; and clauses, as amended, put and passed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved the addition of a new clause, to be clause 5, as follows:—

"The Governor in Council may from time to time determine a scale of fees to be paid for matters to be transacted or for the inspection of documents under this Act.

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not think that was in the mind of Mr. Casey when he desired that arrangement to be made. It was merely desired that these warrants would be negotiable at home, just as was the case with the warrants of other large institutions in that country.

Mr. RYAN: He was very glad that the Chief Secretary had taken the suggestion to move the Chairman out of the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

The PREMIER: With a view to protecting the revenue to that extent.

Mr. RYAN: He hoped they would not sit again. He thought the suggestion to make the stamp duty payable on a value equal to the market value was a very difficult thing.

Mr. MURPHY: It is impossible.

Mr. RYAN: He was surprised that the Chief Secretary did not know it. The stamp duty must be fixed when the warrant was issued.

The PREMIER: If the value is £3 10s. to-day, could you not fix it at that?

Mr. MURPHY: Suppose it is only £2 10s.?

Mr. RYAN: The previous adjournment had led to very good results, from his point of view, and perhaps it was well not to press the matter further, and allow the Chief Secretary to take the step he proposed.

The PREMIER: It might be difficult to frame an amendment, but he could not conceive that there was any insuperable difficulty. If the value was £3 10s., and three times the nominal value of the shares was £3, then, surely, on the transfer it would be assessable at £3 10s. It seemed to him it was practicable, but as they had not the Parliamentary Draftsman there, and as it was one of those things that could not be hurriedly prepared, he thought it was better that the Minister should accept the suggestion with a view to meeting the case so as to protect the revenue.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Mr. RYAN: He would like to know when it was the intention to bring the matter on again? He hoped it would go well down the list.

The PREMIER: The Financial Statement will be dealt with before this is again introduced.

Mr. HUNTER: That will be two weeks.

The PREMIER: It may be a week or two.

Mr. HARDACRE: He would like to point out that they were in a very difficult position if they did nothing. They had already passed a clause giving authority to a company to issue share warrants, and they now were going to amend the clause fixing the charge which was to be made on them. It might lead to confusion.

The PREMIER: It can do nothing until it becomes law.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported progress, and leave was given to sit again to-morrow.

"But no fees other than those prescribed by this Act shall be payable for the registration of any society or branch under this Act, or for the amendment of any rules."

New clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 and 7 put and passed.

On clause 8—"What societies may be registered"—

Mr. KIRWAN asked for some information regarding the "specially authorised" societies mentioned in subclause 6. Was he to understand that the Minister would have power, on any particular occasion, to say whether a society was to be registered under the Act or not? He remembered reading that the Farmers' Union approached the Registrar with a view to registration under the Act, and were told that it was impossible. He also saw that they were going to approach the Premier, and seek his influence in the direction of having their organisation registered. To what societies did the subclause refer?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said: "Specially authorised societies" were those which first of all made application to the Registrar, and were then referred to the Attorney-General for his sanction, and if, on investigation, it was found that they had nothing in their rules which conflicted with the regulations or provisions of the Act, they were duly registered.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 9—"Application for registry"—

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): There was something wrong in charging a society £5 5s. for registration, and then, under clause 13, for every rule that was altered a further charge of £2 2s. was made. Even if only one word was altered, the same fee was charged.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must confine his remarks to the question before the Committee.

Mr. PAYNE said he was speaking on clause 9.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no fee included in clause 9 yet.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that, on line 9, after the word "by," the words "a fee of five guineas. Such fee shall be paid to the certifying barrister for his own use," be inserted. He would point out that there was no change whatever with regard to the fees, as £5 5s. were chargeable under the present Act on application for registration. It was considered that the fee was fixed as low as they possibly could with safety, as otherwise they might have bogus societies or exceptionally weak societies registered. Surely that was not too much to ask in return for all the protection contained in the Act. Once the registration fee was paid, no further charge was made.

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

Clauses 10 to 12, both inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 13—"Amendments to be registered"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that the words "a fee

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of two guineas. Such fee shall be paid to the certifying barrister for his own use," be inserted after the word "by," on line 31.

Mr. MURPHY: Who is the certifying barrister?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The certifying barrister, as a rule, was the person appointed by the Attorney-General. If there was no certifying barrister, the Attorney-General acted as certifying barrister.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Although no change was made in connection with this clause, he thought it would be a good thing if a change could be made, and the charge kept within reasonable bounds. One of the results of charging £2 2s. for any alteration in the rules was that rules were allowed to go for years and years without being revised, and practically half the rules were obsolete before any revision took place. It would be in the interests of the societies, and would have the tendency of keeping the rules up to date, if the charge was fixed at £1 1s.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN (*Kennedy*) thought that it would be wise if the charge was fixed at £1 1s., because, under present conditions, friendly societies kept their rules unregistered for years. If verbal amendments were made, they had to be sent down, and the certifying barrister charged £2 2s. for really no work at all. He hoped the Minister would meet the wishes of the Committee in that respect.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said he had consulted the Registrar of Friendly Societies, who informed him that it would be unwise to reduce the fee. It was only once a year that the rules were sent down to be considered, and, although it might be only a small amendment of a word or two, before he could say that the rules were valid, he must have a certificate from a competent person who had gone through all the rules affected. The certifying barrister, if he did his duty, must go through the rules to see that the alteration did not in any way affect other rules, and it was considered that the fee for the work involved was not too much.

Mr. MAY: Suppose you sent half a dozen amendments down at the one time?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He would deal with one at a time.

Mr. MAY: That is £2 2s. for each one?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No, £2 2s. for the lot. It would be wise for the Committee to take the opinion of the Registrar, who was certainly not unfriendly to friendly societies, and who thought that the fee should stand the same as in the Act of 1904.

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

Clauses 14 to 20, both inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 21—"Audit"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said he had had the advantage of having a consultation with the Registrar on the points raised by hon. members during the second reading debate, and, as the result of that consultation, he moved

that after the word "to," on line 3, the words "a licensed auditor or to" be inserted. As had been pointed out, some societies had already appointed a licensed auditor themselves. Some very strong societies approved of that course, and the Registrar considered it would not be wise to interfere with them, but allow them to continue that practice. At the same time, in connection with all societies, there must be two auditors or a licensed auditor. He thought the amendment would satisfy some of the objections raised on the second reading debate.

Mr. McCORMACK suggested that the books of friendly societies should be audited by Government auditors in the same way as the books of hospitals. It would save a good deal of expense to the societies if some amendment were made allowing Government auditors to inspect the books of friendly societies once a year, at any time a Government auditor happened to be in the district. Auditing by licensed auditors cost the societies a good deal of money. In some districts they charged £5 5s. Those districts in the past had been getting their auditing done free, and allowed the money to go to the widows and orphans' fund. He thought that the Auditor-General should arrange so that the Government auditor when making visits to a district should also conduct an audit of the friendly society's books, and call attention to any irregularities there might be, but since the tea adjournment the Minister had informed him that the Registrar had made inquiries into the matter, and thought the present method would be most satisfactory. He was satisfied that the Registrar was using his best endeavours to make this a good Bill for the friendly societies, so he would not press the matter.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*) was thoroughly in accord with the sentiments expressed by the hon. member for Cairns. The amendment was an improvement on existing conditions, but it left existing conditions just as they were, assuming that the returns sent down to the Registrar were correct. It was quite possible for the returns, as far as the Registrar was concerned, to be perfectly correct, and yet the books from which they had been made up could be anything but correct. It was well known that secretaries in recent times had sent down returns to which no exception had been taken, and which appeared to the Registrar to be in perfect order, but when the books had been examined they had been found to be in an improper condition, and in some instances the secretaries had got away with the funds. While it made it optional if the societies wished to take on the expense of engaging a professional auditor—and a strong lodge would be able to do it—it was not likely that anything could be done in that connection by small branches. In most lodges two members were appointed to audit the books, and in some cases they were well qualified, while in others they were not. They had to take the cue from the secretary, who, if he wanted to mislead them, could do so. Sometimes the audit was satisfactory, but in many instances it had not been satisfactory. It was in large centres, where there were plenty of qualified auditors to be got, that the defalcations had taken place, not in the isolated districts. It would have been a good thing in the interests of the societies if the amend-

ment had gone further and made it incumbent, without placing any expense on the societies themselves, that if a Government auditor did not think it necessary to audit the books he should, at any rate, inspect them, and he could easily satisfy himself whether they were kept correctly or not. The officials in connection with schools of arts and other institutions knew that at any time the Government inspector might drop in and look through the books. If it was the same in connection with friendly societies, it would have the effect of making officials keep their books up to date, and it was regrettable that the Minister had not seen fit to provide that a Government auditor should see the books once a year to ascertain that they were kept in good order. He thought that was done in England.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN was sorry the Minister did not see his way clear to accept the suggestion of Opposition members, because it was in the interests of friendly societies to have a proper audit for their own protection. Generally, a man who was well known amongst friendly societies was appointed as auditor, but many of those men were not qualified, and it would be far better if the Government insisted on a licensed auditor. But for the supervision of the Registrar, friendly societies would not be in as good a position as they were to-day, and to complete the whole thing the Government should insist upon a qualified auditor going through the books. He was informed that the expense would only amount to something like £3 per branch, and there would be thousands of pounds saved to the societies by this judicious outlay. It would be wise if the Committee insisted on that amendment.

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

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved, as a consequential amendment, the insertion of "auditor or" before "auditors," on line 24.

Amendment agreed to.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, the word "objects," on line 23, and clause 22, line 47, was deleted, and the clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 23 to 26, both inclusive, put and passed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved the insertion of the following new clause, to follow clause 26—

"(1.) Notwithstanding any other Act to the contrary, stamp duty shall not be chargeable upon any of the following documents:—

- (a) Draft or order or receipt for money contributed to or received from the funds of a society or branch by virtue of its rules or of this Act: Provided that a cheque drawn by or on behalf of a society or branch shall bear on its face the words 'drawn under the Friendly Societies Act';
- (b) Bond given to or on account of a society or branch, or by the treasurer or other officer thereof;
- (c) Draft or order, or form of policy, or appointment or revocation of appointment of agent, or other document required or authorised by this Act or by the rules.

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"(2.) Notwithstanding any other Act to the contrary, no probate duty or succession duty shall be payable in respect of any amount assured in any friendly society.

"(3.) This section does not apply to building societies deemed to be registered under this Act or to industrial trading societies or their branches."

Question put and passed.

On clause 28—"Membership for minors"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved, after the word "rules" on line 37, to omit the word "but," and insert the following words:—"He may be secretary, but otherwise." That provided that a person under twenty-one years of age could be a secretary of a lodge, but otherwise he could not be a member of the executive, committee of management, trustee, or treasurer.

Mr. WINSTANLEY would like to hear from the Minister some reason for an amendment like this. At first sight it looked as if a boy twenty-one years of age was too young to be a secretary of a lodge.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The amendment provided that persons under the age of twenty-one years but over the age of sixteen years could act as secretary. The request had been made by a number of lodges to the Registrar of Friendly Societies to be allowed to employ a minor as secretary, and as a compromise the Registrar suggested putting in the Act that he could act as secretary, but could not fill any of the other offices he had just mentioned.

Mr. FOLEY (*Mundingburra*) asked if it meant elective secretary or financial secretary?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It means general secretary. It means both.

Mr. FOLEY: It was the first time he ever heard of a young man under twenty-one years of age being eligible to become a secretary of a lodge. While the Bill allowed him to become secretary, it did not allow him to take a part in the management. He (Mr. Foley) had been a member of a friendly society for thirty-five years, and he knew that there was great objection to young members taking executive office, but there was no objection to a young man being appointed elective secretary, because it only entailed writing and reading the minutes and reading the correspondence. It would be as good as night school to allow a young man to be appointed elective secretary, because it would give him a chance to follow up his studies after he left school. The Minister should make it clear that it was not intended that a minor should be appointed financial secretary, but only elective or minute secretary.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*) thought the lodges could be trusted to look after the appointment of the secretary of a branch, as it was a matter that concerned only themselves. In the past it had caused some dissatisfaction, because a minor could not be appointed secretary. At the present time it took eighteen months for a member to reach the president's chair, and if a corresponding or minute secretary were appointed when he was eighteen years of age, he would have to drop out after his first term was over, and he could not take office until he was twenty-one years of age. Personally, he

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thought it would be better to let these young men take any office in the branch. They got as members many young men nineteen years of age who were capable of being president of a branch, but they were prohibited from appointing them. He would like to see the clause go further, and allow a minor to be elected to any office in the branch, although he should not be elected to the directorate or committee of management.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The clause was really a compromise on the part of the Registrar with the friendly societies. The reason it was introduced was because of a letter received from Mr. W. G. Lewis, grand secretary of the Protestant Alliance, dated 20th August, 1913, in which Mr. Lewis stated—

"Section 28 provides that a minor shall not be a member of a committee of management. We suggest that this be amended so as to provide for a minor being secretary, as it often occurs that there is much difficulty in finding a suitable member for that office over twenty-one years of age, especially in new lodges."

The Registrar agreed with that, and thought there would be sufficient safeguards and sufficient protection in that the lodges would not be likely to select a man who [7.30 p.m.] was not trustworthy. The hon. member for East Toowoomba wished to go further, but they were trying, as far as possible, to have the wishes of the friendly societies crystallised in this section.

Amendment (*Mr. Blair's*) agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 29 to 33, both inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 34—"Loans to trustees"—

On the motion of Mr. HUXHAM, the clause was amended to read—

"No person who, or whose husband, or wife, or agent is personally or in a representative capacity a borrower from the funds of any central body or branch, shall be eligible to hold office as trustee, or secretary, or treasurer of such central body or branch."

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 35 to 40, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 41—"Conversion of registered societies into branches"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved the addition of the following words after "by" in line 18, page 17:—

"a fee of two pounds two shillings. Such fee shall be paid to the certifying barrister for his own use."

This was only a fee for the examination and the certifying as accurate the rules of the society, and there was practically no change from the old law.

Mr. FHELLY said this matter had been previously discussed, but he would like some further information. It seemed to him that it was understood that the Crown Law Department did this work, and he did not think it would be an extraordinary thing if the friendly societies were to have the benefit of it. Two guineas was two guineas to every society concerned, although it was a very small amount for the Crown Law Department. The Attorney-General might earn

something very comfortably, and he had objections to money being earned in that particular way. So he did not see why this fee should be inserted.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION explained that this work had been done by the barrister who had held the appointment of certifying barrister, apart altogether from the Crown Law Office. When Mr. Power died he (Mr. Blair) then gave the work to Mr. McCawley, who now was the Crown Solicitor. If no certifying barrister was appointed the fees went to the Attorney-General, but whoever it was that did the work—whether it was the certifying barrister or the Attorney-General—he was entitled to be paid for it. It was work outside the ordinary routine of the Crown Law Office. The Registrar considered that the amount was certainly not extortionate, and that it was a fair charge for the work done. It was important work, work that required technical knowledge and skill, and required the man who had that skill and knowledge to make use of them. He thought the Committee would do well to pass the amendment as it stood, because no change was proposed in the law, and no good reason had been shown why the man who did the work should not be paid the fee.

Mr. FIELLY: His information was from quite as good an authority as even the Registrar—from the friendly societies concerned. So far as he could gather, no one had collected the fee since Mr. Power died, and if Mr. McCawley received the fee, he (Mr. Fihelly) was misinformed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I think I got some fees myself.

Mr. FIELLY: That was exactly what he did not want. He did not want the barristers even outside the Department to get them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Not even if they do the work?

Mr. FIELLY: For the last few years the Crown Law Department had been doing the work, and he thought, realising the benefit that accrued from friendly societies, they might allow the Crown Law Department to do the work in their ordinary routine. He did not think the Secretary for Public Instruction had persuaded any member of the Committee of the legitimacy of this particular charge. He thought it was just part of the traditions of the profession to which the hon. member belonged, and which, he should say, he admired. It was part of the traditions that clung around that sinister profession, and the sooner they chopped the "perks" from the solicitors and barristers the better.

Amendment put and passed.

Clauses 42 to 63, inclusive, put and passed. First Schedule put and passed.

On the Second Schedule—"Rules governing the business proceedings and property of societies"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved an amendment to insert after the word "books," in line 40, page 25, the words "and securities."

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. McCORMACK: Clause 29 of the second schedule provided that no member of a friendly society was entitled to receive more than £2 per week by way of allowance. He had been approached by some societies in the North of Queensland, where

living was high, who stated that the amount was not sufficient. The members of those societies said they were prepared to insure themselves in two or three societies if they could get the full amount of the benefit from each society, or even an increased amount, as the amount provided in the present Act was not sufficient. For instance, they had to pay £1 10s. a week for hospital attendance, and there was only 10s. over, and he thought those members who were prepared to pay the extra money to insure themselves in two or three societies should be allowed to do so, especially in the remote districts of Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The point raised by the hon. member had been considered by the framers of the measure, and it was considered inadvisable to depart from the present law. The reason advanced for that was an exceptionally good one—that if a greater amount were allowed, it might imperil the solvency of the society.

Mr. McCORMACK: Suppose a man were insured in two or three societies. He could only draw £2 a week if he was in five or six societies.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said he was informed that they did not generally insure in two friendly societies. Taking the practice into consideration, it was considered advisable to adhere to the old practice. He moved that on line 49, page 31, there be inserted the words "for a sum not exceeding 1s. in place of all fees or payments in respect of the same."

Amendment agreed to.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that on line 54, page 31, after the word "rule," the words "the sum charged for every such certificate other than the first shall not exceed sixpence" be inserted.

Amendment agreed to.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that, on line 57, page 31, after the word "demand," there be inserted the words "a sum not exceeding 3d."

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

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments, and the third reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

## APPROPRIATION BILL No. 2.

### MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

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

## ELECTIONS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

### SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Since I had the honour of moving the adjournment of this debate, I have had an opportunity of reading through the report of the debate so far as it has gone, and I must confess I was astonished at the very large portion of the Bill that has already been promised away. Some very conspicuous features still remain, and

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to these I intend to devote a few moments to-night. I think there has been a fairly general concurrence of opinion amongst members as to the necessity of a Bill of this description. I do not know that I can say that there has been an equal concurrence of opinion in regard to the details or to the larger features of the Bill. I suppose we shall have to wait for a perfect measure, or a symmetrical measure, until we get a specimen of it embodied in that book "The Curiosities of Legislation," which was promised to us the other night by the hon. member for Leichhardt. At the present moment, we have to deal with a measure which, in many respects, is very practical, and in some other respects will bear amendment. At any rate, the Bill gives to this House an opportunity of bringing to bear upon it all the up-to-date knowledge in regard to theories on the conduct of elections. In looking through the whole measure, one very conspicuous feature is manifest, and that is, that the permanent population in the various districts of the State has received attention, or, if I might say so, that preference to which it is entitled. A very strong attempt has been made in this measure to see that those who have settled in a particular district, and whose whole future is involved in the welfare of the district, will not be swamped in their political representation by those who happen to be in the district for a few months, and who have no intention whatever of remaining there for any length of time. That is a thing that ought to be preserved—the idea of local representation. When we come into this House, we, of course, flatter ourselves that we represent the whole of the State, and to a certain extent we do, because we are, as members of the party, responsible for what is carried out. We particularly represent localities, and I think it right that when we come here we should be able to claim that we represent a majority of the permanent residents in a district, and that we do not owe our appearance here to the fact that, at the particular time at which the election was carried out, a few hundred men, who had no permanent interest in the district, happened to be in the locality. That has happened frequently, and is likely to happen again while we are carrying on such a large policy of railway construction. A good deal has been said by hon.

[8 p.m.] members who have preceded me in regard to the nomads—the wanderers, or those who have no fixed abode. I do not think it is the province of a Liberal Government—I do not think it is the province of any Government—to support or encourage nomadism, and I see throughout this Bill an effort made to discourage that nomadism by giving more prominence, and to a certain extent more political power, to those who have pioneered their way, and settled down and made themselves permanent residents in particular parts of the State. In referring to nomadism and wanderers, I think it is worth while to look into the underlying causes of that problem. I think that there is, by some means or other, implanted in the Australian breast too great a desire for wandering—too little desire to make a fixed home—and there are other causes. I think it must have occurred to many hon. members that from time to time, especially in the North of the State, where labour troubles have been brought about by various means, men who have been compelled to come out on strike, or to leave their work, have found it altogether impossible to re-

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main in idleness whilst being urged on to strike and make no surrender. We have read from time to time of men who have been brought out on strike, and compelled to leave particular districts, and the consequence of their leaving those districts is that their voting place gets into confusion, and when the election comes round they have the infelicity of finding that they are not on the roll, or unable to vote through some reason or other, the real reason being that they have been compelled to leave the districts in which, had they continued, they would have been able to record their votes. In my own district of Mount Morgan, when that unfortunate strike took place some eighteen months ago, a large number of men were induced to leave their work, and had to leave the district. They have not been able to get back to work there, but they have their homes there, and it is a question for us to decide where their greatest interest is—whether it is where they have their homes and their families reside or where they carry on their work. When we are dealing with wanderers, we want, before we express too much sympathy, to see whether the wanderers are not themselves at fault, or to see by what means they have been actuated in leaving their homes and wandering over the State. I do not wish to be harsh upon any electors—on those who ought to be on the roll—and I hope, as far as the House can possibly do so, that in Committee facilities will be extended in all directions where it is apparent that this Bill does not offer the facilities, in order that every man will have an opportunity of recording his vote when the time comes. A good deal of sympathy has been expressed by several members in a previous debate in regard to the inmates of Dunwich, and I have the happiness of finding that my own views in that regard have been anticipated by the hon. member for Murrumba, who expressed very democratic views in regard to those inmates. Ceasing to be taxpayers, naturally they cease to be voters; but if we take into consideration the fact that they have been taxpayers, I think we would not be doing any wrong if we restored them to the rolls of those electorates in which they formerly resided. I agree with the hon. member for Murrumba that we should not give them a solid vote for the electorate in which Dunwich happens to be situated, because that would be bringing in a very solid non-paying factor, which, perhaps, would decide the questions which the taxpayers of that electorate wish to decide. Some complaint has been made with regard to the fact that we have fixed twelve months' residence in the State, and a two months' residence in a particular locality, in order to qualify a man to get on to the roll. I do not see that there is any particular necessity to complain in that respect. Men who come to the State must have some time in which to accommodate their minds to our political ideas, and it would be wrong to allow persons who come as absolute strangers to get immediately on to the roll, and thereby acquire a great political power which could be used against the wishes and desires of those who are permanent residents. One feature I notice with pleasure in this Bill is the great importance attached to the publication of the date of the sitting of the registration court. I think too much importance cannot be attached to that, and where the advertisements are made in country papers, I think they should not be inserted in the advertisement columns. Very

few people read the advertisement columns, either in city or country papers, except they have an advertisement of their own. When we are placing an advertisement in regard to election matters, we should have it inserted in the news column, and if it cost more we could pay more. I believe the Minister will be inclined to seriously consider a suggestion of that sort. In regard to the publication of the list of electors, I think that those lists should also be inserted in the news column, so that those who pick up a paper casually will be arrested by the headline, and will be naturally induced to look down the column and see if their names are recorded—or the names of their friends, or of anyone they wish to see, or do not wish to see. The claim form which is to be filled up by those who wish to get on the roll has been amended, and is very full, but I think an additional question or two could be added in order to make it still more clear. I think that in the claim the surname should be printed in large letters in one line, and the Christian name and address in smaller letters in a line immediately beneath. In some other respects, which I do not call to mind just now, the claim form could be amended, so that the particulars would lead to a more complete identification. I see that every effort has been made to prevent a person being on two rolls at the same time. Some hon. members were contending the other night that it was quite possible for a man to be on two rolls at the same time. But I think a more careful reading of the clause dealing with that will show that measures have been taken to prevent the possibility of such an occurrence. Another part of the Bill which makes me think that the Ministry, in drawing up this Bill, had the permanent residents of the State in mind is that part of it which deals with the fixation of residence, so that we shall know a man as a *bonâ fide* resident in the district for which he makes a claim to be on the roll. That is a section which will require a good deal of attention, because it is open to some misconception in various respects, but I think the object is one that must commend itself to the House. There is another part of the Bill dealing with the ballot-paper. Now, I would like to state that the members of the House should look up the Imperial Act of 1872, and consider the first schedule to that section of that Act. In section 24 of the Imperial Act of 1872, in which year the ballot was introduced into that country, they will find there—I do not wish to weary the House by quoting it just now—but they will find there the method of voting and the form of ballot-paper, which, I think, can be adopted here in Queensland with very great benefit. Instead of the loose ballot-papers which are now used, a cheque-book or receipt-book form is in the hands of the presiding officer, with a counterfoil and ballot-paper, which can be easily torn off, with the marks that are necessary on the front and on the back. When we get into Committee, I intend to bring that forward as a proposal to be incorporated in this measure, because I think it will facilitate voting and accelerate the speed of voting, and be much plainer and quicker in every respect. I think it will be admitted that the old country has had some experience in the conduct of elections, and what they have found to be useful in this respect merits our very serious consideration. I see that the contingent vote, or a proposal to allow

contingent voting, has been embodied in this Bill. I regard that as being an experiment that is offered to the people, but I think it would be better if we made that contingent voting imperative. I do not see any use at all if we say to the electors, "You can put '2' or '3' against the other candidates," because it may happen that only a very small percentage of voters in any particular electorate will avail themselves of that protection. The result will be that it is of no use to us whatever as a guide to political opinion with regard to the next man in the election. I will commend it to the Minister in charge of the Bill, and to the House generally, to make the contingent vote imperative, if we are going to put it into the Bill at all, so that we can have the full use of it. If it is found to be useless after an election or two—we must give it a trial first—we will know what to do, but we cannot give it a trial if we make it merely permissive. We should give it an effective trial, and let the people make some use of it, just as they make use of the ordinary vote. If there is any cry about compulsion in this matter, I would answer that by saying that there is no more compulsion about this than there is in the form which we prescribe for voting. We say to the elector, "You are not called upon to vote, but if you do vote, you must vote in this particular manner and upon this particular form." And it is very little more compulsion to say, "You must put another stroke or two to this particular form," so that on the score of compulsion very little can be said against the proposal. The restoration of the postal vote is a matter which I intend to leave for consideration in Committee. It is certainly a matter involving great difficulty, and one which deserves the very closest attention. I do not wish to see anyone deprived of an opportunity to vote, and as this is not the stage in which we can go into details in regard to any particular section of the measure, I propose to leave it until we get into Committee, because I am anxious, seeing that the Bill itself comes from this side of the House, that we shall not be open to the charge of possible disfranchisement of any electors. These charges have been made, and I must take this opportunity of dissenting very strongly from them. This party, so far as I can understand, has no wish to disfranchise any body of people, or disfranchise any individual.

Mr. MAY: They will do it all the same.

Mr. CRAWFORD: It will not disfranchise the hon. member for Flinders under any consideration.

Mr. MAY: It will disfranchise my constituents.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Another proposal that I shall certainly bring before the Committee is that of restoring the elector's right. I think that is worthy of the serious consideration on the part of the hon. members that we should make another trial of the elector's right. I know a large number of allegations were made about its use in previous times here, and also in the State of New South Wales, but I think very little was proved. There were assertions made in every direction, but nothing whatever of that corruption was proved which was alleged against this system. I have in my possession an elector's right which was given to me at the beginning of this century in New South Wales. I hold it as a good

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possession, because it enables me to see how it is possible for a man travelling throughout the State to carry with him his power of voting. All that he needs to do, having his elector's right in his possession, is, when an election comes round, to walk into the polling-booth, give his elector's right to the presiding officer, have it marked just as a railway ticket is marked, and have it handed back to him. If we did adopt that system, it would enable us to get over the difficulty in regard to postal voting and absentee voting. I shall not go further into that matter to-night, but I would earnestly commend the idea to hon. members. They can look up our own Act of 1877, or thereabouts, when we had the elector's right in use here, and if they look up the New South Wales Act, they will see for themselves a copy of the elector's right. If hon. members look up New South Wales "Hansard," they will see that a number of these assertions were made which I regard as baseless. Hon. members will then be able to judge for themselves whether it will not be possible in this more enlightened State, and in this more enlightened period of our progress, to make better use of the elector's right. I am glad to see that the Bill deals with election day influences, and that it has been decided to clear away from the front of the booth those who in various ways have an influence over the electors proceeding in to exercise their votes. I am glad to see that public meetings have been dealt with, and that power has been given to the chairman, in co-operation with the speaker, to have interrupters removed. This section of the Bill will be futile unless we can manage to have vigorous and fearless chairmen. I don't know whether it is possible in a Bill of this sort to provide for vigorous and fearless chairmen—chairmen who will decide at once and firmly in regard to any interrupter, whether he should be removed or cautioned. So far as the form of the Elections Tribunal is concerned, I believe it is in the right direction, but I am not altogether certain that some amendment will not profitably be made in regard to detail. It is not my intention to go further into this Bill at this stage. I heard some hon. members denouncing it as reactionary. I cannot accommodate myself to that way of thinking. Surely it cannot be said that there is any party in any State of the Commonwealth of Australia that wishes to deprive people of their votes. I am not going to allow that to be said of any party to which I belong. This party is as anxious to have every man and every woman who has the necessary qualifications placed on the roll as is the party opposite. I notice—whether fortunately or unfortunately, I shall not say—that there is no plank in the Labour platform in regard to secrecy of the ballot. Whether there ever was a plank in their platform in regard to secrecy of the ballot I do not know; but I do know that we on this side of the House are anxious that those who do vote shall be able to vote without fear or favour, and without having previously pledged themselves in any particular direction by joining associations.

Mr. COYNE: What about the country party?

Mr. CRAWFORD: I do not know much about the country party personally, but I have read a little about it, and I believe that the members of that party are possessed of the broadest possible spirit, and that they and every other member on this side of the

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House will do all that they can to see that every man and every woman who has the necessary qualification are not only enrolled as electors but have an opportunity of recording their votes. I support the measure in regard to the matters of which I have spoken, and, like other members, I shall certainly avail myself of the opportunity given in Committee to propose certain amendments.

Mr. COYNE (*Warrego*): I do not intend to say very much about the Bill at this stage. I intend to reserve a great deal of what I have to say concerning it until we reach the Committee stage. We have been told by hon. members opposite, particularly by the hon. member for Murrumbidgee, that we have now before us "a liberal and democratic measure." I do not know what the hon. member means by a "a liberal and democratic measure," but I believe he has got his own interpretation of that phrase. I notice that the other day a leading Liberal in New South Wales described the central idea of liberalism as being—

"Equality of opportunity as against equality of individuals."

If that is a correct definition of liberalism, then it cannot be said that the Bill now before us is a "liberal and democratic measure." I listened very carefully to what the hon. member for Mount Morgan said in the speech which he just now addressed to the House. The hon. member told us that if men were nomads it was their own fault.

Mr. CRAWFORD: No; I did not say that.

Mr. GRANT: The hon. member did not say that.

Mr. COYNE: I understood the hon. member to say that a number of men went out on strike at Mount Morgan, and that they had to go away in order to obtain work elsewhere, and that it was their own fault that they had no permanent residence. If that is what the hon. member stated, he must have a very limited conception of the callings that compel men to become nomads in the State of Queensland. The pastoral industry is the chief industry of this State, and will be so for many years, and there are men working in that industry who have sometimes to work in three different electorates in six weeks. Is it the intention of this democratic measure to disfranchise those people? Whether such is the intention or not, that will be the effect of the measure. Surely men who work about nine months in every year in the pastoral industry in Queensland and then put in three months following the same avocation in New South Wales, still regarding Queensland as their home, are entitled to the franchise. Yet under this Bill those men will be disfranchised; they are regarded as nobodies. The other day the hon. member for Port Curtis said that shearers were not genuine residents.

Mr. BOOKER: He does not know.

Mr. COYNE: No; the hon. member for Port Curtis does not know, but that statement will go out to the people who read "Hansard," and they will come to the conclusion that some members in this House regard people who work in the pastoral industry as not being worthy of any consideration at all.

Mr. BOOKER: Don't tack that on to us.

Mr. COYNE: No; I do not tack it on to the hon. member. What I say is that the

hon. member for Port Curtis states in his place in the House that shearers are not genuine residents and should not be recognised as worthy of any consideration. The hon. member who has just resumed his seat repeated what the hon. member for Murrumbidgee said with regard to giving votes to the people at Dunwich. The hon. member said he would not mind giving votes to the people at Dunwich for the districts in which they had resided before they entered Dunwich. Many of those persons had not resided in any particular district for any length of time before they went to Dunwich.

Mr. GRANT: But they were voters at some time.

Mr. COYNE: They were voters at one time, certainly, but it would be difficult for some of them to say in what district they last had a vote. Hon. members opposite say that we have in Queensland one of the freest franchises in the world.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: So we have.

Mr. COYNE: Yes; but you are going to restrict that franchise, because it is well known that there will be thousands of people in Queensland disfranchised by this Bill. If I were to advise the Government, I would advise them that they are making a foolish step in introducing this measure, because if you once give a person a right and then deprive him of that right you are going to bump up against trouble. I am in hopes that the Government are going to bump up against trouble when they disfranchise people, as they will do by this Bill. I have no great objection to the proposal that the people of Dunwich should be given a vote in the electorate they previously resided in under certain conditions, but I would point out that some of the people who are now inmates in that institution have been far better off in the matter of this world's goods than a good many persons who are to-day in favour of the property vote in Queensland, but through circumstances over which they had no control they have lost their property, and now find themselves in the poorhouse. Those people are deprived of their votes, but the men who hold property in certain places may, in the event of its being discovered that their particular candidate is in danger of defeat, transfer their votes from the places where they reside to the places where they have property; and they may in this way swamp that particular electorate with the property vote. If that is a wrong thing to do in the electorate in which the people of Dunwich reside, then it is equally a wrong thing to do in any other electorate, and I hope that members who say that the people of Dunwich should only have votes for the places where they came from will carry out that principle to its logical issue and apply it to those people who now exercise the property vote. Now, that is a fair proposition,

and if there is any fairness about [8.50 p.m.] hon. members on the other side of the House, I hope that they will agree to it. And there is another thing: A person who has a certain amount of property is thereby entitled to vote in that locality in which it is situated, although he has never resided there, and any person who has leasehold may vote, not where he resides but where he has the leasehold. But it will show the anomaly of the Bill to state that although a man may have ten times the value of the freehold and the leasehold combined invested or in the bank, he cannot get such a vote at all. Why do we give those

persons a vote? For no good reason at all. It only shows that the party which is in power in Queensland to-day is a class party. Now, the hon. member for Mount Morgan wished to add more questions on the claim for enrolment as a voter, in addition to those we have already on the paper. Well, I think that anybody who would ask any more questions would be very hard to please indeed. I do not know what the hon. member would propose to add. Probably, for the sake of identification, he would ask whether the claimant had been vaccinated and by whom, and whether it had taken, and so on. I think that there are too many irritating questions—too many useless questions—up to the present time, and I hope that the new ones that are to be proposed will not be carried by this House, because such questions are humiliating—some of them most humiliating—and I do not think it is the business of the Government of the day of any country to put humiliating questions to any citizens of that country when they are asking for their just rights—their citizen's rights; and that is what people are asking for when they ask to be placed on the electoral roll. I want to say that so far as the new provisions in this Bill are concerned, I do not think it is right to deprive any citizen of the State of Queensland of the right to say who shall represent him in this House.

Mr. BOOKER: The Bill does not do that.

Mr. COYNE: It is as plain as daylight to anyone who has read the Bill, and, were it not for party loyalty, nobody would say so more readily than the hon. member himself. The hon. member said that when a farmer and his wife had to travel 5 miles to get to the polling-booth they could not go to the booth and record their votes. To us members of Western constituencies that is little hardship. We would regard ourselves as really at a polling-booth if we were within 5 miles of it. There was one voter who rode 74 miles to record his vote for me last election, and he was seventy-eight years of age. He travelled 74 miles in and 74 miles back to record his vote for me. I asked for polling-places at these places, and I could not get them. There was the same old talk—"You are a bit too late"—and they had to refer to the returning officer. I think that surely in those cases the polling-booths should be granted. But persons who are at a place 5 miles from a polling-booth are really at a polling-booth, and it would not take them a very long time to travel those 5 miles—if not both together, then one at a time—and they could go there and back in the day. But in our Western districts they often have to start the day before polling-day. That is often done, and the electors do it cheerfully. But these persons, who are deprived of quite a number of good things in life that people in the more settled districts enjoy, in addition to all their losses up to the present time, are now going to be deprived of their citizen rights. You can take any person in this community, and under this Bill he may be disfranchised. Take the case of the engine-driver on our railways, who constantly gets removed into some strange district. He has to be two months in that district before he can be placed on the roll, and then he has to run the gauntlet of the attacks of certain organisations as to whether he shall be placed on the roll or not. Perhaps it is said that he has not lived the full two months in the electorate, and he therefore is disfranchised,

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and has got to make a fresh application. This may go on from time to time. And the Bill, at any rate, gives ample opportunity to those persons who in the past have shown their urgent desire to keep large numbers of the citizens of Queensland off the roll, to carry out their intentions to the very fullest. Another reason why I think hon. members on the Government side of the House are desirous of disfranchising people, apart altogether from the provisions of this Bill, is that, quite recently, the police were sent round to purify the rolls, as it was called, not to place fresh names on the rolls, but to see whom they could strike off the rolls.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is done once every year.

Mr. COYNE: The hon. gentleman is not correct.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Oh, yes, I am.

Mr. COYNE: What the police have done before is to place names on the roll; what they are doing now is to strike names off the roll.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They do it once a year.

Mr. PAYNE: It has never been done before, to my knowledge.

Mr. COYNE: It is a solemn fact that it is impossible for a native of Queensland to get on the roll who has, by reason of his calling, to travel round the State. It is quite possible that he shall never be able to get on the roll. An elector must have been twelve months in the State of Queensland before he can get on the roll. What magic is there in the twelve months being the twelve months immediately preceding the day of making the claim? If he was in Queensland for six months two years ago, and for nine months lately, would he not know more about Queensland and of the business of the State of Queensland, and of the laws of Queensland, than if he had resided here for only twelve months just recently? I say "Yes," and that, therefore, the old Act was immeasurably better in the matter of justice to those who reside only portion of the year in Queensland, and probably not for twelve months at any time, than the present Bill. But, then, by this Bill the Government is proposing to disfranchise all those people. I mentioned the case of the shearers, I mentioned how engine-drivers might be disfranchised. Then there are carriers, men whom we cannot do without in the back country, men who carry the food and the station supplies to the far-back stations, and then carry the produce of those stations into the nearest railway lines, sometimes hundreds of miles. Then, there are the drovers, men who follow, perhaps, the most arduous calling that we have in the State. They are travelling all the time. They go away for a little time, and then they come back to Queensland, and they regard it as their home, because they get the stock which they take to other States from Queensland. Now, the Government is going to deprive each and every one of them of the right to record his vote on polling-day, and yet we have hon. members getting up and saying it is to enlarge the franchise, to liberalise it, to make it more democratic, and all that sort of thing. Members must feel ashamed of themselves when they are, for party reasons, compelled to repeat these

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things—because, on the face of it, and in the language of the Bill itself, their statement is belied. As the hon. member for Mitchell reminds me, a number of these men who follow the occupations of carrying, droving, and shearing are disfranchised because they cannot honestly say that they were for two months residing in any particular electorate. Two months of travelling takes a man a very long distance indeed, even with a bullock team. And he goes into another electorate, and from the moment he gets into that other electorate he is liable to be struck off the roll for the one in which he resided. Another thing is in connection with those men who apply to get on the roll. Immediately they are two months in any place, they apply to get on the roll. Then, perhaps, they remain there for another fortnight or another month. That would be three months in the one place, and then that station cuts out, and all the men go a little further on to another station, which happens to be in another electorate, and immediately they go there those who want to disfranchise those men, because of their alleged political opinions, will attend the revision court, and object to those men getting on the roll, because they are not still resident in that electorate. The result will be that those men will never get on the roll. They are constantly moving, and it is patent to everybody that they will never be able to get on the roll while following their usual occupation. In a number of countries there have been serious disturbances in connection with the franchise. Only quite recently the whole of the business of Belgium was held up owing to the denial of the franchise to the people of Belgium. If the men whom the Government propose to disfranchise under this Bill, and the women also, were to revolt and throw the whole districts in which they live—and which cannot get on without them—into a state of confusion, what would the Government think of them? Suppose they said, "We will do no more work until we get citizens' rights—until the ban of being on the level of the naturalised Chinese and kanaka is removed from us, because you are bringing them down to the level of the unnaturalised Chinese or kanaka when you tell them they cannot get on the roll, and, if they are there, to strike them off at the first opportunity.

Mr. PAYNE: You will have another "Black Friday."

Mr. COYNE: They would not have another "Black Friday," because there would be no opportunity of another "Black Friday" where the settlers are spread over hundreds of miles.

The HOME SECRETARY: You won't have another "Black Friday" until that balance-sheet is presented.

Mr. COYNE: I can tell you that that balance-sheet is locked up with the Employers' Federation and People's Progressive League balance-sheets, and they are going to be all presented on the same day. (Laughter.) We are told by members on the other side that members on this side desire to deprive women of the vote, and the hon. member for Port Curtis said members on this side were placing women between them and their duty. I wonder what he meant by that? To try and insult members on this side, but because members on this side know what the hon. member is, he would have to say some very severe things before

anyone would take any notice of him. Hon. members on that side will remember very well that it was members on this side of the House, and the party that now sits on this side of the House, who were instrumental in getting a vote for the women of Queensland, and it was members of the same party that now sits on this side of the House who got universal franchise in the Commonwealth for women; and for anyone to get up and say that we wish to deprive women of the vote, and all this sort of thing, it too manifestly untrue as not to be deserving of notice. Of course, the old cry was raised about the poor woman being ill in bed, and could not get to the polling-booth. My impression is that the women who are so ill that they cannot go to a polling-booth are at such a stage that they do not trouble very much about votes. Fortunately, we have had very few epidemics in Queensland, and no very great number of people have been laid up at the one time. It is only in case of an epidemic such as smallpox getting abroad that a large number of people would be deprived of the opportunity of voting.

**AN OPPOSITION MEMBER:** Or vaccination.

**Mr. COYNE:** Yes, or on account of vaccination. The argument that we wish to deprive the poor woman, or the poor man, who is ill in bed of the opportunity of voting does not hold water for one moment, because under the provisions of this Bill men who cannot write, whether they are ill or not, cannot get a postal vote. Those who cannot write are penalised for their illiteracy. I have a very clear recollection of something that happened here about twelve years ago, when a cry was raised throughout the length and breadth of the Commonwealth that Australia should do its duty, and that every man who could carry arms should go to the assistance of the mother country in helping the Uitlanders of South Africa to get the franchise, and we sent people from all over the Commonwealth to enable the Britishers in South Africa to get the franchise, and yet to-day the Government are actually going to deprive our own citizens—our own native-born—of the right of the franchise in Queensland. I wonder what the hon. member for Burrum thinks on this matter, after going to South Africa to give the franchise to the Uitlanders, at a risk of losing his life, and to find that immediately he came away they supplied the place of the Uitlanders with Chinese, and it is only quite recently that the Uitlanders have had a chance of voting. The hon. gentleman has come back to Queensland, and now wishes to deprive Queensland natives of the right to vote—to make them Uitlanders, and deprive them of the franchise. As I said at the start, I do not intend to go very deeply into this Bill, but I will have a great deal to say about it when we get into Committee. One of the chief reasons the Home Secretary gave for introducing this Bill, and the one he seemed to harp on more than on any other, was the great amount of corruption that was carried on by the Commonwealth authorities during the recent Federal election.

**The HOME SECRETARY:** Not the Commonwealth authorities.

**Mr. COYNE:** Who was it, then?

**The HOME SECRETARY:** I did not refer to anyone.

**Mr. COYNE:** Why, his high-sounding note was the amount of corruption, malpractices,

and goodness knows what other terms he applied to the last Federal election, and as a reason for that he was bringing in this Bill.

**The HOME SECRETARY:** Quite so; it was on account of the state of the rolls.

**Mr. COYNE:** We find that this was all a mere shibboleth—the cry about all that sort of thing was a mere shibboleth—there was nothing in it. We find that in places

where they reckoned corruption [9 p.m.] was at its highest there was really nothing at all to grumble about, and that the alleged corruption which took place in regard to double voting was only apparent. All that any designing officer who might be in charge of a polling-booth where there were two or more of the same name on the roll had to do was to tick the same names off, notwithstanding that he knew the voters were going to vote, and if the person came in after he had ticked that particular name off and asked for the vote, he could refuse it. The people could then go to another booth and make application there, and it would make it appear that there was double voting. It was proved that the double voting was not carried on. The inquiry was made by the opponents of Labour—by the opponents of the Government which was in power when the elections were held—and the Labour Government came out unscathed from the inquiry. It was found that there was no more double voting than might happen at any election, whether State or Federal. The Chief Electoral Officer of the Commonwealth said that the inadvertent ticking off of wrong names accounted for more than half of these duplications. I think we will not hear the cry raised again about this Bill being one to enable people to get on the roll more easily, while they are not really able to get on, because it must be apparent to anyone who can read the language that that is not what was proposed in this Bill. It must be manifest to everybody who has followed the speeches in the House that it is not the intention of the Government that the people should be enabled to get on the roll, and remain there when they are on. We can easily understand the tyranny that hon. members constituting the Government would like to exercise if they had only the power, and they are going pretty well to the limit on this occasion. The leader of the Liberals in Australia, the Hon. J. Cook, said the other day in a speech which he made—

“Liberalism began with the first tyrant that was born, and will live on until the last tyrant is dead.”

Liberalism did come into existence with the first tyrant who was born, because the first Liberal constituted the first tyrant. Mr. Cook said it would live until the last tyrant was dead. Yes, and when the last Liberal departs from this earthly sphere we will have freedom, and the last tyrant will be dead.

**The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** We may have license and not liberty.

**Mr. COYNE:** I cannot accommodate my mind in the same way as the hon. member for Mount Morgan did, and take the good portions of this Bill, as I do not see any good portions in it. So far as the postal vote is concerned, we will be able to talk about that in Committee; but the qualification provided in this Bill is there for no other purpose than to deprive the citizens of Queensland of the

*Mr. Coyne.]*

right to exercise the franchise and to send men here in whom they have trust and confidence to make laws.

Mr. GRANT (*Fitzroy*): I am not going to speak at any length, partly from physical reasons, as I am suffering from a heavy cold, and partly because the matter has been thrashed out already, but it is rather amusing to hear the hon. member for Warrego speak of intimidation. As a matter of fact, the boot is on the other foot altogether.

Mr. COYNE: In what way?

Mr. GRANT: Take any shearing camp. Suppose there is a man in that camp who decides to vote for the Liberal side.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: They are not so foolish as to do that.

Mr. GRANT: Exactly; the interjection proves the intimidation already. I stand on another footing. If a man desires to vote for the Labour party, well and good. That is his business; but if any man in a shearing camp out West—or in one of the mining camps at Sapphire town—wanted to vote for a Liberal, what would they say to him? It is not half so much as the intimidation exercised on the man out West working among his mates who are always voting on one side, and he desires to vote on the other—the intimidation brought to bear on him is far greater than that which any capitalist can bring to bear.

Mr. HUXHAM: You were not always of that opinion?

Mr. GRANT: I have always been of that opinion no matter where I sat—that the environment has been so much against the heretic, so to speak, in that way. The hon. member for Warrego spoke about Liberalism. He could not have a Labour party were it not for the Liberals who preceded him and made the road easy. I think members opposite have really made this Bill clear in regard to the Western worker. I know the conditions there myself. A shearer, for instance, may be working on Cullin-la-ringo in the Springsure district one month, next month at Barcardine Downs, and next month at Oondooroo, in three different electorates, and it is almost impossible for that man to get on to the roll. I do not think it is the intention of this House, certainly not of this party, that there should be anybody without the franchise in Queensland.

Mr. RYAN: But the Bill would do that.

Mr. GRANT: I think the Bill will have to be altered so that it will not be so. The Government has no desire to disfranchise people. Speaking as a member of the Liberal party, I desire that every man in Queensland should be put on the roll, and that we should put our case clearly before them. That is what the other side profess. Let the good sense of the people prevail. If a majority of the electors want a Labour party in office, that is their business; and if they decide, as they did at the last election, by an overwhelming majority, that they want a Liberal Government in office, that is also their business.

Mr. RYAN: Don't you believe in the absent vote?

Mr. GRANT: I think the absent vote has been subject to a good deal of—I do not say corruption, but bad administration. For instance, suppose a man is an absent voter in Brisbane, and bears a very common name.

[*Mr. Coyne.*

He comes from the North, and if he chose he could vote in about twenty or thirty different electorates.

Mr. RYAN and other OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Not at all.

Mr. GRANT: Of course he could. I do not think that the Home Secretary was speaking about the last election—he did not speak about the election itself, but about the rolls. How was it possible that the rolls were perfect when there were more voters on the roll in Queensland than there were adults in the State?

Mr. RYAN: That is not so; it is not proved.

Mr. GRANT: The Premier of Victoria made the statement that there were 10,000 more voters on the rolls in Victoria than there were adults in the State. There is quite a number of adults who, through sickness, or in some other way, are incapacitated from being on the roll. It shows that the rolls must be in a very bad way when there are more voters than there are adults. I spoke strongly once before about the postal vote. I objected to it, but I think, under modifications, the postal vote is necessary. We are starting from the premises that it is decided that every man and woman in Queensland who are eligible should be on the roll, and how is a sick man or woman going to vote unless you give them a postal vote?

Mr. RYAN: Would you limit it to a sick man or woman?

Mr. GRANT: If they live in blacksoil country about 10 miles away from the polling-booth, how is it possible for them to travel on a wet day over country such as that?

Mr. HARDACRE: If it is not possible, it cannot be helped.

Mr. GRANT: If that argument were good, then the other argument about the nomadic population would be good; but I think they are both bad. I am starting on the premises that every hon. member desires that every man or woman on the roll should exercise the vote, and unless you give them the postal vote you deprive some of them of the privilege.

Mr. PAYNE: How can you explain the absent vote?

Mr. GRANT: That is simply ridiculous. There were two things that the late Commonwealth Labour Government did of which I heartily approved, and I said so on every platform during the election. I refer to the penalty for disturbing public meetings and the signed articles in newspapers.

Mr. RYAN: What about signed articles in this Bill?

Mr. GRANT: I hope that provision will be made in the Bill in that direction, and I will give some reasons for it. As a newspaper proprietor, the leader of the Opposition may be familiar with them. (Laughter.)

Mr. RYAN: I am quite in favour of it.

Mr. GRANT: I am in favour of it because I have suffered. With regard to disturbing public meetings, a number of members on the other side—the hon. member for Brisbane was one of them—said speakers at public meetings should not say nasty things about the Labour party. Now, I ask, in all sin-

cerity, is a public man to go to a meeting and say only pleasant things to the people who meet there?

Mr. BERTRAM: He ought to tell the truth there.

Mr. GRANT: What business is it of any listener whether a speaker tells the truth or not? (Opposition laughter.) There is nothing more foolish than telling lies at a public meeting, and if a speaker is so foolish as to tell lies at a public meeting, on him rests the responsibility. But has any man in the audience the right to interrupt him? Has any man in the audience the right to prevent him from speaking? I say, "No." I claim the right, as a public man, to go to any public meeting that I call, and tell the people who assemble there things pleasant or things unpleasant, without being shut up by a noisy crowd at the back.

Mr. BERTRAM: If a man calls some of those in the audience "dumb-driven dogs," have they not the right to resent it?

Mr. GRANT: They have no right whatever to resent it there. They have a much more powerful weapon in their hands than that, and that is to vote against the man who says it to them. But what right have they to go to a public meeting and prevent a man from speaking, and prevent the greater proportion of the audience from listening to him? I think it is a piece of ineffable cheek for men to say to a speaker, "So long as you say nice things, we will give you a quiet hearing; but, if you say things against the Labour party, you will not be heard."

Mr. HUNTER: Why not?

Mr. GRANT: Hon. members opposite say they deprecate disturbances at public meetings, and yet the hon. member says, "Why not?" I know some hon. members opposite have spoken against disturbances at public meetings, but their followers throughout the country have not followed their advice.

Mr. HUNTER: Do your followers take your advice upon the subject?

Mr. GRANT: I think it is a poor compliment to any Labour candidate when his supporters think the only way his opponent can be answered is by silencing him.

Mr. HUNTER: Do your followers do that when you are standing?

Mr. GRANT: No. When we took the brains of the Labour party away from them, we also took that from them. They did not interrupt in our time. The penalty for interrupting at a public meeting should be as stringent as possible in Queensland, where the franchise is so broad. Where every man and woman is entitled to vote, every man and woman is entitled to express his or her opinion. Nearly all our meetings in Rockhampton are rowdy. I would hardly understand an election meeting in Rockhampton if it were not noisy. Now, with regard to signed articles. There are one or two good reasons why all political articles in newspapers during an election campaign should be signed.

Mr. GILLIES: The Commonwealth Liberal party are crying out against it.

Mr. GRANT: I think they are making a mistake. Probably they have not suffered as I have done from anonymous, scurrilous

letters in papers in the electorate in which I reside—letters mostly written in the office—as they nearly always are in newspapers. So far as the newspapers were concerned, the last Federal election campaign was fairly dignified, because the man who wrote an article had to put his name to it. I read the "Worker" through the Federal campaign, and I found that paper was quite mild, simply because the writers of political articles had to put their names to them.

Mr. LAND: They had to do it in the "Courier," too.

Mr. GRANT: I think it is an exceedingly good thing for both sides. (Hear, hear!) The only other matter in the Bill that I intend to deal with is the Elections Tribunal. It would be a very good thing to have the hearing of all election petitions taken away from politicians. They cannot help their party bias. I do not say that any tribunals in the past have been actuated by party motives, but it is inevitable that the party feeling must come in. I am very much in favour of most of the other provisions in the Bill. With regard to the questions to be answered by persons claiming to be enrolled, they are taking a very important step, and I see no reason why they should not answer all those questions. They are not very difficult to answer, and they are not very inquisitorial. Is it not a fact that during the strike last year names of thousands of people, who were only visitors to Brisbane, were put on the metropolitan rolls? Was that a fair thing? It affected the vote in Brisbane. For the same reason I rather welcome the suggestion that the inmates at Dunwich should be put on the rolls of the last electorate from which they came. It would be unfair to swamp one electorate with all that vote. I hope some amendment will be made to enable the Western men to have their votes, and I also hope that there will be some amendment regarding signed articles. I may say that even with a mutilated Western vote, I do not think it will have any effect on the elections.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I would like to say a few words with regard to this Bill. We have the promise from the Home Secretary that such alterations will be made that no person will be left off the roll who should be on it. I support that principle. We have quite sufficient evidence that while this party had been in power, and while we have had the ruling of things, this State has been the most prosperous. Its credit is the best in the old country, and, practically speaking, we are in the best position of any of the States in connection with the Industrial Peace Act, and in other matters, and when we allow every man to have his name on the roll, I say that there is no need for a strike. Putting the two together, that accounts for the prosperity of our country to-day.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am glad to say that I belong to a party here who have, practically speaking, governed the most prosperous State in Australia—a State where the socialists have never been in power. (Hear, hear! and laughter.)

Mr. BOWMAN: We beat you at the last Federal election.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Not in Queensland.

Mr. BOWMAN: Yes, in Queensland.

Mr. Bebbington.]

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I support this Bill because it gives every man an opportunity of getting on the roll. I believe in that. I believe in giving every man a share in the government of the country, because that is practically what has delivered us from class government. But we have to be very careful that we are not stepping from one class to a worse class. We have been delivered from the tyranny of the sweater and the blood-sucker, and those who tread down the workers. (Hear, hear!) We have been delivered from them, but we have got to be very careful that we are not delivered into the hands of the socialists and anarchists who would exercise a very much worse tyranny. (Hear, hear! and laughter.) That is the reason why I support this Bill. In the first place, whose interests are we legislating in? We hear so much about getting on the roll, and about being put off the roll! Are we not legislating in the interests of the people of Queensland?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: When we make provision for every person to get put on the roll immediately they reach their twenty-first birthday, what more can we do than that? Is not that in the interests of Queensland? Having done all that, we value this roll—we value this because it is, practically speaking, our instrument of liberty and our deliverer from tyranny. Why, then, should we be in such a hurry to get every person, no matter what his character is, put on the roll as soon as he comes here? We should allow these people to wait here a certain time before we allow them to have a share in the government of the country. Why should we allow these people to be put on the roll as soon as they come here, when we know that they have come from countries where many of them have never had a vote in their lives? We know that there is a great difference in the standard of living here and in the countries that these men come from. In Australia we have established a high standard of living—in fact, our standard is higher than that of any country in the world. It is the duty of this Government to maintain that standard, and even make it better if we can, and better the conditions of the whole of the people who are here. We bring people from oversea, and they come from places where they have never had a vote in their lives. If we put them on the roll straight away, they are not going to bring about better conditions for our workers. It is not going to help the people of Queensland to put these people on the roll as soon as they come here. Just look at the difference between those countries and Queensland! We have an electoral roll here, and I have a copy of it in my hand. Here we put all our adult people on the electoral roll. In the countries that these people come from, human life is not valued as much as cattle and horses. Why, cattle and horses are sheltered in these countries and are thought far more of than the workers.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is quite true.

Mr. BOWMAN: Don't you think that they should have a vote?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We are not going to be in a hurry to put them on the roll. Give them twelve months to have a look

[*Mr. Bebbington.*]

round. Why, the workers themselves do not agree with the conditions upon which they should work. Let us see the course one class would take. Here is a quotation which shows what the socialists think about it—

“Between these two classes (employers and employed) a struggle must go on until the workers of the world take possession of the earth and the machinery of production, and abolish the wage system. It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism.”

These are the people we do not want to give a share in our government to. I have another quotation here, which shows the true spirit of the worker. It reads as follows:—

“We repudiate, as a party and as individuals, the policy and methods of revolutionary action put forward under the various names of syndicalism, industrial unionism, and direct action, under which the workers would be committed to planned industrial strife, stimulated class warfare, and the use of force instead of the process of law.”

Those are the class of workers that are represented by this side of the House, and they are the class of workers who will keep us here. We should not be in a hurry to allow people to get on the roll as soon as they come to this country. It is not too long to let them wait for twelve months. We get some fine farmers from the other States sometimes, and no one would object to them getting on the roll very quickly, because they make good citizens; but those men who went into the Treasurer's office a few weeks ago and refused to take their hats off should not be put on the roll at all. (Hear, hear! and laughter.) Are those the stamp of men for whom we want to make it easy to get on the roll?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Are we acting in the interest of the people in allowing every rogue and vagabond who likes to cross the border to get on to the roll as soon as he gets here?

Mr. RYAN: Do you call the immigrants rogues and vagabonds?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No; I am referring to the men who were at the Treasurer's office the other day. They are the kind of men who will vote for the socialist, because they are socialists themselves. The definition of socialist is a person who is anxious to divide his goods with someone who has more than himself. (Laughter.) When we think of that definition, we can quite understand why these men who have nothing, and who are always in trouble themselves, want to have the chance of dividing with somebody else. These men are very anxious to join the socialists. They are not likely to join our party. We are justified in bringing in a Bill like this, and keeping these people off the roll—for a certain time at any rate.

Mr. HUXHAM: Who do you refer to as the rogues and vagabonds?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I refer to the men who came into the Parliament gallery the other day. You know the men who came here. Those are the men whom we want to

keep off our rolls altogether. There are other reasons why we should keep them off our electoral rolls. I am quite satisfied that we should give a vote to every worker who is at present in Queensland. The shearers working in the West are quite entitled to get on the electoral roll, but there are others who should not get on at all. Some years ago I went into a shearing-shed and I saw about 150 men working there. They were about as fine a class of men as you could wish to see. I said to the manager, "You have got a fine lot of men there," and he said, "Yes, they come from New South Wales, and they will be going back again directly." Why, these men only stop in Queensland three months, and then go back to New South Wales. Why should they be given a vote as soon as they come into the State? I quite admit that you could not get a better class of men, still they have no interest in our State, and yet they might give a vote here and go back to New South Wales again. If this roll is of any value to us, we should take good care who we allow to get on it. (Hear, hear!) There are other things we do not like. We know how the socialists serve us; they make Liberal workers contribute to their political funds and to their socialistic experiments.

Mr. HUNTER: How do they manage it?

Mr. BERBINGTON: I will tell you how they manage it. The Tobacco Workers' Union agreed to contribute £500 as their share towards the expenses of the flotation of a proposed newspaper, and they decided to penalise the worker to the extent of 1d. per week on the first £1 earned, and 2d. per week on every £1 earned after that. I think it is about time we had a law defining what is a legal contribution to make to union funds. I believe in trade unions, but I do not believe in trade unions starting newspapers or co-operative factories and then penalising the members every week in order to support those institutions. The members of the Tobacco Workers' Union were penalised 2d. in the £1 as a contribution towards a socialistic labour paper. Twenty-seven of the men refused to pay the contribution, and what was the result? The members of the union would not work with them, and demanded that they should be dismissed from their work. Do you know what it is to be dismissed from work? You, Mr. Speaker, perhaps do not know what it is to have a wife and family—(daughter)—and to go home to them after being thrown out of work. I know what it is to have a wife and family and to be out of work. Here there were twenty-seven Liberal workmen penalised by socialists because they would not pay a certain amount towards the cost of starting a newspaper—because they would not pay that amount from money which they had honestly worked for and earned. I know what it is to be thrown out of work; you are almost afraid to go home to your wife and children, but those socialist members of the union I have referred to never gave a thought to that matter. We have to be careful whom we get on our rolls. I say give our own people, every one of them, a vote at twenty-one years of age, and let those who are new arrivals live here twelve months before they are enrolled as voters. There were several other things that I intended to say, but they have escaped my memory, and I shall resume my seat.

Mr. WELSBY: After the brilliant oration and peroration of the hon. member who has

just sat down, I should like to make just a few brief remarks on the Bill. There are one or two matters that I should like specially to refer to. One was in a speech made by a member of the Independent party, backed up, I suppose, by his caucus. That hon. member said—

"It was all very well for members on the Government side to talk about not disclosing Government business, but why should members of the Opposition be in a worse position than members sitting behind the Government? No doubt every member sitting on the Government side knew perfectly well the provisions of the proposed Bill."

Later on in the same evening the hon. member for Cunningham spoke of the value of caucus meetings. Without giving away the secrets of this side of the House, I may inform members generally that, although I was a member of this party in the last Parliament as well as in this Parliament, I have known nothing at all regarding caucus meetings about Bills to be introduced in the House.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: But you are a naughty boy.

Mr. WELSBY: I may be a naughty boy, but I am a fairly independent speaker, and I say that Bills are brought into this House without the knowledge of men sitting behind the Cabinet, and that they get exactly the same amount of information concerning measures as is extended to members on the opposite side of the House. The Home Secretary, for whom I have had a very high and deep regard for many years past, always puts his arguments with a considerable amount of force, and, speaking on this Bill, he said he was sure that it was one of the most complete and effective measures of its kind ever brought before Parliament. I have a vision in my mind's eye, as Horatio had, and that vision is that, when this session ends, and we are allowed to go home to our wives and families, and we find the door of Parliament House closed, over the portals will be seen these words: "This House, on account of the good done by the Cabinet, is closed for ever. For further information apply to the Home Secretary." Then will come the words "Laus Deo," which means "Praise to the Lord." In my opinion, this Bill might have been left over until next session.

Mr. LAND: Isn't it as good as the Liquor Bill?

Mr. WELSBY: I will speak of that later on. Why has not the Tramways Bill been brought forward before now? Why has not the Police Offences Bill been brought forward this session? And why has not the amending Bill which has been asked for by the Press and a certain party on more than one occasion—an amendment of the Liquor Act—been brought forward? I am of opinion that the Bill now before us, whatever may be its future fate, is a direct hit against the Opposition.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WELSBY: It has been said during the course of the debate that all persons over the age of twenty-one years should have the right to vote. The hon. member who leads the Opposition used words to that effect, and said, "What will liberal-minded electors

*Mr. Welsby.]*

think of the Bill?" Later on in the week the Premier complimented the hon. member on the way that he had spoken, and said that if he had not held a brief for the Opposition he would have made an effective speech on the Bill from the Government point of view. I have the privilege of meeting with men in various businesses, and I have heard more than one make remarks about the speech of the leader of the Opposition, and those remarks were to his credit. It is all very well to say that nomads should be allowed to vote, but there is one class of nomad—a class of peripatetic men—who are a great benefit to the State of Queensland.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: You cannot do without them.

Mr. WELSBY: I am speaking of another class of men than those the hon. member has in view. I have not had the privilege of travelling in the Western part of the State and becoming acquainted with the class to which the hon. member refers; but I know one class of people who have apparently been lost sight of in this discussion, and they will be blocked from voting, as well as the shearer. I refer to commercial travellers. The commercial travellers in Brisbane are about 1,200 strong. I have been informed since I came into the House to-night that it is intended to extend the postal provision to persons who are 50 miles away from a polling-booth, but if you do not make provision that any person who is beyond 50 miles from a polling-booth, and cannot record his vote in the electorate, may receive a postal ballot-paper, how is a commercial traveller to vote?

The HOME SECRETARY: It has been explained that provision will be made for that.

Mr. WELSBY: I think the Bill does a great injustice to those men, who are making the trade and commerce of [9.30 p.m.] Queensland, and I have great sympathy with them, as I have with the nomad shearer. I am of this opinion—I have been inclined to give a kind of friendly warning to members of the Cabinet—that a Bill brought forward, and which takes its shape from a certain majority behind them, will lie down by the side of another Bill which was passed by this House last session.

Mr. TROUT: We are just as free to express our opinions as you are.

Mr. WELSBY: I say that there are a great number who do not express their feelings as I do. I say that, if the Bill is not altered in Committee, it will lie down side by side with that Bill that was passed last session, and which has met with the disapprobation of the people of Queensland right from the Gulf to the Tweed River, and which will have its force against the Government at the next election. I believe that we should give every man the right to vote—every honest man—and if we gave him that right and he breaks the law, punish him. If a man is entitled to have a vote, and if it is found that he breaks it, let him be punished. I have seen very few occasions indeed in which men have been punished for wrongfully voting. It is all very well talking after elections and saying that there are more people on the roll than there are in the electorate, and that there are more people on the rolls than there are in the State, but surely if that state of affairs exists, somebody is responsible for it, and if

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the Government pays money to persons who do wrong, they should be punished for it. I can remember the time when I had the right to seven votes for seven different properties, and I was certainly, so far as my votes are concerned, one who did his best possible for the State of Queensland as against, say, the drunken loafer. That man has now the same voting power as I have, for those days are gone. Then, again, a great demand has been made that we should foster immigration. I have held that for a long time, and I have said it on the public platform, that our State does not hold sufficient people. We are bringing in people now who have not the vote in Great Britain, and by the present Bill they must be in Queensland for twelve months before they can get their voting power. Then, I believe that the Bill is going to give votes to sailors. But why should not provision be made for the great numbers who travel up around Cairns and Burketown, and are ordinary passengers on the steamers on which those sailors work, to have their votes? Sailors, apparently, are being allowed to vote at sea; but, as hon. members all know, during the winter months, not only from Sydney and the other Southern capitals, but also from Brisbane, large numbers travel as far as Cooktown and Cairns. They may be at sea on polling-day, and if the sailor is to have his vote, why should the passenger not have his also? There are various things in the Bill which have my support, but I do not like the proposal to vote by putting a cross opposite the name of the candidate desired. I think the hon. member for Townsville, speaking about a fortnight ago, said that he was of opinion that the better way would be to cross out a man's name. I am still of that opinion; it is far better for the ordinarily intelligent voter and for the man whose mind may be adumbrated and not of the ordinary intelligence—he can put his mark through the name of the man he does not want, and he can understand it. I do not like the system of putting a cross opposite one of the names as being copied from the Commonwealth, and I hope that when the Bill goes into Committee better counsels will prevail, and that the present system will be allowed to remain. Then, I am no lover of the contingent vote. I believe that it is a vote which will provoke confusion, and it is far better not to accept what they adopted in New South Wales in the last few months, but rather to let a man be returned by a pure and simple majority. I am not in accordance with the opinions of most members on that point, and from my experience I hope that it will be rejected. With regard to polling-day, a great deal of talk has been made over the trouble that has occurred at elections. The poll clerks, to a very large extent, are responsible for the trouble. Some poll clerks are chosen with not too much intelligence, and, being men of irritable character and nature, they lose their heads, and then in the rush the mistakes are made. Then, I do not like the idea of abolishing the nominations and declarations. I believe that the free, independent, John Bull sort of elector likes to hear the declaration on the evening of the election and then at the formal declaration. According to this Bill neither declaration is to be made, on the night of election nor later, but merely by means of the newspapers. As to the provision regarding canvassing near a polling-booth, I think it is a very wise provision. It is one that affects both sides of the House.

It is an exceedingly delicate thing to take a lady to the poll through a howling crowd round the booth, and I am pleased to see that the Home Secretary is going to prevent an elector from coming within 50 feet of the booth.

Mr. BOWMAN: It is the same as the Commonwealth provision.

Mr. WELSBY: I have been against the hon. member for Fortitude Valley myself on more than one occasion, and against Mr. McLachlan also, and on those occasions the relations between the three of us have been of the most friendly nature. I know that at the last election the hon. member asked the electors in Merthyr to give me a patient hearing, and I asked my old constituents in the Valley to give him a good hearing also. I did not get it.

Mr. MORGAN: Why should that ever be necessary?

Mr. WELSBY: Of course, the hon. member always gets it. But whether or not, as the hon. member for Burke said, you want a pugilist in the chair, I do not know, but I think it is right that every man, no matter what his views may be, should have a fair and patient hearing. I know that when I spoke at the last Federal election—as, no doubt, hon. members on the other side also did in favour of their party candidates—I addressed a meeting within 100 yards of my own house at New Farm and I was grossly insulted. It was not the first occasion on which I had been so treated, and I suppose you get thick-skinned, and remarks do not sink home so deeply as they otherwise might do. Putting the number on the ballot-paper is also a good idea, and I also agree with the hon. member for Mount Morgan in his remarks on the voters' rights. I think it is worth a trial. If a man has a voter's right—he may be asked to pay for it or not—he can vote in any place. Then, as to the Elections Tribunal, I approve of the proposal to remove the assessors and place the whole matter in the hands of a judge. I think that one man, whose mind is fair and open, could better hear both sides of the question and decide the matter than under the present system, in which the hon. member for Port Curtis found practically three on one side and three on the other, and two of them apparently pairing. During the progress of the Bill, I hope that the Home Secretary will see his way to accept certain amendments in which I believe; but if he is going to strike at the nomadic travellers, he must remember that he is also hurting a great number of his own constituents, the commercial travellers.

Mr. HAMILTON (*Gregory*): I do not desire to see the second reading of this Bill go through without saying a word or two on it. I am under the impression that every member should stand up in his place in the House and speak as freely and fully as the last speaker did. It is quite evident that many members on the opposite side could speak in the same manner as the hon. member for Merthyr did if they only had the courage to speak out their opinions as plainly as he did. There is no question in the minds of hon. members that this Bill has been brought in with the intention of hitting the men who support the party sitting on this side of the House. I do not see any reason for the introduction of this measure, as the elections on the last occasion, as far as voting was concerned, were conducted as cleanly as any elections in Australia, or in the world; and, what

is more, I think the absent vote at the last elections, as we have it in our present electoral law, is about as up to date as it is possible to get it. Members sitting on the other side say that they agree that every man and every woman who is entitled to a vote should be on the electoral roll. The question is, who do they reckon is entitled to vote? We heard a dissertation by the hon. member for Drayton as to who he considers should be eligible to vote. We have heard members sitting on the other side of the House say that we want more immigrants brought into the country—that we cannot bring them in fast enough—and yet the hon. member for Drayton said he would not give the immigrants a vote, simply because they were not allowed to vote in their own country. I doubt very much whether the hon. member would have a vote if he were in England. I take it that we are more democratic in Australia, and the verdict of the people of Australia has been in favour of adult suffrage. We have brought in compulsory training for our youths, and we make them food for powder and shot if the country is invaded. If it is right to compel these youths when they have grown up to be liable to be called upon to protect their country, is it not also right that they should have a vote when they become twenty-one years of age? But if we have a Bill such as this, unless there are some drastic alterations made in it, I venture to say that thousands of the youths in the country at the present time will not be entitled to vote when they are grown up. A good deal has been said to-night, and on former occasions, about the nomadic vote. Some speakers have said that they did not believe the shearers should have a vote. Now, Mr. Speaker, you have had some experience in the Western country, and you know what the pastoral industry has done for Queensland. It is responsible for over 50 per cent. of the exports.

Mr. TROUT: Did any hon. member say that shearers should not have a vote?

Mr. HAMILTON: I know some hon. members did. The labour of these men is as necessary for the success of that industry as the sunshine and the rain; and, what is more, the nature of the industry is such that the men are called upon to move about from shed to shed. I was shearing for a great many years, and I know the difficulty I had in getting on the roll, and I know the difficulty men will have to get on the roll and to keep on the roll when following the occupation of shearing if this Bill is not materially altered in Committee. I say the absent vote, as we had it at the last election, enables almost every man in the Western country to vote. If every political party, when they happen to get into power, starts to gerrymander electoral matters in order to make them scarce, what sort of a turmoil would we have? The Liberal party is in power now, and they are going to gerrymander the electoral rolls so as to give them a fresh lease of life. It is quite evident that all this desire for the purification of the rolls has only arisen since the last Federal elections. The result of those elections gave them a fright, and they say they must do something, or else perhaps the same results will occur when the next State elections are held, and so they are going to take time by the forelock, gerrymander the electoral rolls, and disfranchise half the voters of the country. The Home Secretary said the police are going round purifying the rolls

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and striking those people off the roll who have no right to be on. As far as that is concerned, they are doing quite right, but at the same time, while they are striking those off the roll who have no right to be on, they should put those on the roll who have a right to be on. I am not advocating the cause of the man who goes in for double voting. I have no time for the man who knowingly and willingly votes twice, and I think if they can prove that such has been done the law should be allowed to take its course, and the guilty man prosecuted. If there is all this double and treble voting going on, how is it that no prosecutions have taken place? We know it was said that there were thousands who voted twice at the last Federal elections, but when inquiry was made it was found that there was no foundation for the statement at all. As regards what the hon. member for Drayton said about the Labour party forcing members of organisations to contribute 2d. per year towards Labour papers, I would point out that only the other day I was reading about a meeting of the farmers' association at Beaudesert, and one member said that if any member of the organisation voted for Labour he ought to be kicked out. I read that in one of the morning dailies in Brisbane. If a member of the Labour organisation said that, it would have been blazoned forth all over the country. There are a few things in this measure that I cannot understand. In the early part, the Bill provides that a man who is not on the electoral roll is eligible to become a candidate. That provision must have been put in to suit some particular gentleman or another. It is not in our present electoral law. At present a person has to be an elector in the State before he is eligible to become a candidate, but under this Bill provision is being made to allow any person who is eligible to become an elector to become a candidate. What is the reason for that provision if it has not been put in to suit some gentleman who has property in the State, and who probably lives in one of the other States? It is evidently put in so that such a gentleman can come here and become a candidate inside twenty-four hours. Then, in regard to definition, the Bill provides that no man will be able to get a vote unless he has a residence. A great many shearers live in the country; their residence is in the hotel. When the dull time of the year comes on, and the shearing season is over, they put up at the hotels and stay there until the next shed is open. That is their home to all intents and purposes. When they are out of work they return; but under this Bill, in view of the interpretation of what a residence may be, some registrars will refuse to accept this as a residence of these men, and hundreds of them may become disfranchised. We know the difficulty that existed in the past until the verdict was given by one of our District Court judges. It was decided that if a man had a tent on the bank of a creek, or he was living under the shade of a tree, that was his home. From the interpretation put on at one time it was difficult for a man to get on the roll, and under the definition of residence here it will be difficult for men to get on the roll and keep on it. Some of the questions that a man has to answer when he makes application to get on the roll are most ridiculous. It is almost impossible for a man to answer some of these questions. It is a good many years since I first came into Queensland,

and I can hardly say how I got into the State. I believe I came in on horseback. I do not know what time it was, but it would be necessary to remember these things. You are also asked, "If you are not a native of Queensland, when did you arrive in the State?" I remember an old magistrate, when I was a boy in Bendigo, asking a lady as to how she came before him—she had appeared before him several times. She said she had greased herself, and slipped down a rainbow. A man or woman might give the same answer here. The magistrate gave the woman three months to perform the operation of slipping up again. (Laughter.) There is also a question asking where a man was born. It was pointed out by the leader of this party that it was only hearsay as to where a man was born. Then, another question is, "Where do your wife and children reside?" I think there are many in the State who would have a difficulty in that. Some men have no wife and children. A good deal has been said about men who are engaged on construction works on the railways having a vote. I think those men are entitled to a vote. They are doing hard and laborious work, and are carrying on their occupation under very arduous conditions out in the far Northern and Western country; but under the definition of residence in this Bill it will be difficult for any of these men to get on the roll and have a vote. A good deal depends on those who administer the Act. Take the interpretation of the Liquor Act. In half a dozen different towns the police put half a dozen different interpretations on the clauses in the Act. I know places where they will not allow a man to go into an hotel on Sunday. The interpretation which would be put on some of the clauses in this Bill would make it very difficult for anyone to get on the roll. Then, there is the question of a man having to be in the State twelve months before he can have a vote. I think when a man has been in the State six months he has been quite long enough to entitle him to get on the electoral roll. To make a man wait till he has been twelve months on the roll, after which he has to put in an application, will mean that it will be eighteen or twenty months before he can have a vote. That is too long. We want to encourage men and give them citizen rights at the earliest opportunity. We do not want immigrants to come here and put them on the same footing as aliens; we want to treat them as human beings—to treat them as we would like to be treated ourselves. A good deal has been said about giving the inmates of Dunwich a vote. I know many of those who are in Dunwich at the present time. Some of them were in the back country thirty years ago, and helped to build up the State before many of those who are talking about them came to the colony. In old age they have had to go to Dunwich, perhaps because they were not as strong as they should be; but it is only right that they should have a vote. They helped to make the country what it is. There is a good deal in what some hon. members say—that it would not be right to have a block vote in an electorate—but they should have a vote in the electorate from which they have come. As far as the postal vote is concerned, I hope we are not going to see a recurrence of what we saw when we had the postal vote some years ago. If there is no amendment made in the postal vote as it appears in this Bill, very few of the travelling population will be

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entitled to have a vote; but I am pleased that the Home Secretary has signified his willingness to accept a provision to make it easier for people to record a postal vote. I think we are doing a wrong thing in doing away with the absentee vote. If it is desired to make provision for invalids to vote by post, why not arrange to do so; but, as far as everybody else is concerned, it is only a matter of providing sufficient polling-booths. The few people who will not go to vote, or who do not think it is worth while, have not much to complain about. People in the far Western country value the vote, and some come 70, 80, and 100 miles to record their vote. I think it is an attempt on the part of the Government to try and limit the franchise—to deprive a lot of people from having a vote who in the past have simply voted for members on this side. It is well known that the workers generally vote Labour—that most of the nomadic voters are Labour voters. I hope the Bill will be amended before it goes through Committee, as several hon. members on the other side have signified their intention of trying to make it a fairer Bill than what it is. I hope before it is passed it will be far more liberal in its provisions than it was when it was introduced.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I think a Bill of this kind is one that can well be dealt with by members on both sides as a non-party question. It is not right when we are dealing with an important measure of this sort that we should have it continually slung across from one side to the other that the party in power are trying to do something to disfranchise a certain number of voters who are supposed to vote for members opposite.

Mr. RYAN: We never said so.

Mr. MORGAN: When we get into Committee we shall know exactly what section of the House is going to vote party on every question in the Bill. I am quite certain that, although, as the hon. member who has just resumed his seat said, certain members on this side will support amendments submitted by members on the other

[10 p.m.] side, hon. members on the other side will not be found supporting proposals emanating from this side. They have always voted solid, and I am certain that they will be found voting solid on this Bill. They want members on this side to split their votes to suit their views, but we never see them leaving their leader in the hush or only supported by a few members of the party. Until they are inclined to set an example in this respect, the less they say about party votes, so far as this Bill is concerned, the better for all concerned. The leader of the Opposition, by virtue of his position, was the first to speak on the Bill after the Home Secretary moved the second reading, and the hon. member had the opportunity of pointing out a number of defects. It must be admitted that most measures of this description contain some defects, but it is always possible to remove them in Committee. The leader of the Opposition pointed out certain things which many members on this side, and perhaps the older members on the other side, had already noticed as points which required alteration, and immediately the Premier discovered, after listening to the speech of the leader of the Opposition, that there were certain defects in connection with the postal voting provisions, he notified his intention of allow-

ing amendments to be made in Committee that would practically meet the requirements of the leader of the Opposition. So much so, that the hon. member for Cairns stated that, if those amendments were made, the postal vote would be as good as the absent vote. If that is so, what ground for complaint have the Opposition got? The postal vote will not only be as good as the absent vote, but it will be ever so much better than the absent vote, because the sick, old people and people resident some distance from a polling-place will be able to record their votes as well as those who are absent from the electorates for which they are enrolled. It has been shown that at the last elections 13,000 people voted as absent voters, and the deputy leader of the Opposition said that all those people would practically be disfranchised if we introduced the postal vote. I say that the whole of those 13,000 people will be able to vote by post, and the 15,000 whom I cited on a previous occasion as eligible to vote but who could not vote at the last elections will be able to take their stand with the rest of the electors of the State and say who shall govern this State. With regard to the provision requiring two months' residence before anyone is eligible to claim a vote, I had a little experience which, perhaps, no other member in this Chamber has ever had. At the time to which I refer, the railway was being constructed from Miles to Taroom. At such times men come in search of work on the railway, and as soon as they arrive at a railway camp some organiser stationed there gets them to apply to have their names put on the electoral roll. No less than 150 men, who just walked along looking for work on that railway, were induced to sign application forms for enrolment on the Murilla roll. My agent set to work, and he discovered that before the next bi-monthly court at least eighty of those men were not in the electorate, and we lodged objections according to the Act, and those men were struck off the roll.

Mr. HUNTER: You took good care to do that.

Mr. MORGAN: We took good care to do that, and it was our duty to do it. Those men might have stopped two or three days in the Murilla electorate, and then they might have gone into the Maranoa, with the result that they might have voted at Roma as absent voters for Murilla, and perhaps by that time their names would have been on the Maranoa roll, and they might have voted as ordinary voters for Maranoa. The same thing occurred in connection with the Federal rolls. I have figures here from a Southern paper which show that, according to the inquiry which has just been held, there are 155,000 more names on the rolls than there are adults in the Commonwealth. That is what occurred. Take Ballarat as an instance. It is known to those who have come from Victoria that Ballarat has recently gone down owing to the fact that mining is not so prosperous there as it used to be. A great many men went from Ballarat to Tasmania, and a big number of others came to the Wide Bay electorate. I know that many of those men voted for Mr. McGrath as absent voters in Tasmania and in Wide Bay, and they also voted in the latter case as resident electors in Wide Bay. That sort of thing accounts for there being 155,000 more names on the rolls than there are adults in the Commonwealth. Hon. members opposite want us to allow every man

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and woman who is over twenty-one years of age to have a vote, no matter where they are and what roll they may be on. That would not be a bad idea, provided everyone was honest and nobody tried to vote more than once. Under those circumstances, I am prepared to give a vote to every person who is eligible to vote. I want to see, if possible, everybody who is entitled to have a vote get on the roll, and be able to record their votes in the easiest way possible, otherwise I would not be in favour of postal voting, and hon. members know that I have advocated the postal vote all through. We know that there is a great number of people in Australia who will vote twice if they only get the opportunity. I do not say that it applies to only supporters of hon. members opposite. I know there are people who would vote twice if they got the opportunity who belong to both parties. So far as even the Liberals are concerned, there are some men who are not above voting twice or three times if they get the chance to do so. We have been asked, "Why have they not been prosecuted?" Because it would be like looking for a needle in a haystack. It would be almost impossible to get sufficient evidence to bring about a conviction. It is almost impossible to get evidence, and yet we know that some electors do vote twice. I have heard electors myself talking about voting twice. One man would be asked, "How often did you vote?" and if the second man replied, "Only twice," he would not be looked on as an exceptionally good supporter of his party. We should do all we can to get as clean a roll as possible. We should not allow an elector to come into an electorate for a day, so to speak, and get his name inserted on the roll, and then go into another electorate and get his name inserted on the roll there.

Mr. COYNE: What is your opinion of the property vote?

Mr. MORGAN: I will come to the property vote later on. At the time the strike was on in Brisbane, I saw a gentleman, who was an ex-member of this House, putting the names of men on the rolls. We know that these men came from all parts of Brisbane, and from Ipswich and other places, and they were being put on the Brisbane roll.

Mr. BOWMAN: They were being put on for their own electorates.

Mr. MORGAN: These men were all attracted to Brisbane by the strike. One of the questions that the man who signs the election papers has to satisfy himself about is that the names are genuine, and that they have been in the electorate the required time, and everything else of that kind. I am quite certain that the gentleman who was putting the names of these men on the forms and sending them in to be enrolled did not know how long they had been in the electorate. It was impossible for him to certify that the papers which he had witnessed were signed correctly by the applicants for votes. I remember the case of an immigrant in my electorate, who had a claim form filled in for a vote. I happened to know the boat that that man arrived by, and when I asked him if he had been asked if he had been twelve months in the State, he said "No." He was not asked how long he had been here, but his name was taken, the form filled in and sent in to be enrolled. At my instance that man withdrew his application for a vote, because I pointed out to him that he

had signed it, and he had rendered himself liable to two years' imprisonment for applying for a vote in that way, when he had not been in the State for twelve months. We should be very careful to see that we have a clean roll. We know that we have recently had a Redistribution of Seats Act passed in Queensland, and the city electorates and the country electorates were allotted a certain proportion of voters. The hon. member for Kurlpa, Mr. Allan, stated on the floor of this House that during a State election he circularised every elector in the Kurlpa electorate. There were about 4,500 men and women electors in that electorate, and he had returned to him through the post no less than 1,300 of the circulars, which proved that there were that many electors who were supposed to be in the electorate, and they were not in the electorate at all.

Mr. McCORMACK: They might have been, and had only changed their addresses.

Mr. MORGAN: If they were still in the electorate, they would have been certain to have told the postal authorities to send any letters to their new addresses. At any rate, a great majority of those 1,300 circulars would have been sent on to the new addresses if they were still there. The fact that those circulars were returned shows that the country electorates are not getting a fair deal, as compared with the city electorates. The country electorates are not supposed to have the voting population that there is in the city electorates; yet, when the actual voting takes place, it is found that just as many vote in the country electorate as vote in the city. If you go through the rolls, you will frequently find people who have votes on different rolls. I would like to see the Elections Act amended in such a way that a court would be established for the purpose of knocking names off the rolls. (Opposition laughter.) The names of those who are disqualified and those who are dead should certainly be knocked off. I do not believe in allowing a dead man to remain on the roll for twelve months. We know that the dead walk, and sometimes the dead vote. We know that the dead did vote at the recent Federal election. That is an absolute fact. Hon. members opposite will not deny the fact that dead men voted at the last Federal election. They might have been dead Liberals. I do not say they were not. It is quite possible they were dead Liberals, because, if they had been dead Labour men, they would have been too dead altogether. We ought to have courts to knock off the names of these people, and we should advertise the names that are knocked off. Of course, we should circularise them first at their last addresses, and knock off those who are not entitled to be on the roll. We have courts every two months for the purpose of admitting names to the rolls, and at the same time the court should knock off the names of those who are dead, left, or disqualified. It would be very easy for the presiding officer to have a slip of paper on which to put the names of the people knocked off, and he could give the reasons for knocking off the names.

Mr. FITZLY: Would you allow the member himself to clean the roll?

Mr. MORGAN: It is to the interests of all members to allow the people to have a clean roll on which to elect the people who are to represent them. The rolls should be

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kept clean, so that the people can give a clear straight opinion, and say whether they wish to be governed by the Liberals or the Labour party. There can be no objection to having a clean roll. What object can there be to allow dead people to remain on the roll, or those who have left the electorate or who are otherwise disqualified? Why should we give an opportunity to people to impersonate these names and vote for them? The people who say that these names should be left on to give electors a chance to impersonate them are guilty of an incentive to commit crime. (Opposition laughter.)

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MORGAN: If a lot of these names were not on the roll we would not find such trouble take place as we have seen take place in this State. In my electorate I know seventeen electors who voted twice.

Mr. FOLEY: Out of how many?

Mr. MORGAN: Out of 4,000 odd, but it shows there were seventeen people willing to impersonate other voters.

Mr. FOLEY: Can you prove that they voted twice?

Mr. MORGAN: I believe that it could be proved, because in the country the polling-places are so scattered.

Mr. FOLEY: They have the same name, perhaps.

Mr. MORGAN: There are five divisions in my electorate, and if there is an O'Brien at Surat, in the Condamine division, he is not entitled to vote for O'Brien at Goondiwindi. Now, I propose to say a word or two with regard to compulsory voting. If we have the contingent vote at all, then, in my opinion, every elector should be compelled to indicate at least his first and second choice where there are more than two candidates, otherwise we might as well do away with the contingent vote.

Mr. FOLEY: Are you speaking as a member of the farmers' party?

Mr. MORGAN: Yes; as a member of the farmers' party, and as a member of the party on this side of the House. We have the two-party system, but I think that even hon. members opposite will admit that it is a mistake. In my opinion it would be better for the country if we had seven or eight parties, but so long as we have one solid party on the other side known as the socialist party so long will it be necessary for those who do not believe in socialism to combine and protect themselves, otherwise we shall be undermined by the socialists, and instead of Australia being the best place in the world for the working man it will become the worst. I also think that only the surname of a candidate should be printed on the ballot-paper, except in cases where there happens to be two candidates of the same name. With regard to the manner in which electors should vote, if I had my pick of the two methods of voting in both Commonwealth and State, I would strike out the name of the candidate against whom a person wishes to vote, but at the same time I think it is a good thing to have the same method of voting in both Commonwealth and State elections, and as the Commonwealth are not likely to alter their system I think it is only right that we should adopt their mode of voting by placing a cross against the name of the candidate voted for. With reference to election petitions, I think that the candidate who is dissatisfied with the result

of an election should be one of the parties to the petition; I do not think that irresponsible persons should be allowed to lodge a petition against the return of a candidate, but hold that the candidate should be man enough to come forward and take his share of the responsibility, and I hope that the clause dealing with this matter will be amended in that direction when we go into Committee on the Bill. I further hold that petitions should be tried in open court, and I agree with the leader of the Opposition that no person should be appointed as an acting elections judge to preside over the tribunal. If there is no judge available on account of the pressure of court work, then an acting judge should be appointed to relieve one of the regular judges of some of his work so that he may preside over the Elections Tribunal. In conclusion, I wish to state that my attitude towards this Bill is that of trying to make it as fine a Bill as possible, and of treating all parties fairly, giving everyone an opportunity of being enrolled and of recording his vote. The Opposition have specially singled out the nomad, and have tried to make out that members on this side of the House wish to disfranchise him. I am satisfied that that is not correct. The members on this side of the House are prepared to give everybody a vote, but we say that there ought to be some qualification for a voter—either a residence or some other qualification. With regard to the property vote, if a man has only one vote and he cannot use more than one vote, I contend that he should be allowed to exercise that vote in the interest of the district where his property is situated.

Mr. COYNE: Then, why should not the men on the line that you spoke about have a vote?

Mr. MORGAN: They have votes and are on some roll, and the shearers the hon. member speaks about are already on some roll, having fulfilled the condition of residence. Both the shearer and the carrier are often idle two months at a time. The carrier does not cart every day in the year, and the shearer does not shear every day in the year; the shearer often stays at an hotel for two months at a time. The hon. member for Mitchell asked, What is his home? His home is where his wife and family are.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: Supposing he has no wife or family?

Mr. MORGAN: Then his home is where he usually lives when he is not shearing. But it would be impossible to please the Opposition with any Bill introduced by the Government. The only way to please them would be to let them take the Bill downstairs to their caucus room, consider it there, and bring it back and say, "Here is our Bill." That is the only way we could satisfy members of the Opposition, and I do not think this party is going to allow them to frame their Bills for them; they must wait until the electors give them the privilege of framing their own Bills if they desire them to be framed on their lines.

Mr. HUXHAM (*Buranda*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

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

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

*Mr. Huxham.]*