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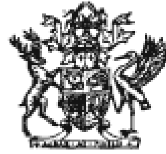

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 1914

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER, 1914.

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

ROCKHAMPTON HARBOUR BOARD ACTS AMENDMENT BILL—PRINTERS AND NEWSPAPERS BILL.

ASSENT.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of messages from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor assenting to these Bills.

PREMIERS' CONFERENCE.

STATEMENT BY THE PREMIER.

The PREMIER (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Oxley*): Mr. Speaker,—With the permission of the House, I desire to make a statement respecting the recent Premiers' Conference.

Question—That the Chief Secretary be permitted to make the statement mentioned—put and passed.

The PREMIER: It may be well to place on record that I arrived at the conference of Premiers at Melbourne on the second day of its sitting. The conference was convened by the Right Hon. the Prime Minister, and he presided at the meetings. On the first day the arrangement arrived at at the previous conference—to finance State and bank needs by an increased note issue was reviewed; and the needs of the States for immediate assistance by way of new loan money were investigated. On the second day the Prime Minister announced that he had arranged to provide loans for five States, and an allotment of respective amounts was made. At the close of the conference, Mr. Fisher made the following announcement to the Press—

> "I have pleasure in announcing that the Commonwealth has engaged to lend money to the applicant States—New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania—for loan expenditure during the next period of twelve months on their public works which have been authorised by the Parliaments of the said States. The money will not be raised by making the note issue inconvertible."

Whilst it is not my place to disclose more than the Prime Minister saw fit to communicate, I may say that the arrangement is a good one for Australia. Happily, Queensland, at the present time, is not needing assistance, but should the war be protracted and conditions be such as to render it undesirable that Queensland should ask for new loan money for public works in the open market, I have an assurance of the Prime Minister that the same consideration will be extended to Queensland by the Commonwealth Government as is now being accorded to the other States.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS.

PRICKLY-PEAR ERADICATION.

Mr. ADAMSON (*Rockhampton*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. What are the conditions regarding prickly-pear eradication in the existing leases of the following runs:—Bauhinia, Rookwood, and Bonnie Doon?

"2. Have these conditions been complied with, and to what extent?

"3. Does the Government intend to apply the forfeiture clause?"

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

"1. Bauhinia Downs.—Prickly pear on the holding to be eradicated within three years from 1st January, 1914. Rookwood.—Certificate under section 142 (1) of the Land Act of 1910 issued 12th May, 1911, that holding free from prickly pear. It must now be maintained free. Bonnie Doon.—No special condition in lease, but liability required under section 40 of the Land Act of 1905 has been expended.

"2. Bauhinia Downs.—Upon inspection on 3rd August, 1914, it was found that good work had been done. £30 had been expended in prickly-pear destruction. The estimate to clear the remainder was £100. Rookwood.—No report has been received since the certificate that the holding was free of pear was issued on 12th May, 1911. Bonnie Doon.—A report dated 26th October, 1914, shows that work of prickly-pear destruction has been neglected. The question of applying section 144 of the Land Act of 1910 is under consideration.

"3. Bauhinia Downs.—No. Rookwood.—No. Bonnie Doon.—Not at present."

AUTOMATIC INCREASES TO ENGINE-DRIVERS.

Mr. E. B. C. CORSER (*Maryborough*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. In the case of engine-drivers now receiving promotion but not receiving the automatic increase, does he intend to pay the increase as soon as funds will permit?

"2. If they again receive promotion before receiving the first automatic increase, does he intend that they shall receive the two increases at once?

"3. Will all grades in the service similarly situated receive the same treatment?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1. Yes, from the date when funds are available.

"2 and 3. Steps have been taken to preserve the status of all employees who are affected by the temporary suspension of the automatic (classification) increases."

POLICE OFFICERS RETURNING TO SERVICE.

Mr. HUNTER (*Maranoa*) asked the Home Secretary—

"1. Are there any police officers in the service who, having left and returned to the department, have not been granted their back service?

"2. If so, will he furnish the names of same and the reason or reasons for not granting same?"

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

"1 and 2. I am of opinion that it would be a mistake to supply the information, as it would unnecessarily make public the private and confidential details of the conduct of the members of the Police Force. I shall be glad to supply the hon. member with the details of any concrete case he is interested in confidentially."

PRICES OF RAILWAY COAL.

Mr. KESSELL (*Port Curtis*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"What prices are being paid by the Railway Department for coal in—(*a*) Toowoomba district; (*b*) Ipswich district; (*c*) Maryborough district; (*d*) Central district; stating in each case whether coal is screened or unscreened?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"(*a*) 9s. 3d. per ton; (*b*) 8s. 6d. per ton; (*c*) 12s. per ton; (*d*) 8s. 6d. per ton. Screened in each case."

PAPERS.

The following papers, laid on the table, were ordered to be printed:—

Fourth report of the Workers' Dwellings Board for the year ended 30th June, 1914.

Annual report of the Department of Public Works for the year ended 30th June, 1914.

Report of the Director of Labour and Chief Inspector of Factories and Shops for the year ended 30th June, 1914.

PETITION.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. J. W. Blair, *Ipswich*) presented a petition from the trustees of certain land in the parish of Dugandan, being a reserve for a showground, praying that leave be given to introduce a Bill to enable the trustees of the land comprised in deed of grant No. 103853, being portion 119, in the county of Ward and parish of Dugandan, and being a reserve for a showground, to mortgage the same.

Petition received.

BELGIAN RELIEF.

On the motion standing in the name of Mr. Philp to the effect that £15,000 be granted towards the relief of Belgian distress caused by the present war being called—

HON. R. PHILP said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to withdraw this motion, at the request of the Chief Secretary. He informs me that he has already sent £5,000 worth of meat, and that, after inquiries, he will send either more meat, or money if preferable.

ELECTIONS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I notice that there are nineteen clauses in this Bill, but I think standing out prominently amongst its features are three or four. First of all, it seeks to ensure that everybody should have a vote who is entitled to it; and, secondly, that everybody who has a vote should use it. It is rather a drastic change to say that anybody who has a vote must vote, but still I think, in view of the great differences there are in the objectives of the political parties in Queensland, it is desirable that before any change takes place in the control of affairs, a majority of the people should have a say in it. When we recollect that there is a party in the State which desires to see an entire change in our system of land tenure, namely, the abolition of private ownership of any kind, and of all private ownership and enterprise, I think that the people concerned should have a say as to whether they desire it or not. Of course, if the majority of people in Queensland desire a change of that kind, there is nothing to say against it, but before it is brought about the people should express an opinion on the subject. There is no doubt that there has been a considerable want of interest in public affairs on the part of the people, and I do not know whether that is attributable to one party more than another. During the last elections I heard members of both parties express the regret that their people were not taking the interest in the elections that they should. Again, when you hear people saying that they will not go to the polling-place unless a motor-car is sent for them, I think it is time that something was done which would ensure their exercise of one of the greatest privileges we have. Our forefathers fought for this privilege in the past, and it seems an abuse that, now they have got it, some people do not use it, and I think the time has come when some such provision as we have in the Bill should be made to ensure that those who have a vote should use it. Secondly, I think that a postal vote is desirable. We all know that in a widely scattered State such as Queensland, on the outlying stations and farms, there are many who are far removed from the polling-places and who are unable to exercise their privilege. We also know that on polling-day a considerable portion of our electors—our women-folk—are, through sickness, unable to use their privilege of voting, unless some such means as the postal vote is accorded them. At a Federal election it is estimated that there are 70,000 women unable to use the vote to which they are entitled. There would be a proportionate number at a State election, and that alone shows that the postal vote is necessary. I know that it has been urged that abuses have existed in connection with it in the past, but nothing of the kind has come under my notice, and there is no reason why we should not provide proper safeguards so that it can be used in future without the abuses which are said to have obtained in the past. I think that the assertions made with regard to those abuses should not be allowed to go uncontradicted, or that the odium that was said to be cast upon the system should be allowed to pass unnoticed. For instance, the hon. member for Keppel made this statement during the debate—

> "In 1907 it was not the aged, sick, and infirm in the country districts who exercised the postal vote, but people in

> Charters Towers, Townsville, Rockhampton, and Brisbane who lived within a few hundred yards of a polling-booth, whereas the people in the country districts went to a polling-booth to vote."

He next spoke about Victoria, and said—

> "Hon. members on this side had no objection to extending the postal vote to the sick and infirm; but we do object to extending it to those who are able to walk across the road to vote."

We do not propose to extend it to anyone who lives within 5 miles of a polling-place, and how does that accord with the statement that it is used by those who only live across the road? Again, the hon. member said—

> "I know that an elector is not supposed to vote by post unless he believes that he will be more than 5 miles outside the boundaries of the electorate for which he is enrolled on election day, but that provision is abused, and there is no penalty for a violation of the law in that respect."

It is quite contrary to fact to say that there is no penalty for a violation of the law in that respect. I have here the last Act which was passed, and I find that clause 47, dealing with the postal vote, says—

> "Any person who makes in any such application any statement which in any material particular is to his or her knowledge false, and any person who attests any such application containing any statement which in any material particular is to his or her knowledge false, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding £100 or to imprisonment, with or without hard labour, for any period not exceeding six months."

That shows the value of the objections of members of the Opposition. The hon. member said there was no penalty, and I am showing that he directly misstated the facts when he said so. Again, it has been said that hardship will occur at the bi-monthly revision court, and that people will be without votes. I do not see why anyone should be off the roll for two months, if he is not entitled to a vote in his late electorate, for provision is made that directly after two months of going into another electorate, he can apply for enrolment there. When he has been there two months, he cannot be objected to. The two things synchronise; they run together. Notice of removal goes before a court, and is dealt with at the next court before he is definitely removed, inquiries are made, the objection to his name is advertised in the public Press, and a notice is sent to him by post. If he has left, I do not see that he has any right to be allowed to remain on the roll. On the other hand, the moment he has been two months in the new place, he can put in his application, and just about the time that he is removed from the old roll he will be placed on the new one. What is there wrong about that? Yet hon. members opposite denounce the harshness of the principle on that score. From the way hon. members spoke on the other side, it appears that what they really desire is that those who have been here only a few weeks or months from the South should be allowed to vote and have a say in the affairs of Queensland.

Mr. LARCOMBE and other OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. SWAYNE: Listening to the interjections made now, and considering the speeches I have heard from the other side, that appeared to me to be the object they had in view. I really think that we all desire that there should be every precaution taken, and that people who are entitled to vote shall have a vote, and at the same time that those who are not entitled should be prevented from having a vote. Again, I have heard objections made regarding the questions put to applicants for enrolment. I think that it is about time that care should be exercised in that matter. I am only expressing my own opinion. I might say that I was acting as scrutineer during the last Federal election, and I am convinced that many of those who voted were not entitled to do so, because they were under age. I think that it is desirable that some precaution should be taken that before people become enrolled they are at least twenty-one. I do not see why hon. members opposite should object to that. I sat at the table, and hundreds who voted passed before me, and my honest opinion is that some of the young people were not of age. I think the recent acts that have occurred show that some care should be exercised in this matter. For instance, I have here in a Press telegram from Bundaberg—

Mr. LARCOMBE: What are you quoting from?

Mr. SWAYNE: I am quoting from the "Courier." (Opposition laughter.) It is all very well to laugh, but it is a Press telegram. It is a mere statement of facts; not the opinion of the paper. If you look up the Bundaberg papers you would, doubtless, see the same thing recorded there. It is in regard to the electoral revision court, and in the cases that were decided the police magistrate several times remarked that the applicants for enrolment appeared to have no idea of the seriousness attached to the business they had in hand. To his mind, the proceedings showed that those responsible for putting in the claim——

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will be in order in quoting the opinion contained in the article, but he will not be in order in reading the article.

Mr. SWAYNE: I was not reading the whole thing through, but only referring to a few lines. However, it goes on to state that one of the applicants said that he had been persuaded to put in his claim there, although he told the person who persuaded him that he was not two months in the electorate and that he did not intend to stay. Do hon. members opposite approve of that sort of thing?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. SWAYNE: I am very pleased to hear hon. members opposite say they do not approve of this kind of thing. I should not be acting in accordance with the Standing Orders in reading the whole of the extract, but I may say that the people who were supporting this were all of the same political party as hon. members opposite. Again, I notice in the account of the same proceedings that a gentleman who was at one time a member of this House stated that he did not know that the justice signing the application form is required to sign a certificate. It is just as well to make this matter clear.

Mr. BERTRAM: Have you ever signed one yourself?

Mr. SWAYNE: If I have done so, I have done it in accordance with the provisions of the law, and if I made a mistake I should be ashamed to come before the court and say that I was ignorant of the Act. Section 30C of the Elections Act, 1885 to 1913, says—

> "The justice or any other person attesting a claim shall, if he is not personally acquainted with the facts, satisfy himself by inquiry from the claimant or otherwise that the answers to the questions are true, and shall sign at the foot of the claim a certificate in the following form or to the like effect, that is to say,"

etc. With regard to the objections from the other side, it seems to me that that precaution has been ignored in connection with a very large batch of applications. I mention this matter to show that more care should be taken in these cases than appears to have been taken in the past. A great deal has been said about giving votes to members of the Expeditionary Force, whom the exigencies of the situation may require to leave Queensland at any moment. While we all regret that the position is such as to take them away from the State, it is absurd to say that they should be given votes for an election which will not take place until the middle of next year. How can those men give their votes for a candidate who is not yet nominated? I notice that the leader of the Opposition offered a solution of this difficulty, and said they could vote for the Labour party or for the Liberal party. But how do we know that there will not be a third party: that what is called "the country party" may not have candidates in the field? If the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition was carried into effect, those men who desired to vote for candidates put forward by the country party would be absolutely prevented from doing so. If any fair and just scheme could be devised which will give those men a vote, I think this side of the House would gain by it. However, it seems to me that such a thing is quite out of the question. As to the proposition that they should vote for a party, quite regardless of the character of a candidate, I would point out that candidates with most objectionable antecedents might be put forward, and those men would have to vote for such candidates in entire ignorance of their character. There are some electors who attach considerable importance to the personality of the candidate, and, indeed, put the personality before party. I am not saying whether that is wise or unwise, right or wrong, but simply state the fact that there are voters who do that. How, then, could those men vote for a man of whose character they were in entire ignorance? A little thought will show how utterly absurd such a proposal is. It comes to this: that in accordance with the practice and policy of members opposite, a litle clique in an organisation will choose a candidate, and the bulk of the electors must vote accordingly without having a say in the choice. The members of the Expeditionary Force are not to have any say in the choice of the candidate, but are simply to cast their vote for him six months beforehand. No one regrets more than I do that those men will not be able to vote at the elections, but at the same time I do not see how we can devise a scheme which will allow them to vote.

Once you admit the principle of voting by proxy, no matter what the exigencies of the case may be, you will commit a great mistake which will probably lead to far greater evils than the one mentioned. Members opposite also express great concern about the holding of a revision court a short time before an election, and the leader of the Opposition said—

> "Never before in the history of Queensland had the power been given to a revision court to strike off names on the eve of a general election."

Our elections generally take place in March or April, and the revision court is held in December at present. In 1908 we had an election in February, so that the accusation of the hon. member, that never before in the history of Queensland had such a thing happened, falls to the ground. If we stick to the facts of the case, there is no reason to occupy any great length of time in discussing the Bill. Boiled down, the measure amounts to this: that everyone entitled to a vote shall have a vote, that everyone who has a vote shall use it, and that precautions shall be taken to prevent personation. Past events have shown that extra precautions are necessary to prevent personation. I know of my own knowledge that during the Federal election before last a vote was given three times in the name of a licensed victualler in Brisbane who was away in the old country. In another case which came to my knowledge, when a man and his wife went up to vote, they found that someone had already voted in their names. These things show that malpractices do exist, and that in any legislation brought forward proper precautions should be taken to provide against them.

Mr. LAND (*Balonne*): When the Elections Act Amendment Bill was before this Chamber last year I stated that if the Government had started out with the express purpose of disfranchising a great number of the citizens of Queensland they could not have succeeded better than they have done in that Bill. That Bill became law, and has been in force about a year, and it has been condemned from one end of Queensland to the other, not only by the Labour party or the people who support the Labour party, but by all sorts of people of different political opinions. As far as the administration of the law is concerned, I have not heard many complaints from the people of the district in which I live. It seems, however, that that Act has not been effective enough to suit the wishes of the party opposite, and no doubt that is the reason this amending Bill is introduced. The principle underlying some of the provisions of the Bill may be good, but one very bad feature in it is the provision which disfranchises people who have not got farms or selections or homes in the districts where they get their living. The hon. member who has just resumed his seat endeavoured to make out that we have always had bi-monthly revision courts which had the power to strike names off the roll. That is not so. The only court which had power to strike names off the roll was the annual revision court. The Home Secretary has often declared himself in this House as a democrat. Indeed, I wonder if he has ever stood on any platform in which he did not say that he was a democrat. If he is really sincere in his profession, one of his first acts should be to endeavour to get those men who are doing the work of the country on the electoral roll and give them an opportunity to record their votes when they are on the roll. I refer to shearers, shed hands, drovers, fencers, and all those who perform different kinds of bush work. It is almost impossible for those men to retain their names on the roll if they are to be struck off every two months. A man who goes away with a mob of sheep leaves his place of residence where his address is, and it may be ten or twelve weeks before he gets back. In the meantime, a policeman or some other person goes round and finds that this man is not at his residence at that particular time, and his name is struck off the roll by the revision court. Members of this House may go to England with the intention of coming back, or they may go down to Melbourne to see the Cup, and yet not have their names struck off the roll. It seems to me that this measure is an attack on the worker, on men who go out to shear and do other bush work which requires that they should leave their place of residence for a while. Therefore, I say that the revision court every two months is for the purpose of striking names off the roll. If they are properly disqualified, that is all right. There is no man on this side of the House who wishes to see any name go on the roll if that elector is disqualified from voting, because it is no good to us at all. The chances are that when an election comes on he would be disqualified, and could not vote. We should take a common-sense view of the matter, and we should not disqualify men who have been bred and born in Queensland and have never left the State, but have been engaged at various occupations here ever since they were able to work. I am surprised at the Home Secretary disfranchising these men. I am surprised at the members representing country districts, and I am surprised at those carrying on occupations in the pastoral industry agreeing to disfanchise the very men who keep their industries going from one year's end to the other.. Another important alteration in this Bill is the two months' residence qualification before the election. The same thing applies to this clause as to the bi-monthly revision court. The bi-monthly revision court will strike off a good number of names, and this four months' residence qualification will knock off many more. Under the old Act, if a man was in the electorate one month in the preceding seven, he was allowed to vote, but this is cutting it down by half, and between those two clauses many worthy citizens of Queensland will be debarred from voting at all. These men have to go all over Queensland in carrying out their work, and it is impossible for a great number of them to get on the roll. The residence of a single man is easily found, and also is that of a married man, until he leaves the district altogether. He will reside at an hotel, or boarding-house, or perhaps live privately, and he will leave his clothes at that place. He will also leave his money in the local bank. His correspondence can be received there, and everything can be arranged all right until he comes back. Unless that man permanently leaves the district he should not be struck off the roll at all. There is another question which I referred to the other day, which the Home Secretary seems to think is already provided for, but I am sure it is not. Suppose a man is wrongly omitted from the roll, there is no provision for him to get on again. If the Home Secretary, or any of his supporters, knew that a voter for the Liberal party was struck off the roll, they would like him to

have a chance to get on again. The Chief Electoral Registrar should have power to put a man on the roll again if he has been wrongly struck off. I have had a great deal to do with the Chief Eelctoral Registrar and the officers in that department. I have always found them most obliging, and have not a word of complaint against them, but they have never been able to show me how those names were omitted from the roll. There should be some provision inserted to enable any person wrongly omitted from the roll to record a vote on election day. The lists in connection with the annual revision of the rolls come out early in the year, and many people see them, but there are a good many that do not see them, and they do not think of looking over them because they know they have not left the electorate and they have not forfeited their qualification in any way. They even go into the polling-booth to record their votes before they find that they have been struck off the roll. When those lists are published, if persons find they have been struck off the roll wrongly, they ought to be able to notify the Chief Electoral Registrar in time to get their names on again. In fact, in the far Western districts they could send a telegram. The Chief Electoral Registrar could then go into the matter and find out why they were left off the roll, and if he finds that they have not been marked "dead" "left," or "disqualified." he would know that they had not been rightly left off the roll and that it must have been a mistake in the office. The officers could then have power to put the name on the roll again. In cases where a person does not find out that he has been left off the roll until he goes to the polling-booth, the presiding officer should have power to give him a vote. The local presiding officers are generally acquainted with every person, and they also have an opportunity of calling in a policeman and asking if he knows the person applying for the vote. In nine cases out of ten the policeman will be able to say that he knows him, and that he has not shifted for years. The Electoral Registrar should have power to instruct the presiding officer to grant a vote in such cases. A lot has been said about giving a vote to the soldiers leaving for the front. I think they should get a vote. We could decide on a certain form, and it could be sent to the soldiers to fill in before they left Queensland. The hon. member for Mirani says it would not be possible to arrange for a soldier to vote for a Liberal or Labour candidate only, because there might be a third candidate in the field, as the country party might run a candidate. In that case we could ask the soldier to vote for one of three candidates representing the three parties in Parliament at the present time. It could be done in a very simple manner indeed. I happen to know a few of the young fellows who are going away with the Expeditionary Force. A lot of them are bush workers, and they think it is a great shame that they should be deprived of recording their votes. They asked me how it was they could not get their vote, and I said "The Home Secretary is against it." They asked me who was the Home Secretary, and I told them. One of them said, "I know that gentleman; I saw his pedigree in 'Hansard' the other day." One of these men said to me that the proudest moment of his life was when he was old enough to become a full privileged unionist, and his next proudest day was when he got on the electoral roll. He also said it was a proud day when he was able to record his vote for the first time. If there was any sincerity in the Government, they would allow these men to have a vote. The Home Secretary is also declaring himself to be a friend of the workers, and is always roaring about his democracy. At every show banquet we hear him make second-reading speeches, both patriotic and democratic, and yet he will not give the men going to the front a chance of recording their votes. Earl Kitchener told these men that it was not child's play that they were going to, and they fully recognise it. They fully recognise that if they are allowed to vote on this occasion that it will probably be the last vote that they will ever record. I hope the Home Secretary will give them an opportunity of voting. I would like the hon. gentleman to go out quietly to the camp himself and ask the soldiers if they would like to vote before they left Australia? If they do not want to vote, then it would be a different thing altogether, but the men I have spoken to do want to vote. A lot of things have been said about George Ryland putting names on the roll when they were not qualified, but I do not believe a word of it. I have had a lot to do with putting men's names on the roll; in fact, I have been helping to make Parliament for the last thirty-five years. Under the old Act, we had a hard job to get men on the roll at all, because the Elections Act then was much more restricted than it is now, and almost every official who had anything at all to do with administering the Act was biased. You could get no information from them at all. Reference was made to the [4.30 p.m.] justices who will act under this Bill. I knew one justice of the peace, who may be one now for all I know, who signed objections so indiscriminately when they were handed to him that he even objected to men in his own employ at the time. I have known men go further than that—to go round organising in the district and then sit on the bi-monthly revision court. While that sort of men are in authority, ordinary men have very little chance. In fact, we know that the Home Secretary had a pet justice of the peace once of his own. I remember when I was down there that they told me he had been convicted of crimes twice, and the Home Secretary invited him to come here to the local authorities' conference. That is what he thought of him. Fancy getting hold of a man like that—and I believe his case was very strongly commented upon by the magistrate in regard to his being a very dangerous man. I suppose he is a justice still.

The HOME SECRETARY: He is dead.

Mr. LAND: Then I will let him rest. I do not wish to detain the House any longer, but I would like the Home Secretary to make note of some of the incidents I have referred to, and particularly those referring to giving the soldiers a vote, and the matter of those who are omitted from the rolls. I have had very, very grave complaints, and I know, personally, men and women who came to the polling-booth last election and who had never shifted one inch, but yet were told their names were not on the roll. I knew a ganger on the railway line whose name was left off the roll. He should have been well enough known. He came to me this year, and said, "This is pretty hot. Here is my wife left

off the roll." These are facts, and if only an odd one is brought up now and again, it shows that such things exist, and that they should be rectified. I have suggested means of doing that.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Murrumba*): I cannot say that I agree at all with the arguments used by hon. members on the other side, that this Bill is restricting people from getting on the roll. I think it aims at endeavouring to get the largest number of voters on the roll to vote, and that is a very good thing—to get as big a majority as possible who are on the roll to vote—because under existing conditions we do not get a fair estimate of what really are the wishes of the majority of the people who are voters in Queensland. I noticed that at the last election we had no less than 309,590 people on the roll, and out of that total number 205,650 persons voted at the polling-booth, and there were 12,889 absent votes. The total vote for the Liberal candidates was 110,817, and for the Opposition 99,034, and for Independents 6,181, and there were only 297 contingent votes polled altogether. This means that altogether about 75 per cent. of the total number on the roll who were entitled to vote actually voted, and it means that no fewer than 77,400 who were legally entitled to vote did not vote at all. What we want is not to knock people off the roll, but to get the people on the roll to vote, so that we may then be able to judge whether they are in favour of the Labour party or of the Liberal party, because if you have 25 per cent. of the people who are entitled to vote not voting, you can never tell how the majority really goes. Our general feeling is that the Labour party's voters vote much better than the Liberal party's voters, and—whether we are right or not—that a very considerable proportion of that 25 per cent. are people who belong to the Liberal party.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: That is why you want compulsory voting.

Mr. FORSYTH: No, it is not. I challenge the hon. member who interrupts to say whether he does not want a full number to vote. Does he not want everybody to vote? Of course, it is impossible for everybody to vote, we know that. But we want that everybody who is on the roll and entitled to go to the poll should endeavour to do so, so that we may have the highest percentage possible. That is a principle I believe in, and I believe everybody believes in it wholly, and anybody who believes that should be delighted to vote for this measure, because it seeks to get a very much larger poll than we have had before. We have had very much smaller polls than 75 per cent. In fact, 75 per cent. is now considered a good poll, but I see no reason why we should not have a very much larger one than that. This Bill aims at getting an expression of the opinion of the people as to whom they want to rule the affairs of the country and what class of legislation should be brought in; and, if that is so, I think everybody on the other side will admit that we want the biggest poll possible, so that the people once for all will understand that the majority of the people of Queensland who vote are in favour of the policy of the Liberal party or of the Labour party. I do not think that there is any prevention in this Bill of persons getting on the roll. The hon. member for Chillagoe says that it aims at the limitation of the people's rights—that it strikes at the very vitals of democracy, and he went into the most terrific heroics to tell us exactly how it was done. He said that it seemed to him that the Home Secretary, and those acting with him, had made up their minds to restrict the franchise to the narrowest possible limits by disqualifying as many Labour supporters as possible, leaving as many Liberals franchised as possible. I ask the hon. member how they can do so, and whether the Government can quietly disfranchise Labour voters who have just as much right to be on the roll as Liberal voters? It is absurd that such a thing could happen. It would not happen. He says that the Bill will enable the Liberal party to disfranchise a great many thousands of persons who should be electors in Queensland. Another thing he made a very strong point about was the case of a man residing in my own electorate and wanting to shift. He said that he might live in Murrumba electorate in July and shift to Brisbane. The police canvass might take place in August, and his name would be advertised as having left the electorate long before he could claim enrolment for Brisbane. If he thought that, then he had not followed the present provisions of the law. Has the hon. member read the law? Does he understand the conditions laid down with regard to the very argument he raised that even if a man has left an electorate he cannot be knocked off the roll in two, or even four, months? (Laughter.) The hon. member laughs. Let me read him the clause. Clause 9 states distinctly that when it is found that an elector has left a district for two months or upwards his name is to be published in the papers or some public place, and then, besides that, a note is to be sent to the man's last place of residence. Not only that, but his name is also not taken off the rolls. I challenge the hon. member to deny that. I am quoting from the Bill, and even if he is marked as left he cannot be put off the roll. As a matter of fact, according to clause 9, even if he has been two months and upwards out of an electorate he then cannot be put off the roll, because he must go, after being advertised, before the next bi-monthly court. Therefore, when the hon. member states that people can be put off one roll before they can be put on another he is simply making a statement, as I understand the Bill, which is entirely against facts. It comes to this: that, after all this is done, he can only be brought forward at the next revision court, and therefore for anyone to say that a man can be knocked off one roll before he can get on another is a most unfair statement to make, in my estimation. He must be at least two months from the district before he is even advertised, and when he is advertised he has to go before the next bi-monthly revision court.

Mr. McCORMACK: And then he has to go another five months before he is able to vote.

Mr. FORSYTH: No, a man two months out of an electorate can apply to be placed on a roll, and then he is advertised in the usual way, just as his name as one to be put off the roll is advertised, and it goes before the next court, and possibly is put on just the same as when his name was taken off the roll of the other electorate. If any hon. member can show that there is any possible chance of a man who leaves an electorate, and acts strictly in accordance with the law, being knocked off an electorate which he has left

for two months before he can get on another roll, then I can assure the hon member that I will vote for any amendment that will put that right. I think it would be most unfair. I discussed the question with the electoral registrar, and some of his men, and I said, "Can you state honestly with all your evidence, and the information you possess, that there is a possible hope under this Bill, or even under the old Bill of 1913, of a man being knocked off the roll of an electorate he has left before he can be put on another roll for which he has made application two months after he has left the first?" I have got the assurance of these men to the effect, and from the Bill itself, I understand, that there is no possible hope of that being done. If any hon. member can show me that such a thing is possible, I shall be delighted to support any amendment which would have the effect of giving any man a chance, in the event of such a thing happening, of having his name on one roll. When he has been two months out of his old electorate, and makes application to go on the other electoral roll, I should think that simultaneously with his name being taken off one roll his name will go on the other. That is how I understand the Bill. It says distinctly that his name cannot be removed till he has been away two months or upwards, and then it must come before the next bi-monthly court. I think that if that is done, there is no chance of a man being knocked off. We have not had a great deal of discussion from the other side with regard to the question of compulsory voting, or even of compulsory registration. The Labour party brought in compulsory registration in the Commonwealth, but it appears to me that if a man is forced by law to go on to a roll, he should be forced to vote, but the Labour party did not see their way to do that. When making it compulsory to register and to vote under this Bill, the idea was to try and get the biggest vote possible, so that people would know exactly what the feeling of the majority of the voters is in connection with one party or another. There has been a good deal of discussion with regard to the seven months' provision—one month in the previous seven months in an electorate. A man might stay in an electorate for one month out of the seven before the election, and go away to Sydney for six months prior to the date of the election. He might be on the New South Wales roll, and come back here and vote, thus doing something which he is not entitled to do. If we have a bi-monthly revision court for taking names off the roll we should also have a bi-monthly court for putting names on. I do not think anyone wants people to be on a roll who are not entitled to be there, and if a man goes out of an electorate, he should apply to get on the electorate he goes to. If he does not do so, it is his own fault. We have heard a great deal said about the notices sent to the electors, and that 75 per cent. of the people do not get them. If a man is leaving the district where he is enrolled, and knows that he is not likely to come back, he should apply without waiting for the letter and get transferred to the new electorate.

Mr. RYAN: Do you believe in compulsory voting?

Mr. FORSYTH: Yes, I think it is a good thing to have. I will ask the hon. member if he believes in compulsory registration?

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in inviting interjections.

Mr. FORSYTH: If it is right to have compulsory registration, it appears to be the natural corollary to have compulsory voting. The Labour Government was anxious to put people on the roll, in the first instance, and fine them if they did not go on the roll, and what was the good of going to all that expense unless there was some means after they had got on the roll to compel them to vote? That is the difference between the Federal Bill and this one; we want people on the roll and we want them to vote. It is the highest privilege of citizenship to be on the roll, and the people should conceive it to be their greatest privilege to go to the poll and vote, no matter whether they are Liberal or Labour. What we want to know is what the majority believe in, but we have never been able to get their opinion, because there has been such a large proportion of people who never voted at all, owing to many reasons, perhaps because they were too far away amongst others. Hon. members opposite do not believe in the postal vote, but they believe in the principle of the absentee vote. It has been stated that there were some 12,000 odd who relied on the absent vote. They talk about the few thousand who used the absent vote, but in Australia there are no less than 70,000 people who cannot go to the poll at all, and that is one of the great reasons why people should be allowed to vote by post. There are 70,000 or 80,000 people in the Commonwealth who would find it impossible to go to the polling-booth, according to Mr. Knibbs, and if we take Queensland's quota as one-seventh of that number, there would be 10,000 people in Queensland who could not vote at all. Hon. members opposite do not care twopence about that. They have said that this Bill would be the means of disfranchising scores of thousands of people. We have, say, 390,000 electors on the roll, or nearly 400,000, out of a population of 670,000 odd. Does the hon. member for Chillagoe think that is a fair proportion of the adult people of Queensland? He knows it is not correct—that we have not got them. The hon. member said—

> "I am honestly convinced that there will be disfranchised under this Bill and the Bill passed last session 100,000 men and women in full possession of their faculties, men and women who have reached years of discretion, and should not be disqualified in any democracy, but who will be disqualified under the Liberal electoral system in Queensland."

The hon. member knows that that statement is not right. With regard to the postal vote, we should only give a vote to every person who is sick and cannot go to the polling-booth. The absent vote is no good to those people, because there are in Queensland people who have not the opportunity to go to a poll because they are 30, or perhaps 50, miles away. Under the old Act there was a provision that anyone who was 5 miles away from a polling-place could apply for a postal vote, and if they were sick they could also apply for a postal vote. The hon. member for Chillagoe asked why the 1,200 people at Dunwich should not have a vote. If they were in the Chillagoe electorate, and were Liberals, I guarantee that the hon. member would be the last man to advocate a vote for them. If the Dunwich people are to have a vote, let them have it for the district they came from; but why should they be allowed to vote en bloc in an

electorate in which they have no interest whatever? Why should they be able to swamp an electorate in which they have no interest? If the hon. member or anyone else likes to move an amendment to give the Dunwich people a vote, so long as they are to exercise it for the particular district which they came from, I would be glad to support the amendment. The hon. member for Chillagoe says there are a great many people objecting to their names being taken off the roll. If any man or woman leaves an electorate, knowing that they are not going to live in that electorate, surely they will inquire of the registrar, or, as soon as the two months are up, advise him that they have changed to another electorate and want their names taken off the old roll. If every elector in Queensland would take the same interest in elections as they should do, there would be no occasion for a great deal of the work that is necessary at the present time. Then, the hon. member for Chillagoe said that there was an attempt to prevent an elector from voting at the polling-booth on the part of the Liberal Government. I really do not know what that means. If a man or woman is on the roll and goes to a polling-booth to vote, I do not think anyone can stop them from voting. You only block them from voting if you think it is a case of personation, or if they have left the district for a longer period than the time allowed. I think that it is the duty of any honest [5 p.m.] man who is satisfied that a man or woman has not been twelve months in the electorate, and has never bothered his or her head about getting on to another roll, to stop that man or woman from voting at an election. Then, members opposite have told us that it will take a person four months before he can get his name transferred from one roll to another, and they complain about the establishment of bi-monthly revision courts. What is the use in talking in the way hon. members do when conditions have changed? Members opposite say that a man must be two months in an electorate before he can apply for the transference of his name to the roll for that electorate, and then that he will have to wait another two months before the transfer was confirmed by the revision court. In that case it would be absurd to have the same time for holding the revision court, seeing that the conditions of enrolment have altogether altered. It appears to me that the main principle of the Bill—namely, compulsory enrolment and compulsory voting—are good. The object is to see that everyone entitled to be on the roll shall be on the roll, and that everyone who is not entitled to be on the roll, shall not be put on illegally. If it were proposed that a person's name should be knocked off one roll before he had an opportunity of getting on to another roll, I should vote against such a proposal, but there is no such provision in this Bill. As to persons going round and putting names of electors on the roll, I can say that I have never asked anyone to do that in my electorate. I may also state that, although I have been living in the same house for twenty years and am still living there, an effort was made to get my name struck off the roll. Before I left for the old country for a holiday I took the precaution of informing the electoral registrar that I was still in Brisbane, that my home was here, and that I was coming back, and I asked him if anyone tried to knock my name off the roll not to allow it to be done. I had, however, scarcely left Brisbane before an attempt was made by someone to knock my name off the roll. That is the kind of tactics in which some people indulge. I do not suppose he was a Liberal elector who tried to get my name taken off the roll, but it was a contemptible thing to do, no matter who did it, as I am sufficiently well known in Brisbane for people to have known that I was coming back here. I look upon this measure as one which is intended to keep the rolls clean, and I am sure that no honest man wants the rolls to be anything but clean. What we desire is that every man who is entitled to be on the roll shall have his name placed on the roll, and that those who are not entitled to be on the roll shall have their names knocked off the roll, so that we may have clean rolls.

Mr. HUNTER: We all want that.

Mr. FORSYTH: If you all want that, then you should be only too glad to vote for this Bill. The Bill bristles with provisions to make it easy to get on the roll, and it allows a postal vote to be attested by two electors. Any member of the Police Force can sign as a witness to a claim just the same as any elector, and that makes the process of getting on the roll very much easier for every one concerned. Taking the Bill all round, I consider that it is a good measure, and I do not think it will have the effect on the people of Queensland that members opposite contend it will have. On the contrary, I believe it will have the effect of making the rolls as clean as possible, and giving every man a chance to get on the rolls.

Mr. BOWMAN: I think it will affect the Western and Northern people.

Mr. FORSYTH: How many people in the Western districts have not got some settled recognised place of abode? There are people who have their homes at Longreach, Mitchell, or elsewhere, and yet who for a considerable part of the year are away in other districts earning their livelihood. There are carriers and shearers who live with their families at Charleville and other places, though they are away travelling for several months of the year, and their home is where their families reside. There may be a few men who have really found it difficult to get on the roll, but the number is insignificant. A single man may, perhaps, find it difficult to get on the roll, but even he, as a rule, has his home with his father or mother, who live at Longreach or elsewhere. Even men who have no relations with whom to reside, generally live at a particular hotel when they come into town, and that is their permanent place of abode. As a matter of fact, a large majority of the people who are travelling about, especially married men, can easily get on the roll, and I see no reason at all why their names should not be on the roll. I can quite understand that if a person goes to New South Wales for four or five months in the year, it may be more difficult for him to get his name on the roll than it is for those persons who do not leave Queensland, but wherever a man has a permanent home he can have a vote. So far we have had no positive proof that a large number of men cannot get on the roll. If proof is given of such a state of things, then we should endeavour to obviate the difficulty, because I

believe it is the honest desire of members on both sides of the House that every man and woman entitled to vote should be enrolled. We do not want to put any difficulty in their way. In fact, this measure will make it easier for people to get on the roll, and I hope that members opposite will see that after all it is a good Bill, and that it will mean the putting of a large number of people on the roll, and having a very much larger poll than we have ever had before.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): I have listened with a great deal of interest and attention to the debate which has taken place on this Bill. The hon. member who has just sat down has proved to his own satisfaction that the effect of the Bill will be to make it easier for the electors of Queensland to get on the roll. As a matter of fact, that will not be its effect. Instead of this Bill making it easier for people to get on the roll, it makes it infinitely more difficult for them to become enrolled, and infinitely easier to have their names knocked off after they have been enrolled. The hon. member for Mirani made some reference to the Elections Act, and said he did not know very much about its provisions. It was quite evident that the hon. member did not know much about the Act, as he did not know when the annual revision court was held or which was the last revision court at which people could get their names on the electoral roll and have a vote if an election took place in February. If I remember rightly, in 1908, when the election took place in February, express provision had to be made to enable some 10,000 electors whose names had been placed on the November roll to vote at that election. Those 10,000 persons had their names put on the 1907 roll, and yet, as the law then stood, they had not the right to vote. The present Bill, and the Bill which was before us last session, have been introduced with the express purpose of disfranchising a large number of workers in Queensland. Members opposite, and the Premier in particular, distinctly stated that there were a large number of workers in Queensland whose names were on the roll, and who had recorded their vote at past elections, but that those persons had no right to have their names on the roll, and consequently that the Government were going to see that they did not get them on in future. The Premier characterised those men as nomads, and because they found it impossible to reside in one particular electorate throughout the whole year, he argued that they had no right to be on the roll and that they should be disfranchised. And now, because the Bill passed last year had not accomplished the object the Government had in view, they had introduced another amending Bill so that they might accomplish their object. It seems to me that no more important Bill can be introduced than a Bill dealing with the franchise of the people of a State which is a democratic State that is supposed to be governed by the people and for the people. If the statutes to be placed on the statute-book are to be broad-based on the people's will, then the people should have an opportunity of saying who shall represent them in this House and make the laws by which they are governed. It has been repeatedly said by members on the Government side that everybody who is qualified should be on the roll. The whole thing hinges on the qualification, as that is where the difficulty arises. We know that a good number of people at the present time find it almost impossible to get on the electoral roll, and, if they do get on the electoral roll, they are quickly put off again. I say that these people have a right to vote and say who shall represent them in this House. The object of this Bill is to restrict the franchise and to prevent a large number of honest working men and women from having a say as to who shall represent them here. A great deal has been said about the old Act, which required a person to be in the electorate one month in the seven months preceding an election. That was much fairer than the present Bill. The hon. member for Murrumba stated that when he went to the old country some years ago, he made it perfectly clear that he was going away for six or seven months, that he intended to return, and that his name should not be struck off the electoral roll. Yet he stated that other men leaving their electorate should be struck off. Under the old Act, if a man was in the electorate one month in the preceding seven his name would be left on, but under this Bill, if a man is out of the electorate for two months he will have his name struck off at the next revision court. Under the old Act a man, by making a declaration that he had been in the electorate one month in the preceding seven months, was allowed to vote, and under that provision fully 300 or 400 men voted in Charters Towers at the last election. These men have their homes there, and their interests and families are also in Charters Towers. They might leave Charters Towers for perhaps six months and return again. Under this Bill they will be disfranchised altogether if they leave the electorate for two months, although their wives, families, and interests remain there. If a man leaves an electorate a day or two before a registration court is held, then by the time the next revision court takes place he may be struck off the roll, and it will be impossible for him to get on again, because his application must be in at the revision court forty-eight hours before the court sits. In cases like that it may be four months before a man can get on the roll again. There are a number of difficulties placed in the way of men who have a perfect right to exercise their vote, but who will be deprived of their right under this Bill. I am sure that there are 30,000 men in Queensland who find it impossible to reside in one particular electorate all the year round, because they have to go to other electorates to earn their livelihood. Even if they get on the roll, they will find it impossible to remain there. The whole idea of the Bill is to prevent these individuals from recording their votes, because the idea exists in the mind of the Government. and of other members opposite, that these men vote in a particular way, and the Government therefore think that it is not in their interests that these votes should be recorded. I notice that there is a protest clause in this Bill. In times gone by, if a scrutineer, or candidate, or returning officer, had any reason for suspecting that the person applying for the vote was not entitled to it, they could ask him to make a declaration, and if he refused to make that declaration, the vote could be refused. This clause relating to protested votes, instead of helping people to record their votes, will prevent them from doing so. Before the last Elections Bill was introduced, it was stated that Queensland was the most backward of all the Australian States so far as this franchise was concerned, and the facilities for getting on

the roll and remaining there were better in every other State than in Queensland. The conditions, however, were certainly better under that Bill than they will be under the Bill now before us. When we remember that we have a large moving population in Queensland pursuing various industries, we should make it easier for them to get on the roll, instead of more difficult. A great deal has been said about compulsory enrolment and compulsory voting. While it may be a good thing for people to be compelled to enrol themselves, it is doubtful whether we could compel them to use their votes. You might be able to compel people to go to a polling-booth, but you cannot make them vote. "You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink." I am of opinion that many people will be reluctantly compelled to go to the polling-booth, and in all probability this will lead to a large increase in the number of informal votes. So that while some people may say that compulsory voting is a corollary of compulsory enrolment, others will say it is a corollary that they do not like. The hon. member for Mirani made a great deal of capital out of a man being compelled to record his vote when he might not know either candidate, or approve of either candidate, but in this Bill the people are compelled to go to the polling-booth and vote for someone, or else spoil their ballot-paper. The surprising thing to me is that hon. members opposite rest satisfied with the franchise being as liberal as it is at the present time. We know that hon. members opposite are in favour of raising the age to twenty-five years, and it is a wonder they do not provide for that in this Bill, and also divide the electors into three sections, as they do in some countries, and have one-third of the votes based on their tax-paying obligations, and the remaining two-thirds of the votes divided amongst less than one-third of the people. Something like that would be in accordance with the statements made by hon. gentlemen opposite. In reference to what has been said about giving votes to the members of the Expeditionary Force, I may say that I saw in a New Zealand paper that the men leaving New Zealand were allowed to vote before they left. I then put some questions on the notice-paper, asking the Home Secretary if the same thing would be done here, and he said the matter would be given consideration. Evidently the matter has been considered, and the Home Secretary thinks they are doing a very fine thing by leaving the names of these men on the roll, but he is not prepared to go the full length of allowing them the right of exercising their votes before they go. A good deal has been said about the impracticability of giving votes to the soldiers, but in New Zealand they allowed the men to vote. The candidates have not been named there yet, and it was six weeks or two months ago that they voted. The New Zealand soldiers were allowed to vote for the principles that they believed in, and also on two or three subsidiary questions. Their votes were then placed in the care of the Electoral Registrar, and when the election takes place their votes will be forwarded to the constituencies and counted in favour of the Liberal or Labour candidates, respectively. The votes given in New Zealand have been characterised as a proxy vote, but it is nothing of the sort. A proxy vote is to give someone else the power to vote for you—to exercise the vote that belongs to you—but in New Zealand the men exercised the vote themselves. The same privilege should be granted to the men in Queensland. The matter of leaving the men's names on the electoral rolls is a very small and insignificant thing indeed. One of the men told me the other day that in all probability within twelve months 60 per cent. of the men leaving Queensland would be put out of action altogether. It seems a just thing, therefore, that we should give them an opportunity of exercising the franchise before they leave for the front. There are a great many other things in connection with this Bill and some matters of detail that might be better dealt with in Committee. The whole purport of the Bill seems to be not to increase the facilities for getting on the roll, but to decrease them, and to make it difficult for voters to exercise their franchise. In reference to the postal voting, a great deal has been said about the difficulties of the aged and infirm not being able to record their votes. I do not think that anyone wants to deprive lame and sick persons of their votes, but it is a well-known fact that when the postal vote was used at the election of 1908, over two-thirds of the postal votes that were recorded were given in the large cities by people who were neither sick nor infirm, and who did not live 5 miles from a polling-booth. Facilities are provided under the Elections Act passed last year for people living in the same street as that where a booth exists to vote by post. I may point out that the Act says nothing at all about a person having to be 5 miles from a polling-booth before he or she can record a vote by post. The Act clearly states that the voter must declare that on the day of the polling he believes he will be 5 miles from a polling-booth, and then the postal vote can be recorded. All they have got to say is that they believe they will be 5 miles away on the day of polling, and the postal vote can be witnessed by two electors and sent in. From my experience of the postal vote, it will not tend to the secrecy of the ballot. It is practically giving an open vote. Some people will be compelled to vote, [5.30 p.m.] and canvassers will make sure of getting their votes to the ballot-box before polling-day. That sort of thing will not tend to the good government of the State, and will not conduce to the convenience of those for whom it was invented. There are quite a number of other things which I think might be dealt with, perhaps, better in Committee than at this present time, and what I have further to say on the matter I will reserve for that occasion.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): We have been told from the Government side of the House during this session, more particularly since the war broke out, that it would be better if we joined hands, as it were, and did something together to help the Empire when it is engaged in this very difficult business. But right on the eve of an election we have introduced what I suppose is one of the most "party" measures it is possible to think of. I do not think this House in its wisdom should pass even the second reading of this Bill, and I hope, before I resume my seat, to give some reasons why the House should not pass the measure. We have been told by the supporters of the Government that this Bill is to make the rolls clean, and to provide that everyone over the age of twenty-one years who is a resident of the State shall

be entitled to get his name on the roll and to vote. I claim that this Bill, together with the amending Bill we passed last year, goes a very long way indeed towards depriving a great number of persons of the opportunity of getting their names on the roll, and when they do get on the roll, I doubt whether a great many of them will be able to get a ballot-paper when they go to the polling-booth. We find that right on the eve of an election this Bill is to give the Government in power machinery to fix up the rolls exactly to suit themselves. I claim that that is a bad power to give to any Government, I do not care who they are. Surely, this is not legislation for clean rolls, or in order that everybody should have a vote! I heard a long argument on clause 12 by the hon. member for Murrumba. I give the hon. member the credit of having sense enough to know the difference between a man's receiving a ballot-paper and his getting his name on the roll. Everybody in favour of the Bill seems to argue that because a man has a fixed place of abode his name is on the roll, or can be on the roll. That is not the argument at all? The argument is that a married man may live in, say Longreach, for twenty years—and I challenge the Minister for Education to contradict this—and if he has to go outside his electorate for four months previous to the election, when he comes into the polling-booth to get his ballot-paper, and is asked the questions in section 63 of the Consolidated Act, he will find he could not get a ballot-paper. It was bad enough before—one month in the previous seven—but now it is to be one month in the previous four. In section 63 of the Consolidated Act, which clause 12 of this Bill seeks to amend, it is provided—

> "The presiding officer may, if he thinks fit and shall if required by any candidate or scrutineer, put to any person claiming to be an elector, before he votes and not afterwards, the following questions or either of them, that is to say."

And amongst the questions is this one—

> "Have you within the last preceding seven months been bonâ fide resident within this electoral district for a period of one month?"

If he cannot answer that by saying, "Yes," he will not be able to get a ballot-paper. Now, this amending Bill seeks to make that period four months. It means that this amending Bill, right from the beginning to the end, is filled chock full of a power that should not be given to any Government. As a matter of fact, take the whole of the Western districts of Queensland. I hope the Home Secretary is listening because I want him not to make the mistake of confounding a man's getting a ballot-paper when he goes to the polling-booth with his residential qualification. A man might be twenty years living in Longreach, and he might be away from home shearing, and, although he has been home for every weekend, under this section he would not get a vote.

The HOME SECRETARY: Oh, no!

Mr. PAYNE: I sat in a courthouse in my electorate while the voting was going on, and I saw the presiding officer refuse to give a man a paper, because under the old Act he had not been a month out of the previous seven in the district "continuously," as he said. It is all very well for the Home Secretary to sit there and say "Oh, no!" In the Mitchell and Barcoo there are sheds on both sides, and it appears to me that a man living in one electorate might be away shearing in the other, and he might be away all the week during the previous seven months and come back on Saturday night to his home, and leave again on Sunday, and yet not be one month resident out of the preceding seven.

The HOME SECRETARY: He cannot be said to be away from home in that case.

Mr. PAYNE: Surely the Home Secretary and his supporters are not so dense that they cannot grasp what I am trying to explain! We have heard a lot about a man's fixed place of abode. What does that have to do with it when he walks into a polling-booth, and is challenged with the question I have mentioned under section 63—"Have you been bonâ fide resident during one month in the previous seven months?" I have seen men disfranchised for that reason, and now they are going to make it one month in the preceding four. When you have a Government sitting coolly and calmly trying to prevent people from getting on the roll, they are capable of anything. The hon. member for Wide Bay knows quite well that what I have said about men in that position is correct.

Mr. BOOKER: They would give them votes.

Mr. PAYNE: I have seen men disfranchised for not answering the question relating to one month's residence during the previous seven. The presiding officer said, "I know you are residing here and have been resident here for some years, but under the Act I cannot give you a ballot-paper. You have not been here one month in the last seven." It is monstrous. In Western Queensland there is practically only one industry, the pastoral industry, and if people are miserable enough to do what this Government are doing, how much further will they go? They can say to the Mitchell electors, "No, there will be no shearing for you in the Mitchell, you will have to get over to the Barcoo." Consequently, if they are not resident one month during the last four prior to the election, they are not to get a ballot-paper. There is a very great deal of difference between getting your name on the roll and exercising your vote. How often will you see an official roll with red lines drawn through some of the names? The presiding officer says, "You cannot get a ballot-paper," and although the man argues that he has not been out of the electorate, he is told, "I cannot help it, a red line is drawn through your name." I quite understand, that by making a sworn declaration, he can get a vote, but there is no possibility of any man who has not been one month in the preceding seven getting a vote under the Queensland laws. Then we have a new feature altogether in this Bill, what is termed a "protested vote." There is already machinery enough on the statute-book to get all the information that is required in regard to who a voter is. That is provided under section 63 of the principal Act, and the Government have brought in an addition for only one reason, and that is to do away with the secrecy of the ballot as much as they possibly can. I challenge the Premier or the Government to say that there is

not sufficient machinery under that section to get at the bottom of everything. The whole thing is a humbug, and there is no sound reason why this Bill should be brought here at all. To my mind, it is done for no other reason than to do away with the secrecy of the ballot as much as they possibly can. Then we come to clause 14, which appears to me to be a mere trick of the Government in trying to violate the secrecy of the ballot. They can give no other reason for it. That clause provides—

> "In section seventy-one of the consolidated Acts, the words 'The presiding officer shall use ink or pencil of uniform colour for all ballot-papers and rolls' are repealed."

Why do they want to repeal that? What benefit is it to the Government, or to the voter, to have the ballot-papers or rolls marked with different coloured pencils, which it will mean now? It means that the presiding officer, if he thinks fit, can initial a ballot-paper with a red pencil, and, when somebody else comes in for another ballot-paper, he can initial it with a blue pencil. What is the advantage of altering the system of a uniform colour being used? Can anyone argue that that is making for clean work as far as our electoral law is concerned? You do not require to be a very thoughtful person to grasp what the Government's intention is in making such an alteration. Then we get to the last clause, the phraseology of which is most ridiculous. The Government have permitted our brave soldiers who have gone away to defend our homes to retain their names on the roll for even twelve months after the war is over. What is the good of retaining those names on the roll unless you give the men an opportunity of recording their vote? Where is the honour of a man's names being retained on the roll? It is like inviting a man to have something to eat, and then giving him an empty plate. The Government are skiting about what they are doing for our volunteers. I believe a lot of people do not realise what these men have taken on, and that it is the very pick of our young men who are going from Queensland. I am sorry to say that we cannot expect them all to come back, and the least the Government should have done was to stretch a point and give these young men an opportunity of recording their votes before they left their homes, perhaps never to be seen again. Yet the Government say they cannot do it. The New Zealand Government did it. The New Zealand Premier said the other day that the outside public had no knowledge of the value of the Australian Navy to the Commonwealth during this particular period. He went on to say that two or three of the largest German cruisers were within some thirty-six or forty-eight hours sail of New Zealand, and but for the Australian Navy those cruisers would probably have been bombarding the ports of New Zealand. Yet here we have a Government which sits quietly by, and tries to make out that they are doing a great deal when those brave volunteers go away to fight for the Empire by allowing them to keep their names on the roll. The Home Secretary should make some provision to give them a vote; otherwise, it would be more honourable to take their names off the roll altogether. It is only a farce to allow them to have their names on the roll without giving them an opportunity of exercising their votes. The Bill has not for its object the cleansing of the rolls and providing that every man or woman over twenty-one years of age in Queensland shall get their names on the roll. It will have the reverse effect. I hope the House, in its wisdom, will see that the Bill does not pass its second reading

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*): I desire to say a few words on the Bill before it goes to a vote. I was very much amused the other night when the Home Secretary made what, I presume he considered, an interesting speech on the second reading, especially at the wonderful and extraordinary claim which he advanced that this amending Bill would make the Queensland electoral franchise the broadest franchise in any part of the world. Some time ago the Home Secretary delivered one of his interesting lectures to the Queensland Women's Electoral League, and according to a report which appeared in the "Daily Mail," he claimed then that the amending Bill of last session was so broad and comprehensive and so liberal in its provisions, that it afforded the fullest and freest franchise it was possible to have, and that body of electors took it for granted that what the hon. gentleman said must be absolutely correct. Yet, despite the extraordinary assertion of the hon. gentleman, he comes down with a still further amending Bill this year, and asserts that this is the broadest franchise. Does the Act, as amended last year, contain the broadest franchise, or the Bill that we are passing this year? Because if the one which was passed last year was as broad as it was possible to make the franchise, then what necessity is there to bring in a still broader one this year? Another thing which strikes me as very peculiar is this: During the past few weeks we read with profound regret that the Liberal Association of Queensland went defunct, and I understand that proper arrangements had been made for its funeral. (Laughter.) That being so, it seems to me that the Government recognise that they have no electoral organisation to advance their interests in Queensland; and consequently, they are using the machinery of Parliament to do the work "on the cheap" which the Liberal organisation would have had to pay for. On 8th October the Government organ, the "Courier," came out with a very striking criticism on the Government policy this session, stating that unless they put a bit more vim and vigour into their legislation, they would lose the confidence of the Liberals of Queensland. They referred to the fact that if between now and election time the members of the Government would show the courage of their opinions, and resolutely perform some of the things they were put in Parliament for, they would save the situation for Liberalism. And further on in this leader there is one continuous flagellation of Ministers generally and their supporters for lack of backbone which they have shown this session. I presume that since that article appeared in the "Courier," the Government have found it incumbent upon them to accept the advice of their organ and go in for something desperate. If this Bill passes into law, I think they will accomplish just what their Conservative organ the "Courier" desires the Government to do; that is, that as many of the bonâ fide electors of Queensland as possible shall be disfranchised. I know you will rule me out of order, Mr. Speaker, if I refer to or quote from this leader at length, but it appealed to the Government to go in for something desperate so that they could save the hide of Liberalism when the next appeal is made to the country. As we all know, that time will soon be upon us. It seems to

me that the Government got a terrible shock when they saw the large number of claims for enrolment which were put in at [7 p.m.] the court which sat in October. They recognised then that there were a large number of electors claiming enrolment, and that there are only about two other bi-monthly courts to sit before the general election comes along, owing to the fact that the period for which this Parliament was elected will have expired; and that if this large number of persons claiming enrolment had their names placed on the annual rolls the Government party would be in a very risky position. The Government organ, the "Brisbane Courier," recognised the position too, and in the leader I have already referred to they pointed out that the Government were weak or lax; in fact, they referred to the Government as backboneless and spineless, and as having lost the confidence of their friends, and they said that the Government, even if they made a mistake, would gain the admiration of their friends and probably the respect of their enemies if they went ahead and did things. They referred to the Government as weakbacked, and pointed out that what they had to fear was not the foe without the party, but the weakbacked and nerveless men within. On the other hand, they pointed out that "a Government which halts between two opinions, which gives assurances that were not trustworthy, which would rather betray a friend than refrain from endeavouring to ward off the criticism of a foe, alienates its friends and is written down as fool by the other side." The "Courier" further pointed out that previous Governments in Queensland had wrecked themselves because their assurances were found to be untrustworthy, and that it was well to remember that history had a habit of repeating itself in politics as in other matters. Then, they made a demand upon the Government that they should buttress the welfare of the State by giving attention to considerations which had long been urgent. Why have they long been urgent? Is it because the associates of that paper, and the associates of the Government for which that journal stands, have recognised that unless some very drastic measure dealing with electoral matters is introduced and passed this Parliament, the Liberal forces will go down with a dull, sickening thud at the next election? The Government had got their command from their organ, their spiritual and political adviser, and if the Government had not introduced this measure, they might want to know why the Government had shown such a spineless, boneless, jellyfish attitude. The Government have evidently become seized with the fact that every day they are losing ground in the country, losing the good opinion of even their Liberal friends, and on top of that losing the Liberal Association. So the Government come to Parliament and practically use the machinery of Parliament to gain their ends at the coming election. The Labour party ask for no favouritism in franchise matters. All they ask for is an even break with the Government. Give us that, and the present Government will not be sitting on the Treasury benches after the next appeal to the people. Referring to the statement that occasionally men have gone to the polling-booth on polling-day and claimed a vote when they were not considered entitled to have a vote, I admit that there may have been some cases of that kind, but the number has been infinitesimal. I remember that during the election of 1899 I was assisting in a polling-booth when no less than three men came into the booth and gave their numbers to the presiding officer. Those three men were told that they were "dead." I can assure the House that those three individuals——

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Were alive.

Mr. BARBER: Yes, and their remarks lively. (Laughter.) Those men were marked off as "dead." I admit that they got their votes, because the presiding officer had known them for a large number of years and was not responsible for the marking of the roll. If hon. members opposite can quote one or two cases where men have claimed votes when they were not entitled to do so, I can quote scores of instances in which persons who were legitimately on the roll and legitimately entitled to vote were refused a vote when they went to the polling-booth, although they had never shifted from the house in which they had lived for years. The only good feature and the only improvement in this measure is the provision which empowers a constable to witness an electoral claim. That is a very sensible provision. The Home Secretary, the other day, questioned very much the honesty and sincerity of Mr. Ryland in filling up certain claims. I would ask the hon. gentleman why he has winked at the illegal manner in which hundreds and thousands of electoral claims have been witnessed and sent in during the past three or four years under the present Act? As the law now stands a constable, unless he has lived in an electorate a sufficient time to qualify as an elector, is not supposed to witness a claim. Under this amending Bill he will be able to do that. I should like the Home Secretary to explain why he has winked at constables collecting and filling in claims, and getting other electors to witness the applicant's signatures, without seeing the claims signed. Will the hon. gentleman say that he did not know this kind of thing was going on? The whole thing was absolutely and distinctly illegal. During the past few weeks the hon. gentleman has evidently "tumbled" to the fact that it is illegal. At any rate, by allowing a constable to witness a claim now, he has removed that illegality. With regard to those certificates that were so much discussed the other day, I doubt very much whether there is a member of this House who either used that certificate or even saw it used. It has always been taken for granted as a matter of practice that when a person has filled in a claim and the person who witnesses the claim and signature reads the declaration at the foot of the claim, and after the claimant has taken his oath under the Oaths Act of 1867, then the onus as to the accuracy of that claim is thrown on the claimant. It is just the same as a person filling in a claim and witnessing a signature on a claim for an old-age pension. I suppose every member here has filled in a claim for an old-age pension. Can it be said with any degree of accuracy that the persons filling in those claims were acquainted with the claimants for twelve months? There is no certificate required. In the same way, justices of the peace have witnessed the signatures of people and attached their names to documents probably involving hundreds of thousands of pounds. Yet they make a lot of noise about the certificates attached to the electoral claim. Why, there is not a member of this Chamber who has ever used it. The accuracy for

what is in the claim surely rests with the claimant. The serious part of this Bill is that portion dealing with the proposed new system of the bi-monthly revision court. If the Home Secretary allowed the bi-monthly courts to operate as they do at the present time, I do not think much could have been said against that part of the Bill, because at the present bi-monthly court where the registrar has been advised that a person has claimed to get on another roll, the court has power to erase that person's name from the roll. In the same way, if an elector dies during the two months elapsing between the holding of the revision courts, the court has power to strike off their names; but to give the court power to strike off the names of people who have been absent for two months from the electorate is giving the electoral registrar altogether too much power. Suppose I left Bundaberg in August and came to Brisbane to live, I would have to wait here two months before I could claim to get on the roll for the metropolitan electorate in which I lived, and my name would be brought up at the court held in Brisbane in October. For the next two months I would be practically disfranchised, because my name could not go on the roll until two months afterwards. A peculiar coincidence about this Bill is this—at least I will not call it a coincidence, because it seems to be a deliberate intent on the part of the Government—this amending Bill is introduced at this juncture and it will come into operation first of all at the bi-monthly court next February, and that will be the court to fix the rolls to be used at the next State election. That is the most iniquitous part of it. If that provision had been incorporated in the Bill passed last session, one could not find so much fault with it, but it must be patent to everyone that this matter has been introduced deliberately, so that at the bi-monthly court in February a number of names will be struck off the roll and they will not have an opportunity of getting on again before the general election takes place. Yet hon. members opposite talk about the wide, liberal franchise. I have been twenty-five years in Queensland, and I remember the old days when they used to Bulcock the rolls. They had the old Conservative Association then. After that it was the National Liberal Association, and then it developed into the Liberal Association; later it developed into the "Political Ass." Then, in the shape of the People's Progressive League, a new fungus growth arose. It was planted here by Dr. Kidston and the party he associated himself with on that side of the House, where all the worst elements of Conservatism and Toryism were inextricably mixed up, and they dominated the man who was supposed to be such a strong man. But the influence of the Tory party on that side led him adrift. Now the last Liberal Association is dead. This is nothing else, in my opinion, but a deliberate intent on the part of the Government to rob the electors of Queensland at the bi-monthly court in February. It will rob thousands of electors who will have no say whatever in the election to take place within six weeks of the holding of that court. Yet they talk about a wide, liberal franchise! We can quite understand a man of the Bill Sykes brigade, who goes out at night with a mask on and with a Charles Peace face, carrying his dark lantern and steel jemmy in his hand—we can quite understand a man of that kind trying to open windows and doors and robbing houses. But here we have a Government, under the guise of the wide, liberal franchise, acting like a political Bill Sykes, and politically sandbagging the electors of Queensland by erasing their names from the electoral roll. And they call it a wide franchise! The whole thing is ridiculed by the majority of the people outside. The Home Secretary will find that the people are not so dense. They know what a measure of this kind means. They know that it is intended to rob them of their political birthright. With regard to the postal vote, we will have a return of all the crimes, the indecency, dishonesty, and corruption that took place when the postal vote was used some years ago when it was in operation in this State. The crimes that took place when the postal vote was last used were the worst that ever took place in Queensland, and are recorded in the pages of "Hansard." We heard the postal vote denounced over and over again by men occupying prominent positions as police magistrates, returning officers, presiding officers, and men who had the responsibility of carrying out the elections. They denounced the iniquitous postal vote in the strongest terms imaginable. Evidently the Treasurer and his colleague, the Home Secretary, have conveniently forgotten all these incidents. I am certain that the postal vote, as we knew it some years ago, will be utilised in the same corrupt manner as it was used then. I hope that before this Bill passes the Home Secretary will see the error of his ways and see that he is not doing a fair thing. The hon. gentleman claims to be a fair-minded individual, and is always talking about British fair play in that sonorous voice of his. Where is the British fair play in robbing numbers of electors of their rights of citizenship? If the hon. gentleman is the fair-minded individual he claims to be, and if his supporters are fair-minded individuals, they will recognise that it would be a gross injustice and a public scandal if this Bill passes this House as introduced by the Home Secretary.

Mr. CAINE (*Bowen*): I listened with some interest to the speaker who has just resumed his seat. For my part I think the amendments in this Bill are very desirable, inasmuch as they will provide [7.30 p.m.] a purification of the rolls, so that, as far as possible, we will obtain what we want—a true expression of the opinion of the electors. I listened to the deputy leader of the Opposition raising a number of objections to this measure. We hear that members of the Expeditionary Force should have the opportunity of voting. I do not think that there is any man on either side of the House who does not desire to see the rights of these loyal and brave men protected in every way we possibly can, so far as their votes are concerned, or in any other way. But let us, first of all, find a reasonable and practicable method of giving them the votes in an election which is so far off. I, for one, fail to see how it is to be provided; but if a suggestion can be made, no doubt there are many men on this side of the House who would be only too ready to welcome it. We hear so much said about these men, that we would naturally conclude that they are all our political opponents. So far as I am concerned, it is a great

regret to me that they are not to get their votes. I do not know that they are my political opponents. So far as I know those who have come from my electorate, I find they are mainly Liberals. But it does not matter what their politics are; if these people can be afforded a vote at the forthcoming election, we want to see them have it. We are told that this Bill is very original, and that on that account it is to be condemned. I fail to see that that is a valid objection. Surely we are not to be condemned if we introduce legislation dealing with the electoral laws which is ahead of that on the statute-books of any other State, and I contend, without hesitation, that the legislation now introduced will provide a finer set of electoral laws than exists in any other State of Australia. This Bill is supposed to be absolutely bad, but when we come to examine the objections to it, we realise that it is not too bad, but that it is bad because it is founded on an Act which is by no means what certain hon. members want. For my part, the Act as it stood was in the main good, but this amendment is going distinctly to improve it. This Bill, of course, is against democracy. Why? Because we are going to see that men shall not vote more than once, because we say that the roll shall be absolutely clean, that when election time comes only those actually entitled to record their votes shall do so. That is the foundation of the charge levelled at this measure. Even the deputy leader of the Opposition considers that there should be some safeguards, that not every one in this State should necessarily have the right to vote. But at the same time we are told that the franchise is too limited. In one breath we are told that those who have the rights of citizenship, that those who are bound by the laws of the State, should always have the right to vote. What do these remarks mean? A man who lands here to-day or to-morrow can come along if an election is in progress and record his vote, because he happens to be subject to the laws of the State. Such a suggestion to my mind is absolutely ridiculous. I grant that there are difficulties with regard to the migratory population, but I do not see how we are to provide them with votes if they move about from place to place, and surely we are not to allow them to have their names on the rolls of practically every electorate in Queensland, making their choice as to which they shall vote for, and, if they like, to vote more than once—to vote for as many electorates as they like? We have a provision which admits, I think rightly, that a man shall be a reasonable time in the State, that he shall have been a reasonable time in the electorate, because if he has not, he will not have sufficient interest in the affairs of that electorate, and, to my mind, the interests of a man in the politics of the State are not his main interests. I think that as a rule a man's interests in an electorate are greater than his interests in the State generally. I do not say that it should be so, but, to my mind, it is so, and therefore it is essential that he should be a reasonable time in that electorate. We are told that there are difficulties in regard to enrolment. Of course, according to the deputy leader of the Opposition, there would not be any need for enrolment. A man in Queensland would simply come and demand his vote. That, to my mind, is the height of nonsense, the height of folly, but, apparently, that is the argument, or the result of one of the arguments I have heard from that hon. member. There may be difficulties in regard to applications for enrolment—informalities —but I cannot for one moment seriously imagine that that is going to debar people from getting on the roll, and if it is, the people who are most likely to have trouble are those on the Liberal side, because those on the Labour side are too well educated up to these matters. I pay the Opposition that compliment. We find that this measure is going to make enrolment compulsory, so that one may say that difficulties in that direction are going to be obviated; that this party is so anxious to see everybody enrolled that if this House thinks fit they are going to make everybody enrol.

Mr. BOWMAN: What about the qualification?

Mr. CAINE: The qualification, to my mind, is good. The qualification that hon. members on the other side want is that a man can come, say, from New South Wales, and go canecutting in the North and get on the roll there, and then, after going away, if he chooses to come back again, he can vote.

Mr. BOWMAN: Nobody wants that.

Mr. CAINE: Then, I take it, that the hon. member will support the important provisions of this Bill. With regard to the expunging of names from the roll, I say that this Bill is to be highly approved of, because if we are going to remove from the roll names that ought not to be there, we are going to do good. Of course, we hear of difficulties regarding transfers mainly. Surely, if I leave an electorate and go into another electorate, my name will be removed, but just as surely as I make the proper move, my name will be added on to the other roll at the same time. We heard the deputy leader of the Opposition say something like this, "Look at the case of a man who in July leaves one electorate." The hon. member referred to the cleaning up taking place after that particular date. By November his name will certainly be removed from that roll, and if at the next court he makes application, by October he finds his name on the other roll. If an election takes place in the meantime, he has been one month in the preceding four in the electorate for which his name is recorded. To my mind, it will be found, on looking into the matter, that ample provisions are made for such cases. If not, by all means let them be made, because I, for one, want to see every protection afforded to those who have the right to vote. Taking the Bill as it stands, we say that we want to get everyone who has the right to vote on the roll. Enrolment is compulsory. But we certainly want to get off the roll everyone who has not the right to vote, and the state of the rolls in the past has been absolutely disgraceful. It always appeals to me that in justice to everyone we should see that the names that should not be on the roll are removed, just as much as we should see that names which ought to be on the rolls are there. If we do not, we are reducing the value of the vote of the man who is rightly on the roll. It does not need much consideration to see that, nor does it require any argument. To my mind, the position must be absolutely like that of a business of any kind. If people are allowed to be shareholders and have a say in any particular undertaking who have not the right to be there, then they are taking away from the

value of the votes of those who are correctly amongst the number of shareholders. Certainly, we do not want to see men who have not the right to record their votes recording them. A great deal of difficulty is raised about asking a question of a voter. I know that if a great number of hon. members had their way we would regard these questions as an insult, but does any honest man object to a question being asked when he is going to record his vote? Certainly not, because he knows the same safeguards will be applied to other people. But apparently the position of hon. members opposite is that no questions should be asked, or, at any rate, that you should simply ask a man, "Have you the right to vote at this election?"

Mr. FOLEY: Do you think it is right to ask a man the date of his birth?

Mr. CAINE: I certainly think it is desirable to have the information. If there is no record, let him say so, but I think most men are in a postion to furnish that, and surely no man can take it as an insult that he is asked a reasonable question. It seems to be that it is only a reasonable protection. We are told that this will lead to intimidation. What harm can asking a man to sign his name on a protested vote do? We are told it is going to lead to open voting. If it does in a few cases, a very few cases, the good done will be greater than the harm. And all the votes that are put aside, and are found subsequently to be the votes of men who are entitled to vote, will, I take it, simply be grouped together, and nobody will be able to say how any man has recorded his vote. We want to see also—to go further into this Bill—that everyone who has a vote should record it. Surely, members on the other side cannot be opposed to that! It seems to me that so far as their people are concerned they see that compulsory voting is in force to-day. And I do not care what side the electors are going to record their votes—we want to have an absolutely true expression of opinion. If it is against one side or the other, the side which loses should be prepared to take the burden. When one feels that the expression of opinion which has been given is only the verdict of a limited number, even those who are successful cannot have the same satisfaction in obtaining it as if it be the majority of practically the whole number of the electors. As far as postal voting is concerned, I am glad to see what I regard as a necessary amendment is being made. The person recording a postal vote can have a couple of electors to witness his vote. In the scattered districts it may be very difficult, where a person desires to record a postal vote, to obtain the necessary witnesses as required at present. We are told that our action in supporting this Bill is unsportsmanlike, but I think that we are in every way sportsmanlike in what we are doing. We are trying to get every name on the roll that should be there, and to see that everyone records their vote, but that no persons may take upon themselves that privilege when they are not entitled, as we find so often they are ready to do. We say that the man who lands in Queensland to-day shall not have a vote to-morrow, and not until a reasonable time has elapsed. Hon. members opposite say the same thing, but they differ in what they regard as "a reasonable time." I contend that in the Act a reasonable time is provided, and the Bill will certainly do a great deal of good. We are told that it is very wrong to introduce legislation of this kind at such a late hour.

Mr. FIHELLY: Why didn't you think of it last year?

Mr. CAINE: If that means that it should have been brought in sooner, I am with hon. members opposite. But when we are going to ask the people of Queensland to again express their opinion, is it not desirable that we should see that every facility is offered—to see that every name is on the roll, in order that they should be enabled to record their votes fully and completely? There will be thus given a true expression of opinion, and that opinion, I am not afraid to say, will be entirely in favour of the Liberal party of Queensland. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. GILLIES (*Eacham*): In spite of the pathetic apologies from the other side, I submit that it would not be possible to perform a more indecent act than to come along, in the dying hours of Parliament—when the nation is engaged in mortal combat and all political differences should be sunk—to compel the members of this Parliament to discuss who shall and who shall not vote for the next Parliament. We should be endeavouring to grapple with the question of the unemployed in Queensland, and making some endeavour to deal with the providing of foodstuffs, not only for Queenslanders but for the people in Great Britain. We should be considering the question of increasing the yield of maize and wheat and other foodstuffs in this State to enable the people who are fighting to carry on the defence of the nation. I think it is a shame to come along with a proposal of this kind to disfranchise a large number of the people. If the conscience of the Government had so affected them that they decided to bring the franchise into conformity with the Commonwealth franchise, or even with that of the other States, there would be some justification for it, but to disfranchise large numbers of the people is nothing for the Government to be proud of. What are the essential differences between the two parties concerning the franchise of this State? It is not a question whether one party is in favour of roll-stuffing, plural voting, or clean rolls; it is a question whether the whole of the people are going to elect the future Governments of this State or only a privileged few. Last session we passed an Act to disfranchise thousands of people in this State, and now we are going to place further difficulties in the way of those people getting a vote. Last session we made it a most difficult thing to get on the roll, and now we are going to bring in an amendment to strike off a number of those people who have succeeded in getting on the roll.

Mr. HODGE: What nonsense!

Mr. GILLIES: There is no nonsense about it. The hon. member for Murrumba said it was most difficult for him to understand our contention—nature or his parents are responsible for that—but I am prepared to take up the challenge that he threw down and endeavour to explain how it is possible for a man to be removed from one roll without going on to another. It is quite common for the Tory mind to be void of imagination. The hon. member was under the impression that when a man left one electorate he immediately went into another electorate and stayed there. He had no con-

cern about the nomadic worker who moves about from place to place, but, as representing a farming community, he knows very well that the majority of small farmers in Queensland could not possibly carry on without the nomadic worker. The Government will not give him a vote although he is the most indispensable man in this State, as the small farmer could not carry on without him. He has no say according to the electoral law. A great number of farmers only employ casual labour for three or four weeks in busy seasons, or to help in urgent work. This is the man whom the hon. member for Murrumba has no concern about, because he says that under this Bill it takes four months to remove a man from one roll, and during that time they would be qualified to go on another roll. Suppose a man who has lived in one electorate long enough to be enrolled and he goes into another and works there a month, and then the farmer does not want his services any longer and he goes elsewhere looking for work. In the meantime he is removed from the roll where he was enrolled, and he is not qualified to get on another roll. The hon. member for Murrumba denies the right of that man to have a vote, but he is an indispensable worker for the farmer. Being a Queenslander, there should be no power to strike him off one roll until he is put on another. There is no desire by this party, or any other party, I think, to ask that a man should be on more than one roll, or should have more than one vote. But we do say that no man, after qualifying in Queensland, either as a native-born or naturalised subject, and being once put on a roll, should be taken off that roll until he is put on another—unless, of course, he becomes a criminal, or a lunatic. I want to repeat that Queensland enjoys the distinction of having the most obsolete franchise of any State in the Commonwealth, and so far as any man supporting the Government is concerned, there has been no attempt made to satisfy the country or the members of this House as to why this State should demand that anyone coming from the old country or from New South Wales or from Victoria should live in this State for a whole year before he is qualified to get on the roll. In every other State six months is sufficient; in New South Wales only three. If a Queenslander goes to New South Wales, he gets full citizenship rights after he has been there three months, and is allowed to have a say in the election of his lawmakers. If the Government had decided at this late hour that it was necessary to come into conformity with the other States, or, as the hon. member for Keppel suggested, have a uniform franchise and a uniform roll which would prevent thousands of people from being disfranchised, I could have understood it. There is no more fruitful source of disfranchisement than the two-roll system. A good many people imagine that when the policeman comes around to collect their names for a roll, it is all right, and they take no more concern about it until the election comes round, when they find that, instead of their name being collected for the State roll, it was for the Commonwealth roll, and they are disfranchised for the State. If we had one common franchise and one common roll, it would not only save thousands of pounds in collecting names and printing the rolls, and in the conduct of the elections, but it would prevent some thousands of worthy people from being disfranchised. The hon. member for Keppel pointed out that during the last three years no less than £500,000 was spent in carrying out the electoral work of the Commonwealth and State. A great portion of that money could have been saved by a uniform electoral system, a uniform electoral law. I think it is quite possible to have a common roll and a common franchise in this State to conform with the franchise of the other States and the Commonwealth. In 1912 we passed an Industrial Peace Act to prevent people going on strike, and we have always been told by the party opposite that the worker who has a vote has no right to go on strike. I agree with that doctrine. If the worker has a full say in electing his lawmakers there is very little reason for his going on strike, and there would be very few strikes. But after passing the Industrial Peace Bill, the very next session they took away something which we are told our forefathers fought and died for—that is, the right to vote. First of all, the Government took away the right to strike, and then the next important measure they passed was to take away from a very large section of the workers the right to record their votes. I think any Government which attempts to put measures of that kind on the statute-book cannot possess the confidence of the people of the State, and that is probably what they realise when they are making further attempts to disfranchise a number of the people. We generally hear the party opposite claiming the right to be considered democrats. Quite recently I read a modern definition of "democracy." The modern definition is "Government of the people by the rascals for the rich" and I think the party opposite have practically endorsed that definition of democracy when they claim to be democrats, as there is no doubt that they are not prepared at this juncture to trust the people. They are afraid to give the people an opportunity to say at the next election who they will vote for. Hence the Bill before us to disfranchise a large number of the workers of the State. The most objectionable feature of the Bill is the provision for a bi-monthly revision court—a court which will give an opportunity every two months to wipe names off the roll. The registration and [8 p.m.] revision court of Queensland is a cumbrous piece of machinery, which does not exist in New South Wales, and which is not found necessary under the Commonwealth law; yet this cumbrous piece of machinery is going to be further strengthened in order to disqualify and disfranchise a large number of worthy men and women at the forthcoming election. The next provision that I object to is that which reduces from seven months to four months the time during which a person may be away from his electorate before he is disqualified. During this period he must have resided at least one month in his electorate. The average length of the sugar season is about six months, and the average length of the shearing season, or the time during which a shearer is away from his home, is about the same period, and it is sought to disfranchise those people by reducing the time to four months. If a sugar-worker leaves the electorate where his wife and family reside and goes away and finishes the season, it will not be possible for him to return in time to have his vote at the next election, and that is probably the main object in

reducing the time from seven to four months. The matter of compulsory enrolment and compulsory voting may be debatable. I have no objection to compulsory enrolment, because a man is allowed a considerable time in which to get his name on the roll, but compulsory voting is an entirely different thing. Under the existing law a man has as much time as he likes to take to get on the roll, and under the Bill he will have two months to consider whether he will get his name on the roll, but when it comes to a question of voting, he will only have one day to consider that. One of the doctrines of the Liberal party is found in their catch phrase, "Freedom of the subject." But it might be better described as "Limited anarchy." The thing they make a great profession about is the freedom of the British subject, and yet they are going to encroach on that freedom by compelling people to get their names on the roll, and then compelling them to record their vote. I understand that the system of compulsory voting is in operation in Belgium and some of the Swiss cantons. I believe that in Athens in the early days the legislators used to send round the police armed with a rope covered with vermillion to drag people to the place of assembly in order that they should express their opinion on the questions under consideration. In the Greek States, when a rebellion took place every able-bodied man was compelled to take sides and fight; if he did not, he was ostracised. But that kind of thing hardly supports a proposal for compulsory voting, especially when a large number of people are not given the privilege of enrolment. Another provision of the Bill makes it compulsory for local authorities to assist in the compilation of the rolls. The principal Act provides that the electoral registrar shall have access to the list of ratepayers and the lists of selectors and pastoral lessees. The local authorities can only assist in the compilation of rolls as far as ratepayers or landowners are concerned, as they have only a list of landowners, not a list of the residents in their districts. It is evident, therefore, that the Government are concerned only about the enrolment of landowners. In my opinion, the average Australian is a clean sport and likes fair play, no matter whether he is a supporter of the Labour party or the Liberal party, and I venture to say that the average Queenslander who has the privilege of recording his vote at the next election will enter a protest at the ballot-box against the disfranchisement of some thousands of his brother citizens. I believe that some of those who have been Liberal supporters in the past will enter their protest against the Liberal party bringing in legislation of this kind. I am not going to say any more at the present time. I have an idea that one or two amendments may be moved in the Bill when we go into Committee. Here is an exhibit that I should like to see printed in "Hansard" if possible, as it is a very important and interesting exhibit, and should be placed on record for all time. It was issued by the Liberal party at the last Federal election, and reads as follows:—

> "Keep the flag flying. Bear in mind the old saw—Lincoln's advice: 'Don't swap horses crossing stream.' Show your approval of the earnest devotion and prompt loyalty of the Cook Administration and vote solidly for the Liberal party on September 5th."

This is a document bearing the Union Jack

[*Mr. Gillies.*

upside down, the suggestion being that the Labour party are not prepared to keep the Union Jack flying.

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member show me in what way his remarks are applicable to the question before the House?

Mr. GILLIES: I am satisfied that the people of Queensland who have the privilege of voting at the next election—and they will not be very numerous if the Liberal party have their way—will show their contempt for the party at present in power by recording their votes against them; that they will let the Government see that they will not be allowed to trifle with the right of the people to choose their law-makers. They will show that they do not approve of taking the franchise from shearers, sugar-workers, miners, railway men, and men all over Queensland who have no fixed home, but have to move about in order to do their work of developing the country. The State has spent £3,888,051 in bringing immigrants from the old country to Queensland, and yet we do not allow them to apply for enrolment until they have lived here a whole year. It will be four months after that before they can really get their names on the roll; and, if they miss an election then, it is quite possible that they will be here four and a-half years before they can vote at an election. I contend that no adult persons should be called upon to obey a law which they have no say in making, unless they are criminals or lunatics. That is a principle which has been accepted, and it is a good, sound democratic doctrine.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*): The hon. member who has just resumed his seat spoke about every man having British fair play. The members on this side of the House claim that everyone should have British fair play, but I cannot say that of members opposite. I wish to reply briefly to the arguments advanced by the hon. member for Bundaberg, who spoke in heroics about things which happened years ago—about Bulcocking, and other things which we know nothing about now. I asked some questions in the House on the 4th November last with regard to certain proceedings at the electoral registration court of Bundaberg, one of which was—

> "If the evidence of Mr. George Ryland, a justice of the peace, who witnessed some of the claims for enrolment, is of the nature as stated in the report, will steps be taken to have him removed from the list of justices of the peace for Queensland, and otherwise dealt with?"

I also referred to the district organiser for the Australian Workers' Union, to Mr. G. P. Barber, member for Bundaberg, and others. I say that any man who has been appointed a justice of the peace, if he does the things mentioned in that report should be removed from the commission of the peace for ever, no matter to which side of the House he may belong. I have no "axe to grind" in the matter as far as the hon. member for Bundaberg, or any member on the other side of the House, is concerned, but I think I had very good cause for asking those questions in the House. I did not ask them because I knew the Elections Bill was coming on, but because I knew that if the things which were reported were true, they should not have happened, and I trust that if on inquiry the Chief Secretary finds that

the statements are proved, he will remove all those people from the commission of the peace. I contend that this is a very good Bill. People are compelled under the Commonwealth electoral law to enrol, but what is the use of that if you do not compel them to vote? We had a case in Toowoomba where an old sick lady was fined for not enrolling her name, but what was the good of fining her when she could not be made to vote? The present Government are doing the correct thing by introducing the postal vote, as it will give many people a chance to vote. I think hon. members opposite are afraid of this Bill—(Opposition laughter)—but I believe that will be one of the best elections Bills that we have ever had before Parliament.

Mr. GILDAY (*Ithaca*): In offering a few words on this very important question, I would like to seek some information from hon. gentlemen opposite as to the reason for the introduction of this Bill. The hon. member for Toombul has intimated that he believes in British fair play. Does the hon. gentleman think it a good thing that thousands of nomadic workers of Queensland should be deprived of the right to exercise their franchise? It was bad enough in the Elections Acts Amendment Bill that was passed last year, but if this Bill is unfortunate enough to become law, it will be very much harder for those people to exercise their franchise. I do not think that any hon. member could dispute the assertion that that is really the object of this Bill. Let us review the whole thing from the time that the members of this Parliament were elected. In 1911 there was no mandate asked for from the people that it was essential to have an alteration in our electoral laws. The present Government were returned to power on that occasion by a majority of twenty-four. What has transpired since then to warrant the Government bringing two elections Bills in two years? I will show the gerrymandering that has been done to try to disfranchise the people of Queensland just to save the political skins of the present Government. (Hear, hear!) I defy any hon. gentleman opposite to rise from his place and say otherwise. To me it is nothing else than corrupt practice. It is a shame that such a corrupt practice should be introduced into politics in Queensland. Why cannot hon. gentlemen opposite be honest and face the electors in an honest way and give every elector an opportunity of exercising his vote? In 1913 we had a Federal election. The Government first went to the country in 1912 and obtained a majority of twenty-four. The reason they obtained that majority was because of the big strike that took place in Brisbane. Our hon. friends opposite were cunning enough to bring on the elections on the spur of the moment. The result was that where the strike took place the Labour party got a huge majority. (Hear, hear!) In the country, where the people did not know the true particulars concerning the strike, the Liberal party got a majority. When the people had sufficient time to realise the true position, the Federal election came round, with the result that the Labour party got a majority of 24,000—that is, taking the popular vote of Queensland. There was a Bill brought in by the Government to amend the Elections Act the same year. Another Federal election took place which increased the Labour majority to 44,000. That prompted the Government to do something else to disfranchise the people, more particularly those who have to travel from one electorate to the other. The Queensland Government have now made a gross attempt to prevent the people of Queensland from doing the same thing that they did at the Federal elections. I am not afraid of their tactics, because every retrogressive move made by the Liberal party will have a tendency to uplift the Labour party, because the conscientious people who have always voted Liberal will vote Labour in future when they see their Government stooping to such tactics as they are doing at the present time. There is not the slightest doubt that it will cause a great split in the Liberal vote in the near future. I do not think there is a party in Australia which has attempted to gerrymander the electoral laws so much as this Government has done. If the Queensland Government had been returned by a bare majority at the last election, and something had been brought under their notice which would justify an alteration of the electoral laws, then no one would have said a word against them for bringing forward an amendment of the Elections Act. I would take the same stand if the Labour party were over there and they did what the Liberal party are doing at the present time. Just fancy! a party with a majority of twenty-four finding it necessary to alter the electoral laws on two occasions in three years. There was absolutely nothing in the Speech from the Throne about an amendment in the electoral laws, but owing to the Federal elections they find it necessary to do something to prevent the people from voting in Queensland. I believe that a large number of those who formerly voted Liberal would sooner do the right thing than support a Government that brought in a measure with the object of saving their own political skins. I am going to show that the downfall of the Liberal Government in Western Australia was caused through gerrymandering the electoral laws the same as this Government are trying to do in this Bill.

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will discuss the principles contained within the four corners of the Bill and make his second-reading speech thereupon. I have allowed him considerable latitude, and hope he will confine his remarks to the question.

Mr. GILDAY: I am opposed to the whole Bill. In 1908 the postal vote clauses were looked upon as absolutely the most corrupt that were ever introduced in any measure. I was looking through "Hansard" to-day and I saw where the returning officer for Laidley condemned it, and it was also condemned by the returning officers at Ipswich, Sandgate, Ravenswood, Warwick, and other places. I am not going to take up the time of the House by reading the extract from "Hansard." I only want to point out that in 1908 members of this House condemned the postal vote. It has been condemned by Liberal supporters, and the Hon. Mr. Hawthorn has condemned it in another place. We also notice that during last year one hon. gentleman in another place said that while the Government officials were authorised to witness certain votes it was not so bad, but now we find that the postal voting provisions are worse than they were when the postal vote was first initiated in this House. I am sorry there are not sufficient members to vote the Bill out altogether, but I am

certain that as soon as the Bill becomes law the people of Queensland will recognise the necessity of putting this Government where they should be for attempting to put a Bill of this kind on the statute-book.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: Notwithstanding the remarks that have fallen from the lips of hon. members opposite, there is in the minds of most hon. members, on whichever side of the House they may be, a very keen appreciation of the fact that the object of the Government in introducing this measure is to ensure honest government and honest representation. (Hear, hear!) We must have an honest system of representation first, or we cannot have honest government. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley, when speaking the other night, asked, could not the Government trust the people? That is exactly what the Government propose to do.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: We are going to trust the people, and we are not merely going to trust a section of the people. We are going to trust the whole people, and, consequently, the Government have brought in a Bill sufficiently comprehensive to enable every man and woman who is entitled to have a vote to record their votes. It is very different from the attitude of the Labour Governments in other places. We know, for instance, that the cry of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley of trusting [8.30 p.m.] the people has not been recognised so very fully by Labour Governments in other places. We know the attitude of the Federal Labour party towards trusting the people. We know that when it came to a question of enabling the people of the Commonwealth to record their votes, they shut out the one avenue that was open to a large number of electors of recording their votes, wiped out the postal vote, thereby disfranchising as they did some 73,000 electors. Was that trusting the people? By practically preventing those 73,000 persons, who, perchance, through no fault of their own, through sickness or ill-health, or through the hundred and one causes that might prevent the people from exercising the franchise on that particular day, did they trust the people? I submit that they did not. But here the present Liberal Government, recognising that we have a duty to the people, and recognising that that duty lies in the direction of trusting the people, are bringing in a Bill so comprehensive that every man and woman who is entitled to have a vote shall have an opportunity of recording a vote. And now, forsooth! we find that hon. members opposite are charging us with not trusting the people. I fully expected that when this Bill was laid on the table it would be treated entirely as a non-party measure. I could not, nor can I see now, anything in the nature of party legislation in this Elections Acts Amendment Bill. Why? Look at the principles of the Bill itself. Does anybody suggest for one single moment that compulsory enrolment is of a party nature? Is that class legislation? Surely not. Surely it is just as important for hon. members opposite as it is for us, as has already been shown by a Labour Government in another place. They were the first who introduced in Australia compulsory voting. Surely that should be sufficient to show that that at any rate is entirely of a non-party nature. Then we come to the next stage. We come to what I consider a most essential provision; that is, compulsory voting. Does any hon. member for one single moment contend that compulsory voting is not of a non-party nature? It is just as important from the Labour or socialist point of view that everyone should record his vote as it is from the Liberal point of view. I regard compulsory voting from a different standpoint from hon. members opposite. I recognise that citizenship in a country where it carries certain privileges also carries with it certain duties, and I submit that as it is a privilege of the citizens of Queensland to exercise their votes in regard to the country's affairs, that it is a duty on them to exercise that right at the ballot-box. We all dislike, perchance, the word "compulsory" used in that connection, but after all it is perfectly reasonable. We all know that compulsory military service was brought in by the Labour party in the Commonwealth, and that there was a great outcry about it. What was the object of that compulsory military service? It was that we might be in a position to defend these shores from foes without. I contend that it is just as important that through compulsory voting we should be in a position to defend this State from any enemies from within as by other means we are able to defend it from foes without, and I submit that it is for that particular reason that we jealously guard our Elections Act, and see that only those entitled to vote are allowed to exercise the franchise, are allowed to have that voice in the government of the country, are allowed to take that part, which as citizens they are entitled to take, in saying how they are going to be governed. I have been somewhat amused in listening to the hon. member for Eacham in his speech of a few minutes ago. He referred to the pathetic apologies of hon. members opposite. Does the hon. member for one single moment suggest that there is a member on this side of the House who would apologise for doing what was right, honourable, and just? I trow not. Instead of apologising for this Bill, I say we feel proud of this Bill.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: True democracy.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: True democracy, as the Premier has said, in the highest sense of the term. I say that, instead of being here as apologists, we feel proud and pleased to be associated with the Government who have seen the necessity of taking such steps that must lead later on to a more honest form of government. One of the great objections which the hon. member for Eacham had to the introduction of the Bill was that it was brought in in the dying hours of the session.

Mr. GILLIES: In the dying hours of Parliament.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: After all, it is not a question whether it is the dying hours of a session or of a Parliament, so far as what I am going to say. I say that if a principle is at stake, and if a wrong is to be righted, the time to rectify that wrong is the time when you have the opportunity—the earliest opportunity. And that is what we are glad to do. We are not concerned for one single moment whether it is the dying hours of the session or the closing days of the Parliament. What we are chiefly concerned about is that every man and woman in this fair State who is entitled to exercise the franchise, not only shall have the opportunity of doing so, but

must do so, so that we can have a clear expression of the people's will. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. RYAN: We will get that in due course.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: We will get that in due course, and I look forward with feelings of pleasure, with feelings of pride, to getting it, because we have such a history behind us as will give such an earnest for the future that the electors of Queensland will have no doubt whatever about returning us. (Hear, hear!) But our friends shiver and shake in their shoes. (Opposition dissent.) They look forward to the coming of next year with a feeling of dread, because they know from that downfall which overtook them in the autumn of 1912, that there will be a still greater downfall in the autumn of 1915. (Hear, hear!) However, that is by the way. I said just now that the principal object of this measure is to secure honest government, to secure an honest expression of the people's will. I have referred to two provisions in the Bill—first of all to compulsory registration, and secondly to compulsory voting. I have said that neither of those can be classed as a party principle in any way. Now we come to the third principle—that is, the postal vote—the broadening of the postal vote. We have been charged with narrowing down the franchise, and with trying to prevent people from voting. The simple amendment we propose to make with regard to the postal vote will give an opportunity to hundreds of people to exercise the franchise who hitherto have not been able to do so. Then we come to another principle in the Bill, and that is a more frequent revision. If hon. members opposite had that firm and sacred belief in truthfulness, in the purity of the rolls, in honesty in electoral matters, they should have welcomed this more frequent revision; they should have received with open arms this proposal of the Government to see that steps should be taken more frequently than has been the case in the past to secure a pure roll for all electors. But do we find that that is so? Do we find this great reform that is going to give us a purer roll in the future than in the past, that is going to enable us to have removed those names that have no right to be placed on the roll, and to place on the rolls those names which should be there? Do we find that that reform has been received with open arms by our friends opposite? Instead, we find them holding up their hands in holy horror against something that is going to effect their political death. If their political existence is hanging by such a weak thread, then it does not show that they have in any sense the people of the State behind them. After all, what is there to be afraid of? A good deal of nonsense has been talked with regard to this Bill. We hear that it is possible to take a man off the roll in two months, and that we cannot put hi[illegible] on within four or six months. What are the facts of the case? You cannot take a man off in two months, and hon. members opposite know that.

Mr. McCORMACK: They can take him off in three.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: What is the use of the hon. member saying that they can take him off in three?

Mr. McCORMACK: Of course, they can.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: I submit you have not read the Bill; have another look at it. I am to some extent disappointed with our friends opposite. We had an hon. member who used to sit in this House, who belonged to the party with which my friend is associated, and who, in giving evidence the other day in Bundaberg, said that he knew nothing at all about the Elections Act, or words practically to that effect. He was like an hon. member opposite, who shows perfectly clearly that he, at all events, does not know the contents of this Bill. Anyone who says that a man can be taken off in three months has not read the Bill; or, at all events, has not understood the Bill. What is the procedure? A man, first of all, must be absent from his electorate for two months before anything can be done.

Mr. RYAN: No.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: I do not think it is of any use for me to try and answer interjections, because they are made without any degree of accuracy. I will confine myself to explaining the Bill as it is, not necessarily for the benefit of hon. members opposite, but for those people outside who may read my remarks. Before you can do anything a man has to be two months absent from his electorate. Then notice has to be given to the first revision court thereafter that the man has been away for two months. The man's name is advertised, and notice is served upon him stating that objection has been made to his claim. No further action can be taken for an additional two months. It is at the next bi-monthly court that final action is taken to remove the man's name. Seeing that two months must elapse between each court, you will readily perceive that it is impossible to take a man's name off within three months. On the other hand, if a man leaves an electorate, as soon as he has resided for two months in whichever electorate he goes to live he must compulsorily register himself under the Bill, and then two months afterwards, at the next revision court, his name is confirmed on the roll of that electorate; consequently, it is merely after all a transfer. (Opposition dissent.) That is the intention of the Bill itself. What is the use of arguing against actual facts, against the contents of the Bill itself? There are some other things troubling hon. members opposite in this connection; and I say without fear or hesitation, and quite irrespective of interjections or remarks from the opposite side, that certain doings have taken place with regard to the rolls in Queensland, emanating from emissaries of the party to which hon. members opposite belong, that have not been honest, have not been true, or in accordance with the Elections Act, and the time is ripe—is rotten ripe—when some steps should be taken to secure purer rolls and more honest representation, which can only be obtained through securing, in the first instance, that only those people who are entitled to go upon the roll shall be upon the roll. It is just as much an act of dishonesty for a man to record a vote to which he is not entitled as it is for a man to put his hand in another man's pocket and rob him. He is taking something that does not belong to him, and that is the crux of the whole situation. We find that in Queensland there has been a tendency for organisers belonging to the party to which our friends opposite belong

to stump the country and put names on the roll without any reference at all to the question of whether they are entitled to do it or not. I have ample evidence of that.

Mr. GILLIES: I say that is a lie.

The SPEAKER: Order! Do I understand the hon. member for Eacham to say that it is a lie?

Mr. GILLIES: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw that remark.

Mr. GILLIES: In deference to you, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw it.

Mr. RYAN: Some pople are careless of the truth.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: Some people are decidedly careless of the truth, and a great many of them are situated on the same side as the hon. member. When I say that men have been put on the roll who are not entitled to be put on the roll by the representatives of the body to which hon. members opposite belong, I am making a statement which is absolutely in accordance with fact. I am not here to make a statement without being in a position to prove it. In my own electorate I saw claims myself the other day that were sent in, in which the residence was given at a certain place. I made personal inquiries and found that such people had never resided there. They were absolutely unknown in the neighbourhood. And yet those forms were witnessed by well-known adherents of the party to which hon. members belong. Are we going to listen to this intolerable nonsense without raising our voice in protest against it? (Hear, hear!) When we come to the question of rollstuffing—a term used quite glibly by hon. members opposite—they are the very men who go in for rollstuffing.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and Opposition dissent.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: It is well known that the whole of this outcry, this noise, and this bitterness against the Bill is because they see that "the axe is laid to the root of the tree" so far as rollstuffing is concerned. They see perfectly well that we have now recognised that we have a duty to the State to perform, and our duty is going to be performed whatever the consequences may be. I could give instances innumerable of similar tactics. I could give instances of men sitting in the streets on Saturday night filling up claims by the dozen of men who probably had only arrived an hour or two before and of whom nothing at all was known. These claims were pushed in by the dozen. Why, the thing became so putrid and so corrupt that the people themselves demanded something should be done, and the Government are doing it, and they are going the right way to ensure that in the future only those people who are entitled to vote are going to vote; only those people who are entitled to have their names on the roll are going to have their names on the roll. As to the qualification, that is not a matter for me to discuss. These qualifications were accepted before. Hon. members opposite say that a man should not be so long as twelve months in Queensland before he is entitled to a vote. That is a matter of opinion, but it is not my opinion. People elsewhere think they should be longer in a country before they can have a vote. People in America think they should be three years in the country before they have a vote. But it is only necessary in the eyes of some people that they should be so many hours in a country before being entitled to have a vote. Those of us who have done something to build up this country—(Opposition laughter)—those of us who, in the past, have helped to make Queensland what it is, are going to make sure that before a man is able to interfere with the administration of the country's affairs he, at all events, shall have shown his bona fides by residing here for twelve months. After that he can enter into the full rights of citizenship. But until then we have every reason and every right on our side when we say, "Wait till we see whether they are a passing stranger—perhaps 'a ship passing in the night'—or whether they are really going to remain here and be citizens of this State," because, after all, grave issues may be at stake. I said a few minutes ago that just as we had compulsory service in our army that we might defend ourselves from foes without, so I say again we are going to have compulsory legislation and compulsory voting that we may protect our fair State from enemies within, because there are such enemies and we know it. (Hear, hear!) It is possible that the dishonest exercise of the franchise by one individual might bring such a calamity upon this country as would send it back for many years, because it might result in such a terrible catastrophe as putting a Labour Government into power. I say we are not going to allow such a calamity as that to happen, and the people of Queensland are not going to allow it to happen.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and Opposition dissent.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: So I say we must begin at the very beginning, and the only way to begin at the beginning is to secure, first of all, that those people who get their names upon the roll are entitled to get their names upon the roll; that those people who are going to exercise the rights and privileges of citizenship by voting for the Government of the country shall be entitled to do so. We are going to still further recognise that as our citizenship in Queensland carries with it privileges, so it also carries with it responsibilities and duties. And we are not going to allow the people to shirk their responsibilities, or to prove unresponsive to their duty, and we are going to make them record their votes. Much has been said by one or two speakers about what now is ancient history—the question of the property vote. Why that has been drawn into this discussion I cannot imagine. There is nothing in the Bill relating to the property vote; but there is a great deal to be said in favour of the property vote as we find it on the statute-book of this State. We have heard a great deal from hon. members opposite against the property vote, and it is common knowledge that one of the first people in Queensland to make use of the property vote was a well-known Labour man; and they cannot deny it. While they, with one voice, sing this great chorus against this provision, they are not above making use of it when it suits their end and their purpose. That is characteristic of the Labour party all the

time and all the way. I think we should make some reference to what has taken place in the other States with regard to roll-stuffing, but I do not think, for the purpose of convincing my audience, that it is necessary to go far in that direction. We know perfectly well the record they have put up in Western Australia; we know perfectly well how, in other directions, the same principles have been actively practised until we find it has become notorious in the minds and eyes of the public at the present time. Briefly put, what we seek to accomplish in this measure is, as I have stated, first of all, that we shall have a roll as near as possible pure; secondly, that we shall ensure that those people who are entitled to the franchise shall respond to the call and use their votes; thirdly, that so far as possible every avenue at our disposal which will enable those entitled to it to record their vote on polling-day, whether they are sick, or blind, or lame, or otherwise—every means are provided and every avenue is opened, while members opposite wish to close the door on those unfortunate enough to be unable to go to the poll. We find the Liberal Government desiring to place country before party interests; and, recognising their duty to the State and to the country, they have introduced this comprehensive Bill, which I submit reflects the greatest credit on the Government, and which I, as a member sitting behind the Government, have the greatest pleasure in supporting.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. McCORMACK (*Cairns*): It is easily seen where this Bill has its origination. It is the first time the Bill has been explained to the House, and it is quite plain now where the pressure has come from which forced the Premier to depart from the opinions he expressed a few months ago in this Chamber, and introduce such a Bill as an alteration in our electoral law at this late hour of the session, and at the end of this Parliament. In listening to the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, one would think that the Labour party had been in power all these years. Government members one after another have got up and talked of the dishonest practices and corruptions, while during the whole time hon. members opposite have occupied the Treasury benches. The "continuous Government," with a change of leaders—with the exception of a few years when Mr. Morgan was Premier—of Queensland have occupied the Treasury benches, and if anyone has benefited by corruption it is the Liberal party. All the elections have been held under the old Act, and the result has been a majority for the Liberal party. The Liberal party have won under corrupt methods, and I am surprised that member after member on the other side stands up and repeats the arguments as repeated by the hon. member for Burrum—that the Elections Act allowed corruption—that voters adopted corrupt tactics, when the result was a majority of twenty members for the Liberal party. I leave that to Liberal members. They have the benefit of the corrupt practices, and to-day we find that, not satisfied with those corrupt practices, they have introduced an amending Bill which has for its object the disfranchisement of a large number of electors. [9 p.m.] It has been stated by the hon. member for Burrum and other hon. members that that is not the intention—that in making it compulsory for an elector on leaving an electorate for two months to have his name struck off the roll, he will be as competent to vote as he would under the original Act. That is not so. Section 14 of the Consolidated Acts provides that the Electoral Registrar, after inquiry of the residents of the district, and inspection of the rate-books, lists of selectors and pastoral tenants, and other documents, shall place the word "left" against the name of any person whose qualification is residence, and who he has reason to believe has left the district, and the word "disqualified" against the name of every person who he has reason to believe is disqualified. That provision still remains in the Consolidated Act, and nothing the hon. member for Burrum may say can convince me that the Electoral Registrar has not to perform that duty. With regard to clause 9 of this amending Bill, it is stated that an elector leaving the district for two months may apply to become enrolled for the electoral district to which he has removed, and may have his name inserted on that roll inside of three months. That is not true, and the hon. member knows it is not true. As a matter of fact, as soon as an elector has been two months out of the electorate, the Electoral Registrar will place beside his name the word "left," a list of persons who have left or who are otherwise disqualified will be published and submitted to the bi-monthly court for revision, and that court will be held four months after he has been in the new electorate, but the elector will not be entitled to vote then, because the application will have to be confirmed by the next bi-monthly court, which will sit two months later. The fact that his name remains on the original roll does not entitle him to vote, because immediately the Electoral Registrar of that district notifies him that he is no longer qualified by reason of the fact that he has been two months absent from the electorate the revision court for that district will strike his name off the roll, so that the man will be at least two months without a vote, and in some instances probably four months. The other night the Home Secretary distinctly stated, in reply to an interjection from me, that that was the difficulty—that there was a period when an elector leaving one electorate and qualifying for another electorate would be without the franchise. The Bill makes no provision for that period, and the hon. member for Burrum, who says that the alteration is equal to a transfer, knows nothing about the matter. If that was so, why does not the Bill make arrangement for a transfer in the same way as the Federal law provides for a transfer from one subdivision to another? The hon. member cannot answer that question. The result of passing this measure will be that numerous electors who are shifting from one electorate to another will be disfranchised on the eve of a general election through no fault of their own. I ask why cannot the Government provide for a transfer, so that the elector may remain on the original roll until such time as he is qualified to have his name placed on the new roll? Surely a man leaving, say, the Albert electorate and going into the Logan electorate, should, after two months' absence, be able to transfer his vote to the Logan electorate.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is what the measure provides.

Mr. McCORMACK: The measure does not provide that.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is where we differ.

Mr. McCORMACK: The hon. gentleman knows quite well that it does not provide for that. Immediately the elector in the hypothetical case I have mentioned becomes disqualified for the Albert electorate, he will have to make application for enrolment in the Logan electorate. The application will come before the revision court, and, probably, be approved, but the applicant will not be entitled to vote until another two months have elapsed and his name has been placed on the electoral roll for Logan.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is so, but he will vote on the old roll.

Mr. McCORMACK: That is not so. Subsection (4) of clause 9 says—

> "At the sittings of the lastmentioned court—"

That is the first bi-monthly court when the elector is struck off the roll—

> "the chairman of the court shall write the word 'left' or 'disqualified,' as the fact appears, against the name on the electoral roll of every elector whose name appears in such list, and with respect to whom such entry in the said list appears to be correct."

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, but that is not confirmed until the next court.

Mr. McCORMACK: There is nothing about confirmation in the clause. On the contrary, it says—

> "Thereupon the name of such elector shall be deemed to be expunged from such roll."

That is plain enough. As a matter of fact, the elector in such a case is entitled to vote for two months after he leaves his original electorate, but he has to put in another two months before he is qualified to vote as an elector on the new electoral roll. There is no doubt about that. In spite of what the hon. member for Burrum has said, there are two months in which an elector will not be on any roll; he will merely be a qualified person making application to get on the new roll. Anyhow, it is useless for me to waste time in arguing the matter. I understand that the motive of the Bill is to have a second revision court in the year that will strike off names on the eve of an election. The hon. gentleman who has just sat down gave the whole show away. No doubt, some of the Ministers on the front bench are not in favour of this Bill, because they know it is unfair; but the corner party, who are afraid of their seats, are forcing the Premier and his colleagues to introduce this alteration of the Elections Act right on the eve of an election. The Premier, in speaking on the second reading of the Elections Bill last year, said that electoral reform was a matter that should be coolly and calmly discussed, not on the eve of an election, nor when members had just returned from the country, but in the middle session of Parliament. What does he do to-day? Right on the eve of an election he introduces an amending Elections Bill, which has for its object the striking off of names at the bi-monthly revision court. It is remarkable to hear the hon. member for Burrum compare compulsory voting with compulsory military training. Everyone should be on the roll, and there would be some sense in comparing compulsory enrolment with compulsory military training; but to compel a man to vote for either one or the other of two candidates with whom he does not agree, is an interference with liberty. I cannot understand the Premier saying it is democracy. In connection with military training that is for service, for defence and not for offence. There are numerous things in the Defence Act which the hon. member for Burrum did not mention. In compulsory voting the voter has no option. There are a number of electors in the country who do not agree with either of the two parties in politics in Australia to-day. Party Government has got to that stage that it is going to force men of independent minds to vote for one candidate or the other, whether they like it or not. We have an alleged Liberal Government introducing this democratic idea. Just imagine people who disagree with both candidates being forced to go to the poll and record a vote for one or other of those candidates! Democracy has to take a back seat to party. Party is the main thing, and the only thing now, and the people have no say at all. The idea of compulsory voting being democratic—the Premier may have his own opinion of that. It is interference with liberty. Why should a man be compelled to go to the poll and vote for a party he does not believe in, and fine him if he does not vote. I would like the Secretary for Public Instruction to tell us, in his eloquent style, if he believes in compulsory voting.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Yes.

Mr. McCORMACK: Do you believe that a person should be compelled to vote for one party or the other?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No. He can make his vote informal if he does not want to vote.

Mr. McCORMACK: Is it a fair thing to drag a man 6 or 8 miles to the polling-booth and compel him to vote without providing him with the means to travel? I am sure the Secretary for Public Instruction does not believe in compulsory voting. It is the corner party, who want to retain their seats at any price, who believe in it. I will give the Premier's opinion of compulsory voting. Last year, in speaking on the Elections Act Amendment Bill, he said—

> "The hon. member asked why we did not go in for compulsory enrolment. Well, that matter had consideration. The natural corollary of compulsory enrolment is compulsory voting."

So it was considered last year—

> "The PREMIER: I say it is a fair corollary. With compelment to enrol, there should be compulsory voting, and the only way of compelling the vote would be to give what I should be very unwilling to give, and that is absolutely unrestricted opportunity to vote by means of the post. That would be undesirable, and, unless we give that, we cannot have compulsory voting, because if you are going to compel a man to vote, he would claim travelling facilities for recording his vote, and inasmuch as the compelment of compulsory enrolment cannot be assured, that has not been embodied in the Bill."

That is the Premier's opinion of compulsory voting. Surely he has not changed his

opinion since 1915. If so, what has brought about his change of opinion? I think he has been sandbagged. Anyone listening to the hon. member for Burrum could see that he and his party want the Bill. Surely the Premier, in admitting compulsory voting, would not allow the unrestricted use of the postal vote. Would he not provide means to get the elector to the polling-booth and pay him too! The Defence Force compels people to train, and it provides payment for them, too, although the hon. member for Burrum did not mention that. This Bill provides for compulsory voting, but it does not provide facilities for an elector to get to the polling-booth who will have to scratch out one of two names when he probably disagrees with both. This Bill, in my opinion, will disfranchise a number of electors. There is no doubt that the Government have admitted that they are determined to disfranchise the nomadic workers. If that is their policy, and they admit it, we know where we are. Why hide behind subterfuges? They say they want honesty in their electoral laws, but what is the use of telling us that when the Home Secretary told us openly that he does not believe in the nomadic workers having a vote.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not say that.

Mr. McCORMACK: The representative of the Government in the Upper House said it, and the Home Secretary also said it in this House.

The HOME SECRETARY: No.

Mr. McCORMACK: You said they were not entitled to a vote if they left their last place of residence. How can the nomadic worker say how long he will be at any place? That is a matter for his employer to say. If he suits the employer, he might stop three days, three months, or three years. If the boss allows him to stay, and it is a good job, he will stop three years. Those are the men whom the Hon. Mr. Barlow called loafers, and he said it was the policy of the Government not to give those people a vote. He was honest no doubt, because he does not depend for his position on the electoral vote of the people of Queensland. But the present Government are adopting the same tactics. They are doing just what they set out to do. They are afraid that there is going to be a change of political feeling in Queensland. There can be no other argument advanced for an alteration in our electoral law. There have been two Federal elections recently. The first brought along an amending Elections Bill; the next, which was a bigger surprise than the first, because it was held under the auspices of their own party and the "clean" rolls, brought along another Elections Bill. What can anybody outside make of it? What can we make of it? This Government were elected under the old Act, and if the old Act allowed so much corruption, and the Labour party were the only people that used corruption, why are we not over there?

Mr. ARCHER: Perhaps it kept you out.

Mr. McCORMACK: It did not keep the hon. member out. He even had not the right to vote for the State. He did not have the right of most of the citizens of Queensland when he became a member of this House. That is just one good illustration, and surely the hon. member is in Queensland with the intention of living here, and if so, how was he left off the electoral roll? Surely it shows anyhow that we should have made a provision that nobody who is not an elector should be allowed in this House! The present Government, no doubt, are trying to save their skins, and they are adopting practices which I am sorry to see the present Premier descend to. I had hoped that when he made that statement about the middle session being the proper session he was sincere. I had hoped that if the Act required alteration he would have made it then, and that he would not have waited until the end of Parliament to make such drastic alterations, such alterations as are in no other electoral law in Australia. And yet supporters of the Liberal party wonder why we stonewall and try to block this measure. They cannot understand it. In everything that is introduced I seek for a motive, and I never seek for a motive that has for its object the good of the people of Queensland in anything that is passed in this House. In looking for a motive I ask, "How is it going to affect the Government? How is it going to affect their private interests, their individual selves? How is it going to affect each individual in his seat?" That is how everything is dealt with by this Government. I do not think that there has ever been a Government in Queensland which has descended to the tactics of the present Government. Bad as were the Governments in the old days, they went out into the open. We hear a lot about roll-stuffing, and the hon. member for Cook attacked me the other night, and reckoned I was a roll-stuffer, and then he was a great deal hurt because I became a little personal in regard to him. Members on the other side get up and charge hon. members on this side with roll-stuffing and other things, and when hon. members on this side say anything about them, they say that they do not expect anything better from us. That is said frequently in this Chamber, and yet we had a Minister getting up the other evening and accusing Mr. Ryland of roll-stuffing, and calling him "a political crook." But if anybody on this side says one word, speaks the truth about a member on the other side, saying he is here representing his own interests and not the electors of Queensland, he says, "Oh, you are getting dirty. You are introducing the personal element."

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. McCORMACK: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I know I am getting a little bit away from the Bill, but still, I think it is well to mention these things, because it is rather amusing to see the heat displayed by hon. members on the other side when their honour is at stake—to hear them declaim against the Labour party, and then get up later on and accuse us of all the crimes in the political calendar. The Government, no doubt, intend to carry this Bill through. They are going to make a welter of it. It is their last chance of retaining power, and, no doubt, they are concentrating all their efforts to make this Bill law, and going to the country on these "pure rolls," as they call them, and defeating the Labour party. It is remarkable that it is necessary to descend to these tactics to defeat the Labour party. It is remarkable that numbers of our best people in Queensland should be disfranchised for any party—and some of the best people will be disfranchised. We had evidence here the other evening of a registrar telling electors that they would not be allowed

to vote unless they wrote "New South Wales" in full, and these ridiculous little matters are used in electoral courts as means for disfranchising electors. What is the meaning of it all? It all seems to me to have started a very few months ago when the Home Secretary allowed the police to collect names for the roll. The Government's first intention was not to allow names to be collected, but when the people of Queensland were shown how many were qualified and were not on the roll, it startled the supporters behind the Government, and then they set out to remedy that position—to remedy the blunder committed by the Home Secretary. They found that these people who were, no doubt, justly entitled to be on the roll—because otherwise the police would not have enrolled them—they found that these people must be deprived of votes. They argued that, perhaps, if they were to disfranchise the nomadic workers, not only those in the country, but those in the towns, such as those who move from Paddington to Ithaca, and from Brisbane to Toowong, and so on, they would be able to repair that blunder, and the result has been that they have found that it is absolutely necessary to do something so that they might catch that great body of persons between two electoral courts, and hold the elections during the two months after one of the revision courts has taken place. They intend to hold this revision court to strike off those names, no doubt saying, "You will be able to get on the next roll"—but the election will take place in the meantime, and thousands of people throughout Queensland will be disfranchised. It is hoped by the Government that these people will be supporters of the party in opposition. I hope that some better counsels will prevail amongst the Ministers, that they, at any rate, will allow a transfer that is reasonable—will allow a person to have the right to shift from one roll to another. The Home Secretary said that that was in the Bill, and if it is in the Bill why should it not be made plain, so that hon. members can understand it, because it is not possible that so many members on this side of the House would make the error of saying that an elector would not be allowed to vote until such time as he was qualified to be placed on the new roll. If that were so, there would not be so many objections to the Bill.

[9.30 p.m.] The old Act made provisions for this very thing we are discussing, provision that an elector who had resided one month in the previous seven should have a right to vote. That was to provide time so that he should become qualified to be on the new roll. That is all I have to say on the matter. I have not been convinced by any hon. member opposite that the Bill is honest. If it were honest, there would be no objection to it. It contains compulsory voting, which, to my mind, is not democratic and not right, but that is another question. It also contains provision for the striking off of names on the eve of a general election. How can that be honest? If that is thought necessary, why should we not have had the present election conducted on the present Act, seeing that it was only passed last session, and if it failed, then in the new Parliament we could alter it in the direction the Government are now attempting to alter it. If they had done that they would certainly have avoided the charge that the present Act is being introduced in the interests of party and not in the interests of the people. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. BOOKER (*Wide Bay*): After listening to the thunder of the other side, it almost makes me ask the question, are we downhearted? I do not think we are. The leader of the Opposition stated that in approaching this question we all agreed that every adult person should be entitled to say who should represent the people in the councils of the State. We agree with that sentiment entirely. The other side cannot take that to itself; it is the general desire of the House that every adult person in the State who is qualified to have a vote should have a vote. But the Bill itself goes rather beyond what I consider is practicable and reasonable, in so far as compulsory registration and compulsory voting are concerned. I cannot conceive how the authorities are going to compel every adult person in the State to register. A large number of people are spread in out of the way places. In every rural district in Queensland you will find men who very rarely come into any particular centre, and they are very hard to get at, even by the police who control the district. Yet you are going to compel every individual to register! With regard to compulsory voting, I might mention that on two occasions I have personally refrained from voting at an election, because I did not approve of either of the candidates. As an illustration, suppose the hon. member for Brisbane threw up Brisbane and came up to my electorate, or the hon. member for Paddington came, I could not vote for the hon. member for Brisbane, with his socialistic proclivities, nor for the hon. member for Paddington with his hidebound conservative political disposition. I should refuse to vote, and might receive a summons. All our legislation nowadays is in the direction of restricting the liberty and creating harassments all through our daily life. I do not see how compulsory voting is going to be carried out, and, if you cannot carry out a scheme in its entirety, you had better leave it alone. We represent a great body of electors in Queensland, and are we going to do anything to lose their confidence in our political integrity, and our determination to do the right thing by the people? No body of men are going to deliberately offend the sense of justice of the people. I believe in effectiveness and economy, and that the State authorities should work hand in glove with the Federal electoral officials. When speaking on the previous amending Bill, I said that we should fall into line and have a uniform electoral law and a uniform electoral administration. The trouble that occurred at Bundaberg the other day showed the fact that the police magistrate, owing to the ramifications of his various duties, cannot have an intimate knowledge of the people in the district, and the people who are coming and going. In connection with the Electoral Act, I would like to see the district inside the Federal area administered by a central officer. The Federal authorities have their officers in the various Federal districts, and the State should get into touch with the Federal authorities, and the same officer who is dealing with the Federal electoral law should deal with our State law. It would simplify matters and save expenditure. We are spending vast sums of money in connection with the electoral laws in Australia. I take it that the system of advertising the names in the Press of the State is a wilful waste of money, and I cannot see where any benefit is derived by the people. Right through this debate the same old story has crept in. I am always interested in any-

thing the leader of the Opposition may say. He has rung in the old story about the price of beef. Incidentally, I hear that, amongst his various investments, he is interested in cattle properties, and that he had sold his bullocks at a very satisfactory price, about £2 a head more than I have been able to sell mine for. (Laughter.) I cannot understand a gentleman who is so keenly interested in the primary industries constantly raising this question of the price of beef. What has the price of beef got to do with the Electoral Act? It may have something to do with the elections; and now I can understand why this matter is constantly being thrown into the discussion. One feature in connection with our electoral law I should like to see carried out is to make it possible that no man when once on the roll is ever put off the roll. I can speak with some knowledge of the nomadic workers in my electorate. Some portion of Wide Bay is sugar-growing territory, and there are many young men—not only in the sugar district but in the mixed farming districts—who leave Wide Bay as soon as the cutting season starts. The Wide Bay district is their home, but they go away for two, three, or four months, and some for six months. The same thing applies to shearers and miners, the general trend of whose affairs takes them from place to place. Anyone who has a home, whether it is under his father's roof, or at a boarding-house or hotel, should have the privilege of being on the roll at some particular place. He should never, under any circumstances whatever, lose his citizen rights. I know quite a number of men who have come to me and stated that they are off the roll, men who support myself—I do not care if they support the other man—but I do say there is an inherent right of every citizen to have a vote and to record it if he likes. I should like to see the measure provide that every citizen of adult age should at no time lose his citizen rights. The question of the nomadic worker is a very big one in this State of ours. Start with our primary industry—the pastoral industry. Take our sheep. How could the pastoralist get on with his work if it was not for, to a large extent, the nomadic worker who comes along at various times of the year for shearing? The same thing applies to the cattle industry. Then take the sugar industry. The same thing applies there. These men are a big factor in the progress and development of our State, and we should give them every facility to maintain their citizen rights. There is one other matter—it is a delicate question; I have listened to many speeches dealing with it, and those I did not listen to I have read—the leader of the Opposition, in the first place, raised the question of denying citizen rights to members of the Expeditionary Force. If it was practicable, I am quite satisfied that the Home Secretary would have incorporated it in this Bill, and I am also satisfied it cannot be done. Take a position like this: Assume that Mr. Fisher was representing the State Wide Bay, and someone else was up against him, and the men who were going away left their proxies. Mr. Fisher's personality in Wide Bay counts for many thousands of votes; thousands of Liberals in that district vote for Mr. Fisher, because he is Mr. Fisher. If any other man were to go to that district he would just get the straight-out Labour vote. Would it be possible to get a true reflex as a result of the elections under those conditions with the proxy vote collected from the Expeditionary Force? By no means. In every electorate there is a big personal vote. How can you do it? It cannot be done. There would be wrong done to the candidates, and there would be a graver wrong done to the men who left their proxies in the hands of political representatives.

Mr. FOLEY: Don't that cut the other way just as well?

Mr. BOOKER: Of course, it does, but you could not get a true reflex of political opinion in that electorate. It is very unwise for this question to be raised at all. From one instance it has gone on to many instances, and the reflection from the other side has been that the great body of men who have gone away with the Expeditionary Force are Labour voters. My experience of a number of men who have left many districts round about Maryborough and the Burnett is quite the reverse. I know, probably, 150 men who left Australia with the first Expeditionary Force, and amongst those 150 men, I will stake my life that 120 of them would have left their proxies with men who would have cast their votes for Liberal candidates in that particular district. The reflection has been cast in this discussion that one class in the community has gone to defend the integrity of the British Empire; to guard the interests of every British citizen—that only one class of the community has gone with the Expeditionary Force.

Mr. COYNE: Nobody said that.

Mr. BOOKER: Yes. That is why I raise the question. The intention is to convey to the people throughout the State that the only class of people who have gone with the Expeditionary Force are men who have political opinions similar to my friends opposite. That, I say, is a base reflection upon every other class in the community. I would like an analysis made—a return tabled in this House—if it was necessary, giving the number of wharfsiders who have gone to the war—give the number in Australia. I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, that I have transgressed, but the reflection has been cast that only one class of the community has gone to the war, and they should have their citizen rights. I say distinctly that is not so. How many unemployed men from Broken Hill have gone to the war? Thousands of them, able-bodied men; no better material in Australia! I would like to know how many of these men have gone. Then I would like to ask the question: How many stalwart bushmen have gone, and every other class in the community? It is as well that this position should be understood, and I am making it understood. Every class in the community are giving their best men to the war, and that is what I desire to say.

Mr. DOUGLAS (*Cook*): There seems to be a good deal of hostility shown on the other side to the introduction of this Bill, and it has been said that the last session of any Parliament is not the one in which an Elections Bill should be introduced. Compulsory voting and compulsory enrolment have been for some little time under review, and we find in the Commonwealth law compulsory enrolment has been in existence for some little time, also compulsory transfer in case of a change of residence. I think compulsory

enrolment is a very good provision, and there is really no cause for complaint from members who sit on the opposite benches. I quite agree that every able-bodied person of the age of twenty-one years possessing the qualifications of an elector should be given full facilities to become an elector, but I think that the residence qualification in the case of a transfer from one district to another is necessary, and the Bill makes ample provision for the transfer of the name of an elector from one electoral roll to another. It certainly cuts down the period of absence from seven months to four months. The provisions of the measure are very satisfactory, and I cannot see that they deal unfairly with the legitimate exercise of the franchise. As far as compulsory voting is concerned, I believe that the electors of Queensland and of other States in the Commonwealth have got into a loose way of voting by reason of the fact that so many conveyances are placed at their disposal, so that unless they are brought to the polling-booth in a motor-car or other conveyance some of them do not think it necessary to record their votes. That state of affairs will be remedied by this Bill. It must also be borne in mind that the Consolidated Act gives facilities for the use of the postal vote by persons who reside at a greater distance than 5 miles from the polling-booth. The measure has been discussed at its various stages at considerable length, and I shall not occupy much time in discussing it, especially as its details will be fully discussed in Committee. Speaking from a broad point of view, I think the Bill contains important amendments which will be beneficial to the electors of Queensland. I believe that under it we shall have a better reflex of the opinions of the people at future elections—that at the first election or two under the measure, at any rate, the franchise will be much more largely availed of than it has been in the past. Instead of having between 50 and 60 per cent. of the electors voting, we shall find that there will be a fairly full vote, and persons who do not go to the poll will be called upon for an explanation of their absence. Compulsory enrolment under the Federal electoral law is calling forth a good deal of comment, and many people even now do not know that it is necessary for them to enrol. I think that people generally take more interest in the domestic affairs with which we deal, and I hope that in future there will be a larger percentage of votes cast than has been the case in the past, whether their votes give a majority to this side or the other side. With regard to the few remarks made by the hon. member for Cairns at the conclusion of his speech, it does not matter to me what cheap sneer the hon. member may hurl at me. The hon. member made some reference to a debate which took place recently, and made some observations about the way in which I represent my electorate. I have had the honour of representing my district for eight years, and it matters very little to me what the hon. member for Cairns has to say in a sneering way about my method of conducting that representation.

Mr. FOLEY (*Mundingburra*): There has been so much said by members on both sides of the House on the second reading of this Bill that I scarcely find anything left for me to say, but there are one or two matters to which I should like to refer. The hon. member for Wide Bay is the only member on the other side of the House who has shown a desire to act fairly by the men who have to travel from one place to another looking for work. He said that once a man got his name on the roll, facilities should be provided for keeping it always on the roll as long as he remains in Queensland. But the distinct object of this Bill, as I read it, is to strike the names of certain men off the roll because of the fact that they have to go from one electorate to another seeking employment. There are scores—I may say hundreds—of men in my electorate who have to go away from the place in which they live to other electorates to earn a living. At certain times of the year the meat works start work, and a large number of men from my electorate go to the Torrens Creek Meatworks and the Burdekin Meatworks in the Kennedy electorate. In some cases the season lasts five or six months. The men work through the season, but have no intention of living in the Kennedy electorate, and as soon as the season is over they come back to Mundingburra. Under this Bill, after they have been away from the electorate for two months, the electoral registrar will have to mark them as having "left" the district, and if they do not return before the next court sits their names will be struck off the roll. In the Kennedy electorate they will have to live two months before they can apply to have their names placed on the roll for that electorate. Then their applications have to remain in abeyance for another two months in order to see if any objection is lodged against their enrolment, so that about six months will elapse before those men can get their names on the Kennedy electoral roll. By this time they will have returned home, and two months later their names will be struck off the Kennedy roll. That is the kind of thing which will happen in many instances. What the hon. member for Wide Bay suggests—and it is a sensible suggestion—is that when a man acquires a vote he should be regarded as an elector. If a young man who is living with his parents has to go away to work in another electorate, if it is necessary that he should transfer his [10 p.m.] name, why should it not be sufficient for him to notify the returning officer of the electorate to which he has gone that he has come there to live, and that he wants his name placed on the roll of that electorate, and have it placed there at once, instead of having to go through the formality of applying to one court and having to wait until the next court for confirmation? On this side we hold that a man who has lived in Queensland for twelve months should be entitled to vote in some electorate in the State, so long as he remains in the State. So long as the Government insist on applications going before the court, so long will hundreds of men have their names struck off the rolls. A great deal has been said about the soldiers, and the hon. member for Wide Bay and others on the other side say that, while they would like the soldiers to get a vote, they do not know how it can be done. When the Home Secretary was speaking on the subject he said that he did not like proxy voting, and I asked him by interjection if he considered the returning officer of the district would be a proxy if the soldiers left their votes with him until the election took place.

Mr. E. B. C. CORSER: But there might be three parties, and there are only two now.

Mr. FOLEY: If there were ten parties there is no reason why he could not vote for the party he preferred. Why should we deprive those who are going away to fight for us of the right they now possess of voting for the party which they would like to see governing this country? They are going away to fight that we may be saved from the invasion of a tyrant, and those who have property are going to have that property protected by these soldiers; and yet, because they may be killed, they are not to be allowed to vote before they go. There are many hundreds of them who are leaving their wives and children here, and they are just as much interested that the country shall be governed as they would like it to be governed as they would be if they remained here. I can see no argument against allowing the soldiers to vote before they leave. A returning officer could be sent to the camp before the soldiers go, and he could tell them that there will be an election in the near future, and that there will be two parties in the field—the chances are that there will not be more than two parties—but, if there will be three parties, the soldiers could be told that there would be three parties seeking their votes—and they could be asked to vote for the party that they would like to see govern the country. They could record their votes and hand them to the returning officer, who could place them in a ballot-box and lock it up and not open it until the election took place. The returning officer could not be counted a proxy, because he would not know whom the men voted for. That would do justice to the men who are prepared to sacrifice their lives for the protection of this country; but the Government apparently do not care about trusting these men as far as that. What is the use of keeping their names on the roll? They will not be able to vote when they are away in Europe. If they were allowed to vote, even if they are not here themselves, their wives and children will be here and will benefit from the fact that the Government in power is the one that they want to have in power. A good deal has been said about the postal voting provisions in this Bill. It is proposed to allow two electors of the district to witness postal votes. I do not know what object the Government have in view in proposing this amendment now. It did not seem to strike them as necessary when they were amending the Bill last year. I know, however, that it will open the door to a great deal of corruption. I know, when the postal-voting system was in vogue before that in Townsville employers went round to the wives of their employees while their husbands were at work, and told them that, if they did not vote to keep the Government in power, the chances were that their places of business would have to close and half the men in Queensland would be thrown out of work. Hon. members opposite know that they are going to do as they did in those days. When the primary vote was counted in Townsville on that occasion and it was found I was 317 votes ahead of the hon. member for Townsville, he looked rather down about it and felt that he was beaten. But the chairman of his committee could tell him, in the presence of hundreds of people, that he need not worry about my majority of 300, because they had 800 out of the 1,100 postal votes recorded. So that, instead of I being 300 ahead of him, when the postal votes were counted, it was found that he was 200 votes ahead of me. They know what they can do with the postal vote. Notwithstanding that we get a majority of the primary votes polled at the polling-booth they know that they have got us in their hands if they can use the postal votes. After all the evidence that was given against the postal vote, the Government should be ashamed to introduce it again. It was abolished before because of the corrupt practices that were indulged in to get the women to vote by post—so that they would be got to vote in favour of the Liberal party. When the postal vote was last in use a body of justices of the peace went round Townsville collecting postal votes, and in one case a justice of the peace refused to give a woman her postal vote because she would not let him post it for her.

Mr. ARCHER: They cannot do that now.

Mr. FOLEY: They could not do it under the old Act, but they did it all the same, and they will do it again under the provisions of this Act. This justice of the peace said he was going down the street and would post the ballot-paper, and when the woman said she would not let him post it, the justice of the peace said, "Then I will not give you the ballot-paper." The woman drew my attention to it, and I saw the returning officer, with the result that the justice of the peace was compelled to give the woman her ballot-paper, and she posted it herself. That man was not struck off the list of justices of the peace; I believe he is a justice of the peace still. He may have done the same thing in hundreds of other cases—I believe he did. These are only some of the things that can be done under the postal voting provisions of the Act. These things were pointed out to the Government before and the postal vote was repealed. Now we have got a Government who, on the eve of an election, finds that this may be the only means by which they can get a majority to save themselves for the next three years. Do they think that the people of Australia are going to take this sitting down? The very people who love fair play—whether they vote for the Liberal party or not—will see honesty and justice done, and the result will be that the Government will find that this Bill will be like a boomerang. The Government will throw it, and it will come back and hit them. I only hope that it will hit them hard when it does come. If anything can save this Government, there is no doubt that the postal vote and bi-monthly revision courts will do it. I have nothing to say against compulsory enrolment, because I believe that every adult in the State should be enrolled. But there are certain objections against compulsory voting. There are certain people in Queensland who have conscientious scruples against voting—certain religious sects who claim that they have no right to interfere in earthly matters at all. All their interests are centred on the life hereafter, and they never worry themselves about anything that takes place on this earth. To compel these people to vote, is carrying the thing too far. There would, of course, be no harm in putting their names on the roll. The hon. member for Wide Bay said there were people who could not conscientiously vote for either candidate at times. That may be answered by saying that these people can make their votes informal by voting for both candidates or for

neither. Those who have conscientious scruples should be allowed to use their own judgment whether they vote or not. The Government think that by striking off the nomadic workers, those who are left will be Liberal voters, and, by compelling them to vote, they will have a chance of winning next election, but at the next election the Government will get such an awakening that they will be sorry that they introduced this amending Bill.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*): I do not want to repeat what has been said before on this measure, but there are one or two points that have not yet been touched upon. In discussing this matter one has to remember the significant fact that it is only twelve months ago since we had a very large amending electoral measure before us. We also remember as well that since we passed that measure there has been a Federal election, which resulted in the overwhelming defeat of the Liberals in this State. We also have to remember one other fact—that we are just about to enter upon a State election. Now, seeing that we passed a measure twelve months ago, fully dealing with the electoral laws, how is it that we have this measure before us at the present time? Evidently it has something to do with the coming election. There is no doubt in the mind of anybody who has thought the matter over that this measure is brought in on the eve of a general election because there is some object, some motive behind it. What is the object? The principal provisions of the Bill are three in number. It first of all provides for compulsory enrolment, and the second for compulsory voting, and it also provides for bi-monthly revision courts to revise names off the roll, to bring about a clean roll. These provisions seem at first sight to be fair indeed, but when we come to examine them carefully we find that they do not carry out what appears on the face of them. They do not provide for the complete enrolment of people who are bonâ fide worthy of being placed on the roll. They do not provide for compulsory enrolment, they do not provide for a clean roll. All they do is to provide for a full-sided roll, a one-sided vote, and a roll that is not clean at all, but is stuffed by a number of voters on one side. It proposes to clean off the roll as many voters as are opponents to the Government, and to put upon the roll as many others as possible, and then drag them in and compel them to vote for the Government. It is a method of cleaning off those who are opposed to the Government policy, and at the same time placing on the roll those who are in favour of that policy. It is cunningly devised for winnowing out the opponents of the Government. Take, for instance, the compulsory registration clauses. It does not mean that all persons should be registered. It takes very good care that some people should not be registered. It imposes a kind of restriction by means of requiring twelve months' residence, by numerous difficult questions, and then it proposes to provide increased facilities for taking off the rolls those who manage to steer successfully through all these difficulties, and that is by means of bi-monthly courts. That seems to me what is meant by the cleaning of the rolls—a roll which has been compulsorily made one-sided and loaded in favour of one side, and, at the same time, prevented from being fairly filled by those having other political views. In other words, it is a "party made law," and I have been interested in noticing the juggle of words which have been used by members on the other side to describe it. They have been talking about those being on the roll who are entitled to be on the roll, and they mouth it with a great deal of unction as if using the word "entitled" carried with it anything other than what is contained in this Bill. It really means "entitled" by law, "entitled" by what the Government provides should give them the title. It does not mean that every worthy citizen of Queensland, who has resided here for many years should be placed on the roll, but merely those who by a specious Act are permitted to be on the roll. Take also this question of bi-monthly courts. Where is the necessity for those provisions? There is already ample provision under our existing Act for preventing any particular harm being done, supposing that any person gets on the roll who may not be entitled to be there. First of all, there is a heavy penalty against anybody making a false declaration enabling him to get on the roll. There is also a heavy penalty against a person witnessing falsely a claim to get on the roll, and then there is the further protection against anyone who gets on the roll by false means, or is there against any particular technicality of the Act, voting wrongly; and there is also a very heavy penalty against a person remaining there wrongly, and there is also the right to challenge any person who may have lost his qualification and may not have resided in the electorate during one month in the seven preceding the election. We know the alleged reason for this device for bi-monthly courts is to prevent what is termed irregularity and abuse which are stated to have occurred in connection with the Federal election, but we know that these charges which have been made about corruption and personation and double voting have been absolutely disproved. Take, for example, the statement of the Principal Electoral Registrar of New South Wales the other day. He said that there had not been a single case of personation or double voting, and I say that all the charges that have been made in Queensland of abuses under our Federal Elections Act have fallen to the ground, and there is no necessity for bringing in these provisions for bi-monthly courts. It has been alleged that no injury can be done to any elector by means of these courts, because he will be enabled to get on some other electoral roll before he is struck off the roll of the district where he was previously residing. I want to show absolutely where it will, in many cases, strike names off the roll and disfranchise persons who cannot get opportunities of getting on another roll. Take, for example a name on the Brisbane roll of a man who leaves, say, to-day, and goes to the electorate of South Brisbane. He lives there for two months, as he must do by the proposed provisions before he can make application to go on the electoral roll of South Brisbane. That takes him until 5th January. He would then make application to the court which sits on January 6, so as to be enabled to have been there two months. He then requires two months more before the second court is held to finally get his name on the roll. In such a case as that, it happens that he is only off one day. But, supposing that when he has left North Brisbane to go to

South Brisbane, the bi-monthly court at South Brisbane has just held its sitting the week before. Then he has to be nearly four months in South Brisbane before he can make application at the first bi-monthly court, and he has to wait till the second bi-monthly court, so that is nearly six months he will have to reside in South Brisbane before he can get upon the roll. There is a provision here whereby even if he happens to remain on the North Brisbane roll unchallenged, he can be challenged if he goes to the poll, under the provision which enables him to be asked the question, "Have you resided one month during the last four months in the electorate?" and, if he cannot answer in the affirmative, he is taken off the North Brisbane roll, and he is also off the South Brisbane roll. That will happen in a large number of cases, because a bi-monthly court is not likely to sit at once in the new electorate to which the voter goes. In a large number of cases, he must necessarily be off the roll for a long period before he can get upon any electoral roll. Then, Queensland is a country which necessitates a good deal of travelling about in search of employment. An elector may leave an electoral district, and be taken off the roll of that district by the bi-monthly court, and not be able to get on any new roll for a long time, because he may only reside one month in the next electorate to which he goes, and then travel on to another electorate, staying there the same time, and it may be a long time before he can be qualified by two months' residence in any particular electorate to get his name on the roll, and in the meantime he is taken off the roll for the place which he left, and is disfranchised. The provision for bi-monthly revision courts taking names off the roll after two months' cessation of residence must necessarily disfranchise large numbers of people in Queensland. I want to deal with another aspect of the matter—that is, the provision for protesting against electors at the time they are about to vote. The presiding officer may be requested by any candidate's scrutineer to require the voter to sign his name upon an envelope and no such person so required to sign his name shall be permitted to vote until he has so signed his name. Then, later on the returning officer, without opening the envelope, shall compare the signature of the voter on the envelope. It may be that electors have got upon the roll by signing an application form, but we know that in many cases there are electors who cannot sign their name, and who have written their mark on the application form, and had it witnessed by a justice of the peace. Are they going to be disfranchised in a case like that in regard to a protested vote, because unless a voter can sign his name he is going to be prevented from voting? Whether intentionally or otherwise, numbers of people are going to be disfranchised by the provisions of the Bill. I want to deal with the increased facilities given with regard to postal voting. It is going to make it possible for electors in country districts beyond the 5-mile distance from the polling-booth, or in other cases, not only to make application for the postal certificate, the form being witnessed by two electors, but also enable them to vote in the presence of two electors, acting, so to speak, as returning officers. Last year, in connection with the measure providing for postal voting, we said that it was going to throw the door wide open to the grossest electoral abuses, and this is going to open the door so wide that wild horses can run through. Under the original provision, which this intensifies, I can sell my vote, intimidate my employees, and carry on the grossest political corruption in the compelling of voters and making them vote in the way I want. It is doing away altogether with the secrecy of the ballot. We know that before the ballot came into operation men were able to intimidate their employees, agents went about buying votes, and it was possible to find out how people voted, and it was to do away with that kind of injustice and abuse that the system of the secret ballot was devised. It was an Australian system, and has been brought into operation throughout the world. Whilst the principal Act provides that the officer before whom the elector votes shall not see how he votes, there is nothing in this Bill to prevent any other person in the community seeing how he votes. An employer can say to his employee that he wants him to vote in a certain way, and in order to see that he votes in that way can go along with him and witness his vote. I do not know that there is anything to prevent him from going into the polling-booth, but, at any rate, he can ask the voter to let him see how he has voted. A man can say, "I will give you £5 for your vote," and, in order to see that he is getting what he has paid for, he can go with him and see that he has voted in the way agreed upon. It is possible for him to do that, and there is no penalty for doing it. The Bill is going to increase the facilities for postal voting, and at the same time compel them to vote, whereas now people who are 5 miles from a polling-booth might exercise the option; they could use the postal vote if they wanted to. This will affect country districts very largely, where 20 or 30 miles is not an extreme distance to be from a polling-place, and in all those cases it is going to compel them to use the postal system of voting, and it is going to largely increase the possibilities of political corruption in this State. I want to again point out how the bi-monthly courts will act in a number of cases. As the bi-monthly courts are not always held immediately after a person moves from one electorate to another electorate—it may compel a man to reside nearly four months in the new electorate before he can make application. Whilst the Bill may be amended in Committee, if it is carried out in its present form it is going to work very injuriously to a large number of people in Queensland, and it will result in a one-sided expression of opinion when the elections are held.

Mr. BERTRAM (*Maree*): 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.

RAILLESS TRACTION BILL.

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, returning this Bill with amendments, in which they requested the concurrence of the Assembly.

Ordered that the Council's message be taken into consideration to-morrow.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. RYAN: I would like the permission of the House to make a personal explanation. I understand when I was out of the Chamber this evening the hon. member for Wide Bay, in the course of his remarks, made references to my being interested in some cattle or cattle property, and that these cattle had been sold at a price higher than he would receive for his cattle.

Mr. KIRWAN: He said £2 higher.

Mr. RYAN: Owing to the nature of the suggestion contained in those remarks, I think it is my duty to say here and now that I am not interested, directly or indirectly, in any cattle property in Queensland or elsewhere; that I have not been, directly or indirectly, interested in the sale of any cattle, or the proceeds of the sale of any cattle. The statement made by the hon. member for Wide Bay is absolutely without foundation, and I hope that he will take the first opportunity of withdrawing it.

ADJOURNMENT.

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

Question put and passed.

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