

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 1915

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER, 1915.

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

ENEMY CONTRACTS ANNULMENT BILL.

ASSENT.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor, conveying the Royal assent to this Bill.

PAPERS.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Return to an Order relative to permits to slow workers.

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

Report of the Land Court on the position of the settlers on the Jimbour Estate.

QUESTIONS.

SHEEP TRAIN ACCOMMODATION.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. Is it a fact, as quoted in the 'Gympie Times' of yesterday's date, the 21st instant, that a sheep train laden with sheep arrived at Gympie, on Saturday last, which was only one class—viz., drover and the sheep?"

"2. That the drover had to travel in a similar truck as the sheep, no other accommodation being provided?"

"3. In order to get in and out of his grated compartment the drover had to do so on his hands and knees, there being no room for him to sit upright; also he had to spread his blankets along the truck floor and lie down while in this one-class train?"

"4. Will he take steps to see that such a condition of affairs is remedied?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Adamson, *Rockhampton*) replied—

"1. This train consisted of eleven sheep vans and two other wagons.

"2, 3, and 4. The drover elected to ride for part of the journey on the floor of an empty sheep truck, which was perfectly clean, in preference to the guard's van, in which he could have ridden. He did not ride in the sheep truck when leaving Gympie, but left his blankets there. He made no complaint."

ENTRY OF PIGS INTO QUEENSLAND.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"Upon what terms are pigs permitted to enter Queensland?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. Lennon, *Herbert*) replied—

"Upon a certificate of freedom from disease from the Department of Agriculture of the State of origin."

CONTROL OF MEATWORKS.

HON. J. TOLMIE (*Toowoomba*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Is he correctly reported when he says to the deputation of bankers—'The late Government was seriously considering the question, last year, of calling Parliament together, in January or February last, to pass a measure giving to the Government such powers as were contained in this Bill'?"

"2. Will he give the House his authority for this announcement?"

"3. When did the Imperial Government ask the Queensland Government to take over the meatworks?"

"4. Was not the request of the Imperial Government fully met when the Queensland Government secured for it all the beef available?"

"5. Subsequent to putting the Meat Act into operation, had the Government any difficulty in controlling the entire output of beef available for export?"

"6. Did any of the meatworks act in opposition to the letter and spirit of the Act?"

"7. If so, will he name the works?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. M. Hunter, *Maranoa*) replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. No.

"3. 21st January, 1915.

"4 and 5. See answers to 1 and 3.

"6 and 7. Meatworks did not come under the Act."

SEED WHEAT ISSUED BY AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"1. Is he aware that, owing to unfavourable weather conditions, much of the seed wheat issued by his department has failed?"

"2. Is it his intention to insist that persons whose crops have failed shall sign the promissory notes recently issued by his department, claiming full payment of seed wheat and interest by 31st December next?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. Yes; but at due date the circumstances will be considered upon the merits of each case."

AGRICULTURAL FARMS IN UPPER BURNETT.

Mr. CORSER asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. The number of agricultural farms in the Upper Burnett actually surveyed and ready for opening?"

"2. When were these surveys completed?"

"3. When will they be made available for selection?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS replied—

"1. Number of portions actually surveyed, 520; designed, 457.

"2. Varying dates up to September, 1915.

"3. As soon as railway communication can be provided."

BRISBANE GENERAL STRIKE OF 1912.

Mr. McLACHLAN (*Merthyr*) asked the Home Secretary—

"1. Is it not a fact that the special constables who were appointed acting sub-inspectors of police during the Brisbane general strike of 1912, were assigned to all police districts throughout the city of Brisbane without the Commissioner has informed him to the contrary?

"2. Were the above selected for that rank because of their social position, or was it because of their previous military training?

"3. If not, what caused the Commissioner to so select them?"

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. D. Bowman, *Fortitude Valley*) replied—

"1. Although the gentlemen named were assigned technically to the whole State, they could not have acted outside the city of Brisbane without the Commissioner's authority, so that practically the answer to the previous question is correct.

"2. Because of their fitness for the position.

"3. See answer to No. 2."

STRIKE OF SEWERAGE EMPLOYEES.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"1. Is he aware that certain employees whilst under engagement with certain contractors in sewerage construction works in the city of Brisbane, recently engaged in a strike contrary to the provisions of the Industrial Peace Act of 1912?

"2. Is he aware that these men were aided and abetted by a union known as 'The Australian Workers' Union,' and that strike pay was provided to the men in question from the funds of the said union?

"3. Does he propose to institute legal proceedings against these men and the union in question for a breach of law, and for the recovery of penalties?

"4. Is he identical with the president of the said union?"

HON. J. A. FIELLY (*Paddington*) replied—

"1. The Industrial Peace Act of 1912 applies only to callings enumerated in or declared to be callings within the meaning of that Act (section 5). The calling of 'employees employed in or in connection with sewerage works' was not created until 6th August, 1915. The Order in Council dated 8th October, 1914, as to labourers employed by the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage

Board, did not, according to the decision of the Full Court, include contractors' employees. Therefore the question is answered in the negative.

"2 and 3. See 1.

"4. Yes."

TALGAI DAIRY HERD.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"1. Is he aware that the Talgai dairy herd, near Warwick, was put up to auction in lots to suit purchasers a few days back, and were sold at very low prices?

"2. Is he aware that one of the reasons dairymen are afraid to buy is the fear of having to sterilise or boil the milk before feeding calves or pigs?

"3. Will he assure the House that no such regulation is to be enforced?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE replied—

"1. No."

"2. No."

"3. The regulation referred to did not require the sterilisation or boiling of milk, and has since been cancelled in order to issue more comprehensive regulations."

REMOVAL OF STORE SHEEP TO NEW SOUTH WALES.

Mr. GUNN asked the Chief Secretary—

"1. Is it necessary to get permission from the Chief Secretary (under the provisions of the Meat Supply for Imperial Uses Act) before moving store sheep to New South Wales?

"2. If so, when was such a regulation gazetted or brought into force?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. No regulations have been issued under the Act, nor are any regulations necessary."

PURCHASE OF BUTTER IN VICTORIA.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*), for Mr. Stevens, asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"1. Was he aware on Tuesday last, when he informed the House that 'the butter production was sufficient for the needs of the State,' that butter was being purchased in Victoria to meet the shortage in Queensland?

"2. Is it the Queensland Government that is making these purchases of butter in Victoria to meet Queensland requirements?

"3. If so, will the price here be raised in order to secure the Government against loss on the transaction?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE replied—

"1. No.

"2 and 3. No."

METROPOLITAN SEWERAGE
WORKERS' AWARD BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the Hon. J. A. Fihelly, this Bill was read a third time, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council by message in the usual form.

MEATWORKS BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS, this Bill was read a third time, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council by message in the usual form.

TRADE UNION BILL.

PROPOSED INTRODUCTION IN COMMITTEE.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: Mr. Speaker,—I move that you do now leave the chair.

HON. J. TOLMIE (*Toowoomba*): Mr. Speaker,—I do not think that you should leave the chair until we get some information about this Bill which the hon. gentleman proposes to introduce. Last week, when the hon. gentleman moved for leave to go into Committee to consider the desirableness of introducing this measure, I asked for information about the nature of the measure, but he declined to give it. Probably he had not the information to give. I am rather inclined to think that that was the reason. If it was not that, we can only put it down to ignorance.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: What did you say the reason was?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I consider we should have some information with regard to this matter. There are several very important measures on the statute-book which will be affected by this measure. There is the Trade Unions Act, which contains quite a number of sections, and which one it is proposed to amend I do not know, and neither does anyone else in the House. As we do not know what the Bill is to contain, we can only take action now to extend the scope of the Bill. It has been the experience of this Chamber quite recently that another measure introduced by the same hon. gentleman was so amended, after it had passed the initial stages, that when we came to discuss the amendments in Committee we found a lot of the powers were taken away from us, and we were unable to move the amendments we wished to do. I think it is particularly desirable that, when legislation of an important character is being introduced to alter the laws of the State to any material extent, it should be put before the public at the earliest opportunity, so that the public should have every opportunity of ascertaining the changes that are to be made.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: You are delaying it now.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am not delaying it at all. The hon. gentleman declined to give us any information at all about the measure. According to the context of the motion, I see that it proposes to amend the Criminal Code in certain particulars. I should imagine from that that he desired to amend

section 534, which deals with the intimidation of workmen and employers. There is no section of the law which is of greater importance to the employees and the employers of this State than the section safeguarding their rights, giving powers to the men engaged in enterprise to carry on that enterprise, and giving power to the workman to pursue his work uninterruptedly, so long as he does it in accordance with the statutes of this State. The reason for that section is apparent to the whole of us. We know why it was introduced. We know the absolute necessity there was for the protection of the working men of this State, and for the protection of the employers. The hon. gentleman has given us no information as to what extent he is likely to move an amendment in this direction, and I think it is very desirable that there should be an expression of opinion on the part of this Chamber in regard to these matters. Section 534 of the Criminal Code describes—

“Any person who—

By violence to the person or property of another, or by threats or intimidation of any kind”——

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot allow the hon. member to read the sections of an Act which he considers might be amended.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am going to move an amendment in connection with this matter, and I am giving reasons why I am moving the amendment.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: Your amendment may be out of order.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am going to move that this motion be read this day three months, and in connection therewith I am giving my reasons why I think the motion should be read this day three months. This is a drastic resolution, and one which should not be introduced into this House. Section 534 of the Criminal Code provides that—

“Any person who—

(1) By violence to the person or property of another, or by threats or intimidation of any kind, or by besetting the house or place of work of another, or by following another in a disorderly manner in a public highway, or by molesting, or in any way obstructing, another by any physical act in the pursuit of his lawful vocation—

is guilty of an offence.”

That is one portion of section 534 which might be amended—

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: You are making a very shrewd guess.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am making a shrewd guess. This protection is to be taken away from the employer and the employee. At least, I presume it is; but I cannot tell because of the small amount of information which has been given. Then another portion of the same section reads—

“Any person who—

(a) Compels or attempts to compel any person employed in any manufacture, trade, business, or occupation to depart from his employment or to return to his work before it is finished—

is guilty of an offence.”

This House presumably is going to take

[*Hon. J. A. Fihelly.*]

away that protection from the employee and employer and allow any persons who feel disposed to do so to interfere with them in their business, and also to prevent a man who is desirous of obtaining employment from carrying on that employment. That is a matter of tremendous importance so far as workers and employers of the State are concerned. If this section is removed, it will allow any person to prevent any other person who is not employed from accepting employment from any other person.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: The Bill is not before us.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: There is another important section of the Criminal Code which might be removed, and it will mean that the life of a workman is in danger. It will make the position of the workman a precarious one because he will be in danger of acts of violence. Then there is a matter of persons belonging to a club or association. There is a section here which might be altered, which reads as follows:—

“Any person who—

- (c) On account of any person not having complied, or refusing to comply, with any rules, orders, resolutions, or regulations, made or pretended to be made by any person, or persons, or club, or association, in order to obtain an advance of wages or to reduce the rate of wages, or to lessen or alter the hours of working in, or to decrease or alter the quantity of work done in, or to regulate the mode of carrying on, any manufacture, trade, or business, or the management thereof—
is guilty of an offence.”

I consider that when an alteration is being made to the law, it should be made public to give the public a chance of giving full consideration to it and ascertaining to what extent they are interested, and if they are likely to be affected either detrimentally or otherwise by such legislation. If this section is removed, there is no telling whether anybody will be interfered with by violence to the person or property.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: I rise to a point of order. I am very loth to do so, as I would like to see the hon. gentleman extend himself; but I would like to know, is he in order in practically creating a Bill so that he can criticise it, more particularly when that Bill has not been presented or read a first time? He has constructed a Bill for himself so that he can criticise it.

Mr. MORGAN: He is moving an amendment.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (*Lockyer*): Speaking on the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I consider that you are placed in a very difficult position. When the leader of the Opposition first quoted from a section of the Act and you called him to order, I consider that you did quite right. I was absolutely with you in that call to order; but, seeing that information in connection with the Bill was asked, and that it was not given, I hold that the leader of the Opposition is absolutely within his rights if he goes all round the point of legislation which is likely to be introduced. (Government dissent.) No specific information has been given as to what legislation will be introduced; and if we think that legislation which is distasteful

to us is going to be brought forward, then we have a perfect right to discuss this question. I hold that the point of order cannot be sustained owing to the meagre information which has been given to us with reference to the contents of the Bill.

The SPEAKER: The leader of the Opposition is quite in order in moving an amendment at this stage. That is provided for in our Standing Orders. I have allowed the hon. gentleman a good deal of latitude in regard to the legislation which he thinks might be introduced to amend the Criminal Code. I hope he will now confine his remarks to reasons why I should not now leave the chair.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: I desire to thank, you, Mr. Speaker, for having accepted the amendment. I say so quite unreservedly, because I think you have been absolutely fair. I am quite within my rights under Standing Order No. 159 in moving the amendment that I am about to move, and I am giving

reasons why I do so. I would

[4 p.m.] not have taken this drastic action

had it not been for the fact that the hon. member did not give us any information on a matter which, as I have already stated, is of such great importance. My amendment will give ample opportunity to the Government to make known to the public what their intentions are in regard to these two very important statutes. It is a matter on which the public should have some knowledge. There has, so far as we are aware, been no great public demand for legislation in this direction, and that being so, and in view of the fact that there is so much legislation that is very pressing, and that unemployment is becoming rife and that provision should be made for it, and also in view of the fact that we on the Opposition side of the House do not know what the financial state of Queensland is—and I doubt whether hon. gentlemen on the other side know—I say that there are more important factors for us to consider. All those things are important factors, factors of greater importance than that which the Government desire to introduce. I do not know whether the motion is introduced merely for the sake of marking time, and to give the Government another opportunity of financing the State. If that is so—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. J. TOLMIE: I am dealing with this particular motion and saying that from my point of view—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is in order in giving reasons why there is no necessity to go into Committee, but he will not be in order in discussing the finances of the State.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: I say that there is no necessity for the introduction of legislation of this kind, and I am giving reasons why.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: Giving what?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Giving reasons why. I say that the Government at the present time should be endeavouring to put the finances of the State of Queensland in order. That is the best and most solid reason that can be adduced why legislation of this sort should not be introduced now. This is stand-over legislation, whereas the other measures I speak of deal with matters of daily occurrence and necessity and affect the very life

Hon. J. Tolmie.]

and well-being of this State. I say that the Government should try to adapt themselves to conditions rather than introduce legislation of this kind.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How do you know they are not?

The SPEAKER: Order!

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am not going to answer the conundrums of the hon. member. I am addressing my remarks entirely to you, Mr. Speaker, and I am giving you the reasons why, in my opinion, there is no necessity to introduce this Bill at the present time.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Your ex-leader had it in his Rockhampton programme in 1907—a Bill under this very title.

HON. J. TOLMIE: When the hon. member has finished I will resume my remarks. It would be very disorderly to reply to interjections and I am not going to be disorderly. I am afraid that I was thrown off the track by the interjections that have been made, but I do not intend to delay the House at any great length. I only wish to say that it grieves me very much to take up this attitude. I would very much prefer to assist the Government and facilitate business, and I think they will admit that that has been done to every possible extent and at all times when there has been any disposition on the part of the Government to exercise that courtesy which is usually exercised by Governments. But if, because there is brute force on the other side, it is not considered desirable to give any information to the Opposition, which has to get information for the people outside, we have this means of bringing under the notice of the public the conduct of affairs in this House, to show the general public that there is a desire to obscure all legislation that is being introduced, so that the people may not become cognisant—

The SPEAKER: Order!

HON. J. TOLMIE: That is a reason, and I say that there is a desire on the part of the Government, judging from their attitude, to prevent people becoming cognisant in due time of the important changes which it is proposed to be made by the legislation which they are seeking to introduce. And, for that reason, I desire to move that all the words after the word "That" be omitted with a view to the insertion in lieu thereof of the following words—

"the House will on this day three months resolve itself into the said Committee."

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*): I rise for the purpose of seconding the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition. I think he has stated very good reasons for moving that the desirableness of considering this amendment of the Trade Unions Act and the Criminal Code in certain particulars should be considered this day three months. As a matter of fact, I think that the Assistant Minister in charge of this particular measure showed a very great amount of want of courtesy to the leader of the Opposition and members on this side in not giving us the information that we wished to have.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: You want to read the little red book.

Mr. PETRIE: I do not wish to read the little red book, or to be dictated to by the

[*Hon. J. Tolmie.*]

hon. member. My reason for seconding the amendment is that I think that legislation of this nature, which is likely to be contentious, and probably—as has been pointed out—may be a serious matter not only to employees but also to employers, and affects one particular section of the Criminal Code—I think legislation of that nature might well be postponed at a time when we have this perilous war upon us. I think that legislation of this nature should be postponed, at all events till after the war. All the legislation introduced by this Government has a trend in one particular direction and towards one particular class of people. Everybody else is to be ignored and the Government are to pass legislation, whether it suits the public or not, legislation of a violent nature—although in this case we can only guess at it because we do not know what the amendment of our law is going to be. I think we have every reason to be treated with more courtesy than the Assistant Minister has afforded to the House since he has been in office. He is a young man—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PETRIE: Well, I will not deal with that, but I only hope that the amendment will be carried. If we cannot get the information we desire, this step, unfortunately, has to be taken by this side of the House. I regret it very much indeed. I think that with a little more courtesy and tact towards members on this side the Assistant Minister would get on very much better.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: Anyone would think you put me here.

Mr. PETRIE: I did not put you there. I am not responsible for that sin, at all events. I hope that the House will view this from a reasonable point of view. We on this side have only been asking for a reasonable thing and we expect to be treated as members should be treated. I do not wish to delay the House any further. I have much pleasure in seconding the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I really thought that the Minister might have had the courtesy to give us the information that is asked for. The amendment is that instead of discussing this thing in Committee now we should adjourn the question until a later time. We are asked to vote on the blind to a very great extent. We are asked to agree to the desirableness of something that we know nothing about.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: The Bill will be printed in five minutes.

Mr. VOWLES: The point is that if we agree to the principle we place ourselves in a peculiar position, and we, and the public, should know if standing legislation, criminal legislation in particular, is going to be taken off the statute-books, what the reason is for taking it away, and whether it is desirable or not. It is claimed by the leader of the Opposition that it is a hit at a particular section of the Criminal Code. If that is so, I think it is in the interests of the people, and more particularly of the Opposition, that we should have an opportunity of knowing what we are committing ourselves to. If the intention is to deal with this section, then I say it is not in the interests of the general community, because it is legislating to take away from the criminal jurisdiction of our courts certain powers relative to strikes in particular, and what is known

as peaceful picketing—that is, intimidating by gestures, by words or conduct, or anything else you like, either employer or employees. The trend of the legislation we have had before us has been dealing with workmen, and we have this coming on top. We cannot anticipate the intentions of the Government so far as trade unions are concerned.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in anticipating the contents of the Bill.

Mr. VOWLES: No, I say we cannot. The suggestion has been made by the leader of the Opposition, and by his silence the Minister has given a good deal of credit to what the leader of the Opposition anticipated. By interjection, he has given us to understand that we were on the wrong track. If that is so, why does he not close the debate and let us know what is the right track? When the matter was before the House previously we asked for information and could not get it, and now I say it is only right that we should stand out as a matter of protest and support the amendment that the consideration of this matter should be adjourned for three months. I am supporting it simply from the point of view that I do not think the hon. member is giving the courtesy which he should to the leader of the Opposition and his following under the circumstances. If it were a matter of ordinary legislation—to amend some trivial law—it would be one thing, but when it is dealing with the criminal law in particular sections in the direction of creating mob law and mob control—which it might mean—it is another thing, and I say that in the interests of the public the Opposition, who are asked here to preserve the law as it stands at present, should take the stand they have. For that reason I am supporting the amendment.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): From the experience which the House has had in connection with measures brought forward by the Minister, I think there are very good reasons why the amendment should receive the support of members of this Chamber. When we agreed to the introduction of those measures, we were told that certain principles were in them, and after our experiences we feel "once bitten twice shy." The information which the Minister has refused to give to the Opposition was given time after time during the last seven years when members supporting the Government occupied seats on this side of the House. From the wording of the motion moved by the Assistant Minister of Justice we are naturally led to believe that there is to be an alteration in a very important law now in existence. The proposed Bill may carry out a certain plank in the platform on which Ministers and their supporters went to the country—that is plank 8, providing for an amendment of the trade union law; still we, as an Opposition, are entitled to know what are the intentions of the Government in this respect. We are also entitled to ordinary courtesy. I am sure hon. members will agree with me that when the leader of the Opposition was in office he was tolerant and courteous in the performance of his duties, and that he has displayed the same tolerance and courtesy as leader of the Opposition, and naturally he expects to be

treated with common courtesy by any Minister who is in charge of a Bill. We anticipate that a most important amendment is to be made in the existing law. The leader of the Opposition has dealt very fully with a certain provision in the Criminal Code which is of vital importance to employers and employees, as it deals with industrial disputes, strikes, and lockouts. It is my opinion that the Opposition would not be doing their duty if they allowed a Bill of this sort to be introduced without further information being given, and I hope and trust that even at this late hour the Minister will give us the information asked for and take the Opposition into his confidence. If the Bill is necessary, and the Minister is satisfied that it is right and proper to make the proposed amendments in the law, surely he is not afraid to give the House information as to the nature of the proposed amendments. Is it purely and simply pig-headedness or want of tact that prevents the Minister giving that information? Possibly it may be both; otherwise, after the leader of the Opposition had finished his address pointing out the reasons why the Opposition should be treated with courtesy and taken into the Minister's confidence in this matter, the hon. gentleman would have risen and given the information desired. If there is any delay in the passing of this motion, then that delay has been brought about by the Minister himself. I feel sure that if any other member had been in charge of this Bill he would have given us the information we have asked for and have explained the intentions of the Government.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Tolmie's amendment*) stand part of the question—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 29.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Larcombe
" Armfield	" Lennon
" Bertram	" May
" Bowman	" McLachlan
" Carter	" O'Sullivan
" Collins	" Payne
" Cooper	" Peterson
" Fihelly	" Pollock
" Foley	" Ryan, D.
" Gilday	" Ryan, H. J.
" Gillies	" Smith
" Hartley, H. L.	" Stoford
" Hunter	" Wellington
" Huxham	" Winstanley
" Land	

Tellers: Mr. Gillies and Mr. D. Ryan:

NOES, 15.

Mr. Armstrong	Mr. Moore
" Barnes	" Morgan
" Bayley	" Petrie
" Bridges	" Roberts
" Corser	" Stodart
" Forsyth	" Tolmie
" Gunn	" Vowles
" Hodge	

Tellers: Mr. Hodge and Mr. Roberts.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. T. J. Ryan, Mr. McPhail, Mr. Theodore, Mr. W. Hartley, Mr. Kirwan, Mr. McMinn, Mr. Free, and Mr. Hardacre.

Noes—Lieut.-Colonel Rankin, Mr. Macartney, Mr. Swayne, Mr. Booker, Mr. Stevens, Mr. Walker, Mr. Grayson, and Mr. Appel.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Original question put and passed.

Mr. Morgan.]

COMMITTEE.

(Mr. Coyne, Warrego, in the chair.)

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY moved—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the law relating to trade unions and the Criminal Code in certain particulars.”

During the last half an hour, or perhaps three-quarters of an hour, they had witnessed an exhibition of captious opposition to this measure on the part of members on the other side of the House. Those hon. members simply endeavoured to delay the printing of the measure. The measure could have been printed some considerable time ago if members opposite had not wished to show how offensive and personal they could be, and if the leader of the Opposition had not desired to show his followers how clever he was.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Is the Bill not printed now?

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: It would be printed in a few moments. The leader of the Opposition simply seized the opportunity to be gratuitously offensive. If the hon. gentleman and members opposite, instead of referring to the little red book they were so fond of quoting, would only study the Standing Orders, they would know that this was the right stage for the Minister to explain the purpose of the Bill. If he had given the information last Thursday, and had given it again on the motion to go into Committee, members would have had a surfeit of that information. The Bill proposed to amend a couple of provisions in the Criminal Code.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Which provisions are they?

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: The Bill would be here in a few moments, and the hon. member would then get that information. The Trade Unions Act which it was proposed to deal with in the Bill was passed in 1886, so that it would be quite understood that some amendment was necessary in that legislation.

HON. J. TOLMIE: What sections are you amending in the Trade Unions Act?

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: They were wiping out the Trade Unions Act entirely, so that the hon. member need not refer to it. After a lapse of thirty years, it was only right that they should make some amendment in the law relating to trade unions. The present Act was altogether unsatisfactory. He did not know of any British-speaking country where their trade union law was so obsolete and out of date. The amendments in the proposed Bill were based on the English Act and the experience gained in connection with the Osborne case. Security would be given to trade unions as far as their funds were concerned. There was no security now. There was a clause in the Act dealing with picketing, but this merely defined what picketing should be. He thought that in itself it was a very harmless clause. In 1905, the leader of the present leader of the Opposition forecasted a Bill similar to this one, and he was astonished at the hon. gentleman not knowing something about it. He (Mr. Fihelly) had read it several times. He saw the Minister's note and the late Attorney-General's voluminous notes on it. He thought he saw the notes of the hon. member who led the Opposition, who he thought had

made a few annotations on that particular Bill, and he was astonished that the hon. gentleman did not know the contents of the Bill they proposed to introduce. They were only too happy to avail themselves of suggestions, no matter from where they came, and if the old Kidston party had a good Labour element in it, and that Labour element made sound suggestions, they would adopt them and incorporate them with the more up-to-date idea which they formulated themselves. If there were any more points which hon. members desired to mention, he should be glad to give them any information which he could. He had given them what he thought was necessary, and he would leave the rest for the second reading stage.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. member's idea of what was a fair outline of the Bill was materially different to that of other hon. members. The information which he had given had simply been dragged out of him. If he had endeavoured to give as little information as he possibly could, he certainly could not have done so better than he had done at the present time.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: I cannot help it if you are unable to assimilate it.

HON. J. TOLMIE: This amendment of the Trade Unions Act was simply to wipe that Act off the statute-book altogether. The hon. gentleman had given no indication of that sort, but from the manner in which the statement was made he believed that was the intention of the Government in this Bill.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: That is so.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Then, in regard to the very important provision in the Criminal Code, which had been a safeguard to working men in this State for a considerable number of years, he had given them little or no information. He had indicated this was to do away with the clause which prevented picketing.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: We are going to introduce peaceful picketing.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The Chairman was well aware, from his wide knowledge of industrial matters and disputes, that it could be anything but peaceful picketing. He trusted the Chairman would not take that remark as a reflection on himself, but as having been made on account of his wide experience in connection with these matters. They had all had some experience in industrial disputes. They had seen the conditions under which industries had been prosecuted, and the disaster which had overtaken them, and their desire was to mitigate the evil as much as possible. One of the chief protections which had been afforded to working men in this free land had been the legislation which it was now desired by the Government to remove from the statute-book. They were going to remove all those safeguards. He did not know of any other Government which had set itself the task so earnestly as this Government had done to try and wreck the very foundations on which industrialism was built, to destroy all possible kindly feeling between employer and employee. Every Bill which had been introduced by the Government, with the exception of perhaps one or two minor measures, had had that object definitely in view—to destroy the confidence that had existed between employer and employee, and which had resulted in the development of Queensland to its

[Hon. J. A. Fihelly.]

present high state. It was possibly because there had been introduced into this Chamber a body of men whose work for a number of years had been in that direction, and they had come here full of the enthusiasm which had inspired them in the work they had been carrying out, and with the determination to force the Government to "walk the plank"; and they were succeeding to the fullest extent in making the Government "walk the plank." They saw the leader of the Government summoned to the Trades Hall to have drilled into him the attitude which he had to take up in connection with legislation.

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: This is melodrama.

HON. J. TOLMIE: One measure after another had been introduced with the same object in view—that was, to destroy the confidence between employer and employee. Under the section which it was proposed to take out of the measure which they were now considering, there was a certain amount of protection given to all working men. They could proceed to their work and carry out their avocations without being submitted to contumely on the way there, or perhaps in the workshop or on the way home. Their homes, at any rate, were not surrounded with large bodies of men imbued with the one desire of compelling a workman against his own better judgment to cease work or to do those things which he thought he should not do. All these things were set forth by the hon. member as likely to be done. He had told them that this was a measure to give greater protection to the funds of trade unions. Now, under the law which existed to-day the trade unions had all the protection that any reasonable man could ask for them.

Mr. COLLINS: What about the change brought in in Great Britain?

HON. J. TOLMIE: They had all reasonable protection for their funds. All the funds they desired to earmark as benefit funds for the advantage of the individual members of the unions were protected, but with the exception of one of the societies which had accumulated money in the old country and had branches all over the world, there were no funds which were set aside for benefit purposes. All the time the desire was to utilise this money and to force men—whether they believed in the principles that were being enunciated by the unions or not if they had to earn money to maintain their wives and families—to pay money into the funds for the purpose of fighting in the direction of securing legislation that was ultimately going to destroy themselves. They had listened to the hon. member in charge of the Bill which dealt with two of the most important measures now on the statute-book of this State. The Minister's speech was of a most flippant character, and calculated to give them as little information as possible. They had had experience in the Chamber before of authorising a Bill to be introduced which they could not amend when it came into Committee, and possibly something of the same sort might occur now. In order to protect themselves as fully as possible, he moved the omission, after "Code" of the words "in certain particulars." That would widen the scope of the measure. Surely, the Minister could not object to the amendment, which would give an opportunity to hon. members on either side to move any

amendments which they might think would make the Bill more workable and more in the interests of the people of the State.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Murrumba*) supported the amendment, because it would not be a wise thing to alter the law in connection with both the Criminal Code and the Trade Unions Act. Anyone would at once see the object of this particular Bill. As the law stood, no trade union could compel a man to pay certain fees unless he wanted to do so, and that was always the principle which this side had supported—freedom as to saying how money was to be spent. They knew that a great deal of money collected from trades unions had not been spent on benefits, but on quite different things!

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: We are providing for that too.

Mr. FORSYTH: They were getting information as they went along. There was no doubt that the system under which money paid into the trades unions, which might be used in such a way as the man who paid it in objected to, was objectionable. They sought to protect the worker from being forced into the position that he must pay certain fees in regard to which he had no power to say as to how they should be spent. Under the Criminal Code and the Trade Unions Act the men were protected in every possible way. It was only fair that the destination of the money paid into trade unions should be defined, and if it was for the benefit of members it should not be touched for any other purpose. If the money was to be spent in connection with political propaganda work, or in connection with running a newspaper, or in some other way, it should be so specified. So long as the workmen subscribed upon those terms and conditions it was all right, but up to the present time it had not been so. If a man joined an industrial union, why should he be asked to subscribe money for an object which he did not believe in? He thought it was only right to enlarge the scope of the Bill. It was quite evident that the whole of the Trade Unions Act was to be wiped out, and that the Criminal Code was going to be altered in regard to clause 534. Under the present law they could not compel a man to contribute to a certain fund and could not bring him before the court for not doing so. He hoped they would be able to alter the measure in some way so that if a man did not want to contribute to a certain fund he need not do so.

Mr. VOWLES supported the amendment. He was sorry the Minister was adopting an oyster-like attitude. He would save the time of the House if he gave more information. The Minister spoke for three minutes, and he took up about half that time in chastising the Opposition, while the remainder of the time was devoted to outlining the measure he proposed to introduce. The motion was the desirableness of amending the trade union law in certain particulars, but the Minister gave them to understand that instead of amending the law he was going to introduce fresh legislation altogether.

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: Some of the old law will remain. For instance, clause 1 of the old Act will be clause 1 of this Bill. (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: He knew the intention was to give the trade unions power to devote

Mr. Vowles.]

their funds for political purposes, and that was never contemplated when the Trade Unions Act was first introduced. The measure was intended to circumvent the decisions given in the old country which had the effect of changing our laws. According to our law, every man would be compelled to become a member of a trade union, whether he liked it or not, and the funds of the union would be devoted towards objects he was not identified with, and for purposes which he thought were undesirable. With regard to the amendment of the Criminal Code, he understood the Minister to twit the leader of the Opposition with anticipating legislation which was never intended, but, as a matter of fact, the leader of the Opposition had referred to the very section which it was proposed to amend.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: That is what I suggested. I told him he made a very shrewd guess.

Mr. VOWLES: The Criminal Code had been in existence since 1899, and it secured the protection to members of trade unions against interference in any undue way by persons connected with unions.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: I might accept an amendment to include your union—the lawyers' union.

Mr. VOWLES: Under the proposed measure it would mean that a man would be intimidated and his family would be intimidated and they would be forced to go against their convictions. They knew that during industrial strife in Brisbane shopkeepers were intimidated to such an extent that they were afraid to open their shops, while workmen were intimidated so much that they were afraid to go to work, and even their families were afraid.

Mr. COLLINS: Why were they afraid?

Mr. VOWLES: Because mob law was in existence. If that sort of thing was going to be countenanced in Queensland, it would be a bad thing for everybody. This Bill would countenance mob rule and would allow the public to be intimidated.

Mr. COOPER: Is not mob rule preferable to snob rule?

Mr. VOWLES: They were getting Labour legislation hot and strong now. They were getting it by mob rule, and they were being ruled by snob rule. It was not right that they should be asked to vote on the blind with regard to any legislation. They were getting the provisions of the Bill bit by bit. He hoped the Minister would open his soul and give them a full outline of the Bill.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: I will give you the Bill itself directly.

Mr. VOWLES: The scope of the Bill should be widened before they bound themselves down to passing a Bill to amend the law in certain particulars. They should know what they were voting for, and that was why they wanted to extend the scope so that they could introduce an amendment if they wished to.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The Minister stated that the law relating to trade unions would

[*Mr. Vowles.*

be altered. He would like to know if the new law would be on the lines of the trade union law in England?

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: It will remove some of the troubles created by the English Act. The hon. gentleman knows the English Act.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Yes, he knew all about the trade union troubles in England.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: Then you realise the necessity for this Bill.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: He knew the trouble that arose in England over the Osborne case, and that the trade union law had to be amended to meet the defects which were found in the Osborne case. If this law was to the same effect, then he would consider seriously before he supported the amendment of the leader of the Opposition.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: It is to the same effect.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: He was very pleased to hear the Minister say that, because it removed a very great objection in regard to the allocation of the funds of the trade unions. They all knew that every individual member of a trade union would have a different idea as to how the funds should be allocated, just the same as every member of Parliament would have a different idea as to how any funds that they might have to handle would have to be allocated. If a trade union wished to allocate a certain portion of its funds for political purposes, they should have a perfect right to do so. He agreed really and honestly that everyone should become members of a trade union, for the simple reason that it would be much easier to break the trade union from within than from without. With regard to the Criminal Code, some consideration should be given to it before anything was done to amend it. They had been working under its provisions for a good number of years, and the unions knew the law as defined in the code. He did not know that they should widen the leave with regard to "certain particulars." He disagreed with the whole of that portion of the legislation entirely. He thought the whole responsibility for the introduction of the legislation should remain upon the shoulders of those who introduced it, and they should let them take the fullest responsibility with regard to it. In fact, they should give them enough rope to hang themselves. They should get all the unions they could inside the trade union law and let them hang themselves.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: Don't you steal it at the next election.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: No, he would not do so. The hon. gentleman knew that he (Mr. Armstrong) had always given his opinion openly and freely on all matters, and that was why he thought they should all become unionists, so as to break the trade union from within.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: You will apply it also to the Farmers' Union?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Certainly, he would. (Laughter.) He could not support the amendment. He was quite in favour of giving hon. members opposite enough rope, so that they could hang themselves.

Mr. MORGAN: If the hon. member for Lockyer wished to give members opposite

enough rope to hang themselves, then he could do that by supporting the amendment, which was to give the Government a little more legislation than they were asking for. Perhaps it would be found that the Minister had forgotten something, and as the debate proceeded, the Minister would see the necessity for some fresh legislation, just as he discovered it in connection with the Bill which he had recently introduced. It was because of the fresh legislation that the Minister thought necessary that they were compelled to get the Speaker and Chairman of Committees to give rulings on the matter. The Minister in charge put the blame on somebody else.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: Do you remember how you amended your policy on giving the soldiers a vote?

Mr. MORGAN: In connection with this particular measure, the Minister had an opportunity of bringing in amendments which were not contained in it. All that the leader of the Opposition had done was to move an amendment with a view to giving the Minister more scope. They recognised that he was only a new Minister, that he had not had a great deal of experience, and did not appear to be too comfortable in his seat; and, in order to assist him, and see that he passed legislation as

[5 p.m.] perfect as possible, the leader of the Opposition had volunteered to give him every opportunity of amending the Bill, because it would save doing it in caucus. Another thing, when their masters met or the Trades Hall saw the Bill—if they had not already seen it—they might come along with further amendments. He thought the Minister would be well advised to accept the amendment, because it was moved with perfectly good intentions, with the best of motives, with the object of assisting the Minister, so that he would not display the ignorance he displayed when he moved a previous measure. They had had very little information from him, but so far as the trade unions were concerned, they knew that at the present time agitators were not able to compel trade union funds to be used for political purposes. No doubt the Minister was bringing in the Bill so that the agitators would be able to use the sums subscribed in weekly or monthly payments by the unionists, many of whom were forced into the unions because it meant that otherwise they were not permitted to work and so earn the food for those dependent on them—so that they would be able to use that money for political purposes. Those men who were compelled to join the unions would thus have to contribute towards funds which, on election day, would be used against candidates—Liberal candidates—whom in the secret ballot they might support.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What champions of unionists!

Mr. MORGAN: They made no distinction, and that was why they were opposing the Bill. They said that the unions had no right to use their funds against the wishes of a great number of unionists, for political purposes.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: Can you prevent the Colonial Sugar Refining Company from using its funds for political purposes?

Mr. MORGAN: The law was to be amended so that those who were in power

might, at the next general election, have a great lot of funds at their disposal to keep them in power and pay their expenses—so that they would be saved paying them out of their own pockets. Members opposite were supporting the Bill from a selfish motive, because they thought that they would have at their disposal the accumulated funds—funds which had been accumulating perhaps for years, and that they would come in very nicely three years hence, when, perhaps, the publicans and others would withdraw their support.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What about the Farmers' Union? They are using their funds for political purposes.

Mr. MORGAN: The Farmers' Union at present were working under the law. But if it was a question of political unionism—and they were not dealing with industrial unionism—he would not care how they used their funds, because, when a man joined a political union, he would know what he was in for. There was no doubt that a great deal of monetary support, at any rate, was given at the last election to the Labour party—hiring of motor-cars and so on—by certain bodies in order to defeat the Liberal Government purely and simply out of revenge—because they could not get all they desired—not because they thought the Labour party was the better party to put into power or that they would get better treatment from the Labour party. They wanted to retaliate on the then Premier, simply because they had not the power to turn and twist the Government of the day as they desired. They knew perfectly well that one very, very strong follower was the licensed victuallers in Brisbane, who threw their weight and strength and money into the fight, and were successful in bringing about the defeat of the Denham Government because they dared to introduce the Liquor Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not speaking to the amendment.

Mr. MORGAN: He was trying to connect his remarks with the union funds which were not at the disposal of the party at the last election.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member deals with trades unions' funds he will be quite in order, but not otherwise.

Mr. MORGAN: And he wanted to show why the party opposite wanted to have those funds, why they wanted to secure themselves and make certain that they would have money to fight with in order to keep them in the place of power. He wanted to deal with one portion of the proposed amendments which was not in the direction of tending towards peace and liberty and freedom—at any rate so far as the non-unionist was concerned. They were to have a section of the Criminal Code practically abolished in order to make it lawful for men who were breaking the law and were out on strike to coerce and browbeat and in every way interfere with the peaceful citizens, who were desirous of doing their duty and attending to their work. And when they had the police—as he believed they were—formed into a union, Queensland would be in a lovely position. They might have a strike with picketing and so on, and the poor unfortunate man who desired to go on working would not only be sat upon and browbeaten, but, perhaps, he would also be

Mr. Morgan.]

illused by the police, because they would be unionists then, and it would be lawful for them to take part in a strike. The police might be called out, but they would use their Government's batons on the poor unfortunate non-unionist, who would not only be beaten and knocked about by the men on strike as he went down the street, but would also get something to go on with from the police.

Mr. D. RYAN: You are supposing.

Mr. MORGAN: It was an absolute possibility, because they saw what happened in connection with the strike in 1912, when, owing to the fact that the police were not unionists, bloodshed, and a great disturbance were prevented. He trembled to think what would be the result had the police been connected with the unions at that particular period and had the people of Queensland not had their protection against the mob. This interference with the Criminal Code was going to place everything in the hands of the mob—or the Trades Hall—the house of the mob—where all legislation first saw the light of day, from which it was sent on to the Government. Some members opposite called it “the People's Parliament,” and whatever was agreed to there must eventually, if they so insisted, be brought forward in that Chamber and become law. That was one reason why he opposed a measure of this description, a Bill which was not wanted at a time when they had enough trouble and grievances and were all desirous of bringing about peace in a certain direction. But when they asked the Government to bring in measures dealing with little matters which they thought were desirable in the interests of a section of the community who were feeling the stress of the times, they were told “We have not time.”

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

Mr. MORGAN: He would take another five minutes. On the other hand, they were told “We have time to deal with this, which is going to cause unrest and industrial upheaval and general dislocation of trade”—because he knew that the Minister for Lands was aware that the legislation of which he was in control was doing a great amount of damage at the present moment, and that men were not putting their money into anything which was likely to create work, simply because they did not trust the Government. What was the Minister for Lands bringing forward to help the selectors?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MORGAN: One of the reasons why he thought they should not go any further was that a certain section of the community, who were desirous of going on the land—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must deal with the amendment, which proposes to delete certain words.

Mr. MORGAN: And to give the Minister further opportunity of bringing in amendments which he had not thought of. He thought the hon. gentleman should be thankful for the good turn which the leader of the Opposition wished to do him, and hoped they would be able to carry the amendment.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*) said he had no desire to delay the Committee, but he

[*Mr. Morgan.*

should like to express his appreciation of the amendment and his intention to support it. The broadening of the scope of the Bill would enable the Minister to fulfil to a greater extent the promise made by the leader of the Government to the country in his Barcaldine speech at the last election. The Premier then made it perfectly clear that he intended to amend the Trade Unions Act very considerably, but from the information supplied by the Minister in charge of this measure, the Opposition had come to the conclusion that the people were not going to get the measure which was promised by the Premier. The leader of the Government was reported to have said in his Barcaldine speech—

“An amendment in the law relating to trade unions will be made at an early date for the purpose of giving greater protection to trade union funds and removing some of the unjust disabilities which at present operate against unions.”

It was because the Opposition believed that that promise was not fulfilled in the measure proposed to be introduced that they were supporting an amendment to broaden the scope of the Bill. Another reason why they supported the amendment was because they objected to the appropriation of union funds for other than industrial purposes. Why should trade unionists be called upon to subscribe so many lovely sovereigns for the purpose which Mr. Watson was trying to bring about in New South Wales, and for which he was receiving a salary of £500 a year? The trade unions had spent no less than 100,000 lovely sovereigns in trying to establish a Labour Press, and the working men who had subscribed that money were losers to that extent; and it was now suggested that Mr. Watson should be appointed to the position of High Commissioner for Australia in London. Members of the Opposition wished to guard against such misappropriation of union funds. They had lost £100,000 in New South Wales in trying to establish a Labour journal.

Mr. COOPER: That is not true.

Mr. CORSER: And now that it seemed that the scheme was not going to eventuate, they wished to push Mr. Watson on one side by appointing him as High Commissioner. The desire of the Opposition was to protect the trade unionists of Queensland against such an expenditure as that.

Mr. COLLINS: They have already subscribed to it.

Mr. CORSER: Yes, some contributed to the £100,000, but the Opposition desired to see trade unionists who held various political opinions protected, and the funds which they contributed appropriated to the purposes for which they were contributed. It was not fair or right that the Government should introduce a Bill making it possible for their political party to seize those trade union funds in order to use them at another election for the purpose of convincing the people of the State that they should be retained in office. Prior to the last election, the Labour party were not able to secure a large amount of money for election purposes, but he had it on very good authority that at the last election the present Government secured no less a sum than £38,000 to enable them to obtain possession of the Treasury benches. (Government laughter.) They did not think

it was possible for them to secure that amount of money in the future, and they wanted to provide another means of securing money for election purposes, and that was one of their reasons for bringing forward this Bill. The Opposition, in the attitude they were taking, were looking to the interests of the working man, and were desirous of protecting the funds which he contributed to the union against being seized by the party which was in power at the present time. The proposed measure would make picketing legal. The Opposition did not believe that it was fair that pickets should be allowed during a strike to coerce workers to follow a certain course, and that was another reason why they objected to this Bill. With the passing of such a measure as that proposed, the pickets of unions would be really special constables, whose business it would be to further the aims of strikers in case of an industrial dispute. He trusted that the good sense of the Government would induce them to accept the amendment, and so widen the scope of the Bill that they would be enabled to carry out the promise they gave to the country at the last election.

Mr. BARNES (*Warwick*) intended to support the amendment. The information had been given to the Committee that certain things were going to be done, and those things in themselves certainly gave them scope enough for legislation, but in order to provide a little greater scope, the Opposition had come to the rescue, and proposed to give the Minister an opportunity for introducing further amendments into his Bill, or for amendments to be moved by members on that side of the House. The Opposition were deeply concerned as to what might become of the accumulated funds belonging to trade unionists. Members knew that in other days the funds of trade unions in Queensland and in other places had gone into wrong channels, and it was only right that in such legislation as that which was now proposed, they should seek to protect the funds which the members of unions subscribed. It would be an exceedingly regrettable circumstance if a few years hence funds which had been accumulated by unions for some years were to be applied to the establishment of journals that might not be in accord with the ideas of the unionists. It would also be improper to use a large proportion of those funds for election purposes. If they were to appeal to the workers at the present time, they would find that a large number of them were against moneys being squandered in that direction.

Mr. CARTER: You didn't like them using their funds to conduct strikes.

Mr. BARNES: From the interjection of the hon. member they might infer that there was an intention or desire to use these funds in conducting strikes in the future. He was sorry to have the admission from the hon. member that he anticipated that union funds would be used in that direction. The result of the measures which were introduced by the Government would be that all workers would be forced into unions, and they could very well understand that men who were not unionists to-day would be against expending funds to which they contributed in the direction which hon. members opposite evidently had in their minds. The Secretary for Agriculture interjected just now that the funds of the Farmers' Union were used for political purposes. By that simple interjection the hon. gentleman conveyed to

the minds of hon. members that, if the use of Farmers' Union funds in that particular direction was a proper thing, then it would be equally right and praiseworthy to utilise trade union funds in the same way. With regard to the Bill which it was proposed to introduce, he contended that if there was anything that the Committee should put its foot down upon, it was the legalising of anything in the way of picketing—"peaceful picketing." They knew what peaceful picketing might become when mob rule existed. (Laughter.) They could understand what would have taken place a few years ago if the Police Force had then been in a union and in sympathy with men who were striving to do picketing. They knew what a calamity it would be to this country. Those who wanted to see a community thriving and living in peace had no desire whatever to legalise the power which men unlawfully made use of in other days. And in other directions in connection with the last momentous strike, they knew the influences which were brought to bear, and it was only by the strong hand of the law—

Mr. D. RYAN: It was the batons.

Mr. BARNES: That they saved the community at that time. Once legalise the actions of men in the particular direction to which they had been given full bent, and there would be no good government. If they were going to hand over the government of the country simply to unions and their supporters, there was a very sorry day in store for Queensland. He strongly supported the amendment.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*) supported the amendment. He thought that political funds should be kept separate from other funds.

Mr. COLLINS: Is that what the Farmers' Union does?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Unfortunately, the Farmers' Union had neither funds nor rules to support strikes or for political purposes. When they went into work for political purposes they had to give their labour, and very little of that. Men were forced into unions now in order to earn a living, but no farmer was forced into the Farmers' Union in order that he might sell his produce. It would, perhaps, be a good thing if it was so, because many farmers had simply to sell their produce for just enough to get a living, the same as many a man in the past had been compelled to sell his labour to live. He did not believe in that; he believed in a fair thing all round. The funds of unions should be used for the benefit of members, and if they liked to contribute for political and trade purposes, let the amounts be kept separate. They were going to compel people who thought quite differently to unionists to contribute to union funds. There was not much objection to that, so long as the funds were used in assisting the men to become better men, to become better manufacturers, for instance. Use the funds for the betterment of the men in every way except for political purposes, which were against their own interests and against their conscience. They had no right to compel a man to contribute towards political funds against his own conscience. They did not object to a man joining a union, but the funds should be kept separate.

Mr. CARTER: Your union won't pay you anything. You can't get one.

Mr. Bebbington.]

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member talked very wildly. In any case, when the hon. member went back to his electorate, after the experience they had had in unionism, the dragging down of the producer and the boasting of the Chief Secretary—that he, after all beat the butter producers—he thought that those things would tell so much that the people would want to hear a lot from him that they did not know last time. These things were making the farmers think very seriously. There were three things which they had been considering: one was to leave the land altogether; the next was to boycott the coastal cities; and the next was civil war.

Mr. PETERSON: Are you speaking for yourself?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They are beginning to think that they would get no justice except what they got by force. They were beginning to believe that everything this Government was doing was by force, and that was the reason why they wanted the scope of this Bill extended. Hon. members talked about force. There would not be very much force wanted to take some of the cities at the rate they were going to war. They certainly did not want fight; they would keep out of it as much as they possibly could. What strengthened that conviction was that the men had to depend on the women in the big strike; the women were in the front. He thought the country people were thinking very seriously of asking the women in the cities to take the men's places at the front in the war. There were so many of their boys going from the country that there were none of them left. Union funds should be kept separate, and used for the betterment of the men. Let them join a union for industrial purposes and get the best conditions they could, but it was wrong to force men to contribute for political purposes against their own consciences.

Mr. PETRIE thought the leader of the Opposition was perfectly right in asking for the omission of the words "in certain particulars." It was a most important matter to amend laws in the direction sought. The trend of legislation since the present Government had come into power had been in the one direction, which was controlled by a power outside. There was no doubt that it was framed there before it was brought into the House, and, notwithstanding the efforts of the Opposition, the Government were going to carry that legislation. The Opposition were asking for this amendment for the protection of employees as well as of employers. He took it that trade unions were looked upon as benefit societies, but if they chose to use the money for political purposes and the members agreed, then it had nothing to do with anyone else, but, at the same time, it was objectionable if they were compelled to pay towards a thing they did not wish to have. That was very often done by the leading men in connection with some of the unions, who ran the whole concern, and thereby intimidated some employees. He knew that employees belonged to unions today for peace sake.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: To get their living.

Mr. PETRIE: Yes. He had a newspaper cutting here, headed "Labour Problems," which he would read to hon. members—

"A mechanic in the winding depart-

[Mr. Bebbington.

ment of a Manchester firm of electrical engineers came to loggerheads with his fellow-workmen and decided to leave. His piecework account for the last week ran up to nearly £5. As this was an astonishing amount for a department where half this sum was considered a normally good week's wages, the wages clerk reported the matter to the manager, and the man was requested to explain how he had earned so much.

"I could have done that every week had I dared," he asserted. "I'm the quickest worker in the whole shop, sir, though I guess no one knew it before."

"Then why are you leaving?" queried the manager. "You're just the kind of man we want."

"Because I can't let myself out," retorted the workman. "I'm sick of holding back and killing time. Besides, I want more money. So I'm off to America, where I'm told I can earn twice as much as I draw here."

"What do you mean by holding back and killing time?"

"I mean that I must not make over £3 a week in this shop. The men would cripple me if I did. It would let the cat out of the bag, and upset the wage schedule. We shan't part very friendly because of this," and he rattled the wage in his pocket.

"No persuasion would hold him."

That was the sort of thing that men at the present time were fearful of. They were now asked to pass legislation, that no matter what members of a union might do—a man might be afraid to go round a building when there was a strike in case a brick should fall on his head.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: Oh, that is coming it too strong!

Mr. PETRIE: It was not coming it too strong. What they wanted on his side was to let the public see what sort of legislation they might expect not only now but for the next three years.

Mr. MAY: The next twenty years.

Mr. PETRIE: At an important time like this, they had other matters in connection with the war, which were far more serious and should receive the attention of the Ministry, and legislation of this nature might well be kept over till next session—until the war was over.

Mr. D. RYAN: You mean next century.

Mr. PETRIE: Not next century. They had a perfect right in the interests of the men who did not belong to the unions, and some who were in the unions, to see that they had the protection which they desired, and that there should be no intimidation exercised if a strike occurred. Men should be allowed to exercise their own judgment. He knew this Bill would become law, and that they could do nothing but enter their protest against it, as no matter what they might say, the Government had a thumping majority, which made the Minister for Justice so uncompromising. The Minister thought he was the Lord High Executioner, but he was a young man, and had a lot to learn yet. He was, no doubt, a clever young man, and might make his mark here, but he would have to alter his attitude, or else he would not.

Hon. J. FITHELLY: Will you supply the tombstone? (Laughter.)

Mr. PETRIE would see that the hon. gentleman got a very good one at as reasonable a price as possible, and it would probably be made by union men. (Laughter.) He was very glad of that interjection, because it gave him a free advertisement. He was always very glad of anything that would bring in a little more work, which they certainly wanted these times.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. PETRIE: Every man in the House had a right to his own political opinion. That was no reason why they should cut one another's throat. It was the duty of the Opposition to point out any mistakes they thought the Government were making and to criticise any legislation they were certain was not going to be for the benefit of the community. He knew the Bill would be carried. The leader of the Opposition was quite right in moving his amendment, because he wanted to make the Bill fair and just for every section of the community.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*): When the members of the present Government were in Opposition, they always put up a fight with regard to the words "certain particulars"; they always wanted the scope of the Bill widened by excluding "certain particulars." Now that they were in power, why did they not seize the opportunity of having every Bill discussed in every particular without excluding anything at all? The trade unionist at the present time was top dog all over Australia. The unionists had their Trades Hall meetings, and their conferences, and they framed laws and conditions under which they would work. They sent down their laws to different Legislatures and instructed their colleagues in Parliament to carry out those laws, which were conceived and born in the Trades Halls of the different States. Therefore, there was no reason whatever for a Bill of this nature. The reason the Bill was brought in was because it was one of the commandments in the Labour bible. The eighth commandment in the Labour bible was as follows:—

"Amendment of the trades union law."

There were a number of measures conceived in the Trades Hall, such as the Meatworks Bill, and the Government of the day were instructed to put these different Acts on the statute-book. The present Government also had to carry out the wishes of their masters. He (Mr. Gunn) was an employer of labour, and his experience was that the unionist was never afraid of the master. The unionist was more afraid of his fellow-unionists. He had had a lot of experience with men. One one occasion, when a unionist told him that he did not have a ticket, and the union delegate was coming along, he said to him, "My advice to you is to go and buy a ticket. If you do not get a ticket, your life will not be worth living." Seeing that the trade unionist was the top dog, this Bill was not required at all. They did not want such a law on the statute-book at all. If they wanted to pass an Act at all, it should be to protect the non-unionist who was at the mercy of everyone.

Mr. STOFFORD: At the mercy of the employer.

Mr. GUNN: No, he was not. All he had to do was to take a union ticket, which they were compelling men to do all over Queens-

land at present. If they did not wish to join a union, they would have to go out and die of starvation. There were so many men coming round collecting from the unionists that they did not know where it was going to end. They had to subscribe to the daily Labour paper or the "Worker." On one occasion, a man said he was asked to subscribe to the paper and asked what he would do, and he said to him, "My advice to you is to pay every time." The man then said, "I cannot read. I never learnt to read, so what is the good of me paying for a paper I cannot read?" Many trades unions collected money for political purposes, but under this Bill, if money were collected for the purposes of providing medical comforts for the members, the money might be commandeered and used for political purposes.

Mr. MAY: You are wrong—entirely wrong.

Mr. GUNN: They would see when they got the Bill that he was right. The Bill was going to be foisted on the country, although it was only a bit of window-dressing and would seldom be used.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: Then why fight it?

Mr. GUNN: Because there were too many Acts on the statute-book. Every year a poor man had to employ more lawyers to assist him because there are far too many Acts on the statute-book. Every time a new Act was introduced, an old Act ought to be wiped off. Some day the people would rise and say there were too many laws passed altogether. Half their time was taken in filling up forms of one kind or another. (Laughter.) This Act would mean more forms to fill up. He hoped they would be able to amend the Bill in Committee.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): He had one or two reasons why the amendment should be assented to to widen the scope of the Bill. If the amendment was defeated, they would not have another opportunity of widening the scope of the Bill. The hon. member for Carnarvon told them that if a man wished to make a living, he would have to join a union first. Then portions of the funds of the union would be used for subscriptions to papers with which they had not the least sympathy, and in many instances they were unable to read the papers that they had to subscribe to. The Registrar of Friendly Societies had been making remarks about the trade unions for a number of years, and it showed that it might be necessary to amend the law in the direction suggested by the Registrar. That was one reason why they should widen the scope of the Bill at this stage. The Registrar, in dealing with the registration of trade unions from 1910 to 1913, pointed out certain things which the trade unions were doing probably illegally, and it was necessary to make amendments in that direction. In 1910, the Registrar reported as follows:—

"The expenditure for 1909 amounted to £16,256, of which £2,532 was paid for benefits, £8,398 for management, and £5,326 for other payments, mainly assistance to other unions, legal and political expenses, and contributions to Labour newspapers. In view of recent legal decisions, the positions of unions generally respecting these latter payments are doubtful."

That was the point to which he wished to

Mr. Roberts.]

draw the attention of the Committee, as a reason why the scope of the Bill should be widened. The Registrar went on—

“I have advised the officials to that effect as necessity has arisen, and when considering amendments to rules submitted.”

In that year the revenue was £16,867. Out of £16,256 of expenditure, benefits paid amounted to £2,532. In 1911, the Registrar reported—

“The expenditure for 1910 amounted to £25,423, of which £4,641 was paid for benefits, £8,607 for management, and £12,180 for other payments, mainly assistance to other unions, legal and political expenses, and contributions to Labour newspapers.”

In 1912, the Registrar reported—

“During the year some of the largest Labour unions withdrew from registration mainly on account of the necessity for closer restriction of their objects as set forth in the rules consequent on legal decisions affecting trade unions.”

He went on to show that of that total amount of £11,960, the sum of £3,151 was paid for benefits, £6,677 for management, and £2,130 for other payments, and he remarked that the latter item, owing

[7 p.m.] to the withdrawal of the unions which devoted their funds to purposes outside of the scope of trades unions as then interpreted, fell by £10,050. In his 1913 report, the Registrar stated—

“Of the total expenditure, amounting to £16,934 during 1912, £3,839 was paid for benefits, £6,048 for management, and £1,997 for various other payments. The principal items paid for benefits were—Strike pay, £6,790; sickness, £368; superannuation, £418; funeral, £272; unemployment, £115.”

He thought there were some reasons why they should get an opportunity of more widely discussing the Trade Union Bill in Committee and making amendments. Then again, they knew that the Government proposed to provide for preference to unionists. Under those circumstances they should be assured that the Bill would make it possible for every man to become a member of a union without restriction. They also should provide for the other point: that when a member—probably for some good and just cause—found that he could not continue any longer to be a member, he should be allowed to pay the amount for which he might be indebted to the union and withdraw from it, on the full understanding that if he wished again to follow that employment, he might be readmitted. He knew personally of one instance—he could give any hon. member the name—in which a man who was what was called a good unionist took exception to certain actions of his union. He thought that they were not playing a fair game, and he paid up his dues and left. He was able to obtain employment in a non-union shop, and things went along all right. At a later date he wished to get employment in other works, and was successful, and proposed to commence work there. He was told by one of the men representing the unions—he supposed the person in charge, so far as those works were concerned—that he could not start on that job until he

[Mr. Roberts.

had paid up certain fees. He wanted to know why, and almost endless discussion followed, and ultimately he was told that he could start work at the trade at which he (Mr. Roberts) thought he was certainly entitled to get his living, if he paid up £14, £4 of which he was expected to pay down, whilst they would give him time to pay the £10. They ought to be assured, when dealing with the Trade Union Bill—seeing that everything was to be done in the interests of the unionists—that men would have a reasonable opportunity of getting equal justice, and that was all he desired. He was supporting the amendment with the object of getting into the Bill what he thought was fair to the men.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Tolmie's amendment*) stand part of the question—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 26.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Land
.. Bowman	.. Larcombe
.. Carter	.. McLachlan
.. Collins	.. Murphy
.. Cooper	.. O'Sullivan
.. Dunstan	.. Payne
.. Fihelly	.. Peterson
.. Foley	.. Pollock
.. Giday	.. Ryan, D.
.. Gillies	.. Ryan, H. J.
.. Hartley, H. L.	.. Stopford
.. Hunter	.. Wellington
.. Huxham	.. Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Larcombe and Mr. Stopford.

NOES, 11.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Hodge
.. Bayley	.. Moore
.. Bebbington	.. Petrie
.. Bridges	.. Roberts
.. Forsyth	.. Tolmie
.. Gunn	

Tellers: Mr. Barnes and Mr. Roberts.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. T. J. Ryan, Mr. McPhail, Mr. Theodore, Mr. Hartley, Mr. Kirwan, and Mr. Hardacre.

Noes—Lieut.-Colonel Rankin, Mr. Macartney, Mr. Swayne, Mr. Booker, Mr. Stevens, and Mr. Appel.

Resolved in the affirmative.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the resolution, and it was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

HON. J. A. FIVELY presented the Bill, which was read a first time. The second reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ELECTIONS BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Speaking to the second reading of the Elections Bill, I will preface my remarks by saying that although I do not see much necessity for a new Elections Bill, generally speaking there is not a very great change from the old Elections Bill; and, like most of the legislation brought forward by the Government, it is a change for the most part in one particular direction. I do not know whether the Government anticipate having a general election very soon, but there is no question about the desire on the part of the Government to have the Elections Act amended, and

amended in such a way that I do not think we are likely to get a just opinion from the electors of the State of Queensland, because there are provisions in the Bill that will go to make for an impure roll, and we know that, where there is an impure roll, we do not get a true reflex of the opinion of the people of the State. As far as the Hon. the Minister is concerned, I think that he endeavoured to put the measure before us in the clearest possible manner. All the details of the measure were presented in such a way as to attract the attention of the whole of the House. The hon. gentleman went to a considerable amount of trouble in preparing the Bill and explaining its provisions, and I am sure that members on this side of the Chamber appreciate his action. There is one desire on the part of members on this side of the House, and that is to make the best of the legislation introduced, but sometimes the temper of the House is such as does not admit of a just measure being passed. Sometimes a measure is passed which contains provisions that are not in the interests of the people, because, owing to the state of party feeling, reasonable amendments which are proposed are not accepted, with the result that we find before very long that there is a necessity for those amendments. I do not know whether the practice has been followed in regard to this measure that has been followed in regard to measures which have preceded it—that is, that the caucus having considered the matter and the Government having introduced the measure to the House, as far as the party is concerned that ends the matter.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Hear, hear!

HON. J. TOLMIE: I hear the expression "Hear, hear" from an hon. member opposite, which I take as an indication that, no matter how intelligent an amendment may be, there is no disposition on the part of members opposite to accept it.

HON. J. HUXHAM: We will accept only intelligent amendments.

HON. J. TOLMIE: That is where there is likely to be a conflict of opinion. The hon. gentleman must be well aware that none but intelligent amendments will come from this side of the House. An electoral measure should be as wide as possible—that is, it should give everyone in the State who is entitled to have a vote an opportunity of being enrolled; there should be an adult franchise, always excepting a certain number of individuals who from very proper reasons it is not desirable should have a vote.

MR. O'SULLIVAN: Whom would you debar from voting?

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. member is quite socratic in his method; he goes about asking questions for the purpose of obtaining information, and I have no doubt that he secures quite a fund of information in that way. There are persons excluded from the franchise by this measure as they have been excluded under other measures passed by this House. If the hon. member had only read the Bill and had listened to the Assistant Home Secretary, he would have found that there are a certain number of individuals who are debarred from having a vote under this Bill. As I have said, an

electoral measure should provide the means for enrolling every person who is entitled to have a vote, and should afford facilities to persons to get their names on the roll. If the law provides that all adults, with the exceptions I have indicated, shall have a right to have their names enrolled, then the facilities to get their names on the roll should be as great as possible. Then, having got their names on the roll, they should be given an opportunity to record their votes. It has happened in the past, both in the Queensland Parliament and in other Legislatures, that facilities have not always been given to people to record their votes, although their names were on the roll. I have heard hon. members who are now sitting on the other side of the House stand here and emphatically declare their determination to prevent persons having opportunities to record their votes.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was your methods rather than the votes that we objected to.

HON. J. TOLMIE: A good electoral measure should also provide the means for preventing people securing votes who are not entitled to vote. The electoral law which this Bill seeks to replace gives adult franchise, and gives full opportunity to every man and every woman of twenty-one years of age who conforms to the law of the land to exercise their votes. They have facilities given them for getting their names recorded on the rolls. The courts were always open for that purpose; they were held frequently, and in addition to that, at stated intervals the department having the administration of the electoral law sent round police officers to collect the names of all persons who were entitled to exercise the franchise. A fuller opportunity for enrolment than that it would not be possible to get. First of all, there was a chance for every individual to become enrolled if he felt so disposed, and then if there was any lack on his part in taking advantage of that opportunity the State provided means by which his name was enrolled, almost against his own inclination—certainly we overcame his own laziness in placing his name on the roll. There could be no fuller opportunity given to record votes at election time than was given by the law which this measure seeks to repeal. All people had an opportunity for recording their votes.

MR. COLLINS and other GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: That is not so.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The people who were on the roll had an opportunity of recording their votes. If that was not so, the hon. member will have an opportunity later on of showing that it was not so.

MR. COLLINS: I will point it out.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I hope the hon. member will do so. There seems to be a disposition on the part of members opposite to express their opinions on this measure. After the silence of those hon. members when another measure of importance was under discussion, it is pleasant to find that they like to hear the sound of their voices in connection with this particular measure. But, notwithstanding the opinions expressed by those members in their seats, which they will have an opportunity of expressing on their feet later on, if they get the permission of the Acting Chief Secretary, I say the fullest

Hon. J. Tolmie.]

opportunities were given to the healthy and to the sick and infirm to record their votes under the law at present in force.

Mr. BERTRAM: What about the inmates of Dunwich?

HON. J. TOLMIE: And the measure which this Bill seeks to displace had also the excellent quality that it provided for the purification of the rolls—for seeing that it was a clean roll. Any hon. member who desires to secure his seat in this Chamber on a roll that is unclean assumes an attitude of mind that I cannot quite understand. I should like again to emphasise the fact that the existing Act contains the excellent qualities I have mentioned. In that Act we went so far as to provide for compulsory enrolment, and for the corollary of compulsory enrolment—compulsory voting. I remember the outcry that was made by hon. members opposite on the question of compulsory enrolment when that measure was going through the Chamber last year.

HON. J. HUXHAM: We are retaining that; there is no need to talk about it.

HON. J. TOLMIE: That is perhaps why the hon. gentleman does not want me to talk about it.

HON. J. HUXHAM: No; I always believed in compulsory enrolment.

HON. J. TOLMIE: When the present Act was going through the Chamber last year and we decided to put into it the principle of compulsory voting, which naturally followed from the principle of compulsory enrolment, the greatest possible outcry was raised by hon. members who are now sitting on the other side of the House. The reason for that was that they could not possibly give the late Government credit for a desire to do the best they could for the people of the State in providing that a true and definite opinion should be expressed by the people at a general election. Members opposite thought that measure was loaded in some way—that it was introduced for the purpose of defeating them in some way. An hon. member on the other side interjects that the Government who introduced that measure did not think that the results of the election would be what they have been. I do not know that the hon. member has any right to make an assertion of that kind, which is an insinuation that the late Government were not actuated by good motives in the introduction of that measure. As a matter of fact, the Government were actuated by the very best of motives. We desired to see not only that every qualified person was enrolled, but that every person so enrolled should come forward and exercise his vote. The Assistant Home Secretary, in introducing this Bill, made a passing reference to this matter, and stated that had we known that the result was going to be what it was on the 22nd May last probably we should not have introduced the principle of compulsory voting. As far as I know the minds of my colleagues in regard to this matter, I can say that they were actuated by only one desire, and that was a desire to pass an Elections Bill under which we should get a true expression of the will of the people whenever an election took place. The expression of their will is the putting of hon. members on the other side of the Chamber with a mandate to do certain things in the direction of supplying them with work and of providing them with cheap food. I trust

[Hon. J. Tolmie.

that the people are taking full cognisance of the fact that the Government are not doing the work they came here to do. When the hon. gentleman refers to what took place on the 22nd May, I feel justified in quietly directing his attention to that particular point. One of the defects of the measure now before the Chamber is that the methods which it provides for the purification of the rolls are not as adequate as those which are provided in the measure at present in operation. Probably before I sit down I shall have something more to say in regard to the question of the purification of rolls, and with regard to the methods adopted by professed friends of the people on the other side to secure a roll under which we shall get a true reflex of the opinion of the people in any district. The mind of

[7.30 p.m.] the Cabinet seems to be concentrated, as far as this Bill is concerned, upon devising a measure which will provide for what we call "roll-stuffing." The first important alteration in the Bill is in clause 3, as to the question as to who is eligible to be a member of the Legislative Assembly. That clause amends clause 2 of the Constitution Act of 1867, in which the conditions were laid down as to persons who had the right to stand as candidates for Parliament. This clause widens that franchise. The Constitution Act provides that a candidate should be a male of twenty-one years and upwards who fulfilled certain conditions. There is now a widening of the franchise to include the female as well as the male. Here I might say there has also been a desire shown to make a person eligible as a candidate who could be put on the roll even though he is not. I am quite aware that it is in the present Act, but I hold that is one of the strong points of the Act.

Mr. PETERSON: Not strong enough to put Mr. Archer in.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. member seems to look at the position from a lugubrious standpoint. (Laughter.) For that reason I think he is favourable to the alteration. In dealing with this, I would like to dwell for a short time upon the remarks of the Minister on the second reading. I did not anticipate that I would have heard a Cabinet Minister on the opposite side taking up quite the same attitude as the hon. member did. I quite agree with the proposal to widen the franchise to enable women, if they feel so disposed, to stand as candidates. In dealing with that matter, my idea was that it should be open to all classes of females, just the same as any male is eligible to stand. The hon. gentleman the other night, in trying to buttress up this innovation, suggested that it was quite possible that only one class of people in the community are likely to take advantage of it.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: No.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I have no wish to misquote the hon. gentleman. I will quote his words from "Hansard." He said—

"In Scandinavia—Norway and Sweden—we find the women are very active factors in modelling the legislation, and I feel perfectly satisfied—although we may not have it in our State Parliament for some little time to come—that the advent of women into our Parliaments would be an advantage rather than a disadvantage. Why should we deny that right

to intellectual women, who have taken a high university degree? We say, 'You—'

HON. J. HUXHAM: You can go beyond that.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. gentleman continued—

"We say, 'You can go to our university; you may qualify in political economy and in all the sciences which are taught in our universities; you can learn all that our universities can teach, but we deny you the opportunity of assisting in making the laws of the country.'"

HON. J. HUXHAM: That is what you did before, but we want to bring all women in as eligible for Parliament.

HON. J. TOLMIE: As far as I am concerned, I have advocated the adult franchise ever since I have been in political life, and the hon. gentleman cannot find any statement of mine to the contrary.

HON. J. HUXHAM: I do not say that, but your party did not believe in it.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I always argued that the corollary of the extension of the franchise to women was an opportunity for women to go into Parliament.

HON. J. HUXHAM: Why did you not make that provision before?

HON. J. TOLMIE: The Government intend to do it, but there is a limitation so far as the quality of the women is concerned.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: No, no!

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am only giving the expressions of the hon. gentleman. If I misquote him in any way, I should apologise. I cannot take the intention of the hon. gentleman. I only take his words as they appear in "Hansard."

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Bill shows what the intention is.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I listened with the greatest attention to the Minister, and surely I am entitled to courtesy from the front bench; but not only are interruptions coming solidly from the front bench opposite, but also from their left wing and right wing. With the confidence I have in you, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to be talked down by hon. members opposite. The point I desire to emphasise is this: that so far as I know the minds of hon. members on this side, we have no objection to the widening of the franchise, but we are not exclusive. Just the same as any hon. member on the other side, whether a person has been a member of a university or not, we take no exception on that account. Neither do we take exception to the qualification of women who may be returned as members of the House. Passing away from the question of who is eligible to become a member of Parliament, we come to the person who is eligible as a voter. The answer to that is as it has been for a number of years—the adult, with certain restrictions. The restrictions will be found laid down in the Bill, and I may go into them later on. There are other qualifications. Under the old Act a man had to be twelve months in Australia before he obtained a political vote; he had to be six months in Queensland, and two months in an electorate. The alteration is

made of six months in Australia, three months in Queensland, and one month in an electorate. I am not disposed to cavil at one month in an electorate, provided that the man who is exercising his vote in Queensland has an adequate knowledge of the conditions of the country and of the laws of Queensland. It has been contended that twelve months in Australia is little enough to give people an opportunity of familiarising themselves with the conditions in this State.

MR. COLLINS: Your Act was twelve months in Queensland.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Our Act, if I remember rightly, was twelve months in Australia. It used to be twelve months in Australia and six months in Queensland. I know the last addition was two months in an electorate. That being so, it gave people who came here an opportunity of familiarising themselves with the conditions of the country. Nothing can be worse for a country than that the Government should be in the hands of persons who are not familiar with the conditions of life in the State. Unless people know things, they are unable to do that which is best for the country. We have quite a large number of persons coming into Australia whose conditions of life in other countries have been totally different to the conditions of life in this new country.

MR. H. L. HARTLEY: Will you suggest a medical examination?

HON. J. TOLMIE: This is the talking gramophone which we have in the Chamber when I suggest anything. The hon. member should listen to what I have to say.

MR. H. L. HARTLEY: We quote our authorities. (Laughter.)

HON. J. TOLMIE: The records keep on, but it is not going to inconvenience me. It is a very great injury to a country when persons not familiar with the conditions of life which prevail are able sometimes to adversely affect legislation in connection with the people. Residence in a country for a certain period gives a knowledge of the requirements of the country. It makes a man better able to exercise his vote, and when he is called into this Chamber, better able to give effect to the will of the people. Under this Bill there is no such opportunity. A man need only be in the State for three months, and then he is qualified to deal with all the affairs of this great State in all their wide ramifications. No matter how ignorant he may be of the conditions of life here, he will be qualified under this new Bill to come into the State and record his vote. In dealing with the measure there is one slight omission which is contained in the old Bill and which the Minister perhaps will rectify. Last year we introduced a valuable provision affecting the conditions of persons who went abroad. A person might not be twenty-one years of age at the time he went abroad, but might have lived for the greater part of his life in the State and know all the conditions. When he came back again, under the old law, he had to wait another twelve months before he had an opportunity of exercising the franchise. Under the Bill of last year it was provided that he could obtain the franchise within the period of two months.

MR. PETERSON: A splendid provision.

Hon. J. Tolmie.]

HON. J. TOLMIE: It is a good provision, but it has been omitted from the Bill, and I hope it will be introduced by way of an amendment. I am certain it would be of advantage to quite a number of our young people who have to leave Queensland to secure education, or for other reasons, and subsequently return.

HON. J. HUXHAM: I doubt if it will affect a score of people altogether.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Under the old Act a man was disfranchised if he was an habitual drunkard, but under this Bill he is not disfranchised. He is allowed to retain his vote unless there is a record against him of twelve convictions in one year. I refer to the opportunities there are for roll-stuffing. The measure provides no means by which persons who are improperly on the roll may be removed. Certain persons who marry may have their names recorded in their married name on the roll; also persons who are convicted in a police court. There are provisions made for dealing with them. When a man dies, his name can be removed at the end of a month, because there is a record made with the registrar once a month. If he is convicted at the police court, the bench make a record, once a month, but it is only once a year where alterations are made with regard to persons who change their name through marriage. The measure might be improved by dealing with them once a month, just the same as we deal with other persons. So far as a large number of persons are concerned there is no systematic attempt to take them off the roll. Under the old Act once in each year there was a purification, and, when we amended the Act last year, we provided a means for a purification four times a year, so that we would have a pure roll every time an election took place.

Mr. COLLINS: A Liberal roll.

HON. J. TOLMIE: We provided that there would be a pure roll at every election, whether it was a general election or a by-election, so that the clear reflex of the people in that particular electorate could be given. There are no such means for it here. Under the old Act the police were instructed to go round once in each year, and subsequently once every quarter, for the purpose of finding out those who had left the district. The result is that people may leave an electorate, and yet they may keep their names on the roll for that electorate, for reasons best known to themselves. Although they have lost touch with the electorate and are no longer electors, still, when an election comes round, they find their names are on the roll, and that is *prima facie* evidence that they are electors.

Mr. PETERSON: They cannot vote more than once.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The opportunity is given them to vote more than once. We know that in the western districts particularly there is a danger of rollstuffing taking place. Evidence was taken on this question during the year before last by the Federal authorities, and the evidence was brought out that in the western districts particularly that men are known by more than one name at various shearing sheds. There is nothing improper in that so far as these individuals

[Hon. J. Tolmie.]

are concerned, because men have been known to change their names because it suited them for getting work.

HON. J. HUXHAM: Is that a reflection on the men?

HON. J. TOLMIE: No reflection at all. We know the system of obtaining work at a shearing shed. Men frequently apply for work at more than one shed, and, if two sheds start shearing at the one time, he cannot go to both. He selects one of the sheds at which he will work, and his name is put down at the other shed for the roll call, and is sometimes taken by another man. That was brought out in the evidence, and it also appeared in the report of the Commission. Another person went to take the vacant stand at the shed where he did not go to work, and he took it in the name of the person who applied for it in the first place.

HON. J. HUXHAM: Because he was black listed in his own name.

HON. J. TOLMIE: No; no man knows better than the Home Secretary that what I say is true.

The HOME SECRETARY: I know many cases where they are black listed.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I do not say that some are not black listed, but what I do say is that there is no means provided for purifying the roll in regard to cases of that kind. If a man gets his name on half a dozen rolls, he is entitled to vote on half a dozen rolls. That is a reason why there should be some better methods for purifying the rolls than exists under this Bill.

Mr. CARTER: I know men who had their names on more than one roll now.

HON. J. TOLMIE: You ought to see that they are taken off.

Mr. CARTER: I did see that they were taken off my roll. (Laughter.)

HON. J. TOLMIE: Clauses 25, 27, and 30 have reference to persons who have ceased to have a qualification. The definition of "having ceased to have a qualification" is not very clear. I think the Assistant Home Secretary, in dealing with this matter, might make the law a little more explicit in that direction. If that is done, there will be greater opportunity of securing a pure roll. I do not charge the hon. gentleman with any desire to have anything other than a pure roll. I believe the hon. gentleman and his colleagues may be absolutely innocent of any intention to produce a roll that is not a true reflex of the people living in the district; still, under the law as it set forth in this Bill, it is quite probable that the rolls may become very impure, and then we do not get a true reflex of the people at a general election. It is laid down in this Bill that the aid of the Federal authorities might be obtained in connection with preparing our rolls. I think that is a mistake, because we should have nothing whatever to do with the Federal authorities. If it had been possible to devise a roll that would apply to Queensland Federal politics as well as Queensland State politics, then I say something might be done.

HON. J. HUXHAM: That is what we are aiming at.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. gentleman had pointed out himself that the number of

representatives in the Federal Parliament are a varying number. So long as that condition of things obtains, it is undesirable that we should have any connection with the Federal roll. That being so, I think it unwise to put our rolls under the control of any Federal officer at all. There are plenty of people in Queensland who keep on looking at the Federal rolls in the State, and they think they are on the State roll. We will find plenty of names on the Federal roll, and not on the State roll, and vice versa; and, if we attempted to work the two together, it would lead to endless confusion. It is desirable that there should be no confusion in this matter at all, and it would be better to eliminate altogether the clause having reference to trying to work at the present time with the Federal Government. We might keep in mind that it may be possible at times to have a Federal and a State roll that would be an effective roll, but, as conditions exist to-day, that is impossible. I notice that to a very great extent the Government are following out the principles laid down by the late Government in regard to the polling of votes and the opportunity provided for people to obtain votes. It is very gratifying to us to know that, notwithstanding the fact that "Hansard" contains hundreds of pages, indeed I am justified in saying thousands of pages, of diatribes by members sitting on the front Treasury bench and their adherents against legislation of the past—

The HOME SECRETARY: And deservedly, too.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The Home Secretary says, "And deservedly, too." Yet we find before Parliament is three months old hon. members opposite bring in a Bill containing all the provisions for the polling of votes that existed in the old law.

The HOME SECRETARY: Under a very different constitution altogether.

HON. J. TOLMIE: There is no difference in the constitution so far as the polling of votes is concerned. There is no difference in regard to the qualification of those who are entitled to be on the roll, although better means were provided for enrolling people under the old law than in the Bill we have before us. In regard to compulsory voting, hon. gentlemen opposite now approve of that, although they objected to it last session.

HON. J. HUXHAM: No, I did not.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I hope the hon. gentleman will not think when I say that there is opposition on the other side that I mean that all the opposition is coming from the Assistant Home Secretary in particular. I remember that he was much more liberal than quite a number of his colleagues on the front Treasury benches, and that he saw that the late Government thought that the means adopted to secure enrolment were excellent. He has shown his sympathy and his disposition to adopt the method of the late Government in this measure. I know that the rôle he is trying to fill is a hard one. He is trying to give expression to his own honesty of purpose, but he has to obey the dictates of the caucus in regard to this matter, and he finds himself in a conflicting position, while he has taken the opportunity of putting into the new Bill all those provisions that were in the old Bill. Although the caucus, perhaps, is going

to exercise some influence over it, the facts remain the same. The opportunities we gave for recording votes, which were fought by the hon. gentlemen opposite, are to be found here as the best means of securing an expression of opinion. We know first of all when the postal vote was introduced what a great clamour there was against it. I believe there are members sitting on the other side of the House who wildly declaimed against the operation of that principle after it had been in operation for one election, and notwithstanding that that principle was introduced by a party, which, as they said, was largely led by their own side, they opposed it as strongly as it was possible for members to oppose it. After the election took place a new Bill was introduced and the postal vote was removed. Now we have it re-introduced. A short time ago we had the same declaimers against the absent vote and it was claimed by means of the absent vote that the Government was securing a large measure of support throughout the State of Queensland that they would not otherwise have obtained. They denounced that principle and in response to what was thought to be the will of the people that principle was eliminated from our election legislation. Here again all those principles that were regarded by hon. gentlemen on the other side as being bad have been re-introduced. They

[8 p.m.] are here in this measure. The postal vote is here; so is the absentee vote. When we look it through from beginning to end, although the hon. member said it was a new measure altogether, we find the principles that underlie the old measure are here in almost every case. The only real principle which has been removed from that measure by hon. members opposite is that which provided for the purification of the roll.

The HOME SECRETARY: Then you will support the measure?

HON. J. TOLMIE: Certainly, I am supporting the second reading of the measure and I will endeavour in Committee to make it a much more workable measure than it is. Does the hon. member think that when they have paid us the compliment of following out the lines of our own Bill so closely that we are going to oppose it in every way? And I must give the Assistant Home Secretary credit for not trying to hide it in any way. Whenever he came to one of those principles which belonged to the old measure, he told the House that this was legislation introduced by the Liberal party, and being introduced by the Liberal party they had found it to be good and had continued it.

HON. J. HUXHAM: I reflect the opinions of members on this side of the House, not my own sentiments alone.

HON. J. TOLMIE: But I want to say that, although the bulk of the legislation is exactly as it was under the old Act, there is one defect—the purification of the rolls, and the means that are adopted by the Government in the measure which they have introduced are not such as are going to be effective to any great extent. I think it will mean that the names of a large number of persons will be retained on the roll long after they have ceased to have any interest in that particular district, and that being the case I think that the provision of the Bill is not in the best

Hon. J. Tolmie.]

interest of the State. I would like to point out one omission from the Act. I do not know whether it is accidental; I do not know whether it is intended, but I see no reference to any mention of taking the soldiers' votes. Now, hon. members, when they sat on this side of the House last session made a very strong point of this, that men were going away to fight the battles of the Empire and they had the right to have the franchise extended to them.

THE HOME SECRETARY: There is provision in the Bill for that very thing.

HON. J. TOLMIE: There is no provision in the Bill for taking their votes on the other side.

HON. J. HUXHAM: There is provision for the soldiers' votes.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Before they go away, but some thousands are away. Another point to which I would like to draw attention is in regard to the making of regulations. This is a very important point, and it may be of great value so far as this measure is concerned. The Assistant Home Secretary, when introducing this Bill, said—

“And, in addition to the powers of making regulations contained earlier in the Bill, clause 99 provides a wide and general power to make such regulations as are necessary, but we have made provision that those regulations are to be placed before Parliament. They are not to be regulations brought into being and made law at the good will of the Government, but will have to be laid before Parliament, and Parliament will have the right of disallowance, so that there again members will recognise that we have endeavoured to meet them reasonably and well.

“Hon. J. Tolmie: You merely mean to table them, the same as other regulations?”

“Hon. J. HUXHAM: Oh, no! They will be there for hon. members to discuss, and if there be anything in the regulations that they consider unfair, they will be open to criticism.

“Hon. J. Tolmie: You make provision for that?”

“Hon. J. HUXHAM: Oh, yes, we make provision for that!”

That is the point I desire to emphasise here now, because I am not satisfied that the provision set forth in the clause is going to give the power the hon. member believes it will. We know that in almost all legislation there is provision for making regulations, and it is usually provided that they shall be laid on the table of this House within a certain number of days after the meeting of Parliament, and at the expiration of fourteen days after being laid on the table they become law. I have been here for some years and I only remember one occasion on which an effort was made to deal with those regulations as laid on the table of the House, and the member who endeavoured to do so found himself blocked in every way. He could only exercise his right on private members' day, and long before his opportunity to speak on the particular regulation arrived, the regulations were law and all he could say had no effect. I hope that is not going to be the case in regard to this measure. If this is going to be largely administered by regulation, as most electoral laws

[Hon. J. Tolmie.

are, I think it is a very wise step on the part of the Home Department to give an opportunity to this House to discuss them, because regulations are sometimes of more moment than very important sections in the Act, and if the Chamber has an opportunity of discussing those regulations and, perhaps, expressing its views on them, the change might sometimes be made for the better. But, unless the Home Secretary will devise some means in the Bill for giving effect to that rather than the means which are devised in the Standing Orders of this House, we will not be able to do it. And we hold that this is a matter really of no party consequence, but of great consequence to members of the House generally. What we want is an electoral law that will enable the people to give the best expression of their will, which will give them all the facilities that are possible for recording their votes. I quite believe that under this measure considerable facility is given in that direction, that is, the healthy can go and record their votes, very often the infirm can go and record their votes too, and where there are persons who are so indisposed that they are unable to go to the poll, be they male or female, I believe an opportunity will be given in this measure through the postal vote for them to record their votes. Again, the absent vote gives an opportunity for a large number of persons to record their votes. I remember that at the last election I met quite a large number of persons in my own city who had not taken advantage of the Act through want of knowledge, or perhaps a little carelessness, or perhaps because business of an important nature suddenly intervening carried them away, and when they came to record their votes they could not do so. They were afraid of being punished under the compulsory sections of the Act, and they came and spoke to me about it, and I told them that so long as they were able to give a good excuse I did not think any punishment was likely to follow, and that I would endeavour to do the best I could to protect them—just the same as any other hon. member would endeavour to protect a person who found himself in difficulty that was likely to produce ill consequences to him. I say that the absent vote gives an opportunity to exercise the vote under certain circumstances, but the fault that may arise is the impurity of the roll. Dealing with all those persons who are able to record their votes, I think there is one class who sometimes experience difficulty. I think there is hardly any hon. member who has not been brought into close touch with persons who are illiterate and who, perhaps, are very old. More particularly if they are infirm, they may be a little deaf, or they may not be quite as strong in their minds as they have been in the days that have gone, and those persons very frequently ask a friend to go with them when they are recording their votes. But under the strict letter of the law the friend is not allowed to go with such a person up to the presiding officers, and they are generally handed over to the presiding officers, and in many instances the poor person—using that word only in the sense that they are afflicted—is unable, through the excitement, to give expression as to how he or she wants to vote. Now, I think that in the administration of this Act some provision should be made to allow some person to go with them.

MR. WELLINGTON: Cannot the presiding officer meet that difficulty?

HON. J. TOLMIE: Then, there is another provision which I have not dwelt upon so far in regard to what is known as the Dunwich vote. I think it will be found to be recorded that in past years I have taken no objection to the Dunwich vote, provided it was distributed over the whole State of Queensland.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: We are doing that.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I am referring to that now. I say that I take no objection to the vote being given if it is distributed over the State—that is, if the persons are allowed to vote in the electorate from which they came; but to put them all in one electorate I think was a very improper thing to do. I am very glad to find that the Home Secretary has introduced legislation in that direction, that he has decided to give a vote to the people at Dunwich, some of whom probably have arrived at that stage when I am sorry to say—and I am not saying it in a disparaging way—they have ceased to take an interest in the political affairs of Queensland, and probably their mental attitude is such that they cannot be relied upon to give a very intelligent vote, but the number is so few that they are not likely to affect an election. And the Government having seen fit to give this vote to Dunwich, then I think they have adopted the best method of doing it, that is by distributing the vote over the whole of the State of Queensland. I do not know that there is anything that I need refer to at the present time in regard to the conduct of elections. The provisions laid down are practically the same as obtained under the old Act, and which we found to work fairly well, and if there has been any innovation in the direction of improving them then it will meet with a welcome from candidates on both sides. Candidates who go through the stress of an election very often find that, notwithstanding their very best efforts to comply with the whole of the law, sometimes matters arise for which they are held responsible and for which they ought not to be held responsible. Generally speaking, the conduct of elections at the present day is such as meets with the approbation of candidates on both sides. I know that in all my contests I had no reason to quarrel with my opponent, and I do not think that he has had any reason to quarrel with the attitude I have taken up. I think that the machinery provided is adequate, and I do not know that it is necessary for me to say anything further in connection with it. The whole thing, to my mind, rests on this point: that if we get a pure roll, if we get a wide franchise, if we get facilities for the people to record their votes, then we have an opportunity of getting a fair expression of the will of the people at the particular time at which the election is taken. I do not say that it is likely to be the permanent opinion of the electors—it would be very imprudent of me to say so—because we all know that very often the electors find that they have made a bad bargain, and when the time comes round again they will clearly show that they are very glad of the opportunity presented to them of reversing the position. All I hope is that when the election does take place we will be able to reciprocate in the kind expressions made by the Deputy Home Secretary when he said that the election which took place on the 22nd May under the old law prepared by the late Government was satisfactory, and that he will then

be satisfied with the next election. I think it is characteristic of this side of the House to be always satisfied with the expression of the will of the people. All that we want is that the people should have a full opportunity of knowing what are the actual conditions, that the sunlight of public criticism should shine upon the actions of Ministers and members of this Chamber, so that the general public may have the fullest opportunity of seeing what is being done here and knowing the people who are striving to do that which is for the interests of Queensland. If that was the case under this law or any other law, then the people would vote for those that they believed were doing the best for the State. I have only to add that I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill, and when it goes into Committee, if reasonable amendments are allowed, we on this side of the Chamber shall endeavour to introduce such amendments as we think will make it a more workable measure and one more acceptable to the State.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I am one of those who think that neither an electoral nor an industrial Bill should be made a question of party politics. I am not one of those who think that the establishment of adult franchise should really be the only aim and object of our voting system. Sometimes it seems to me that we are too free with our franchise, and that on some occasions the single element in the community has too much say in the electorate, and that people who are responsible for carrying the burdens of the State have insufficient power. I am not sure that it would not be a good thing, not only to give every adult person one vote, but also to give the head of a family another vote. We do not consider enough those who carry on the responsibilities of the State. We should have a rebate in the income tax to relieve the family man or woman who is assisting to carry the burdens of the State, and those persons should have more say in the Government of the country than they have at the present time. We know that many young men—perhaps young men of great promise but inexperienced—are often led away by other people when exercising the franchise; and I contend that family men should have more consideration and more representation than they enjoy at the present time. The Government must have had a very difficult task in framing this measure—a difficult task in finding anything better than is contained in the present law, most of which is contained in its provisions. I do not say that the Bill cannot be improved. It would have been difficult to find two men to fill the position of Home Secretary better than the gentlemen who are now at the head of that department—(hear, hear!)—men who have a broader sympathy for the people who need it than they have, and who would distribute the money they have to spend better than they will distribute it. I believe that they will do the best they possibly can for the persons they have to deal with. It is only a few months since we discussed an Elections Bill in this House—not for hours and days, but for many weeks—trying to get, not what was best for one party but what was best for the State, and what would result in giving every person in the State an opportunity to express his wishes at election time. There is one thing in this measure which should be extended—that is, the postal vote. I do not think that the members of the

Mr. Bebbington.]

Government have a sufficient idea of the difficulty of voting in country districts. By this measure they are going to give sick persons an opportunity to vote by post, which is a very good thing; but that opportunity should be extended to every voter living more than 5 miles from a polling-place, so that electors in the bush may have an opportunity to exercise the franchise. With regard to the provision for compulsory voting, that simply follows in the footsteps of the past Government, and is no doubt all right; but with compulsory voting I should like to have seen compulsory contingent voting. However, I know that the feeling of the bulk of hon. members is against me on that point, and I am not going to press it. I shall have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Murrumba*): I desire to say a few words on this Bill before it passes its second reading. Anyone who has studied the measure can see that it is nothing more or less than the existing Act with one or two amendments. Seventy-five per cent. of its provisions are taken from the existing Elections Act, which show that the Government thought those various provisions were fair, otherwise they would not have been inserted in this Bill. Last session, the present leader of the Government—then the leader of the Opposition—objected very strongly to the provision for compulsory voting, and asked why we should pass a measure of this sort when there was other important work to do, such as finding work for the unemployed and attending to matters connected with the war? Member after member on that side objected to the passing of that measure and to compulsory voting; but now, because they think it suits their particular book, they have included a provision for compulsory voting in this Bill. A large number of electors throughout the length and breadth of Queensland were absolutely careless in regard to the franchise, and did not bother about voting; and the idea of the Liberal party was that if we desired to get a true expression of the will of the people we should get the largest vote possible. Therefore, they thought it was a wise thing to introduce compulsory voting. Everyone of us know that sometimes only 50 or 60 per cent. of the people on the rolls voted. That does not give us a fair idea as to what is the actual feeling of the electors in the various electorates of the State. If 40 or 50 per cent. of the people do not vote, we do not get a true expression of the will of the people. What the Liberal party wanted was to get a true expression of the will of the people, and that is the reason why they introduced the compulsory voting system.

Mr. MAY: You got it at the last election.

Mr. FORSYTH: Yes; we got it at the last election. The people then gave a large majority to the Labour party in this House. But despite the fact that we had compulsory voting at the last election, many of the electors did not vote, an evidence that the Act is somewhat weak in that respect. The question is: how are we to alter the law so as to get the largest possible expression of the will of the people? As I said, a very considerable proportion of the people who were entitled to vote did not vote at the last election.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: You must not forget that 10,300 persons who were registered could not vote, according to the electoral registrar's statement.

[*Mr. Bebbington.*

Mr. FORSYTH: Possibly that may be so, and that is a matter which can be considered later on. There is one clause in this Bill in which I do not believe, and that is the clause which gives the Governor in Council power to make arrangements with the Commonwealth Government to appoint a principal electoral registrar who is to be deemed the principal electoral registrar of the State. Why should the principal electoral registrar for the Commonwealth Government in this State be also the principal electoral registrar for Queensland? The Minister said that this provision is inserted so as to show that there is a good feeling between the Commonwealth Government and the Government of the State.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: The late Government appointed a conference to go into this matter.

Mr. FORSYTH: Yes, that is so; but how is the Principal Electoral Registrar for the Commonwealth to perform the duties of Principal Electoral Registrar of the State? The State work should be done by a man appointed by the State, and his duty should be to attend to State electoral matters alone. At the present time we have one Commonwealth electorate containing six and a-half State electorates, and you may have ten State electorates in one Commonwealth electorate, and then you will have to alter the whole of the electoral machinery as far as the rolls are concerned. I do not approve of that provision, as I think it will lead to confusion. The State should have its own Principal Electoral Registrar, whose business it should be to attend only to the elections of the State. The principal clause in the whole of this Bill is clause 9, in which the residence qualification is made six months in the Commonwealth, three months in the State, and one month in the electorate. The leader of the Opposition gave some excellent reasons why the times mentioned are too short, and why they should be extended. I believe that it has always been the policy of the Labour party that six months' residence should entitle a person to the franchise. At the present time a person can transfer his name from one electoral roll to another after one or two months, and that appears to me to be a reasonable provision. My impression is that the provision in this measure will lead to considerable confusion in cases where people remove from one electorate to another and reside only a short time in each electorate. As was clearly pointed out by the leader of the Opposition, the difficulty is how you are going to cleanse the rolls. There is no machinery provided in this measure to keep the rolls as clean as possible. I believe it is the wish of everybody who wants to see a clean honest roll that people who should not be there should have their names taken off, but I do not think we have machinery for that purpose. Under the old Act, the police used to go round to enrol people or have them taken off the roll. Seeing that we have now compulsory enrolment and compulsory voting, it will mean that every person is compelled to put his own name on the roll, and if he does not do so he will be subject to a fine. Therefore, you would think people would get enrolled so as not to be fined, but they do not do it—in spite of those provisions there are a considerable number of people who will not take the trouble to get on the roll. You may get information from the

police, or through the electoral registrar, but the question is as to who is to give the information. Under this clause anyone who gives information with regard to a name being taken off a roll must pay 5s., and I do not object to that, but when a man is also to be fined £5 if the registrar thinks the objection is frivolous, it will mean that a man will be afraid to give the information, and a person's name will remain on the roll when it has no right to be there. There should be every possible means of getting information so that people who are not entitled, or who have removed from the electorate, should not have their names kept on the roll. One of the objections I have is that we do not appear to have any machinery in connection with this matter. We are supposed to continue the vote for the soldiers at the front, whose names have not to be taken off the rolls. We do not object to that, but the idea was to give them a vote. I understand there are 7,000 or 8,000 men encamped at Enoggera, but what facilities will there be for those men to record their votes at a general election? There are none whatever. Their only protection is that their names are on the roll, and that their names will not be taken off the roll, because they happen to be away from Queensland, but there are no means placed at their disposal by which they can vote.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: Could they not have a polling-place out there?

Mr. FORSYTH: I mean before they go away. They should be able to vote before they go, or appoint someone to vote for them, but there is no provision made in that direction. I can understand that the Minister does not think it necessary, and I sincerely hope that the war will soon be over and our men be back to record their votes in the usual way. We were under the impression that the old Act was a good one in regard to having bi-monthly courts for registration and removal of names. No one could raise any objection to that. If you allow men to go on the roll every two months you should also take names off every two months. That will be altered by this Bill, under which there will be an annual and a quarterly roll. Under clause 17, all members of the Police Force, all State officers, and all officers of local authorities and other local governing bodies are required to assist the registrar in preparing the roll. Under the old Act, the policemen used to go round to get names on the roll. They found out people who were eligible and put in claims for them.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: We are providing that now. The Minister may appoint.

Mr. FORSYTH: I do not think that is correct, as it does not appear to be in the Bill. There is no mention that anyone will go round at different periods.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: They may be appointed to do so, if necessary.

Mr. FORSYTH: Before they did it regularly. I think the Minister will agree with me that it is most advisable that we should have as complete a roll as possible, but who is going to give information as to the names which should be put on or taken off the roll?

Hon. J. HUXHAM: The people in the houses visited by the police.

Mr. FORSYTH: Why don't you have that put in the Bill?

Hon. J. HUXHAM: The people will do their duty without being compelled by the Bill.

Mr. FORSYTH: A great many people do not go on the roll through carelessness. If a man deliberately says that a man has left the district, and his name is taken off the roll, and the informant knows that the voter has not left the district, I do not object to the fine of £5, and I would not object if it were £10.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: The registrar will make sure that the information is correct.

Mr. FORSYTH: Instead of people being asked to put in objections, the better way would be, perhaps, to tell the electoral registrar that a certain man or woman has left, and for the registrar to find out who they are, but how is he going to do it?

Hon. J. HUXHAM: There is provision made for that in the Bill.

Mr. FORSYTH: If the hon. gentleman will show me where it is, I shall be very glad. The Minister will agree with me that it would be utterly impossible for an electoral registrar to know every person who has left or come into a district. He must get information from somebody. Therefore, the Minister should endeavour to give greater facilities, so that people who are not entitled to be on the roll should be struck off at the earliest possible moment. I believe in the principle of an elector being allowed a transfer from one electorate to another, but if before a general election takes place he is not able to get his name transferred to the roll of the electorate he has removed to, it is only fair that he should not lose his vote, but should be allowed to vote for the electorate for which he is enrolled. Clause 39 deals with the qualifications of a candidate, and includes either male or female persons. I do not think myself that this is a place for a woman at all, and I hope that when we get into Committee we shall be able to have that innovation knocked out. There is no doubt that the provision with regard to absent voting is a good one, and enables a lot of people to get their votes recorded. It is not as good as the postal vote, and there are thousands and thousands of people throughout Queensland who will not be able to vote under this particular Bill because there is no postal vote provided for them. Last year anyone who lived 5 miles away from the nearest polling-place could apply for a postal vote. Anyone who knows the country districts of Queensland, more especially the Western districts, will find people scattered in small numbers all over the place—two or three here and half a dozen there—and they will be 20 or 50 miles away from the nearest polling-place. How are they going to vote?

Hon. J. A. FIBELLY: You remember there were 200 navvies at Petrie disfranchised by your Government.

Mr. FORSYTH: There were only twenty-one or twenty-two, and they were knocked off because there was a clause in the Bill which stated that they must have a permanent place of abode with a fixed determination of remaining there.

Mr. STOFFORD: They remained there eleven months.

Mr. Forsyth.]

Mr. FORSYTH: There were only twenty-one names knocked off altogether. I do not believe in the principle of any person losing his vote, but these men should vote where their wives and families are living.

Mr. STOPFORD: There was one man then would have to vote in England although he had been working in Queensland for two years.

Mr. FORSYTH: I do not object to a man in that position having a vote. In October of last year there were a lot of names collected and advertised, but before they could be placed on the roll these men had actually cleared out of the district. A large number of them had no right to get on the roll at all, because they had cleared out.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: If they are citizens of Queensland, why should they not have a vote?

Mr. FORSYTH: I do not object to that. A man has a right to have a vote in the electorate where his home is, but people who are changing from one place to another should not be allowed to record a vote for every electorate they move to.

Mr. CARTER: They can only vote once.

Mr. FORSYTH: They might vote more than once.

Mr. CARTER: Don't judge them by yourself.

Mr. FORSYTH: I can give an illustration of what happened to me. I was going away for a holiday, but I took the trouble to tell the registrar that I would only be away for a certain time, and that he was not to knock my name off the roll. I was only away ten days when some of my friends opposite tried to knock me off. I have a good idea where it came from, although I do not know the man who tried to knock me off. I know some ladies living in Brisbane who have been in the same house for years and years, and yet they were knocked off the roll.

Mr. CARTER: I know hundreds knocked off that way.

Mr. FORSYTH: One lady who was living in Brisbane for many years went down to record her vote, when she found that her name was not on the roll. In connection with the postal vote, we will find that a large number of people, more especially women who live 10 or 12 miles from a polling booth, will not be able to record their votes at all. If a man lives in the country with his wife and family, and he goes in to vote, he has only got his wife left to look after the place. How is it possible for them both to go in and record their votes? There are lots of places in the West where there are only a few people and they will not be able to record their votes.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: There will be a polling-place there.

Mr. FORSYTH: How can you have a polling-place for two or three people? You cannot do it.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: We have them now.

Mr. FORSYTH: There are isolated cases in the far West of grazing farmers who live too far from the polling-booth to record their votes, and they will lose their votes altogether. I hope the Minister will alter that, so that people living a certain distance away from a polling-booth will be able to get a postal vote. The action of the hon. gentleman

[Mr. Forsyth.

in depriving these people of the postal vote will mean that we will disfranchise a large number of women in Queensland. That is one of the things in the Bill that I object to. This Bill, which is supposed to be such a liberal Bill, will disfranchise all these people. I am glad to see that the Minister has made provision for people who are sick to vote by post, but the same principle should be extended to those who live over 5 miles from the nearest polling-place. In connection with a charitable institution, such as Dunwich, the question has been raised again and again as to whether the inmates should be given a vote. I have always said, and I say it now, that I do not believe in the principle of a block vote being given to the inmates of Dunwich. I did not think they should be allowed to vote for the one electorate, but I said that I would always support a proposal to allow the inmates to vote for the electorate from which they came. I am glad that the Minister has introduced it in that particular way and I will support him in that. I hope that every means will be given to those who are on the roll to have a chance to record their votes. If the Minister agrees to extend the provisions of the postal vote so as to apply to people living in the country, then one of my principal objections to the Bill is gone. We

have had the absent vote before [9 p.m.] and we know how it worked.

We also know that from the very beginning the Labour party have been up against the postal vote—dead against it—because they say it led to corruption. It may, or it may not. We still have it to a restricted extent, and I do not think we had much corruption at the last election. I do not think I heard of much. I did not hear of any, as a matter of fact. There may have been, of course, but I have not heard of any particular case of corruption under the provisions where a person could vote by post if he was 5 miles away from a polling-booth. Of course, under the original Act, anybody could apply for a postal vote, even if he lived across the street from the polling-booth, and there was corruption under that Act.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: There was corruption at the last election, too.

Mr. FORSYTH: When we brought in a provision that only persons more than five miles from a polling-booth could vote it was altogether different. I think that the Minister will see that by these provisions I have mentioned he is disfranchising a very large number of people, two or three or half a dozen here and there, all over the length and breadth of Queensland, who will have no possible hope of recording their votes. I believe that the Minister is anxious and absolutely sincere in his desire that everybody should have an opportunity of recording his vote. I hope he will find some means whereby those persons placed in that position will have that opportunity.

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: What about the navvies or those electors who live in a tent?

Mr. FORSYTH: They are generally on a railway construction. I do not see why a man living in a tent should not have a vote. The Act says, "a place of abode," and that could be a tent, a bark humpy, or a house if you like, so long as it is his permanent home.

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: You admit that twenty-five were disfranchised at Petrie?

Mr. FORSYTH: That had nothing to do with it; the reason was that they had not a permanent home. So far as that vote is concerned, I have always understood that a tent was a "place of abode," the same as a house.

Mr. STOPFORD: But the magistrate ruled otherwise.

Mr. FORSYTH: I hope the Minister, who, I think, is very sympathetic and really anxious to do the best he can to give all people a vote, will think over the large number who will not be able to vote under this Bill and bring in some means whereby they will have a chance to vote by post. If he does that he will take away a good deal of the sting in the Bill so far as I am concerned. I hope that this Bill will do all that the hon. member thinks it will do, and I agree that every man who is qualified should have a vote, and I also believe that everybody who is on the roll and should not be on the roll should be knocked off, but there is no machinery in the Bill to do that. Unless you provide the means, unless you bring forward all the best machinery, so that people who have no right to be on the roll may be knocked off, what is the good of the Act at all? Who is going to give the information about who should and who should not be on the roll? I do not know. If you have an electorate of 5,000 or 6,000 electors, how can the registrar, or the clerk of petty sessions, or any officer, tell the people to put on the roll? It is an impossibility, and if you do not provide machinery to do that, there will be trouble. I hope that the Minister will recognise that fact and will do his best to make it as we had it under the old Act, where the police came round several times a year. By that he will be doing a great deal of good, and will have not only cleaner rolls, but will also carry out the Act as he wishes, that is, to give everybody a chance to be on the roll.

Mr. MORGAN: It appears to me that there is a "conspiracy of silence" on the part of hon. members opposite. Evidently they have had their instructions to sit tight and say nothing. I presume that they think that this is the last word in electoral reform, and most likely they will endeavour to carry it through exactly as it is here. That may be the desire of the majority of members opposite, but I feel sure that the Minister in charge of this Bill—knowing, as we do, his tendency, at any rate, to be fair and liberal in most matters—will meet us in regard to many important provisions which have been shown to be faulty. I think that members on this side of the Chamber can honestly approve of the greater portion of this Bill. In fact, it is largely our own measure. It really contains principles for which Liberal members were responsible by placing them in the present Act. And to a very great extent we were going to assist in carrying this Bill, but we do think that there are certain clauses which would be much better if amended. I feel sure that the Minister in charge of the Bill will consider particular amendments which come from this side when the Bill is in its Committee stages. First of all, I think the Government are going too far when they are making the residential qualifications so short. There is not another State in the Commonwealth which has gone so far as this Bill proposes to go. When I first entered this

House I advocated six months' residence in Queensland and twelve months' residence in the Commonwealth, and voted in favour of that. Instead of that, the Labour party are going to the other extreme. Had they been satisfied to meet us half way, I feel sure that they themselves would agree that there is some argument in favour of a person residing in Queensland for six months before he is able to vote. I think we must also admit that people coming from foreign countries, or other parts of the British Empire, should get a clear grasp of Australian politics before they get a vote, and that it takes twelve months' residence before they can get that grasp of the politics of a State.

Mr. STOPFORD: They will have to be here two years.

Mr. MORGAN: No, twelve months in the Commonwealth before making an application—six months in the State and one month in the electorate—and if the Government proposed that, then I think we would be unanimous. I want to point out that they believe in those principles when they affect themselves. Take, for instance, the election of candidates to compete at parliamentary elections in the Labour interests. They will not allow a man to be nominated for the plebiscite until he has been a financial member of a Workers' Political Organisation for two years.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: That is a different thing from having a vote.

Mr. MORGAN: Hon. members opposite think that a man ought to be educated in Labour principles, in unionist methods, and matters of that sort, before he is qualified to become a candidate for Parliament in the interests of the labouring classes or the socialists. Then they go further and say that no man can vote at a plebiscite for a candidate unless he has been a member of a union or a Workers' Political Organisation for six months.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: That is so.

Mr. MORGAN: And yet hon. members are in favour of a man coming from another part of Australia who knows nothing about politics here and having a vote for Parliament!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How long were you here when you got a vote?

Mr. MORGAN: I was here just twelve months, and I was entitled to be on the roll and to become a member of Parliament.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Had you been here only three months you would have got in just the same.

Mr. MORGAN: I may have, but I would not have known as much about Queensland politics. I am Australian born and naturally I have been connected more or less with public matters in Victoria, where I lived, where they had a Labour party and a Liberal party, but coming here from Victoria was quite different from coming from another part of the world into Australia, because the politics in Victoria and Queensland are more or less identical. But in connection with matters of their own, why do the socialists say that a man must be a financial member of a Workers' Political Organisation or a union for six months before he can vote for a candidate at a plebiscite?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We want to test him.

Mr. Morgan.]

Mr. MORGAN: Yes, you want to test him. You say he must be a member six months, otherwise he is not qualified to give intelligent judgment. That is the very principle we wish to adopt in this Bill. We say that you should also require that a man shall have a certain amount of education and information before he shall be allowed to record a vote, because unless he has that education and information he cannot record an intelligent vote. I admit that it is only necessary for some men to win a plebiscite in order to become members of Parliament, because the socialist vote is very strong in their electorates; but when you say in your own rules that a man must be a member of a union for six months before he has the right to vote, I contend that you should apply the same principle to State elections—that a man should reside in Queensland six months if he is to give an intelligent vote at a parliamentary election. Those are my objections as far as clause 9 is concerned. Another objection which I have to the measure is that while it gives every facility to people to get on the roll—no Bill can be more liberal as far as putting people on the roll is concerned, and I have no objection to that, because I think that every man and every woman possessing the required qualification should have the right to vote—it makes no provision whatever for a clean roll. Provision is made that if a person dies, notice of his death must be given by the local registrar of births, deaths, and marriages to the electoral registrar, and that the name of such person shall eventually be wiped off the roll; but no provision whatever is made for the police or other officials to strike off the names of men and women who have actually left the district and have ceased to possess the residence qualification. I know that people are on the roll for my electorate though they have been absent from the district for ten or twelve years. This Bill, as far as I can see, gives every inducement to roll-stuffing on the part of political organisers, whether they be Liberal or Socialist organisers. It is only necessary to have live energetic political organisers in the different electorates, and they will be able to stuff the rolls; and it is only necessary to stuff the rolls with people who are educated to vote early and often in order to secure electors who will vote in different electorates. In a place like Brisbane, where a person has only to jump on to a tram to go from one suburban electorate to another, a person could vote for five or six different electorates, and he would not stand one chance in a hundred of being detected.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What a fool he would be.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. gentleman knows that that kind of thing is done, and that it was shown before the Federal Elections Commission that it was done. Where polling-places are miles and miles apart it would not be possible for a man to do that kind of thing, but it is quite possible for such a contingency to eventuate in the Brisbane district.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: Very improbable.

Mr. MORGAN: Provision has been made previously in the country electorates for the police to take around forms and give them to people who are not on the roll, and to make inquiries with reference to those people who may have left the district; and the police

generally have acted very fairly in compiling the rolls. It appears to me that the present Government do not trust the police in this matter. With regard to removing from the roll the names of persons who are not qualified, that is left for political organisers—Liberal or Labour—who have sufficient funds at their disposal to enable them to lodge 5s. with each objection. Then they have to put up with a fine of 5s. in odd cases, but their position will be such that they will be able to get many names struck off the roll. Is it not far better that the police and the electoral registrar should take the responsibility of removing names from the rolls than that we should leave that work to be done by political organisers? The Labour party have their organisations acting continually throughout the State, but the Liberal party have no organisation. There is not one Liberal organisation in my electorate. We have only one organisation there, and that is the Workers' Political Organisation.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Then you represent a disorganised rabble?

Mr. MORGAN: I represent people who recognise my value, and who voted for me without any organisation on my part. But under this Bill, while my opponents, with funds at their disposal, will be prepared to lodge objections to persons who would vote Liberal, I shall have no organisation to meet their objections and to object to persons who are not qualified to be enrolled. To do that I would have to start an organisation in every little town in the electorate. Up to the present I have been satisfied that the police and the electoral registrar have done their duty in seeing that people who are not entitled to be registered had their names removed from the roll, and I am quite prepared to leave the matter to those officials. There has never been any complaint on that score in my district. The provision in this measure is going to work into the hands of the Socialists, who have their organisations. It will give them something to do—something to justify their organisations, they will be able to say, "We must keep on, we must get your half-crowns, because we have to look after the rolls, and in order to win the contest we must see that every person who has left the district is removed from the roll, while those we know will vote for us are kept on the roll, even though they have left the electorate." There is no one knows that better than the hon. member for Gregory, who has had experience in regard to voting.

Mr. POLLOCK: We are using our experience to protect the people.

Mr. MORGAN: The most objectionable feature that I find in the measure is this one, which will lead to a political party being always kept in a state of organisation purely and simply to watch the rolls. The cleansing of the rolls is a matter which should be done by the State, and not by Socialistic or Liberal organisations. If you are prepared to meet the Liberal party on election day on fair grounds without any favour or advantage, you should be prepared to allow the State officials to do the work of purifying the rolls as they have been doing it for many years. This measure makes every provision for getting people on the roll, but no provision for keeping the roll clean. When we were defeated at the last election we did not complain that the

[*Mr. Morgan.*]

rolls were stuffed—we were beaten on our merits and on a clean roll—but members opposite are not satisfied with beating us on our merits and on a clean roll, and now want to pass a measure which will encourage roll-stuffing. Do they want to make their position so secure that the people cannot shift them, no matter what they do during the next three years, no matter whether their action is popular or not? It looks as if that is what they desire. Another important provision is clause 95, which was also in the old Act. It provides that—

“Every police magistrate, clerk of petty sessions, or officer or member of the Police Force who, during the time he continues in such office, by word, message, writing, or in any other manner endeavours to persuade any elector to give or dissuade any elector from giving his vote for any candidate, or endeavours to persuade or induce any elector to refrain from voting at any election, shall forfeit the sum of one hundred pounds, to be recovered by any person who shall sue for the same without collusion within six months after the commission of the offence.”

Hon. J. HUXHAM: What objection have you to that?

Mr. MORGAN: When the police become unionists how is that provision going to work? You are going to allow the police to form a political union, and [9.30 p.m.] are they not going to persuade men how they shall vote? This clause will be an absolute farce the very moment the police join the unions, because all unionists to-day are political, and they all endeavour to bring about a certain political result. Under the Bill we know that once the police form a union it will be used for the return of certain candidates. The fact that it will be used in order to secure the return of a certain candidate is interfering with the liberty of a person so far as his voting is concerned.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: We cannot take the hon. member seriously.

Mr. MORGAN: I know you have not thought of that particular question.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: Oh, yes, we have.

Mr. MORGAN: The fact that the police become part and parcel of a political organisation must have an effect so far as voting is concerned.

Mr. ARMFIELD: They might vote Liberal.

Mr. MORGAN: Men are compelled to join in order to get work. They do not join because they wish to become a member of that particular union, but for peace and quietness.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MORGAN: I am trying to connect my remarks. They endeavour to use the fund in that particular way. If the police are members of a union they must become, as it were, canvassers so far as their party is concerned.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: The hon. member does not believe that.

Mr. MORGAN: I am satisfied that that is so. Another matter I am glad to see in the Bill is the recognition of the principle that the socialists have been up against for many years—that is in regard to postal

voting. When the Elections Bill came forward some time ago there was a great stone-wall, and objection was raised by hon. members opposite to postal voting in any shape or form. I am glad to see that they have recognised that a person who is sick shall be able to vote by post on election day. I want to appeal to the Minister to go a little further and to recognise the fact that all electors are not like his own electors, who have polling-places within a mile or two of each other. All electors have not motor-cars to take them to the booth. We know that Brisbane is not Queensland in regard to this matter. I think that my electorate has had more polling-places than any other electorate.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: You have been very fortunate.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes, but not more fortunate than the people desired, because the people in the country have as much right to record their votes as the people in the towns, and because it may mean a little expense you have no right to prevent anyone from recording their vote. The late Government were liberal in that respect, whether the electorate was held by a Labour or by a Liberal candidate.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not the case.

Mr. MORGAN: I believe it is. In my electorate any additional polling-places which were recommended by my opponent were placed upon the list of polling-places. There is a way of placing these matters before the Minister who has to deal with them. I do not leave it till the last moment. I have my polling-places fixed up for months before an election. I go round the electorate for months and inquire about the matter. Some people wait till after nomination day and then want the Minister to appoint polling-places.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: You can give our men the tip and they will follow you.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes, I give them the tip now. I feel sure that if before the next general elections I go round for six months and inquire, the Minister will meet me in regard to additional polling-places. In electorates like my own there are people still 20 or 30 miles away from a polling-place. There may be a man and his wife, and say an old man and woman seventy years old or more. They are too old to stand a journey of 20 or 30 miles in a buggy, but they want to record their votes. The husband and wife cannot go away and leave the old persons at home by themselves.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: Could not that old man get the postal vote?

Mr. MORGAN: No, that case does not come under the sickness provision. The hon. member knows that what I say is the case.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: He does not want any change.

Mr. MORGAN: I believe if he would speak his mind he would be in favour of it. Why are you preventing postal voting when people are 20 or 30 miles away from a polling-place, and you are allowing postal voting when all the corruption which occurred was in towns and cities? The corruptioin which it was stated took place before was in thickly populated electorates. In a case like that I have mentioned, is it not right that those people should have an opportunity to vote by post. We had postal voting at the last

election, and, so far as my electorate was concerned, I was defeated on the postal vote. Had postal voting not been in force I would have secured a bigger victory than I did. I am making this appeal, not on my own behalf, but for those who live in the backblocks, whether they be Liberal or Labour. If you are sincere in your desire that everyone in the backblocks should have an equal opportunity of voting to that given to voters in the towns, you should allow them to vote by post. Notwithstanding what our opponents said when the Act was going through, the results have proved that it is fair. I do not see that there was any necessity to bring about any alteration in the Act with the exception of the two months' residential qualification. I admit that persons who have left an electorate for over one month, and have not been able to get on the roll for the electorate to which they have removed, should be enabled to get on the roll. I think that is a good provision, and I will support it. A schoolmaster may be shifted to another electorate, and may not have been away quite a month, and, therefore, may not be able to make application in time to get on the other roll, although he may have been out of the old electorate for two months when the election comes on. The socialists in connection with the unions recognise that a person before he is eligible to vote should have certain educational qualifications. They approve of that principle in the selection of their own candidates for Parliament. A man may not stand for Parliament until he has been a member of the union for two years, yet anyone can stand for Parliament after he has been here for six months. Any British subject who comes into Queensland has to wait two years before he can stand as a member of Parliament in the interests of the socialists, but to stand as a candidate for Parliament he has only to be here six months.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: You see how liberal we are to you.

Mr. MORGAN: Hon. members opposite, now they have forty members in Parliament, simply say they are going to protect themselves, and that a man must be a member of a union for two years before—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MORGAN: I desire to point out the difference between the qualifications which the Government wish to impose upon those who come from other parts of the world before they can become candidates in the Liberal or independent interest—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has already pointed that out three times.

Mr. MORGAN: I think it is so good that a little repetition will do no harm. (Laughter.) I wish to point out the inconsistency of the Bill so far as qualification is concerned. I think you will agree with me, Mr. Speaker, that it is most inconsistent on their part to bring in the qualifications they are endeavouring to bring in in regard to this particular Bill.

Mr. GUNN: I did not expect to see an Elections Bill brought in quite so soon after the election. It is the usual thing for Parliaments to bring in an Elections Bill after they are in a short time, but after the late Elections Act did the honour of sending them into the House with a big majority—

Mr. WELLINGTON: You did not expect it?

[Mr. Morgan.

Mr. GUNN: No, I did not expect it, but it came about all the same. (Laughter.) But after the last election I do not see what fault the present Government can find with the Act which put them into the honourable position they occupy at present.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We got here in spite of the Elections Act.

Mr. GUNN: If you go tinkering with this Bill, you will find yourself in the cold shades of Opposition after the next election. I am thankful for small mercies, and I am thankful that, under this Bill, the non-unionist will have a vote. I was fearful lest this Bill would give preference to unionists, and that only unionists would be allowed to vote for a member of Parliament. I notice that, to become a member of Parliament, you only need to have the same qualifications as a voter—namely, six months in the Commonwealth, and three months in Queensland. I do not think that any person can become conversant with the conditions prevailing in Australia in six months; that he has not a sufficient knowledge of the laws to enable him to take a seat in this House in six months.

Mr. BERTRAM: Couldn't Mr. Asquith qualify in six months?

Mr. GUNN: No; I do not think Mr. Asquith could become conversant with Australian conditions in six months. I have seen many new chums—good people, too—who did not understand our conditions until they had been here much longer than six months. They find that Liberalism is a very different thing here to what it is in the old country. (Government laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: It is a misnomer here.

Mr. GUNN: I notice that the people who come here from the old country can become members of Parliament in six months, but it takes a man two years, as a financial member of a union, before he can become an aspirant for parliamentary honours in the Labour party. I am glad to see that, because it means preference to non-unionists. There has been a great deal of talk about the women's franchise. I was not in Parliament when it was passed, but I have had a good deal to do with elections and with voting, and I have the greatest respect for the opposite sex. I can say that I have seen some distressful scenes at election times. In the old days, the boundary rider would go in and cast his vote, but now his wife has to go in on polling day and take her family with her. After conversing with these women, I am convinced that they would be more satisfied without the vote. They would sooner let the husband go in and record his vote. They say it is only a duplicate vote that they give, and they are quite right. It would be a good idea if we could take a referendum of the women of Queensland to see if they wished to have the vote, and if they wanted it we could let them have it, but if they did not wish to have it we should not compel them to have it. I think we would find that they would vote against it.

Mr. BOOKER: No; they would vote for it.

Mr. GUNN: With regard to the vote to the inmates of Dunwich, I have every respect for the inmates of that institution, but I do not think they are sufficiently mentally equipped to record their votes at an election.

I have been down there, and I have seen a ward full of very old people, who are just on the verge of the grave.

Mr. BERTRAM: The same thing applies to some members of Parliament.

Mr. GUNN: If the hon. member refers to me, I consider I have not got corks on my hat, at any rate. (Laughter.) I do not think that the people in Dunwich are mentally equipped to understand the politics of the day, or to cast a vote, and I am sure they would be better without it. The union delegate and the non-union delegate would go down and worry the old people. Many of them have lost their sight, and if they were in the bush they would have corks round their hat, and no one who has corks round his hat has a right to vote.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He has them to keep the flies off.

Mr. GUNN: The hon. gentleman knows quite well what I refer to. There are some people in their dotage in Dunwich. I am sorry to see it, but it is a fact that nature provides that when the human machinery works out, that the mental machinery works out first. I am sorry to see it, but it is so; and for that reason these people are not fit to cast their votes.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The people in Goodna do not vote.

Mr. GUNN: People are in Dunwich because they think they are better off there, but if there was no Dunwich a good many of them would be in Goodna. With regard to the postal and absentee votes, I am one of those who used to advocate the postal vote because I have seen our womenfolk disfranchised when they were sick. I think it would be a good thing if we abolished both the absentee and postal votes, as it would have the same effect on both sides of politics. Many ladies have the same complaint whether they are on the Labour or Liberal side. (Laughter.) It means that when a woman is ill in bed, the doctor or nurse comes along with a form to fill in for a postal vote, and the women would be better pleased if they did not have the postal vote at all. In days gone by, I "cracked up" both of these votes, but I do not believe in them now. But if you are going to give a postal vote, you should certainly give it to those who live more than five miles from a polling-booth. With regard to the soldiers' votes, no one has a greater admiration for the soldiers than I have, and if I had my way I would give them two or three votes. But I am afraid that it is only a dead letter, because the people at the front will have no time for voting at all. The papers will be sent over and they will not be returned. At the last election several soldiers' votes were sent to me, but I happened to be in another electorate and they were of no value. The returned soldiers' votes cast at the last election were very few. No matter what party is in power, I hope that we will not have another election while the war is on. We should not have another election until the war is over, and we hope that all the soldiers will return and be able to record their own votes. (Hear, hear!) The member in charge of this Bill has paid the late Government a great compliment in copying so many of the provisions of the last Elections Act. I notice that the portion

of it relating to the Elections Tribunal is just the same as the old Act. I sat on the Elections Tribunal many times, and we made certain recommendations to the officer in charge of the electoral department, with the result that our ideas were incorporated in the new Act. The same provisions are incorporated in this Bill, and I am glad to see it. I think this Bill is making provision for a vote for many people who will not be able to exercise it in an intelligent way. I hope that when the next election comes round the Act will have the effect of making a number of people change their views from what they were on the last occasion.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): The Bill as it is presented comes as a surprise to many members sitting on this side of the House, considering the opposition that members opposite put up to the last Bill when it was being passed through the House. We find many clauses of the Bill the same as that passed last year. The greatest difference is that this Bill does not provide the necessary machinery for a clean roll. That is where the opposition comes from on this side. It strikes at the principle of adult suffrage in wiping away the machinery which provided that a man must vote only in one electorate, but it is possible for him to be enrolled in two electorates under the Bill before us at the present time. It is worse than any of

the Tory ideas of depriving
[10 p.m.] people of the franchise—that is,

the present idea of providing two or more votes for one section of the community or another is just as great, if not greater, than the Toryism of the past; and I consider that the roll-stuffing that will be permitted under this provision will have a far more disastrous effect throughout Queensland than would have been the case had a few electors been prevented from being enrolled by measures which probably erred on the side of being too safe. Therefore, I think that, whilst everyone should have a voice in the affairs of the State, I do not think that any elector or any section of electors should have more than one vote. That is why we passed that Act; and that is why it was abused so much by members sitting on the Opposition benches at that time. The present deputy leader of the Government stated that it would have the effect of disfranchising 100,000 electors, and it would have the effect—according to many members on the opposite side—of making it impossible for the Labour party to secure the Government benches. I think that the Act as passed gave every facility to Labour members, as was proved at the last election.

Mr. PETERSON: There would have been no Opposition at all had we had a proper roll at the last election.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member is evidently striving, through this Bill, to get no Opposition at all; but, although we may not get as fair a run as we might like, still I think it will be fair enough to enable us to come back to the benches which the people are sorry now we have vacated. I am not, like the last speaker, much of an authority on women's franchise, or the likes of women; but I am sure that if the women of Queensland were asked if they would like to continue to hold the franchise, they would, by a very large majority, decide in favour of a continuance of women's franchise, and I would not be one to vote in favour of taking away the

Mr. Corser.]

vote which we gave them, and which they enjoy. I would like to say that, under the old law, every privilege was given for the creation of new polling-places, and as long as the supporters on both sides, and whoever might be the member for the district at the time, would assist the various sections in the electorate, then it was possible to make it convenient for every portion or district of the electorate to vote easily, if the weather conditions were good or bad on election day. But it would be a very bad thing if the Government were to be directed by one section of the House or another in reference to the facilities which might be secured in the matter of polling-places, merely through the assistance which the member for the electorate was able to render. I should like to say that, although I am not an ardent believer in the postal vote, still, guarded as well as possible, it is a good thing, in some instances, to provide it. I notice that on this occasion the sick only will be provided with the postal vote. During last session and the session before a great fight was put up by the Opposition against the inclusion of the postal vote for sick people, yet we find that one of the first things the Labour Government have done is to give it. They have done the just thing, have taken no notice of what they said or did on previous occasions, and are prepared to provide for a continuance of the postal vote. At the same time, I think it should be continued also to the aged and infirm. They have as much right to their comfort and their beds and their homes on election day as the sick, and I hope that every facility will be given to them, particularly in country districts, where there are no tramcars or motor-cars to take them to the poll, and—if the weather is bad—no means of any other sort, probably. I will say that one of the things which made the postal vote less useful than it should have been was the ridiculous forms which were handed out and the means which were provided for applying for them. A more complicated means could not be devised by any man, or any department, than that provided in connection with the last Act by the Home Secretary's Department, and I contend that in that we had an illustration of how a measure can be marred or made successful by its administration. I consider that those forms provided a great obstacle to the people recording their votes when it was necessary that the witnesses should sign in their capacities, and that if they did not sign as "J.P.," or elector, or doctor, or nurse, as the case might be, it was impossible for the electors to record their votes. I have known of a returning officer who, because a witness to a vote did not state his qualification as a witness, returned the application, or set it aside as informal. That should not have been the case, and I contend that if the Home Secretary's Department had done more to make the process simpler, then we would not have seen the trouble that members on both sides must have been sorry to see. However, I am satisfied that if it is possible to extend the postal vote to both the sick and the infirm, both sides will be agreed that a fair thing has been done. I am not altogether against the absentee vote. I was sorry on some occasions that some of my electors were unable to use it. I know one woman who did not sign the claim forms which had been presented to her, and when she came to Brisbane she got into the

[*Mr. Corser.*

hands of some organisation—and I may say that the Liberal party had no organisation—and they told her something about not being able to fill in the claims outside the electorate, and, of course, this woman swallowed the pill, and did not vote at all. While that sort of thing is possible, it makes it very hard for any Act to be administered properly.

Mr. McLACHLAN: Was she in Brisbane on election day?

Mr. CORSER: No, she was in Sydney on election day, but somebody here told her this tale, and I do not think it was a Liberal, because there was no Liberal organisation in existence. We were told that there were some very shrewd organisers out on the warpath, and, from what we can gather, they did their duty well for their side. Though we all like the facility provided by the absentee vote, the greatest danger is the possibility of a person exercising more than one vote. For instance, the great moving population in such districts as the cane districts, and the wool districts—shearing, and so on—go from one shed or one field to another and become enrolled in two or three different electoral districts. And whether they be commercial travellers, or workers, in those particular industries, it is possible to get on two or three rolls, and when election day comes they can go into the booth and vote for the electorate in which they are, and then vote as absentees for the various electorates for which they have been enrolled.

Mr. WELLINGTON: Do you honestly think they would take that risk?

Mr. CORSER: I honestly do know that they took the risk, because no hon. member can tell me where anything has been said to them or where any conviction has been recorded. Everybody must realise that there must be a great danger in this way of doubling the vote, and that is the real trouble with the Bill as introduced. It does not provide the machinery to compel men to be only on one roll. The last Act did strive for that. Probably it may have overstepped its desire to provide only a clean roll.

Mr. PETERSON: How do you account for a number of people who are dead being still on the roll?

Mr. CORSER: In the electorate of the deputy leader of the Government there were hundreds of people who were not in the electorate for many months, and whose names had been handed in as absent, and yet they stayed on that roll. It was hard to keep a sufficient number there so that the roll would not look too small for the hon. member who was about to contest the seat. He knew, and his opponent knew, that on that roll there were hundreds of names of persons who had no possibility of voting at all.

Hon. J. A. FIBELLY: That is absolutely wrong.

Mr. CORSER: It is absolutely true, and the hon. member who is concerned—that is, the deputy leader of the Government—knows it as well as I do, and he knows it as well as his opponent did.

Hon. J. A. FIBELLY: You make that statement while he is away.

Mr. CORSER: I would make that statement while he is here. I have said nothing

against him in making that statement; but, since he is away, and the Bill is going through, I must make that statement, and would say more if he were here.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: I say the statement is absolutely wrong.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman knows nothing about it.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: Why don't you give some evidence?

Mr. CORSER: I have made my statement that there are names on that roll that should not be on the roll, and it shows that it is possible for the names of people who might be dead to be on the roll, as was the case in that electorate. People who had left the electorate and who were disfranchised many months before were still on the roll. I do not say they voted, but they served the purpose by being left on the roll. If the rolls had been kept clean, it would have shown how few electors there were in that electorate.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Some voted twice.

Mr. CORSER: If the hon. member knows anyone who voted twice, he knows more than I do, and I hope he has reported the case. Under the old Act, with all the safeguards, the hon. member admits that he knows a case where an elector voted twice. If that is so, how much easier will it be under this Bill for an elector to vote twice? Why is there not some safeguard in this Bill to prevent an elector voting twice? That is what we want. We hope to have a clean roll, and a square fight at election time, and let the best side win. Let the side with the greatest number of supporters in the electorate win. That is all I ask for, and that is all members on this side ask for, and we would be very sorry to think that by any means we were helped to the detriment of the other side. All we ask for is to have a clean roll, so that the electors will have an opportunity of electing the man they want. Although we were accused, when the last Act was going through, of trying to choke out the Labour party—that we were disfranchising thousands of men and women electors—that was proved not to be so.

Mr. PETERSON: Why did you choke out the men on the Dawson Valley Railway?

Mr. CORSER: We did not choke out anyone, but the Act—in the desire to provide one vote for one adult—may have been a little strict in some ways—in that it prevented a man who had only recently gone into an electorate from voting. That was a trouble I was hoping to see fixed up in this Parliament; but, instead of that, the Government have made it worse; they have made it possible, not that a few men should be disfranchised, but that thousands of people can have two votes. That is a thing that is likely to hit against the Government themselves, and particularly so in country districts, for the simple reason that facility is offered to the moving population—no matter whether they be commercial men or industrial men—to have two votes. They have a preference over the people who stay at home—who live on a farm. I do not think anyone should have two votes unless we are going to consider a vote for children.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: Your party stood for two votes for two babies.

Mr. CORSER: If there should be another vote given for a family. That is a matter

that should be considered, but it is not provided for in this Bill, and I don't intend to deal with it.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: You don't mean the baby vote?

Mr. CORSER: This party has not advocated it.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: It was in the old Philp programme.

Mr. CORSER: I am not here as a Philp-ite.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: Oh, yes, you are. Your leader is an old Philp-ite.

Mr. CORSER: The Opposition leader broke away from the Philp party, and I think the Philpites came back to them later on. I am sorry to see that, after the great fight that was put up, or the pretence of a fight that was put up by the then Opposition last year, the present Government are going to wipe out the vote of those soldiers who are detained in Egypt, or in hospitals in other countries, or who probably may be detained in some of our new tropical possessions.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: Wrong.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman knows nothing about it. You hope the war will be ended and so does everybody else, but what if the war is not ended? It looks as though the hon. gentleman was going to make this a five years' Parliament. If they do that—and that is what the interjection seems to indicate—it means that hon. members opposite are going back on their election promises, because they got us rosy on that point. We went round advocating a five years' Parliament, and most of our friends did not get one year; they got blown out. The five years' proposition came from that side, and it is likely to develop there again. That is where the bump of five years comes in. The people on this side don't want five years, but when you get on the other side you look for five years. However, I am sorry that the soldiers who are absent have been deprived of the franchise, and I trust that before the Bill goes through, we will have an opportunity of doing something for those great heroes who are fighting for us, and make it possible for them to vote as it was possible for them to vote under the measure brought in by the Liberal party. The Labour Press, previous to the election, and during the election campaign, stated that the Liberal Administration were taking away the vote from the soldiers who were in Egypt. They did not admit that those votes came along, because they found that they were votes on the wrong side.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: We got ten to one of those votes.

Mr. CORSER: We got ten to one. In my electorate I do not think the Labour party got one of those votes.

Hon. J. A. FIEHELLY: This party had seven times the number your party had.

Mr. CORSER: I should like to see a return of the soldiers' votes given, though I do not think that if the hon. gentleman looked into those returns he would know how the votes were cast. I am only speaking of my own electorate in this matter, and I don't think any of the Minister's friends went to the front.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: You didn't vote for the Labour man, did you?

Mr. CORSER: Why should I? (Laughter.)

Hon. J. HUXHAM: But you didn't?

Mr. Corser.]

Mr. CORSER: If I advocated my own case as a candidate at an election, I should only be doing as members opposite do.

Mr. PETERSON: What about the proxies lodged with you?

Mr. CORSER: Where I held any proxies I did what the persons who sent them to me wished me to do. I trust that before the Bill becomes law it will be possible to insert in it some provision which will insure fair and clean rolls, because so much depends on the rolls. We intend to include many other voters on the State electoral rolls, and if there is anything wrong with the rolls it will affect, not only parliamentary elections, but local authority and other elections held on the same rolls. Members on both sides should consider this measure as a non-party measure. An Elections Bill should not be a party measure at any time. All we want is fairness; this side is looking for it; and I am sure that if we can secure one man one vote we shall have a fair measure. That is all we are asking for.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: You will get it under this Bill.

Mr. CORSER: We shall certainly get stuffed rolls under this Bill, because there is no machinery in it to make it possible to clean the rolls; and if we have roll-stuffing experts going round the country they will make it very hard for the side to which they are opposed. With the following the Government have, they have now a chance of showing what a fair roll should be, and I trust they will make good use of their opportunity.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I do not want to take up much of the time of the House, but there are one or two matters I should like to refer to. With regard to enrolment, the Bill states in one part that a man shall be entitled to be enrolled if he has resided in Queensland for three months, and in another clause it says that "The validity of the enrolment shall not in any case be questioned on the ground that the person enrolled has not in fact lived in the district or division for one month." It appears to me that those provisions are contradictory, and require some explanation. Apparently, the police are not going to do the enrolment under this Bill, but people are to be left to make their own claims. In the country districts there are a large number of people who do not make claims for enrolment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The present Act does not make any provision for the police doing that work.

Mr. MOORE: I think the Act should provide for that. I know for a fact that several people in country districts did not apply to have their names placed on the roll, because they were afraid that if they were enrolled they would have to serve on the jury. The people in the country are simpler than people in the towns, as a rule, and they do not apply for enrolment, so that it is desirable that some provision should be made for putting their names on the roll. At the last election quite a large number of people did not vote, and as this measure is going to continue compulsory enrolment and compulsory voting, it should be made as easy as possible for persons to become enrolled. Many who failed to get their names on the roll were afraid to do so later on lest they should become liable to a penalty. With

[*Mr. Corser.*

reference to the contingent vote, I strongly believe compulsory contingent voting is a corollary to compulsory voting, and I cannot see any reasonable objection to compulsory contingent voting if it is our desire to get a true expression of the opinion of the majority of the people. Where there are several candidates for one seat it will be impossible to get a true expression of the will of the people without the contingent vote.

Mr. PETERSON: You said country people are simple. How can they understand the contingent vote?

Mr. MOORE: Any number of them do not understand it, but it can be explained to them; and the exercise of the contingent vote will help one party just as much as the other—the Labour party just as much as the Liberals or the members of the farmers' party. With respect to the question of postal voting, I notice that the [10.30 p.m.] Federal Elections Act limits to 5 miles the distance within which voting is made compulsory; and I hold that if voting is compulsory within that distance of a polling-booth, electors living more than 5 miles from a polling-booth should be allowed to vote by post. As to the provision for making one roll serve for both Federal and State elections, if that can be done it will be a good thing; but I think it will be found awkward and difficult to fix up the rolls so that they will serve both purposes. It should be simplified and made as easy as possible.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: That won't be a great trouble.

Mr. MOORE: I do not know that it is going to be a great trouble, but it is going to be a difficulty in some electorates.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I regret that the Minister in charge of the House has decided to finish the second reading of the Bill to-night.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Is not that by arrangement?

Mr. ROBERTS: No. At any rate, I think that every member on both sides should be given an opportunity to discuss measures of this nature freely. I regret that the Government does not listen to reason on this occasion, and allow members to get away home, and continue the discussion to-morrow. It cannot be said that I very often delay the passage of measures, but this is a Bill on which I wish to address myself in two or three particulars. I have been looking up the attitude adopted by the present Government when the last Elections Bill was before the House. One of the main features which they criticised at that time was in relation to the postal voting clauses. I am pleased, but somewhat surprised, to find that they propose to continue those provisions in the way in which they passed through the House under the Liberal Government. The present Assistant Home Secretary, speaking in 1914 on the amendments proposed, took exception to the postal voting, and said—

"The system of compulsory voting is a good one under fair circumstances, but I do object to so many people being disfranchised as is provided for by the Act of 1913 and the present Bill. Another thing I object to is the Government having reverted last session to the postal voting system instead of keeping to the

absent vote. It is most unseemly that the postal vote should be reintroduced. I know from my experience during my second contest for South Brisbane, in 1908, the trouble that was caused by the postal vote, and, after the way in which it was dealt with by the then Premier, Mr. Kidston, and by Mr. Barlow in the Upper House, one would have thought the Government would not have had the temerity to attempt to reintroduce that method of voting."

Almost every member on the Government side who was then in Opposition devoted a portion of their time to criticism of this clause. The present Minister for Justice was very emphatic, and likewise the hon. member for Maree. Speaking on the postal vote clauses, that hon. member said—

"The postal vote as we know it in the past is sufficiently objectionable, surely, without adding to it the hideousness that the Government to facilitate the operations of such a measure make it legal for two ordinary electors to witness a postal vote."

That shows that these gentlemen were not sincere on that occasion. It appears to me that they were simply talking for talking's sake.

Mr. CARTER: Like you are just now.

Mr. ROBERTS: No. I am talking in all seriousness. There are one or two things in connection with the postal vote which I hope we shall have an opportunity to get in by way of amendment. In connection with the recent elections we found that people who had gone away to other electorates and had every qualification for voting, but had not qualified themselves by residence to get on to the electoral roll and were thus disfranchised—I hope that we shall be able to secure an amendment which will give those people the opportunity which they are justly entitled to of exercising their vote as electors of Queensland. In clause 4 a natural-born subject is defined to be—

"A person born in the King's dominions, or whose parents or either of them were or was so born."

I should like some information on that when the Bill is in Committee. As I understand the naturalisation laws, this does not seem to be the correct thing. People who are allowed to vote should be fully naturalised subjects. I notice that clause 11 sets out some of the disqualifications in regard to voting. Subclause (c) of that clause provides that no person who—

"Has an unsatisfied order of any court for the maintenance of his wife or children (whether legitimate or illegitimate);"

shall be qualified to be enrolled or vote. I think that is a very good provision, and it will give an opportunity to men who wish to exercise their vote to pay their reasonable and just debts. I notice that clause 12 provides that no person shall be entitled to vote more than once at the same election. The hon. member for Aubigny touched on that, and it does not appear to be at all clear. I do not know whether they propose to allow an elector to get on a lot of rolls. It looks as if there is that possibility. It is

to encourage electors to retain their names on the rolls. When a man or woman is making a claim, they are expected to intimate the roll on which they were last enrolled, and that clause might very well be dropped out. Clause 15 provides for a description of the voters. We want some clearer definition than that, more especially in regard to the women. We find at times that it is difficult to recognise who is the person referred to. If it is a married woman, it should be distinctly stated, and not merely the words "domestic duties." The married woman should be known by the name "housewife." I do not quite grasp the meaning of clause 18. It states that the Governor in Council may arrange with the Commonwealth for the preparation of names, and it refers to names which are not entitled to be on the Commonwealth rolls. I suppose we will get some meaning for that in Committee. The Bill provides for the inmates of Dunwich getting a vote. Several members on this side said they favoured that under certain conditions.

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: They did not give it.

Mr. ROBERTS: I am opposed to it myself.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: You favoured it once.

Mr. ROBERTS: I did not favour it at all.

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: Yes, when you were on the Central Political Executive.

Mr. ROBERTS: We are not discussing the Central Political Executive to-night. If we were, I might, perhaps, tell hon. members one or two things that they would regret. I confess I can see no sensible reason why the people of Dunwich should have a vote, whether they vote for the electorate in which Dunwich is situated or the electorate where they previously resided. We know that a large number of those people are incapable of exercising an intelligent vote. If the Minister goes down there and interviews them, he will find that a number of them will hardly be able to tell him where they previously resided. In addition, they will know nothing of local politics.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: Many of them know more about politics than the members of this House.

Mr. ROBERTS: If they are spread over the various electorates, the ultimate result is not worth discussing, but it is not wise to extend the franchise in that particular direction. I notice that paragraph (3) of clause 21 says—

"The validity of the enrolment shall not in any case be questioned on the ground that the person enrolled has not in fact lived in the district or division for one month."

That means that if I wish to lodge an objection against a person whom I have every evidence to prove does not hold the necessary qualification, I cannot lodge it on those particular grounds. I do not know of any more important ground that the objection could be lodged on. Probably we will get some information on that point. Clause 27 provides for the changing of altered names of married women, and for other alterations which must be made from time to time. Clause 31 provides for objections to be lodged

Mr. Roberts.]

accompanied by a 5s. fee. Members opposite have always objected to the 5s. fee, and yet they have continued it in the present Bill. It does not concern me, because I never lodged an objection to any person. I am pleased to see that under clause 34 provision is made for a court of appeal, consisting of a police magistrate or two or more justices of the peace. If an elector's name is removed, he has the right to appeal against the action of the registrar. With regard to the printing of the ballot-papers, there are some electors who cannot read—as was referred to by the leader of the Opposition—and perhaps it would be as well if we printed the names of the candidates in their political colours. Then people who could not read would recognise the colour, and place the "X" against that name.

Mr. BRIDGES: What colour would you suggest?

Mr. ROBERTS: Red for the Labour candidate.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: And black for the Liberal candidate—black for mourning. (Laughter.)

Mr. ROBERTS: I notice that most of the alterations of the law which appear in this Bill have been copied from the Commonwealth Electoral Law, but I am very pleased to note that the Government have not extended the time for taking the polls, because I think that from 8 o'clock till 6 o'clock is ample time for the electors of Queensland to exercise the franchise, notwithstanding that our friends on the opposite side, when they were in opposition, used to use the argument that the hours of polling should be brought into line with the provisions of the Federal Act.

Mr. A. J. JONES: Why not give them every facility?

Mr. ROBERTS: I think there is every facility. I think that between 8 o'clock and 6 o'clock there is every facility for people to exercise their votes.

Mr. A. J. JONES: Some of them have to ride 50 miles.

Mr. ROBERTS: There is no reason why we should not provide for those people. But, nevertheless, there must be very few who, in these times, have to ride 50 miles to vote, particularly as we are going to allow the absent vote. I do not think that the number of persons who have to ride that distance would exceed ten or twenty right throughout Queensland. Clause 71 deals with the postal vote, as I said earlier in the evening, and I hope that we will have an opportunity of making it possible for everyone who is entitled to a vote to avail himself of that vote by the attestation of the signature of an elector of Queensland.

Mr. GRAYSON (*Cunningham*): Every Government which has been in power for the last fifty years has had an Elections Bill on its programme, and I find that this Government is no exception to the rule. Personally, I am always in favour of giving every facility to every elector to have his name placed on the roll and to record his vote. I believe that in this Bill the Government are making an attempt—I would even go so far as to say an honest attempt—to see that everyone who is entitled should be enfranchised. I notice that provision is made to extend to females the privilege of becoming candidates for Parliament. We have had

female candidates for the Federal Parliament in several States, but, as a rule, they have not been taken seriously by the electors, with the exception of Vida Goldstein. I think. I know that the Assistant Home Secretary has a very kind regard, has a warm corner in his heart for the females of Queensland. I do not think I am transgressing when I say that.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: And so have you.

Mr. GRAYSON: I do not deny that. I am very pleased that the hon. member has had the courage of his convictions, and, personally, I have absolutely no objection to that clause, so that if there is any ambitious lady in Queensland who aspires to adorn the seats in Parliament House, she will now have an opportunity of doing so. Speaking generally, I think the Act passed last year, 1914, should have been sufficient to satisfy any member of the party opposite. We have had an election under it, and if it proved anything, it was that that Act was in favour of those occupying the Government benches. I am very pleased to see that the Assistant Home Secretary has adopted several clauses in the 1914 Act, particularly that allowing the sick and infirm to exercise their votes. I have always been in favour of that provision. I think it would be a great mistake to deprive any old colonist of his vote on election day who, by reason of illness or other cause, was unable to go to the poll. I remember—I think at the time of the 1912 election—I visited the Warwick Hospital, and I met there an old gentleman, who had been a resident of Queensland for fifty-five years. He was a countryman of mine—an Irishman—who had always taken a very keen and lively interest in parliamentary elections, and he said to me, "Mr. Grayson, I am sorry to say that this will be the first election since I have been in the colony that I will be deprived of recording my vote." I pointed out to the old gentleman that he would be able to record his vote, and he was quite delighted that he would again be able to exercise the franchise. I immediately saw one of the agents of the candidate he was going to support—and I might say that was a Labour candidate—and I made all arrangements for the postal vote to be got for him, and he recorded his vote, which turned out to be the last he recorded in Queensland. There are also many instances where females are deprived of recording their votes through maternity, and I think that, in instances like that, it is right and proper that provision should be made. I notice that electors will be placed on the roll when they have been six months in Australia. Previously, I believe it was twelve months. Well, I have not the slightest objection to that. I say that it is right that any elector who has resided in Australia for six months should be placed on the roll. Then, anyone who has been three months in Queensland may claim to be placed on the roll. There is just this danger about that: When an elector has been three months in Queensland and his name appears on a roll, he is entitled to become a candidate for Parliament for any constituency. The same thing applies to a female. If a female comes from any of the other States of [11 p.m.] the Commonwealth and is resident in Queensland for three months, that lady will be eligible to be nominated as a candidate for any constituency in Queensland. I think it would be as well on the part of the Assistant Home Secretary to amend the clause so that no elector can

[*Mr. Roberts.*]

become a parliamentary candidate until she has been resident in the State for at least twelve months. I have always been in favour of female franchise, and I do not believe there is a single member of the House who would agree to abolish that franchise. Speaking as the representative of a country district, I have always found that the women of Queensland exercise the franchise in a most intelligent manner. (Hear, hear!) I do not know whether the majority of them vote for Socialists or for Liberals.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: They are nearly all Socialists.

Mr. GRAYSON: I do not believe they are nearly all voters for Socialists. Certainly that has not been my experience in any election I have contested.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: They vote "bread and butter."

Mr. GRAYSON: "Bread and butter" was a splendid cry at the last election, and if hon. members on the other side can only start a somewhat similar cry at the next election, they will stand a good chance of again capturing the Treasury benches; but, failing a cry of that character, I am afraid they will be in a serious minority after the 1918 election. I am also in favour of the absent vote. Any elector who is absent from his electorate on polling-day should be allowed to record his vote as an absent voter. It seems to me as if the Minister has adopted a good number of the provisions of the Act passed last session by the Denham Government. I have no hesitation in saying that I am quite in favour of giving the soldiers a vote, but the result at the last election was a complete farce. I was speaking a few weeks ago to an officer who returned with wounded soldiers, and he told me that the voting papers were handed to the soldiers just as they were leaving Melbourne by boat, and nearly all of the votes were thrown overboard. Those soldiers were going to fight for the Empire, and they did not want to vote. At the same time, if it is the intention of the Minister to press that clause, I shall not oppose it. Not only would I be prepared to give the soldiers one vote, but I would be prepared to give them a dozen votes for their valour in going to the front to defend not only the Empire, but also Australia. Then I notice that the inmates of Dunwich are to be enfranchised. That has been a pet idea of the Labour party for many years. Every time that an Elections Bill has been introduced, they have proposed an amendment to give the franchise to the old people at Dunwich. I have visited Dunwich on many occasions, and my experience of the poor old people is that a very small percentage of them care a snap of the fingers whether they have a vote or not. In connection with giving them a vote I see a danger. Supposing several hundred voters at the institution are tacked on to one of the Brisbane electorates, the Labour party will have a certain seat in that electorate. I believe that the inmates should be allowed to vote for the electorates from which they came.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: That is what the Bill provides for.

Mr. GRAYSON: I am glad of that.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Why will they all vote for Labour?

Mr. GRAYSON: I think that the Labour party will receive 95 per cent. of the Dunwich votes, for the reason that they have persuaded the old people that every concession they have received for many years past has been due to them.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Are you stonewalling?

Mr. GRAYSON: I am not stonewalling, and this is the first time I have even been accused of stonewalling. This is an important measure, which requires calm and full consideration. I have not offered any very serious opposition to it so far, but it is only proper and right that members of the Opposition should have an opportunity of making a few casual observations on Bills that are submitted to us. As hon. members are getting tired, and as I am tired myself, I shall not delay the House any longer. I intend to watch the passage of the measure very carefully, and to discuss several of its clauses in Committee.

Mr. PETRIE: Hon. members on the other side may thank their deputy leader for having been kept here until this late hour. On an important measure like this he might have agreed to an adjournment at a reasonable hour, and we could have finished the debate probably to-morrow afternoon.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: You agreed to put it through.

Mr. PETRIE: I made no agreement, and I understand that no agreement was made. However, it is an important matter, and I have not got up for the purpose of stonewalling, but as I understand it was said that the deputy leader of the Government was determined to put this measure through, I thought I would like to say a few words on it before it went through. I congratulate the Assistant Home Secretary on the manner in which he introduced this Bill. It is his first measure since he took office, and he has been most courteous, and from his point of view he explained matters as clearly and as nicely as he could, and I wish one other member of that seat would take a leaf out of his book in every respect. This is a measure that we are in the habit of getting nearly every Parliament. At all events, there have been many amendments, and we thought the amendment introduced by the late Government in the last Parliament was going to give every satisfaction. I am pleased to see that every man and every woman is going to have facilities for getting on the roll. There have been many mistakes made by the people themselves through being careless and indifferent in the matter of getting on the roll. I would like to suggest that the electoral registrars, who are responsible for carrying out this work, should be placed in more commodious premises, and that they should have an opportunity of getting further assistance. I have been in the office in the basement of the Treasury Buildings, and there is no counter, and when you open the door and go into the main building, you are tumbling over men and women trying to find out whether they are on the roll, or making claims to get on the roll, and I really do not understand how these officers have been able to do the work as well as they have. There has been a lot said about the people who were disfranchised on account of the residence qualification. The reason objection was taken in that matter by the Liberal

Mr. Petrie.]

Government was that, when a railway was being constructed, it was within the power of any Government to say that they could get on the roll one month before an election. They might start a railway perhaps two or three months before an election takes place, and thus swamp the electorate. They could defeat a candidate in that way when they could defeat him in no other way. Notwithstanding all the amendments, I am afraid we will still have rolls that are not what they ought to be. During the last election I sent out circular letters, and I also took the trouble to enclose a leaflet showing the people how they could use the postal vote, and although there are only 6,000 electors on the roll, I had over 400 of those letters returned with their addresses marked "unknown." I know one instance where a person was on the last roll who had left the State for five years, while others—I am speaking now of both sides—have been disfranchised. In some instances they were marked as "dead," although they were very much alive. I give this Government credit, at all events, for the desire to put matters right if they can, and to give everybody who should have a vote an opportunity of voting. So far as compulsory voting is concerned, the reason I was in favour of compulsory voting was that, when the Commonwealth had compulsory enrolment, then they should give them an opportunity of voting. Some members on this side have advocated compulsory contingent voting. I am not in favour of that, as there are some very serious objections to it. With regard to extending the franchise to the old people at Dunwich and charitable institutions, I am very glad to see that that has been included by the Minister. I voted against giving a vote to the inmates of Dunwich mainly because I did not think it was a fair thing that one electorate should have all those people shoved on to it. Under the provisions of this Bill they have a vote for the last electorate they come from, and that is a very fair thing, although some of the old people down there may be in their second childhood. I have advocated in this House free passes to old pioneers, but I am sorry to say that, although I brought it forward on two occasions, I did not succeed, and I would like to see every assistance given to these old people who have "borne the heat and burden of the day," and probably many of them are in these institutions through no fault of their own. With regard to the innovation put in by the Minister, whereby every male or female can be a candidate for election to Parliament, I see no objection to that, now that women are taking a very active part in all phases of our civilisation. We now have them as doctors, dentists, and barristers, and if they can qualify for those positions, I see no reasons why they should not qualify to become members of Parliament. The Women's League—I do not know so much about the women on the Labour side, but I think they have done good work also—have done excellent work during the elections that have been carried out since they have been entitled to the franchise. Take my own electorate: nearly one-half of the electors on the Toombul roll are women; they have a big say now that the franchise has been extended to them, and I do not see why we should not go a step further and allow them to be nominated as members of Parliament. The day may come—although I may not live to see it—when our State Parliament will be wiped out, and we will have just

[*Mr. Petrie.*]

one national Parliament, and we will be something like local authorities here. That day is coming.

Mr. COLLINS: Do you advocate that?

Mr. PETRIE: I do not say I am advocating it. I am not an advocate of party politics. I would like to see party politics wiped out altogether, and the sooner they are the better it will be for the people of Australia.

Mr. A. JONES: You didn't say that when your party was in office.

Mr. PETRIE: I have said that not on one occasion, but on many. There is one thing that I should like to point out to the Assistant Home Secretary, and that is that no provision is made in this Bill or in any Electoral Act with regard to prosecutions for double voting. There were nine or ten cases of double voting in my electorate at the last election, some of which I could prove. The onus of prosecuting in such cases is thrown on the candidate, and I do not think that is fair. When double voting takes place, and it can be proved, it should be the duty of the Electoral Department to prosecute, because if a candidate has a fair majority he is not going to go to the trouble of instituting a lawsuit, and in any case it is not a nice thing for the candidate to prosecute.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is no obligation on the part of the candidate to prosecute anybody.

Mr. PETRIE: I know that, but, as I pointed out, the Government do not take any action in such cases, and if anybody does take action it is the candidate, and that is what I object to. The proper persons to undertake a prosecution are the officials of the Home Department. I hope that some amendment will be introduced to deal with this matter. I am sorry that I should have kept the House as late as this, but the fault for that does not lie with members on this side of the House. We have been very temperate in our remarks, and if the deputy leader of the Government had been as courteous as he usually is we should have got away by half-past 10 o'clock. I shall not detain the House any longer. I hope that the Bill will be made as perfect as possible when it goes into Committee, so that in the future people will not have reason to complain of their names not being on the roll or of their names having been struck off the roll for some unknown cause.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

REGULATION OF SUGAR CANE PRICES BILL.

MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL.

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

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE, the consideration of the Council's amendments was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at twenty-six minutes past 11 o'clock.