

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Council**

**WEDNESDAY, 24 OCTOBER 1917**

---

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

WEDNESDAY, 24 OCTOBER, 1917.

The PRESIDENT (Hon. W. Hamilton) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

### PAPERS.

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

Regulation, dated 12th October, under the Slaughtering Act of 1898.

Report upon the Government Central Sugar-mills for 1916-17.

### TIME FOR TERMINATION OF SITTINGS.

#### NOTICE OF MOTION, No. 1.

On Notice of Motion, No. 1, being called, HON. T. M. HALL said: I desire to allow the first motion to lapse.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones): I wish to speak on the first notice of motion.

The PRESIDENT: The first motion has lapsed.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I rise to a point of order. On the business-sheet in the name of the Hon. Mr. Hall is "Notice of Motion, No. 1"—

"Mr. Hall to move—That, notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in the Standing Rules and Orders, the Council, for the remainder of the present session, shall adjourn on each sitting day at an hour not later than 9 o'clock p.m."

I understand the hon. member wishes the motion to lapse, or to be withdrawn from the paper

Hon. T. M. HALL: Not necessarily. I will move it if you like.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I would appeal to the hon. member, in view of the reasonable hour at which we have been adjourning this session, to withdraw both motions.

Hon. A. J. THYNNE: This is not a point of order.

Hon. T. M. HALL: Will you adopt my motion yourself?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The second motion?

Hon. T. M. HALL: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Certainly not, because it is not necessary. We have not sat unreasonably late. On no occasion have we sat here this session after 11 o'clock. The latest we have sat is half-past 10 o'clock—the usual hour for adjourning—and I would appeal to the hon. member to withdraw both motions and let us get on with the State Iron and Steel Works Bill and other important questions on the business-paper.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Standing Order 44 reads—

"Except by leave of the Council, motions shall be moved in the order in

*Hon. A. J. Jones.]*

which they stand on the notice paper, and, if not so moved or postponed, shall lapse."

Notice of Motion, No. 1, has never been moved, and it is consequently a lapsed motion. The hon. gentleman can speak on the next motion when it comes on.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I bow to your ruling.

MOTION No. 2.

HON. T. M. HALL, in moving—

"That, unless otherwise ordered, at 8.45 o'clock p.m. on each sitting day the proceedings on any business then under consideration in the Council shall be interrupted by the President declaring that the proceedings stand adjourned; and, if the Council be in Committee, the proceedings shall be interrupted by the Chairman leaving the chair and reporting to the Council.

"If a motion has been proposed for the adjournment of the Council, or of the debate, or in Committee that the Chairman do report progress, or do leave the chair, every such dilatory motion shall lapse without question put.

"After the business under consideration at 8.45 o'clock p.m. has been disposed of, no further business shall be taken, but the Clerk shall read such motions and questions as have been given notice of during the sitting, and the President shall then declare the Council adjourned until the next sitting day.

"If a question is under decision either by collecting the voices or by a division at the time of interruption of business, the interruption shall take place after the declaration of numbers from the Chair.

"Government business under consideration at the time of interruption shall stand over until the next sitting day, and private members' business shall stand over until the next sitting on which private members' business has precedence.

"So much of the Standing Rules and Orders are hereby suspended as would otherwise preclude the adoption of the foregoing procedure."

said: I have no desire to take the business out of the hands of the Minister, but it is quite clear that the hon. gentleman is not prepared to enter into any arrangement with regard to fixing the time for adjournment. Those who have been in the Council for a considerable time realise how, at the end of the session, when the warm weather comes on, it is very wearisome and exhausting sitting continuously in the evening and listening to orations which, if delivered by one hon. member on each side, would be sufficient; but which, when repeated by various members merely "dittoing" everything said by previous speakers, become very tedious. The members recently appointed to this Chamber have certainly shown a very satisfactory example in the brevity of their remarks. They have had an opportunity of expressing themselves almost to a man, so that this motion will not deprive them of the opportunity of speaking at considerable length on matters in which they are deeply interested. This House is differently situated to the Assembly, inasmuch as the other House has to initiate legislation, which necessitates cover-

ing a much wider field in explaining the subject-matter of the various Bills introduced. This is a revisory Chamber, whose duty it is to correct any manifest errors which may have crept into Bills rushed through another place, or in amending badly expressed clauses which would create legal difficulties and complications in the form in which they come to us.

HON. R. SUMNER: What has happened so far to call for this motion?

HON. T. M. HALL: Nothing has happened so far. It is a provision for what may happen in the near future.

HON. R. BEDFORD: The Requisition of Ships Bill.

HON. T. M. HALL: I will give an instance of what has happened. We do not want a better illustration than the protracted discussion which took place yesterday on a Bill which on a previous occasion had been rejected on the motion for the second reading and was restored to the business-paper. That Bill was discussed by practically every member in this Chamber with the certain knowledge that, if anything had taken place since the previous discussion, it was not calculated to alter the views expressed by hon. members on the previous occasion when the second reading was rejected. Rather, the position last evening was that there was less necessity for that Bill than on the previous occasion, and that there was no necessity for a long and acrimonious discussion such as took place.

HON. W. H. DEMAINE: We were not here on the previous occasion.

HON. T. M. HALL: The discussion yesterday occupied from half-past 3 o'clock until nearly 11 o'clock. Questions of vital interest can be discussed dispassionately but at no unnecessary length. As a matter of fact, with the large number of hon. members we have here, discussions are likely to become more lengthy than they have been in the past. Those who know me know perfectly well that I am the last man to rise unless I have something to add to the debate; and if hon. members were to confine themselves to that, there is nothing to prevent us getting through our business by 9 o'clock, and it is for that reason that I am taking this action.

HON. R. BEDFORD: Why sit at all? You would be better without us.

HON. T. M. HALL: The probability is that we would be better without some persons.

HON. R. BEDFORD: We would be better without those who were here before.

HON. T. M. HALL: The members who were here before have been stamped with the approval of the people of Queensland; and if the Council becomes degraded hereafter, it will not be the fault of the old members. I do not intend to labour the question. The motion should commend itself to all reasonable men who desire to curtail unnecessary discussion. When measures are before us which have been approved of in another place, and wherein the principles are such as commend themselves to the right-thinking members of the Council, they will require but little discussion and small amendment. But we are not to be curtailed in our discussions, and I hold that an hon. member can, in the course of a quarter of an hour, say all that is to be said in connection with a question of this kind, unless he is beating

[*Hon. T. M. Hall.*]

the air with a view to the political publication of certain documents. I am not referring to hon. members sitting opposite. I am referring to hon. members on this side as well, who sometimes take a considerable time to express themselves on questions before the House. The motion will affect them as much as it will affect other hon. members. I consider that I have only done my duty in submitting the motion.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones): I rise to oppose the motion moved by the Hon. Mr. Hall. I was rather surprised at his giving notice of the previous motion on the paper, which I alluded to when I rose to a point of order, so that I might make an appeal to the hon. gentleman on behalf of the Government, and on behalf of the newly appointed members in this Chamber who are supporting the Government, to withdraw both motions because neither is necessary. The latest sitting hour of this House since I have had the honour to represent the Government in this Chamber, has been 10.30 p.m. I may stand corrected as to a few minutes only. During the great number of days that we have sat in this House since the opening of Parliament, we have adjourned at 6 o'clock on most occasions. I appeal to the hon. gentleman at this early stage to withdraw his motion, and let us get on with the more important business of the country. I may be excused for saying that I have on every occasion endeavoured to meet the convenience of hon. gentlemen by adjourning at a reasonable hour, and I would remind them that a little while ago, in trying to please two members, I got myself into hot water with country members like the Hon. Mr. Dunn and the Hon. Mr. Parnell, who come from Maryborough and Rockhampton to attend to their duties in this House. We have sat only from half-past 3 in the afternoon until 6 o'clock, and those hon. gentlemen have had to wander about this Chamber, and probably listen to the dreary debates in the Assembly, in order to fill in time, instead of doing the work they were appointed to do. Considering that we have some very important measures on the business-paper, I appeal to the Hon. Mr. Hall to withdraw his motion. We have on the paper a Bill to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916. That measure has been introduced by the Hon. Mr. Leahy, and though I do not agree with it, yet, from his point of view, it is a very important measure. Then we have the Farm Produce Agents Bill to be further considered in Committee, the State Produce Agency Bill to be further considered in Committee, and the Agricultural Settlers' Relief Act Amendment Bill to be read a second time. All these measures are of great importance to the people of the State, and I firmly believe, although we are a non-elective Chamber, that the people expect the House, while it is in existence, to pay some attention to legislative work, rather than engage in obstructive tactics such as this motion indicates. We have also before us the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act Amendment Bill, and the Government and a few members behind me are anxious to place that measure on the statute-book in the interests of the people engaged in the sugar industry. Surely we would be better employed this afternoon in discussing that important measure than in discussing this motion. However, I intend to discuss the motion, and every phase of it; but I will sit down within

five minutes if the hon. gentleman will withdraw the motion so that we may get on with other business.

Hon. T. M. HALL: What is your proposition?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If the hon. gentleman can point to any one case of unreasonableness on the part of the Government—

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Six hours were wasted yesterday.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. gentleman was partly to blame for that.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: A quarter of an hour.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Last night I intended that the House should adjourn at 9.30, and an arrangement was made to that effect. The Hon. Mr. Demaine was to speak, and he spoke briefly and to the point on the Requisition of Ships Bill. He did not wander away from the subject as the Hon. Mr. Fowles did. It was arranged that the Hon. Mr. Fowles was to follow him, and that I was to make a ten-minutes' speech in reply. I agreed to that arrangement, and as proof of that I may mention that a conveyance was waiting outside to take me home at half-past 9 o'clock.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: You are a lucky man; some of us had to walk home in the rain at half-past 11.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am very sorry.

Hon. W. STEPHENS: You look sorry.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: However, that is by the way. I think that a person who works from half-past 8 in the morning till 11 o'clock at night deserves some kind of conveyance to take him home.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: That is an argument in favour of the motion.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That was the arrangement made. What happened? The other side, if I may use that term, broke through the arrangement and put up the Hon. Mr. Fahey to make a very long speech.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: No, you are entirely wrong.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is a fact that the Hon. Mr. Fahey spoke at great length, and was followed by another hon. gentleman. I spoke at less length yesterday than any member who addressed the House on the Bill then under consideration. I was rather annoyed last night because the Hon. Mr. Fowles accused me of breaking my word, when, as a matter of fact, the breach of faith was on the part of the hon. gentlemen opposite. Do you mean to say that if we were not a reasonable body of men we would have made that arrangement in spite of the fact that this motion was on the business-paper?

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: What are you going to do to-night?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I will sit down in five minutes if the Hon. Mr. Hall will indicate by interjection that he will withdraw this motion so that we can get on with the business of the country.

Hon. W. STEPHENS: What is your compromise?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Hon. Mr. Leahy knows what Lowell said

*Hon. A. J. Jones.]*

about compromises. We do not want to compromise too far. When we sit till an unreasonably late hour at night, that will be time enough for the Hon. Mr. Hall to move his motion.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: You must look ahead.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am satisfied that the Government could not possibly fix any hour for adjournment. But surely hon. gentlemen will take my word that we will not sit unduly late.

Hon. T. M. HALL: Some of us have to stay in town if we do not get our trains at half past 11.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Might I suggest 11.30 or 11 o'clock as the latest hour for adjournment?

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Will you sit at half-past 2, instead of half-past 3 o'clock?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am willing to say on behalf of the Government that we will adjourn at a reasonable hour, and this House may be the judge of what is a reasonable hour.

Hon. T. M. HALL: Give us an indication of what is a reasonable hour.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We have been reasonable up to the present time.

Hon. T. M. HALL: That is not to say that you are going to be reasonable in the future. I have heard something about all-night sittings.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Perish the thought! I am not physically fit for all-night sittings, and I have no desire for all-night sittings.

Hon. T. M. HALL: Well, fix your time, so that we can get our trains.

Hon. W. STEPHENS: Half-past 2 till 10 o'clock?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not think it is wise to fix any time. Surely if I give my word on behalf of the Government that we will not be unreasonably late, hon. members will accept that assurance. Before I go on with the argument I intend to use with regard to this motion, I would like an indication from the hon. gentleman who moved the motion as to whether it will be withdrawn.

Hon. T. M. HALL: If the hon. gentleman will fix a reasonable time, I will withdraw it, or I will accept an amendment.

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: What about the members who wish to get away by the Bundaberg mail train which leaves about ten past 10?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Members will always adjourn in time to catch the Northern mail. The Hon. Mr. Demaine, of Bundaberg, the Hon. Mr.

[4 p.m.] Purnell, and the Hon. Mr. Parnell, of Rockhampton, and the Hon. Mr. Dunn, all desire to catch the ten past ten train. I will give my word that they will catch that train if this motion is withdrawn.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Arrangements were all broken last night.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Then, I say that they were broken by the hon. gentleman's side.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Not by myself. Arrangements are no good whatever.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: It was a misunderstanding.

[Hon. A. J. Jones.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am inclined to think it was a misunderstanding, because I know the Hon. Mr. Fahey too well to think it could be anything else but a misunderstanding. The object the Government has in fixing a time is this—we may be in Committee on a Bill, and a quarter of an hour or ten minutes may complete the Bill. Hon. gentlemen with wide Parliamentary experience know that to facilitate political business it is wise to get as far as you can in one day. If a Bill is within a quarter of an hour of completion, and the debate is adjourned over that night till next day, and we come back fresh with new arguments, it may last till the following day.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: That is an extreme case. Save a quarter of an hour at the beginning instead of at the end. You have wasted half an hour already.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not think I am wasting the time of the House. I am giving splendid arguments why this motion should not be carried. There is no greater stickler for the rights and privileges of Parliamentarians than I am. I would rather do anything than destroy those rights and privileges which have been handed down to us by our forefathers. Every member of this Chamber has his rights. I am not denying the right of the Hon. Mr. Hall to move this motion. He has a perfect right to move it, the same as other hon. members have a right to move motions on private members' day.

Hon. R. SUMNER: He can close at 4 o'clock if he likes.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The other night I wanted to sit till my train left for Gympie, but I adjourned at six in order to meet hon. gentlemen. The Hon. Mr. Leahy will bear me out in that.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: That is so.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I can assure the Hon. Mr. Hall that if the rumours he has based his motion upon have reached his ears, they are quite unfounded. We are here in the interests of the people. Hon. members opposite may claim the same. As one who can speak on behalf of a good number on this side, I can say they are here with an honest desire to try and get the business of the country through. I do not know that I am giving away any secret, but I believe the Premier is very desirous of closing the House down earlier this year than usual.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: What is that for—to have another session later?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not know. We have not a very large business sheet, but we have some very important measures on the sheet. It is the desire of the Government to close Parliament next month.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: And it could be done notwithstanding this motion. Let us sit another day a week.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No, it cannot be done with this motion. It matters not how we may differ in our political views, we should allow the friendly feeling between the members on both sides—members of the Government and those who oppose them—to operate.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: If this hour does not suit you, name some hour that will suit you.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Everybody knows what a reasonable hour is—say, 10 o'clock or 9 o'clock—it will depend upon our business-sheet. I never did believe in the prevention of free speech.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Say 10 o'clock, if 9 is too early.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Withdraw the motion, on my word that we will adjourn at a reasonable hour.

Hon. T. M. HALL: Unless you definitely state the hour, I will not accept anything.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Then we will go on, as negotiations have failed.

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: That might be a reasonable hour on Friday night, when some of your friends want to get away; but somebody else might want to get away on Thursday night and might have to appeal to you.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I have never done anything like that since I have been in this Chamber. I am sincere in my desire that this motion should be withdrawn, and that we should get on with the business of the country, and if hon. members wish, we may finish as much of the business as we possibly can and adjourn for a week. I have plenty of work to do in the afternoons without even coming here.

Hon. F. T. BRENTNALL: We decline to accept it unless you fix a definite hour. Go on with the business.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am going on.

Hon. H. L. GROOM: Make it half-past 2 to half-past 10.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Make it 10 o'clock.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Premier moved yesterday in the Assembly a motion for the establishment of steel and iron works—a motion of a broad, national character. We would be better engaged this afternoon, if this motion were withdrawn, in completing the business-paper, and allowing that all-important measure to be discussed. I regret very much that in this Chamber, which is supposed to be non-party, we are dealing with so much paltry stuff, with so many paltry motions such as that moved by the Hon. Mr. Leahy to refer to a Select Committee the State industrial enterprises.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: It is the most important motion this session or any other session, and it is giving good results.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am glad the hon. member thinks so.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: The public think so.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am satisfied that the vast majority of the right-thinking public do not think anything of the kind.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: If you were reasonable you would make it 10.30, and drop the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am not able to fix any set time for the reasons I have given, but I repeat on behalf of the Government that we shall not be unreasonable. We shall treat hon. members with courtesy, and give them every consideration with regard to their wishes for an adjournment. I have always taken up that attitude,

and have always discussed with the Hon. Mr. Leahy and the Hon. Mr. Hawthorn—I do not know who is the leader—

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: We are all leaders here.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I have discussed with those hon. gentlemen, and others, the question of adjournment on previous occasions. How many nights have we adjourned at 6 o'clock, when there was really business to do, in order to meet the convenience of some hon. members?

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Say 10 o'clock, and it will be finished.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I have failed in my duty to the Government when there has been business on the sheet in agreeing to adjourn.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: You have made it up next day.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We should reciprocate, and, when hon. members find I am reasonable, I am satisfied they will facilitate the business of the Government. It is suggested that we should make the time half-past 10 or 10 o'clock. My reply to that is that it may delay business, as we may be within a few minutes of finishing a Bill at that time.

Hon. T. M. HALL: If you are going to make a compromise, why not let it rest on the consent of the House?

Hon. F. T. BRENTNALL: The hon. gentleman should try to be reasonable.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think I am trying to be reasonable. I do not anticipate that we shall need to be here till half-past 10 every night. We have not sat till half-past 10 one night this session, and the motion is not justified. If hon. gentlemen will take my word that we will not be unreasonable, that we will meet their convenience as much as possible, and that the House will adjourn at a reasonable hour every night, the motion could be disposed of. I am sorry we cannot come to some arrangement at this early stage of the debate. The Government is very much opposed to this motion, because it is an infringement of the rights of Parliament.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: They do not consider that when they want to wipe out this Chamber.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: We make our own rules for this Chamber—it has nothing to do with the other place.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. gentleman is giving one of the best reasons why this Chamber should be abolished.

Hon. F. T. BRENTNALL: Let the Assembly have its own way in everything.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The members of the Assembly are certainly the representatives of the people, and the people can alter the personnel of that Chamber in three years' time if they wish. I am one of those who always wish to bow to the will of the majority.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Well, we have a majority.

Hon. B. FAHEY: Why don't you bow to it this afternoon?

*Hon. A. J. Jones.]*

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If I thought the motion was a true expression of the will of the people, I would certainly do so.

Hon. F. T. BRENTNALL: They gave you your answer on 5th May.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The people did not give us their answer on 5th May. The answer the people gave on 5th May was that the bi-cameral system of government should continue. They did not say that this House was to introduce obstructive motions. I would not accuse the Hon. Mr. Hall of wilfully trying to obstruct business, but I believe the effect of this motion will be to lay down a precedent that eventually will lead to obstruction.

Hon. T. M. HALL: If I withdrew the motion, would you agree to adjourn at a specified time?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I cannot possibly agree to a specified time for the reason I have mentioned. If this motion is carried, at 8.45 to-morrow night some hon. member may be debating the second reading of the State Iron and Steel Works Bill, and the Council will automatically adjourn, and the hon. member speaking will have the trend of his argument interrupted, although in five minutes he might have completed his speech. Then he may come along the following day with a fresh lot of arguments, facts, and figures.

Hon. T. M. HALL: That could happen at any hour of the evening.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: That would be all for the benefit of the debate.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Hon. members will soon recognise that the speech that I am about to deliver will be a benefit to this House, and that it will furnish a good reason why this motion should not be carried.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Would you agree to a time limit for speeches?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: They have a time limit in the other Chamber, but it is not necessary here. Hon. members here are reasonable. I have never heard any unduly long speech delivered in this Chamber. The speeches I have heard here have been most interesting, and they have proved edifying and educational to me.

Hon. W. STEPHENS: It is the Government business you are delaying. It is not we who are delaying it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: In my opinion this is a very petty motion.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: You are not treating it as if it were petty.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is petty in one respect. If I spoke from the purely party point of view, I would hail this motion with delight, because it will do more to assist the Labour party at the next general election than any other motion that has been submitted in this Chamber except the one moved by the Hon. Mr. Leahy. It is well known that one plank of the Labour platform is the abolition of this Chamber

Hon. T. M. HALL: And eight hours a day.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: This motion is splendid evidence why this House should be abolished.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Do you believe in abolishing this House?

[*Hon. A. J. Jones.*

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I certainly do.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Well, why don't you allow the motion to go, if it will do us harm?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I want to protect the hon. gentleman.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: I can look after myself.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The people expect this Chamber, so long as we have two Chambers, to facilitate the passage of public business, but this is not a facilitating motion. I can only describe it as a motion intended to obstruct public business. The Government have no desire to interfere with private members' business by moving the suspension of any of the Standing Orders, because we recognise that hon. members in this Chamber, where very little legislation is initiated, may desire to introduce legislation. Private members are fully protected by the Standing Orders; but if private members' day is to be used to discuss obstructive tactics such as this, those who support the motion can have no other desire than to obstruct the business of the country. Under our Standing Orders the House has full control over its hours of sitting. Hon. members on the other side have a majority, and they can get an adjournment almost whenever they like. If there was any reason for the motion, I could understand its being submitted. But since I became a member of the Council the House has never sat after 11 o'clock at night, and I think only on one occasion have we sat till half-past 10. Most evenings we have adjourned at 6 o'clock, or 8 o'clock, and very rarely have we sat till half-past 9. Last night was an exception, and I am willing to admit that there may have been a misunderstanding—probably on both sides—but nobody was directly responsible for that misunderstanding. Seeing that the party to which the Hon. Mr. Hall belongs have a majority, there is no necessity for such a motion. Surely the hon. members, with a brutal majority behind them, will not interfere with the rights of the minority. I have often heard the Hon. Mr. Leahy quoting Lowell and the poets regarding freedom and the rights of minorities. I appeal to the manly instincts of hon. members opposite to preserve the rights of the minority on this side.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: We are not taking away their rights. They do it elsewhere, but it is not done here.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The President was the leader of the Government in this Chamber for some time, and he showed marked ability while acting in that position. He had a sad minority—only one or two supporters.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: He got through a lot of work.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Probably he got through more than I would be able to get through with such a numerically small following. But hon. members were considerate of the hon. gentleman personally, although they had no time for some of the measures that he introduced.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: We have treated you exactly the same.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Well, I appeal to hon. members to withdraw this motion.

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: He never spoke for an hour.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I appeal to hon. members to trust me as they trusted our worthy President. I regard the motion somewhat as a personal reflection upon myself. I lost a few hours' sleep last night after reading the motion, because I thought that hon. members considered that I was unreasonable and had tried to take some snatch vote or unduly to inconvenience them. The only obvious reason for the motion is that hon. members want to pass the motion as an excuse for their non-attendance.

Hon. T. M. HALL: We can always have a majority of ten or twelve here.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Hon. members must know that the people of the State, even after the vote of 5th May, are very dissatisfied with the non-attendance of hon. members in this Chamber. We have come here in the afternoon and had to go away again because there was no quorum.

Hon. A. GIBSON: Once.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Where were your own men?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Do hon. members opposite deliberately want to hang up the business of the House, no matter how important or how urgent it may be? Is the motion moved for the purpose of preventing the business of the Government going through this Chamber? I think we ought not to discuss Government business at undue length. We should not make exceptionally long second reading speeches on Bills received from the Assembly or on Bills introduced in this House. If hon. members want to justify their existence here, they should certainly be reasonable and discuss Government business received from the Assembly and the business introduced in this Chamber in an intelligent way, so that when Bills are sent or returned to the Assembly their arguments may carry some weight with that House. There is a danger in this motion in connection with Supply Bills. It may be necessary to pass an Appropriation Bill through this Chamber in one day. That Bill may be under discussion, but if this motion is passed, when the hands of the clock go round to 8.45 this House must automatically adjourn and public servants will probably be left without their pay.

Hon. W. STEPHENS: We have heard that before.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Does the hon. gentleman intend to obstruct an Appropriation Bill?

Hon. T. M. HALL: Yes, if necessary at any time.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: When I entered this Chamber one of my first duties was to move the suspension of the Standing Orders so that an Appropriation Bill might be carried through all its stages in one day.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Nine millions in four minutes, wasn't it?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Yes, we passed £9,000,000 in four minutes, because hon. gentlemen understood exactly what they were passing. In a very brief speech I was able to show hon. gentlemen

that it was necessary to pass that Bill through all its stages in one day, and it was passed. There will, no doubt, be an Appropriation Bill before this House before this session of Parliament ends, but if that Bill is under consideration when the time reaches 8.45 p.m., the House will have to adjourn and public servants and public departments, as well as the general public, will be put to inconvenience.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Bring it on a week earlier.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The bringing on of such a motion as this will cause the Government seriously to consider the question of additional appointments to this House.

Hon. T. M. HALL: That is all bunkum; you know you cannot appoint any more.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am here to say that, if you pass this motion, we shall be compelled, in order to get our business through, to ask for further appointments to be made.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: That does not say you will get them.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Oh, yes, it does say we shall get them. I know that hon. gentlemen are annoyed because certain appointments have been made to this House in order to facilitate the passage of Government business.

Hon. T. M. HALL: We have no objection to the appointments.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I say the appointments have been justified. The new members have contributed to the debate on some very important measures, and I think they are an acquisition to this Chamber. We shall want some other acquisitions to the Chamber if a motion like this is carried. If we are not given an opportunity to get the Government business through the Chamber, the Government will have seriously to consider the question of additional appointments.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Aren't you stonewalling Government business now?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If the hon. gentleman will read my speech later on, he will find that I have not been guilty of tedious repetition. I should now like to read from a few files of the "Courier," but I will promise not to read the "Courier" if the hon. gentleman will withdraw his motion. If it is not withdrawn, I will presently prove very conclusively which party compromised His Excellency the Governor and censured him for making certain appointments to this House. I may have my own opinion regarding the office of Governor, but never since I have been a member of the Chamber have I spoken disrespectfully of the representative of the Crown. This is an advertisement which appeared in the "Brisbane Courier" of 16th October, 1917—

"LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS."

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Are you in order reading that?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Yes, we are discussing the appointments to the Legislative Council.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: No.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am going to connect my remarks with the quotation, but I can only connect it with it after

*Hon. A. J. Jones.]*

reading the advertisement and the article. I say again that this motion will prompt the Government to appeal to His Excellency for additional appointments to the Legislative Council, though we may probably not want to do that.

Hon. T. M. HALL: You would like to do it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not know. There is a difference of opinion amongst members of the Labour party as to the swamping of the Council or the method to be adopted for abolishing the Council. The High Court has ruled that there is no constitutional difficulty in the way of the people abolishing this Chamber.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Is the law settled on that point?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Yes, it is settled.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: I do not think so.

Hon. T. M. HALL: Temperamental judges.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The High Court has decided that the people can abolish the Council, and I ask hon. gentlemen, if they do not want to commit political suicide, to cease moving such motions as that brought forward by the Hon. Mr. Leahy, and that which has been submitted to the House to-day by the Hon. Mr. Hall. This motion is introduced for no other purpose than to obstruct the business of this Chamber and to prevent the Government going on with important measures; and if I use my voice in this Chamber from now till to-morrow morning, I am going to oppose the motion, because I do not think the privileges and rights of hon. members should be interfered with by such a proposal.

Hon. T. M. HALL: Don't you believe in majority rule?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Hon. gentlemen opposite are using their brutal majority to interfere with the minority, and I am standing up for the rights of the minority. Hon. gentlemen are again whispering, or I would again quote from Lowell in connection with this.

Hon. F. T. BRENTNALL: You are a long time getting to that "Courier."

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Yes, this is what the advertisement says—

"AT THE  
EXHIBITION HALL, BRISBANE,  
on  
WEDNESDAY NIGHT NEXT,  
at 8 p.m.,  
A CITIZENS' INDIGNATION  
MEETING

Will be held under the auspices of the  
RETURNED SOLDIERS' AND PATRIOTS'  
LEAGUE

To Protest Against the Government's  
recent Appointments to the Legislative  
Council.

—  
SPEAKERS:

Lieut. E. MAURICE LITTLE,  
Warrant Officer RUNCORN,  
Sergt. N. R. WORRALL.

—  
Prior to the Meeting there will be an  
organ concert, commencing at 7.15 p.m.  
(Organist, Mr. Percy Brier, A.R.C.O.)"

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: It is a pity we have not an organ concert here.

[Hon. A. J. Jones.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Yes. Hon. gentlemen want to adjourn this House in order that they may engage in political propaganda work on behalf of their party.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: We do not.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: At that meeting certain resolutions were carried. I notice that side by side in the next column to this report is the all-important question of a State iron and steel works—"Debate in the Assembly," and it is rather a shame that I am wasting my voice in opposing a motion like this and standing up for the rights and privileges of hon. members and for the freedom of this House and any other legislative body, while there is an important measure like the Iron and Steel Works Bill to be discussed.

Hon. F. T. BRENTNALL: Is it against the rights and privileges of this House to pass a motion to regulate its own business?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is not regulating its own business; it is obstructing business. It is putting a time limit on business.

Hon. F. T. BRENTNALL: You said just now that we are depriving this House of its rights and privileges. Is it a violation of the rights and privileges of this House to propose a motion like this regulating our hours of business? I would like you to answer that.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I have previously pointed this out, and I do not want to repeat my arguments. I am sticking to the motion before the House.

Hon. F. T. BRENTNALL: I want you to stick to my question, and, if you cannot answer it, appeal to the President.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: My answer to the hon. gentleman's question is this: That we might be discussing a question, and the House would need to automatically adjourn if this motion is carried.

Hon. T. M. HALL: "Unless otherwise ordered," as mentioned in my motion.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Therefore, we would have to come back next day, and go over the whole thing again.

Hon. F. T. BRENTNALL: That is not the point. Have we the right and privilege of regulating the hours of sitting here?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am entitled to my own opinion as to what are the rights and privileges of this Chamber. This motion is an interference with the privileges of the minority of members of this Chamber; because the Government members happen to be in an unfortunate majority, this brutal majority will take advantage of them by a motion like this. They think they are going to get it through without debate, and that we will sit here silently and allow the motion to be carried.

Hon. F. T. BRENTNALL: You called in question the right and privilege of a member of this House to bring forward a motion like this. I want you to stick to that point just now.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I will quote two or three articles from the "Courier" of 18th October. There is a report of the meeting—

Hon. F. T. BRENTNALL: But you have not answered my question yet.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The question of the hon. gentleman's will be answered in due course, and at the proper time. (Laughter.)

Hon. F. T. BRETNALL: Appeal to the President to decide it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I would ask the hon. gentleman to give notice of the question.

Hon. F. T. BRETNALL: You cannot answer it, evidently.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I have also my individual rights, and my individual opinion, and I say that a motion like this is an interference with the rights and privileges of a minority of this Chamber. Would the Hon. Mr. Hall and those supporting him dare to move this motion if they had a minority in this Chamber? The only thing that surprises me is that they did not move it when I was alone in the Chamber. That proves I have been reasonable. Before I sit down I am going to get "Hansard," and to give the times of adjournment of the Council, and in no instance have we been later than 10.30 p.m. until last night.

Hon. T. M. HALL: When your supporters said that they were going to sit late so as to kill off the old members of the Council, it is time for me to move, and I moved the motion on that account.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Did they use an adjective?

Hon. T. M. HALL: Yes, a very strong one.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am surprised. I am sure that no hon. gentleman has heard me use such expressions regarding hon. gentlemen.

Hon. T. M. HALL: No, you would not.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I sincerely hope that hon. gentlemen will live long to enjoy the privilege given to them to legislate in this Chamber while it is a Chamber.

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: I rise to a point of order. Is the Minister in order in reading an extract from the "Courier," reflecting on the character of an exalted personage in this State?

The PRESIDENT: I have not heard him doing so. It is time enough to call him to order when he does it.

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: You will wait till you hear it?

The PRESIDENT: I cannot call the hon. gentleman to order for a thing that he has never done.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I have no desire to cast any reflection on His Excellency the Governor, nor have I done so. I rose to protect His Excellency, and I consider it to be my duty as the representative of the Government in this Chamber.

Hon. T. M. HALL: What has that to do with the motion?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I can connect the article which I am about to read.

Hon. T. M. HALL: We will have a few of these later on when you bring some of your dirty Bills on.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. gentleman is entirely out of order in using an expression like that. I am really

surprised that the Hon. Mr. Hall has so far forgotten himself as to use such an expression towards the Government as "dirty Bills." There may be Bills that he may not agree with—

Hon. T. M. HALL: Some of them I know something about, too.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No doubt there have been many Bills introduced into this Chamber that the hon. gentleman and his friends may not agree with, but I do not think there have been any dirty Bills introduced into this Chamber.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Would not pig iron be a bit dirty?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am not going to follow on that line of argument. While I remain in this Council I am going to try and confine myself to the question that I am debating, and always to use parliamentary language. I am not going to be led off the track. If hon. gentlemen want to show their ability for using foul language in this Chamber to the people of Queensland, they may do so. I am not concerned about that, but I know that that sort of thing is another nail in their coffin, and an argument why this House should be abolished. In the "Courier" of 18th October we have the following headlines:—

"The Governor criticised—Resolution of Disapprobation—Meeting of Soldiers and Citizens."

I read the advertisement to hon. gentlemen.

Hon. T. M. HALL: No, you did not.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Now, I will read the article. Hon. gentlemen will know that I am a much better reader than I am a speaker.

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: It is not right to read that during the absence of His Excellency.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: This meeting was called—

"To utter a strong protest in respect to the recent appointments to the Legislative Council, a very large meeting of citizens and returned soldiers, convened by the Returned Soldiers' and Patriots' National Political League, was held in the Exhibition Hall last night. Mr. Pearce Douglas (late of the 9th Battalion) presided, and, after explaining the object of the gathering, stated that it had been convened by the league which has a membership of 1,500 returned soldiers, and 5,000 patriots."

Hon. H. C. JONES: That is the tale.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES:

"Prior to the meeting Mr. Percy Erier, A.R.C.O., rendered a number of acceptable selections on the organ and little Miss Ruth Arnold recited cleverly."

I am not going to read the whole of the article—

"Sergeant N. R. Worrall directed attention to the fact that the matter of the appointments to the Council had greatly disturbed the minds of the people for the past week. It had been dealt with concisely and fearlessly by the leading daily journal, but no one had yet had the temerity to attack the question on the public platform. They were not there in any partisan spirit. As a body they were pledged to the destruction of the party system in politics, a system

*Hon. A. J. Jones.]*

which had ruled too long in Australia—(applause)—and which must be annihilated. (Applause.) They did not propose to discuss the personnel of the appointments. It was the principle involved that they wished to discuss. They claimed that they had bought on the battlefields the right to discuss these national questions. (Applause.)”

That right no Government would allow the Nationalists or any body of men to discuss.

The PRESIDENT: I must call the hon. gentleman to order. The hon. gentleman would be quite in order in reading an extract from a paper that was relevant to the matter before the House, but I do not see that that question is relevant to the matter before the House at all.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I bow to your ruling. My eyesight is not too good, and I could not find the place. I wanted to quote the motion that was carried, and I will connect my argument with the motion before the House. The motion was—

“That this meeting of returned soldiers and citizens of Brisbane, while expressing its loyal allegiance to his Majesty the King, and its unswerving devotion to the Empire, hereby conveys to his Excellency the Governor, Sir Hamilton Goold-Adams, its strongest disapprobation of his action in appointing to the Legislative Council of Queensland thirteen new members, thereby increasing the number of members beyond the recognised maximum strength of the Chamber in direct opposition to the mandate of the electors of Queensland given on May 5 last. (Applause.)”

The Hon. Mr. Campbell rose to a point of order, and said that, in quoting the advertisement, I was casting a reflection on His Excellency the Governor. I say that, as a Minister of the Crown, it is my duty to protect His Excellency the Governor. Certain advice has been tendered to His Excellency which he in his wisdom thought fit to accept.

HON. T. M. HALL: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. gentleman in order in discussing a meeting that took place in the Exhibition over a motion by certain returned soldiers that has no reference to this Council?

The PRESIDENT: The hon. gentleman is out of order. The matter he is discussing is not relevant to the question before the House.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I again bow to the ruling of the President. At the same time, the hon. member who interjected must admit that he was out of order when he said that I was casting a reflection on a gentleman in an exalted position. I would not have taken [5 p.m.] the oath of allegiance if I dared to come into this Chamber and cast any reflection on His Excellency the Governor. I deny the imputation emphatically. It is a reflection on a man who cannot protect himself. Is this the fair play that a brutal majority is trying to exercise this afternoon by asking us to accept this motion?

HON. T. M. HALL: I have told you already that I am prepared to withdraw the motion if you will agree to fix a time for adjourning.

[Hon. A. J. Jones.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If I have to stand here till to-morrow morning, I intend to stand up for the rights of the minority. Unfortunately, we are not as strong numerically as hon. members opposite, but we are not going to accept a motion like this without protest. A motion such as this is one of the strongest reasons why the question of additional appointments to this House should be seriously considered so that Government business may be transacted. Look at all the important measures now on the business-paper. The Government cannot possibly get those measures through if hon. members pursue obstructive tactics. If the hon. member will withdraw the motion, I am prepared, on behalf of the Government, to say that we will not unduly inconvenience any member of this Chamber, and we will adjourn, as the business will allow us, at a reasonable hour every night.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Fix a time.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We will not fix a time for the reason I have mentioned. Hon. members with large parliamentary experience must know that it could easily happen that, when the time for adjournment came, another quarter of an hour would have enabled a Bill in Committee to be completed; but, by adjourning, hon. members could come back the next day with fresh arguments and occupy the whole of the sitting.

HON. G. S. CURTIS: What do you call a reasonable hour for adjournment?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I have been too reasonable, and I have not done my duty to the Legislative Assembly very often in agreeing to adjourn at 6 o'clock. On no occasion this session has the Council adjourned at a later hour than 10.40 p.m.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Are you willing to say that half-past 10 is a reasonable hour?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am not going to fix any hour, because I think it would be an infringement of the rights and privileges of this Chamber to do so. We are not going to allow anybody to take the business out of the hands of the Government by fixing any hour for adjourning the Council. If hon. members care to take my word as a man—and I have never broken it yet in this Chamber—I will sit down in five minutes if they will withdraw the motion and let us get on with the important public business that is on the business-sheet. If not, we will go on. What about the rights of the minority?

HON. T. M. HALL: What consideration have you or your party ever shown for minorities?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I compromised with hon. members last night. They accused me of breaking through the agreement, but it was they who broke through that agreement. The Government representatives have been very reasonable in this Chamber. We have adjourned the Council at 6 o'clock.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: We have been reasonable also.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Did not the Hon. Mr. Dunn and the Hon. Mr. Parnell complain to me that they came here to do business, and then had to walk about the lobbies because the Council had

adjourned at 6 o'clock to meet the convenience of hon. members opposite? Those hon. members had my sympathy. Such a hostile attitude as is manifested by this motion will not be tolerated by the Government. The Government of the country must go on. Do hon. members mean to tell me that this motion is not moved for the specific purpose of interfering with the business of the Government?

Hon. T. M. HALL: I told you why it was moved.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I could quite understand the motion being moved if I had been unreasonable, or if we had sat to an unreasonable hour. But now the Hon. Mr. Hall comes along with another trumped-up charge—and I may say that a good deal of the time of Ministers is taken up in meeting the trumped-up charges that are levelled against them by members of this House and members of the Assembly—

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: You have no right to say that. It is quite unparliamentary.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: What about the motion of the hon. gentleman for the appointment of the Select Committee with respect to State enterprises? I am very anxious to get on with the important measures on the paper and with the administrative work of the Mines Department, but here I am compelled this afternoon to oppose strenuously a motion like this.

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: Stonewalling.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I indicated before that I would use all the arguments that I am capable of using on this motion, but I said that I was willing to sit down in five minutes if the Hon. Mr. Hall would withdraw the motion.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Carry this motion, and we will clean the business-sheet by 9 o'clock to-night.

Hon. F. T. BRENTNALL: What right have you to insist on the Hon. Mr. Hall withdrawing his motion? We have a perfect right to discuss such a motion.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Why question my right to ask that the motion be withdrawn?

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: We are not questioning your right.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You may question it before morning.

Hon. T. M. HALL: We are quite prepared to sit here till morning. That does not worry us a bit.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The government of this country is going on, heedless of this hostile motion.

Hon. T. M. HALL: Heedless of everything.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There is too much of this recrimination. I would not degrade myself by using the unparliamentary expressions that are used at times by hon. members opposite.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Have you come to the conclusion that 10.30 is a reasonable hour?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I will give my word on behalf of this Government that there is no intention on the part of the Government to inconvenience hon. members. The trumped-up charge that I was just referring to was that the Hon. Mr. Hall moved this motion because of some rumour.

Hon. T. M. HALL: It was not a rumour. It was something I heard with my own ears in the writing-room. I heard someone say that they would sit every night and kill the old men off, and a very vulgar expression was used.

Hon. R. BEDFORD: Who said that?

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: You are quite capable of trying it:

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Those are not my instructions from the Government. Last night we adjourned at half-past 10 o'clock, and that was not an unreasonable hour.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: That is exactly what we wanted you to admit.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The President is aware that at the conclusion of a session there are occasions when this House has to wait for certain business from the other Chamber. Sometimes hon. members have to wait here till 12 or 1 o'clock.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: We will do it again if it is necessary, and we can do it under this motion. It says, "unless otherwise ordered."

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The House, under the present Standing Orders, has control over its times of sitting, and this motion is absolutely unnecessary. How much longer do hon. gentlemen want me to use that argument? If hon. gentlemen wish me to continue my argument, I shall make some quotations which will probably take up some time.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: That won't hurt us.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I shall quote from a speech delivered by the Hon. Mr. Leahy, but before doing so I shall give the times at which this Council adjourned from Monday, the 9th July, which was the first meeting of this House at which I represented the Government. On most days we adjourned at 6 o'clock in the afternoon.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Because there was nothing to do.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Hon. gentlemen have said that they come here with a mandate given by the people on the 5th May last. I say that the people in the country are expecting more from members of this Chamber than the discussion of a motion like that which is now before us. Hon. members opposite are giving the best possible reason why private members' day should be abolished. I am not going to advocate that, because there is no greater stickler for the rights of private members than I am. That privilege has been handed down to us from the mother of Parliaments, but it has been abused by hon. members to such an extent that all they can now do is to move a motion to harass the Government. Contrast the motion of which notice has been given by the Hon. Mr. Bedford for next Wednesday with the motion now before the House.

Hon. T. M. HALL: That motion is a piece of impertinence—an attempt to dictate to the Commonwealth Government.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The motion is of a national character, and affects the metal industry of this State. If it is carried in this House, and a similar motion is passed by the Legislative Assembly, that will be an indication to the Federal Prime

*Hon. A. J. Jones.]*

Minister of what the metal producers in this country desire in the way of reform. I further object to this motion on the ground that it will make an additional sessional order, and that such an order should be made at the beginning of the session. I doubt whether the motion is in order on that ground, but I am not raising a point of order, because I do not want to take any unfair advantage of an hon. gentleman who, through his ignorance of the Standing Orders, may move something which is not in accordance with parliamentary practice. Again, I question whether there is any precedent for making such an amendment of the sessional orders so late in the session. Can the hon. gentleman quote one precedent for his action in submitting the motion? The hon. member had previously given notice of another motion which reads—

“That, notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in the Standing Rules and Orders, the Council, for the remainder of the present session, shall adjourn on each sitting day at an hour not later than 9 o'clock p.m.”

The hon. gentleman allowed that motion to lapse, and gave notice of another one somewhat more in order, but I ask: Can he quote any precedent which justifies such a motion? I am not such a great stickler for precedent, but I certainly think the hon. gentleman should show what is the necessity for this motion, and in that respect he has lamentably failed. We are now within six weeks of the closing of the session, and we have this motion sprung upon us, so that it may go out to the country that members opposite had to introduce the closure. We have not got the closure in our Standing Orders; we have not even got the “gag.”

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Read Standing Order 108. It would have been put in force half-an-hour ago if you were not a Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. gentleman who moved this motion failed to give any reason why it should be carried. There is only one motive that could have actuated him in moving such a motion, and that is that when the party are appealing to the country at the next general election they may be able to say to the people, “We had to get a motion carried in the Legislative Council adjourning the House automatically at 8.45 in order.”—

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: To get on with business.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: To obstruct business. Do hon. gentlemen object to having each Bill properly discussed? I never make long speeches in the House. I believe my speech on the Address in Reply lasted for about one hour and three-quarters, and occupied twenty-nine pages of “Hansard,” but twenty pages were interjections, and only the other nine pages were my speech. This is a motion for the brutal majority to govern in the absence of its members. It is actually voting by post.

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: Where are your three old supporters in this House? At the Melbourne Cup, aren't they?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I have to thank them for their attendance in this House and the able way in which they have supported me here, and I think they are entitled to a little trip. Those hon. gentlemen courteously informed me that they were

[Hon. A. J. Jones.

going South, and that is all I know about their absence. I propose now to quote from a speech delivered by the Hon. Mr. Leahy in the other House on the 6th November, 1907. The then Premier, Mr. Kidston, had introduced the following motion:—

“That during the remainder of this session Government business do take precedence of all other business at 3 o'clock p.m. on Thursday in each week.”

In introducing the motion Mr. Kidston said that the Government had a great deal of business to get through. The Hon. Mr. Leahy, speaking on that motion, said—

The PRESIDENT: Is the hon. gentleman reading from the debates in another place?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Yes.

The PRESIDENT: It is distinctly out of order to do that. “May” is very clear on the point. At page 291 he says—

“The rule that allusions to debates in the other House are out of order prevents fruitless arguments between members of two distinct bodies who are unable to reply to each other, and guards against recrimination and offensive language in the absence of the party assailed; but it is mainly founded upon the understanding that the debates of the other House are not known, and that the House can take no notice of them. The daily publication of debates in Parliament offers a strong temptation to disregard this rule. The same questions are discussed by persons belonging to the same parties in both Houses, and speeches are constantly referred to by members, which this rule would exclude from their notice; and although there are few orders more important than this for the conduct of debate, and for observing courtesy between the two Houses, not one perhaps is more generally transgressed.”

The hon. member will, therefore, see that it is distinctly out of order to quote from speeches delivered in another Chamber.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Thank you, Mr. President. I was not aware that I was out of order. I do not wish to transgress the rules of this House; I have never tried to do so—not deliberately— [5.30 p.m.] and if I am out of order, I bow to your ruling. But I would very much like to have given some of the arguments which the Hon. Mr. Leahy used during the year 1907.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: I stand by everything I said.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I knew the hon. gentleman would. There are a few members in this Chamber who have had parliamentary experience in the Assembly, and the Hon. Mr. Leahy is one of them. I believe I was in the House at the same time as the hon. gentleman in 1907, and so were you, Mr. President, and, as far as my memory serves me, I do not know anyone who was a greater advocate for the rights of free speech than the Hon. Mr. Leahy.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: And I am now.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: And there was no greater stickler for the preservation of the rights and privileges of the Assembly than the Hon. Mr. Leahy. The

hon. gentleman was one of those members that we looked up to for some guidance in those days.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: I wish you would do it now.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I must say that the hon. gentleman has deteriorated somewhat since he came into this Chamber.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: This Chamber would improve anybody. You are better since you came here.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I hope we are getting better every day; but I am sure that the political atmosphere that I have breathed in this Chamber has not done me very much good. I am also opposed to this motion, because it is a shirking of our duty. Like other hon. gentlemen, I am a nominated member of this Chamber. I have been an elected member of the Assembly, and, as hon. members know, I relinquished my position there and accepted the position offered to me by the Government. I thought that when I came here it was my duty to carry on and to facilitate the business of the country, and that is also the duty of any other member who accepts appointment to this House. I have heard the Hon. Mr. Brentnall use the argument that it is our duty to legislate, and hon. members have always drummed into me since I have been here that they have equal rights with members of the Assembly. They have chastised me when I have pointed out that the members of the Assembly are directly responsible to the people, because they are elected by the people. They said they had similar rights, and that it is their duty to legislate for the people just as it is the duty of elected representatives in the Assembly.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Do you deny that right?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not deny the right. Hon. gentlemen are trying to shirk their duty by trying to adjourn this House automatically at an absurd hour.

Hon. T. M. HALL: Make it half-past 10.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES. What is the use of coming back after dinner for one hour and a-half.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Why do you not name an hour that would suit you?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hour that I am discussing is embodied in the motion.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: You have been told that the mover will accept a later hour.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am tired of saying that I am willing to accept the withdrawal of the motion. There is no loss of dignity or breach of principle in the Hon. Mr. Hall saying, "I will withdraw the motion if you will promise to be reasonable and adjourn at a reasonable hour."

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Will you take the latest hour that we have sat during the session up till the present—that is, half-past 10?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I will not take an hour at all, for the reasons I have mentioned, but I will promise to be reasonable. We are not pleading for an apology for the introduction of the motion. The Hon. Mr. Hall is quite within his rights in moving the motion, and he will have the right to reply to my arguments. The motion

means that we meet at half-past 3, and adjourn at 6 for tea, and then go on from a quarter-past 7 for an hour and a-quarter, or an hour and a-half, at the most, because the other quarter of an hour will usually be taken up in formal business. That is just one hour to legislate after dinner.

Hon. T. M. HALL: No, we often keep on till half-past 10.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We are sent here to legislate for the good of the country, which frequently calls for urgent and immediate legislation, and it is then our duty to sit, whatever the hour of the day or night, to do our share in making the laws that are needed. It is degrading the intelligence of this Chamber to ask it to pass a motion to automatically close debate at a quarter to 9.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: You have been offered half-past 10.

Hon. T. M. HALL: We close automatically at 6.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is a pity you cannot automatically close me.

Hon. T. M. HALL: We could if we chose.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If that is the attitude hon. gentlemen are going to adopt, they will find there is any amount of fight in me also. I am sure hon. gentlemen are not sincere in their threats. They had better send their "Whip" round and secure their majority—a brutal majority to oppress the minority. Hon. gentlemen are giving arguments, not only for further appointments, but the very best reason why the people should be called upon at an early date to deal with this House in another way; they are giving arguments why the people should be again asked whether they will have a Legislative Council or not. The people will probably be asked at a time when the personality of the candidate will have some weight; the question will have to be decided at a time when the minds of the people are not confused by litigation and suggested litigation. That is the reason why hon. members opposite are in a position to boast of a 60,000 majority. At the taking of the referendum on 5th May, the case that the High Court ultimately decided in favour of the Government—that there is no constitutional difficulty between this Chamber and the people—was sub judice, and the minds of the people were confused. They were afraid lest they might be voting with the Government when the Government had no legal right to take that referendum. Now, when they know that the Government have a perfect right to take the vote, and test the question as to whether this Chamber shall be abolished, they may vote in a different way. I am not here to make any threats, because this motion is quite unnecessary. If hon. gentlemen want to commit political suicide, they had better go on with these obstructive tactics.

Hon. T. M. HALL: Thank you for your advice.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is a motion used for no other purpose than to prevent the business of the country being carried on. It is our duty, as representatives of the people—if hon. gentlemen opposite take the vote recorded on 5th May last as giving them the right to legislate in this Chamber—to legislate, when the Government think fit to send us legislation from the

*Hon. A. J. Jones.]*

other Chamber, at reasonable times. Surely a reasonable time to legislate, considering we are not allowed to sit in the morning, is from half-past 3 until, say, half-past 10 or 11 o'clock at night—that to be the maximum. We have never been later. The Legislative Assembly do not sit later than 10.30. Very rarely is there an all-night sitting, especially now that there is a time limit to speeches. As they have a greater number of members than we possess in this Chamber, they sometimes sit later on in the night, but only occasionally. Those are exceptional cases, when the Opposition feel that they may have an opportunity of defeating the Government or of successfully opposing a particular Bill. Surely we in this Chamber can transact the business which comes from the other Chamber until a reasonable hour. We all know that this motion has been moved simply because Government supporters tried hard to induce the Council to sit after 9 o'clock last Wednesday night to deal with such important matters as the discharge of the Select Committee on Industrial Enterprises and the Requisition of Ships Bill. That is where the Hon. Mr. Hall got the idea of bringing forward this motion. Hon. members want to attend to their private business during the day and then come here and legislate for an hour or so and disappear at 6 o'clock. The only thing I am surprised at is that they have not submitted a motion that the Council should adjourn at 6 o'clock so that they could get home each day for dinner. Why did hon. members accept a seat in this Chamber if they were not willing to stay here and transact the business of the country? Last Wednesday we wanted them, after private business had been disposed of, to proceed with the Requisition of Ships Bill, so that we might restore trade and commerce along the coast of this State, but hon. members were not prepared to stay and transact that business. Since I rose to speak hon. members have expressed their willingness to compromise to the extent of extending the time for adjourning from 8.45 to 10.30—that is, for another hour and three-quarters. That in itself shows what a silly proposal this is. That proves that it was not necessary to bring forward this motion, and that it must have been absurd in the first place, because I am willing to admit that 10.30 is a very reasonable hour to adjourn.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Then why don't you accept the compromise?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: On behalf of the Government, I appeal to hon. members to be reasonable and to withdraw the motion, and I will promise that the Government will never inconvenience hon. members, and that we will adjourn at a reasonable hour each night. I do not believe that the motion really emanates from the Hon. Mr. Hall himself. It is no doubt the result of a consultation with his friends.

Hon. T. M. HALL: I do not know that one of my friends is going to support the motion. I will not know until I hear them say so.

Hon. F. T. BRENTNALL: I can tell the Minister that I have never been asked to support the motion.

Hon. T. M. HALL: I have never spoken to a soul about it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is parliamentary to accept the Hon. Mr. Brentnall's word, and I accept his statement. Will hon. members assure me that a majority

on their side will vote with us so that we may defeat the motion? I would be failing in my duty if I did not raise a vigorous protest against a motion which interferes with the rights and privileges of every hon. member. I think hon. members should applaud me for standing here and making a speech that should be handed down to posterity as a defence of their rights and privileges. (Laughter.) Hon. members pride themselves on their so-called mandate from the people, yet they refuse to set personal convenience aside for public duty. Hon. members might be pardoned for such a motion if it were submitted in a moment of pique, or if, in the heat of argument, we had taken advantage of our opponents in order to gain our own ends. But I have never become heated in this Chamber; I have never even squirmed because of some foul interjection that has been hurled across the floor of the Chamber. I could quite understand if the Hon. Mr. Hall had made up his mind last night to submit this motion because he thought we had not kept our part of the agreement.

Hon. T. M. HALL: I did not think of that.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I could quite understand him, in a moment of pique, moving "That the Council do now adjourn," and then coming back the next day in a better frame of mind; but to ask the Government to accept a motion like this is to ask something that no self-respecting Government could accept without vigorous protest. Hon. members may force it through with their brutal majority—

Hon. T. M. HALL: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. gentleman in order in referring to us as a "brutal majority"?

The PRESIDENT: It is an expression that is often made use of, and I do not think the hon. gentleman is out of order.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I very humbly apologise if I have offended the Hon. Mr. Hall. I do not think I have used unparliamentary language since I first entered this Chamber.

Hon. F. T. BRENTNALL: You have used that expression several times this afternoon.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Well, I think I am justified. I am beginning to feel a little warm on this question. However, I did not use the word "brutal" in any offensive sense; I simply used it in a political sense. One might pardon the hon. gentleman for moving this motion if it were intended to apply to one sitting only, but it is too much to expect the Government to agree to it as a general principle and as an alteration of the sessional order. Last night we adjourned at half-past 10.

Hon. T. M. HALL: No—at a quarter to 11.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. gentleman has had time to discuss this matter coolly with other hon. gentlemen, and no doubt he has discussed it with them, and that goes to prove that the object of the motion is to prevent certain business from being carried through this House. The whole thing bears the mark of a conspiracy to checkmate the energetic minority in this Chamber, who are sincerely and genuinely desirous of getting on with the business of the country. The hon. gentlemen who have just been appointed to the Chamber come from all parts of the State, even from the extreme

[Hon. A. J. Jones.]

North of the State, and they naturally want to get through the business and to get back to their homes and their various occupations. I am quite satisfied that the whole procedure in connection with this matter bears the mark of a conspiracy to prevent the minority of members—the energetic members—from carrying on the business of the country. Talk about combinations in restraint of trade! If this motion is passed, this House will be revealed as a combination in restraint of progress. Very often in my younger days, when speaking on behalf of the party I have the honour to be associated with, I spoke of this House as a clog on the wheels of progress, and I can tell hon. gentlemen that in the country it is looked upon as a clog on the wheels of progress. There are hon. gentlemen in this Chamber who are very capable of doing business. Since I have been in the House I have accepted all reasonable amendments in Bills, such as those proposed by the Hon. Mr. O'Shea in the Wages Bill, and others which were inserted in the Opticians Bill. I am aware that hon. gentlemen are quite capable and quite willing to amend Bills, and to legislate in the interest of the people; but a motion like this will retard such legislation. Are we a body of men who, while priding ourselves on our honours and privileges as legislators, are apt to grow very weary in well-doing. Why procrastinate business? Why put off till to-morrow that which you can do to-day?

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Why are you putting off till to-morrow the Farm Produce Agents Bill and the other Bills on the business-paper?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We shall not have time to-day to deal with the matters which I indicated would form the business for this sitting. According to the Public Service Act, members of the public service are retired when they reach the age of sixty-five, and if this motion is carried it will be an argument in favour of retiring members of Parliament at the age of sixty-five.

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: Why?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Because, according to the motion, they are not physically fit to do more than four hours of legitimate work per day—from half-past 3 till 9 o'clock. Will hon. gentlemen admit that there are quite a number of members in this Chamber who are not physically fit to come here to legislate for the people?

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Not one.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: This motion is an admission of that.

Hon. C. F. NIELSON: You are the only one who has admitted this infirmity this afternoon.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Well, it is my duty to oppose the motion. When I entered the Chamber this afternoon I was suffering from rather a severe cold, and I am sure my voice indicates that fact. Still, no matter how ill I may be, I intend to raise my voice in protest against a motion like that now before the House. It is rather a harsh thing to retire public servants at the age of sixty-five, and I always opposed it in the Legislative Assembly. It would also be a harsh thing to retire a legislator who is mentally capable and physically fit for his legislative work, but this motion is an

admission that a number of members of this Chamber are unable to attend here after the hour of 8.45 p.m.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: It is against all-night sittings.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Well, I can assure hon. members that there will be no all-night sittings. No Parliament in the world has such an absurd rule as that which is proposed in this motion. They have a time limit for speeches in the Assembly and in some other Houses, but there is no time limit for speeches in this Chamber. Since I have been in the House the speeches of members have not been unduly long, and there is no need for a time limit for speeches in this Chamber. As I have said, no Parliament in the world has such an absurd sessional order as that we are now asked to agree to. Fancy the Hon. Mr. Nevitt coming from Townsville and the Hon. Mr. Purnell from Rockhampton to attend the House three days a week and to legislate for twelve hours only! The Hon. Mr. Parnell and the Hon. Mr. Dunn cannot conscientiously vote for this motion, because they have complained of having to attend the House when the sittings were only from 3 o'clock till 6 p.m., and I claim their votes against the motion. All the country members have rights, and they should not be disregarded. I claim the vote of the Hon. Mr. Nielson and other country members who want to do their work so that they can get away at a reasonable time and catch their trains on Thursday night. I have already promised that we shall not be unreasonable, and that we will adjourn the House on Thursday night in sufficient time to enable members to catch the 10.10 o'clock train.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Why not fix some limit?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We cannot fix a limit. There is no Parliament in the world where they have a limit to their time of sitting, but under this motion, no matter how important a measure may be that is under discussion, members must retire at 8.45 p.m. and go to their beds.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: "Unless otherwise ordered." Read the motion.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We know what "otherwise ordered" means. I shall probably analyse the motion in detail at a later hour. Why was not this motion moved two and a-half years ago?

Hon. T. C. BEIRNE: There was no need for it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There is no need for it now. If the hon. member can stand up and give one good reason why this motion should be adopted, I will sit down.

Hon. T. C. BEIRNE: Sit down then; I accept the challenge.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Not just yet. The hon. member will have his opportunity. Surely, it is not because hon. gentlemen wish to obstruct the business of the Government that this motion [7.30 p.m.] is introduced. Do hon. gentlemen want to cut down the business of the House to four hours a day? Is this the affirmation of the principle of a four-hour day? Some hon. gentlemen who opposed an eight-hour day principle in the distant past now want to affirm the principle

[Hon. A. J. Jones.]

that they should only work a four-hour day. Hon. gentlemen do not advocate any curtailment of the hours of the toilers on the railway line, who have to work in the sun when it is 110 degrees in the shade in the West of Queensland. Does the Hon. Mr. Hall advocate a four-hour day? If so, we shall be able to claim him as a unionist—two and a-half hours before dinner and one and a-half hours afterwards.

Hon. C. F. NIELSON: And ten hours preparation before that.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The motion means that the debate must close before a quarter to 9, as the Clerk of the House must have sufficient time to read the questions and notices of motion given in to him, and, in opening the proceedings, time must be allowed for laying on the table the necessary papers and answering questions. That limits our legislative work to less than four hours a day. If hon. gentlemen had meant that four hours a day is a good thing for the toilers in all industries, probably we should agree with them. If it took so long for the hon. gentleman to explain his motion—

Hon. T. M. HALL: It takes you a long time to explain it away. (Laughter.)

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: And he has not explained it away yet.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I have advanced strong reasons why this motion should not be carried.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: You are the very best advocate we could have got for carrying this motion.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is quite unfair for the hon. gentleman to say that, because I have no desire to talk. I appeal to my friends on my right, as to whether I did not suggest to the Hon. Mr. Hall that, if he would let both motions lapse, I would promise him on behalf of the Government that we would adjourn at a reasonable hour.

Hon. T. M. HALL: And I asked what a reasonable hour was, and you refused to answer me.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. gentleman, in his political stubbornness, refused to accept my reasonable suggestion. Hon. gentlemen should applaud me for trying to defeat this motion, because later on it may boomerang on to hon. gentlemen themselves. I appeal to the fair-mindedness of hon. gentlemen who form the majority to preserve the rights of the minority in this Chamber.

Hon. T. M. HALL: We are offering you a compromise there if you will look at it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I have a right to say that this is an attack upon the new appointments. I am forced to that belief because of the fact that two and a-half years of this Parliament have already expired, but the Hon. Mr. Hall has never attempted to move a similar motion before.

Hon. T. M. HALL: It is never too late to repent.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If the motion is an attack on the new members of the Chamber, it is consequently an attack on His Excellency the Governor—(laughter)

[*Hon. A. J. Jones.*

—because it came immediately after His Excellency had decided to make the appointments. Hon. gentlemen want to carry this motion in order to restore their previous position. Prior to the new appointments being made, they could adjourn the House when it pleased them, and they formed a quorum when it pleased them. I quoted from the "Courier" the resolution carried at a meeting of the Patriots' League—a political league. The Hon. Mr. Hall is behind the Political Patriots' League.

Hon. T. M. HALL: I protest against that statement. I am not behind any political league. I am not connected with any political league.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. gentleman must accept the denial made by the Hon. Mr. Hall.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is parliamentary to accept the denial of the Hon. Mr. Hall, and I am very pleased to accept his denial. If he has not joined any political league in the past, I hope he will join our political league. If hon. gentlemen opposite moved the adjournment of the debate at 10 o'clock or half past 9 I am sure there would be no obstruction; I would not put up any stonewalling speech at half-past 9 at night.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: You did it last week.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Not in the spirit the hon. gentleman wishes to convey to the Chamber. I am sure this Chamber will never be guilty of altering the Sessional Orders in such a way as this, and of thus laying down a precedent that others may follow. I want to protect the privilege of individual members of this Chamber, as well as of the Government. The Hon. Mr. Leahy, in the days when he represented the people in the Legislative Assembly, used arguments against the curtailment of the privileges of private members, and he was anxious that no limit should be imposed on the discussion of private members' business, but his attitude is now changed. In those days he wanted to preserve the rights of hon. members in regard to freedom of speech, and that is all we are trying to do this evening. The only promise that I intend to give is that we will be reasonable, as we have been in the past, and not keep hon. gentlemen here to a very late hour. I have some regard for their health.

Hon. T. M. HALL: You do not want to kill them off then?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No. I deny that statement. I do not think that statement has been made.

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: Yes, it was.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I can assure the hon. gentleman that no such statement ever emanated from the Government.

Hon. T. M. HALL: No, not from the Government.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: But from Government supporters.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not care how long we are here to-night; we are going to preserve the rights of this Government.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: I thought we were dealing with the rights of the Council; that is what concerns us.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am preserving the rights of the Council, too.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: What time have you ordered your motor-car for to-night?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I have just cancelled the order, I shall have to walk or go home by train or tram.

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: There are plenty of Government motor-cars.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think the trouble is that hon. members feel that the motor-cars were not built for our Government, and that Labour Ministers have no right to ride in motor-cars; but I am going to accept all the rights and privileges appertaining to my position and abuse none. One paragraph of the motion reads—

“If a motion has been proposed for the adjournment of the Council, or of the debate, or in Committee that the chairman do report progress, or do leave the chair, every such dilatory motion shall lapse without question put.”

That is a very dilatory motion.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: You are making it such.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We shall have a regular “I.W.W.” policy if this motion is carried. I know the term “dilatory motion” is properly defined in “May”; but I ask hon. members what would be the effect of that paragraph if carried. Supposing we are discussing an Appropriation Bill when the hands of the clock come round to 8.45, what will happen?

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Tell us when you are bringing in your Bill, and we will fix you up all right.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Government are supposed to sacrifice their principles, and, at a great loss of dignity, to appeal to the Hon. Mr. Hall for permission to sit five minutes later so that they can carry an Appropriation Bill and the public servants may be paid the following morning. I am trying not to misinterpret the motion, but the people of this State may be put to a great deal of inconvenience, especially in connection with Appropriation Bills, if this motion is carried.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. gentleman is repeating the same thing many times over.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Hear, hear! If he were not a Minister, he would have been cut down long ago.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: With all due respect to the Chair, I think I am quite within my rights in detailing this motion. My speech has not been of undue length. I remember when one member in the Assembly spoke for seven hours, and I have not been above two hours.

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: They can't do it in the Assembly now.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No, because there is a time limit.

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: So there should be here.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am going to stand up for my rights and privileges, even to the extent of challenging a ruling from the Chair.

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: You are not going to insult the Chair?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not intend to do so.

The PRESIDENT: The Chair will defend the hon. gentleman's rights and privileges, but there are certain duties which devolve upon the President which he cannot overlook. (Hear, hear!) I have given the hon. gentleman fairly reasonable scope, and, while he sticks to the motion, he will be quite in order.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am only saying for the edification of hon. members opposite, who desire me to be called to order very frequently, that I am not casting any reflection on your ruling, because I have bowed to your rulings on every occasion during this debate. The motion further says—

“If a question is under discussion either by collecting the voices or by a division at the time of interruption of business, the interruption shall take place after the declaration of numbers from the Chair.

“Government business under consideration at the time of interruption shall stand over until the next sitting day, and private members' business shall stand over until the next sitting on which private members' business has precedence.”

I wish to call particular attention to the words “Government business under consideration at the time of interruption shall stand over until the next sitting day.” Is that not an interference with Government business?

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: No; it comes on the next day. An adjournment of the House is just as much an interference. It is done every day.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Of course it is done every day. The leader of the Government in any Chamber has the right to arrange the business of the Government.

Hon. T. M. HALL: So long as it is at a reasonable time—not all night.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We have not been unreasonable. Do hon. members anticipate that we are going to have all-night sittings?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Yes.

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: It was all fixed up. You said it yourself.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is a very flimsy reason to urge in support of this motion. Hon. members anticipate the very worst from the representative of the Government, and they introduce a motion of this kind to prevent him doing something evil? I defy any hon. member to cite one instance where I have been unreasonable in the conduct of business in this House. This motion has not the approval of the Government, and I am going to oppose it at every stage as vigorously as I possibly can. I

*Hon. A. J. Jones.]*

hope that hon. members, even at this late hour, will yield to my appeal. The Government have been sent here by a very large majority to represent the people, and I believe they will be sent here after the next elections, even though this Chamber may use obstructive tactics to prevent Government measures going through. The Opposition in the Assembly are not numerically strong, but they have friends here who oppose the Government whenever they introduce progressive legislation. I am anxious to get on with measures which are demanded by the people of the country, and I appeal to hon. members before it is too late not to pass such an unprogressive sessional order—one that does not obtain in any country in the civilised world.

The PRESIDENT: I desire to call the attention of hon. members to the fact that during the dinner hour someone removed from my table books of reference in which I had quotations marked. The books on this table belong to the President, and they are not to be moved from this table. There are other works of reference on the table for the use of hon. members. (Hear, hear!)

\* HON. C. F. NIELSON: I have tried to discover whether there is any humorous side to this debate, but it does not appear to have appealed to hon. members in that light, as it has appealed to me. I think the Secretary for Mines has got back to the old days of stonewalling. He has assured us that he was not stonewalling. He has also assured us that it was never intended to have all night sittings, and he is perfectly willing, as he has been in the past, to be reasonable at all times. The Hon. Mr. Hall has assured us that the motion was not moved for the purpose of preventing business being done. Generally speaking there have been a lot of mutual assurances between the Minister and the Hon. Mr. Hall, and it appears to me that both of them, to a great extent, are beating the air. Apparently there is nothing in dispute except mutual feelings, for which each assures the other there is no foundation. Until I came into the Chamber this afternoon I had not even read the motion, but it occurred to me that this is not a subject upon which this House or any other sensible body of men should commence a stonewall and talk from now till Doomsday, or as long as breath lasts, for the purpose of testing the strength of parties. Of course, if we have to spend the night here, there are

[8 p.m.] any amount of means of doing it without sitting here and listening to the speeches. We have had an all-night sitting before. I think I fought the Bible in State Schools Bill for a whole night myself, but you often get a wowsler-like idea—that is, a one-eyed notion about things.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Is a wowsler one-eyed?

HON. C. F. NIELSON: The word was first applied to an American officer, who was one-eyed, and who was regarded as mentally one-sided, and whose name was Wowse. However, we often get one-eyed ideas, and do not look all round the subject as we ought to do. It occurs to me that there is not very much to argue about in this matter. The question is whether there should be any limit to the hours of sitting, just as we have to the days of

sitting. The Hon. Mr. Hall proposes that the hours of sitting should be from 3.30 p.m. till 9 p.m.

HON. W. J. RIORDAN: One man can talk all the time.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: I do not know whether he could or not, as I have never tried it, and am not going to try it. The Minister proposes that a "reasonable hour" should be fixed. For some time during the early part of his speech he refused to pin himself down to a "reasonable time," but as I gathered from his later remarks his idea of a reasonable hour is half-past 10 p.m.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He would not say so, though.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: If hon. members will refer to the motion they will see that it says "unless otherwise ordered." That means that, if the hour is fixed at 9 o'clock or half-past 10 o'clock, the House will rise at that hour "unless otherwise ordered." The Minister has often suggested to hon. members that they should wait a little longer when there was a necessity to do so, and his request has never been refused. Therefore, if the hour for adjournment is fixed at 9 o'clock or half-past 10 o'clock, and the Minister sees that hour is approaching but desires to sit a little longer in order to finish some business, he has only to move that the House do not adjourn at the hour specified and give his reasons for the motion, and the House will accede to his request. The Minister has told us by word of mouth, and has shown by his attitude in the past, that he is always desirous of meeting the convenience of hon. members within reason. If there is any necessity to have an hour fixed, I would suggest as a compromise in the matter that instead of making it 8.45 p.m. we should make it 9.45 p.m. Then when that hour has passed any member can get up and move the adjournment of the House, or if the House is in Committee move the Chairman out of the chair, and the sense of the majority will decide what is reasonable. I am sure that there is not a member in the House who would not oblige the Minister by keeping the House for another half-hour or even an hour if the occasion demanded it. The compromise I have suggested would get over all the imaginary difficulties we have heard this afternoon from both sides in regard to this question. It is no use to say that it is illogical or improper to fix the hour when the sitting should close. We fix the hour for the beginning of the sitting, and we may just as logically fix the hour for closing the sitting. As to the suggestion that we should meet earlier in the afternoon, we have to remember that the Minister has his administrative duties to perform. Those who have occasion to call on the Minister for Mines, as I have very often to do, know perfectly well that his time is fully occupied, and that frequently he has to administer some other department as well as his own, so that it might be very inconvenient for him to attend the House at an earlier hour. It is no good saying that in proposing to fix the hour for adjournment we are starting the "go slow" policy or any other policy. That does not prevent us from laying it down in the Sessional Orders that we can only sit

on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. We cannot meet on a Friday, unless it is otherwise ordered.

HON. R. BEDFORD: What chance would there be of our side getting a Sessional Order to sit on Fridays?

HON. C. F. NIELSON: It has been customary to agree to Friday as a sitting day when the Minister has suggested it, and there is no reason to suppose that a request of that kind will be refused in the future. Possibly, one of the consequences of fixing the hour for adjournment will be a curtailment of speeches. We have all, I hope, a decent sporting instinct, and nobody will want to monopolise all the time by his speech; he will recognise that other members wish to say something, and the natural result will be that he will curtail his speech. We often oblige each other. Last night I had to go to see a gentleman off on the mail train, and I had no difficulty in getting another hon. member to give me a pair. All these little kindnesses and civilities exist among us, and I believe that the proposed curtailment of the hours of sitting will have the effect of curtailing speeches. Members will then recognise that they will have to get up their speeches better and to put their views more succinctly and shortly before the House, so as to allow other hon. members an opportunity to speak. But after all, if the thing does not work, it can be altered. If we find that the curtailment of hours is an impediment to the progress of business, I honestly believe that the Hon. Mr. Hall himself would be the first to agree to a reversion to the existing practice.

HON. T. M. HALL: Hear, hear!

HON. R. BEDFORD: We are told that the reason the motion was moved was because of a rumour, which has not been confirmed.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: Whether the rumour is a sufficiently good reason for moving the motion or not, there can be no doubt that the rumour was circulated, because it was talked about in the lobbies. However, I make the suggestion that the hour in the motion should be altered to 9.45 p.m., and that the words "unless otherwise ordered" should be retained, thus leaving it to the Minister, when occasion demands it, to arrange with the House to sit a little later.

HON. W. H. CAMPBELL: Do all the Bundaberg and Northern men agree with you in that?

HON. C. F. NIELSON: I do not know; I have not asked anyone about it, with this exception—that, after I wrote down my suggestion, I asked hon. gentlemen who were taking a leading part in the motion, and they looked kindly on my suggestion, and I understand the Minister looked kindly on it. As far as the Northern members are concerned, the Minister gave us an assurance this afternoon that the sittings on Thursday would not be prolonged so as to prevent those hon. gentlemen from catching their train, and that is sufficient for me. I would urge those hon. gentlemen who feel keenly on this motion to consider whether my suggestion is a reasonable compromise or not.

HON. T. NEVITT: I am sorry that the mover of the motion has not adopted the suggestion of the Minister to withdraw

it. If this motion is carried it means that if we sit four days a week, we can only sit twelve hours a week, "except otherwise ordered." That means that the representative of the Government has to come cap in hand and ask hon. gentlemen as to whether he shall be allowed to conduct the business of the country. This House is in a unique position. It is a question whether such a position ever existed before, where a Government is in power but the majority of members in the Chamber are Opposition members. The Government has been in power two and a-half years, and there has been no necessity for a motion of this kind; but as soon as there is an addition of new members of the same political thought as the Minister this motion is brought forward. In no true democracy can you uphold the principle that the Opposition should be in a position to take the business of the country out of the hands of the Government. I once more appeal to the Hon. Mr. Hall to accept the offer made by the Minister. The Minister says he is prepared to see that we shall not sit unduly in this Chamber after a reasonable hour. There are occasions when it may be necessary to sit later than 8.45 p.m. On many occasions an Appropriation Bill has not come from the other Chamber before that hour. I am satisfied that, if hon. gentlemen opposite were in a similar position to what we are on this side, we would not hear of a proposal of this kind. The Hon. Mr. Hall took a greater length of time to read his motion than in giving his reasons. He said that what had caused him to bring this motion forward was something he had heard in the lobby of the Chamber, that in future we were going to keep some of the older members of the Council here for an all-night sitting. If the hon. gentleman had given a little thought to the matter, he would have waited until he had a more substantial reason for placing a motion like this on the paper. Hon. gentlemen have admitted that they have had no reason to complain of the attitude of the Minister, and that cuts away any necessity there might otherwise be for a motion of this kind.

HON. T. M. HALL: We are not dealing with the Minister; we are quite prepared to support him. We want to know what his supporters are prepared to do. He may decide one thing, and you may decide the other.

HON. T. NEVITT: The hon. gentleman has known me for some time, and I think I can claim to be a reasonable-minded man.

HON. T. M. HALL: Yes, I admit that.

HON. T. NEVITT: If at any time the Minister had given the hon. gentleman any cause to alter his opinion that he is not a reasonable-minded individual, I could have understood a motion of this kind being brought forward. The Hon. Mr. Nielson, who has a lengthy experience in this Chamber, also stated that he had never seen an unreasonable attitude adopted, with the exception of one occasion, when the Chamber took up an unreasonable attitude from his standpoint. People felt very strongly on that particular matter, and were perfectly justified in using every method to prevent that particular measure being placed on the statute-book. When people are raised to such a pitch of excitement as they were then, no one can object to them taking strong-

*Hon. T. Nevitt.]*

measures. The Hon. Mr. Brentnall interjected that the present attitude of hon. gentlemen in this Chamber was approved by a great majority of the people of Queensland on 5th May, but I am of a different opinion. The people did not say that this Chamber is constituted in a way that they believe in. They simply said that the second Chamber should remain in existence for the time being. They did not trouble themselves as to the personnel of the Chamber. In my opinion, a motion to provide a time limit for speeches would be more advisable than the present motion. I have sympathy with a time limit to speeches, but I have no sympathy whatever with this motion. A time limit to speeches would give every member an opportunity of speaking on all subjects which come up in the Chamber. If we passed this motion what would be the result? I remember Mr. Lesina, the hon. member for Clermont in the Legislative Assembly at one time, speaking for seven hours and a-quarter on one occasion, and he turned round to the Speaker and said he had 122 reasons to give why the Government should be turned out of office. The guillotine then came down upon him. There is nothing in the Standing Orders, as far as I have been able to find, to prevent anyone from occupying the whole of the time that this motion would allow for a day's sitting. On those grounds I appeal to the Hon. Mr. Hall to show a spirit of sweet reasonableness and withdraw the motion. At a later period, if he has reasonable grounds to introduce a motion for either curtailment of speeches or of hours of sitting, there is nothing to prevent him from doing so. I understand that the Premier has stated that in all probability the present session will not last more than five or six weeks; but if this motion is passed and we only sit four days a week, I cannot understand how it is possible to get through the business coming from the other Chamber.

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: It has been done before. We always got through the business.

HON. T. NEVITT: Since the present Government came into power there have been far more Bills thrown out here than ever before in the history of this Chamber. It simply proves that the Government are in power in the popular Chamber by the will of the people, but that they are not in power here; and hon. gentlemen in Opposition take the control of the business, and do as they feel inclined.

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: The country approved of it.

HON. T. NEVITT: The country did not give an expression of opinion on that question.

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: They were satisfied.

HON. T. NEVITT: The question was not in issue at all. The people were satisfied that a second Chamber should remain in existence and that was all that the vote taken on 5th May affirmed. It is an [8.30 p.m.] impossibility for the business now on the paper in the other Chamber, in addition to what is on our own business-sheet, to be passed here in the few hours per week that will be at our disposal if this motion is carried.

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: We have more talking men now.

[*Hon. T. Nevitt.*]

HON. T. NEVITT: What were we sent here for? Prior to a week or ten days ago the Minister was practically single-handed in this Chamber.

Hon. B. FAHEY: He got well assisted.

HON. T. NEVITT: I grant that hon. members gave the Minister a considerable amount of assistance, but they also gave him a considerable amount of opposition. On more than one occasion they took the business out of his hands. On more than one occasion they refused to give him a quorum.

Hon. B. FAHEY: That only occurred once, and he had no business to put before us that day.

HON. T. NEVITT: Hon. members never came to the Chamber to see whether there was any business or otherwise. Although I did not see the business-paper on the occasion referred to, I am satisfied that no Government representative would ever come to this Chamber with a blank business-sheet.

Hon. B. FAHEY: When the House met there was no business to be done. It came afterwards, though.

HON. T. NEVITT: If the Government had attempted to interfere with private members' day, I wonder what kind of a hue and cry would have been raised by hon. members opposite. Towards the close of the session it is absolutely essential for Government business to take precedence every day; but, although we are now well on to the end of the session, the Government have not attempted to do that. Yet we find hon. members opposite trying to take the business out of the hands of the Government in such a manner that it is impossible for the business already on the paper to be put through if the session is to close by the end of November, and I understand there is a desire to close the session by the middle of November. If this motion is carried there is no likelihood of that taking place.

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: Not unless you curtail your speeches.

HON. T. NEVITT: I suppose we should sit still and allow hon. members opposite to use their majority and outvote us every time. If this motion had not been put on the business-paper we could have done a considerable amount of business to-day.

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: Why didn't you pass the motion? We could have done all the business by this time.

HON. T. NEVITT: The Opposition want to conduct the business in their own way. Is it democratic or reasonable for an Opposition to control Government business just as they think fit?

Hon. R. BEDFORD: They want to control it in their absence.

HON. T. NEVITT: That would be the effect of this motion. They have a majority which would enable them to remain away with impunity. All they would have to do, if this motion were carried, would be to keep about one half of their number in the Chamber and then they could still outvote the members sitting on this side every time. I am prepared to take my seat and let the business of the country proceed if this motion is withdrawn. Hon. members have frequently said that the Labour party have no

thought for the primary producer. Two of the first items of Government business on the paper are of vital importance to the primary producer. They could have been passed to-day but for this motion.

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: Who blocked them?

Hon. T. NEVITT: This motion blocked them.

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: Your chief blocked them with his two and a-half hours' stone-walling speech.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. T. NEVITT: Frequently we have been twitted with having no concern with the primary producer, yet the Farm Produce Agents Bill and the State Produce Agency Bill, could have been put through their Committee stages to-day, and they would have enabled the primary producer to get a much better price for his product, and on the other hand would have enabled the consumer to get his food for considerably less than he has to pay for it now. The Hon. Mr. Fowles said this afternoon that we could clear the business-sheet by 9 o'clock.

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: So we could—easily.

Hon. T. NEVITT: Had that been done, hon. members would have done something that they have never done before, particularly having regard to the class of measures that appear on the business-paper. I wonder whether they would have passed the Valuation of Land Bill, in addition to the two Bills I have already referred to, or the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act Amendment Bill.

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: Very likely. We get through business very quickly here sometimes.

Hon. T. NEVITT: Now the hon. member is trimming. A while ago he said that the business-paper would have been cleared. Now, he says, "Very likely."

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: I cannot say what opposition you would have given them

Hon. T. NEVITT: Are these measures ones that we on this side would have been likely to oppose? We can only judge of the attitude of hon. members in the future by what they have done in the past, and my experience has been that rarely have the Government introduced a Bill that hon. members opposite have not sifted from stem to stern, and on no occasion did they omit, in the case of Bills which had for their object the welfare of the majority of the people of Queensland, to oppose them with all their power. I have a few quotations from a speech delivered on a previous occasion by a very eminent gentleman who is at present occupying a seat in this Chamber. It was proposed on one occasion that a time limit should be placed on speeches, and among the arguments used against the proposal was this—

"I say there has been no waste of time, and there never was an occasion when there was any need for such a motion as the present."

The motion now before the Council is far more drastic than a time limit on speeches, because the effect of this motion will be to restrict the time during which the whole business of the country will have to be conducted in this Chamber to twelve or fourteen

hours per week. I certainly would not oppose a motion for placing a time limit on speeches, and I would be prepared to support the appointment of a committee to revise our Standing Orders in that direction. Further on the hon. member said—

"I think it is a serious question whether long speeches are not a good thing."

Evidently that same hon. gentleman, by his attitude this afternoon, did not consider the Minister's speech was reasonable, though he could then quite conceive of circumstances arising when a man might consider it necessary to speak for four or five hours. The hon. gentleman is supporting this motion because he now occupies a different position to that which he occupied when he gave expression to the views I have quoted. Now that the party with which he is associated is in Opposition he is quite prepared to alter the Sessional Orders to suit the convenience of his friends and himself. He further said—

"It seems to me the more we talk the less harm we do."

I do not know what he wished to convey by that, unless it was that the longer he kept talking the less opportunity the Government would have of passing legislation. That is the only inference I can draw from the statement of the hon. gentleman, and that is exactly the motive which has prompted the hon. member who has submitted this motion, and which has prompted the hon. gentlemen behind him to support it. Later on he said—

"In no State in Australia has any attempt been made to pass a motion of this kind."

That was a motion for the curtailment of speeches. I believe that was true at that time, except with regard to New Zealand, where a time limit was imposed on speakers, or Parliament was considering the advisability of fixing a time limit. That hon. gentleman is now supporting a thing which at that time he strained every effort to prevent being made a Standing Order. The hon. member further said that the onus lay with the member who moved the motion to show that the Standing Orders were not working as well as they should do. The hon. member who brought forward this motion has not given one solitary reason why it should be passed, and no reason has been given by the other hon. gentlemen who have spoken. Further on, the hon. gentleman said—

"It is quite possible that in the early future a condition of things may exist in which it may be necessary to maintain the principle of the liberty of the subject at length."

Yet the same hon. gentleman would curtail the privileges of members on both sides in this Chamber. That is a strong argument why the motion should not be passed. I sincerely hope that when I resume my seat some member opposite will try to give some logical reason why the motion should be passed. If such a reason is given, then it is quite possible that we on this side may support the motion. The hon. member went on to say that if a time limit were placed on speeches it might operate injuriously. I have already pointed out that this motion would operate very injuriously, because a member

*Hon. T. Nevitt.]*

could occupy the whole of a sitting without a great deal of effort, especially in the debate on the Address in Reply, and in discussion of other matters where a good deal of scope is allowed. We only sit three days a week, and, as I have said, it would require very little effort for one member to occupy the whole of a sitting, so that the debate on the Address in Reply could be kept going for three months without any trouble. That is one of the ways in which this motion may act injuriously. I ask hon. members opposite to exercise a little of the spirit of sweet reasonableness, and allow the Standing Orders to remain as they are. If at some future time they see that there is any occasion to do so, they can reduce the length of the sittings. The hon. member from whom I have quoted further said—

“It is a gross interference with the liberties and privileges of members of this democratic Chamber.”

I have heard it said by that hon. gentleman that this was a democratic Chamber in the past. If it was, it will cease to be a democratic Chamber if we pass this motion. Hon. members opposite, in one breath, say they are true democrats, and in the next breath they seek to curtail the liberties and privileges that have been enjoyed by members of this House since it came into existence. I notice that the hon. member from whose speech I have quoted is looking round to see if he can find any democrats here.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Of whom are you speaking?

Hon. T. NEVITT: I do not mind saying that I am speaking of the hon. gentleman, and that I have quoted the opinions to which he gave expression on a previous occasion.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: On what occasion?

Hon. T. NEVITT: Never mind that. I can give the occasion and date if necessary.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Those remarks would not apply to this motion.

Hon. T. NEVITT: The motion the hon. gentleman was then speaking on was a motion for the curtailment of speeches.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Wasn't it a motion for the curtailment of private members' day?

Hon. T. NEVITT: No; it was a motion for the curtailment of speeches.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: That is not this motion.

Hon. T. NEVITT: No; this motion is much more drastic, and if it is passed, there will be nothing to prevent an hon. member occupying the whole of the sitting if he has the physical power to enable him to do so.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: His mental powers do not count?

Hon. T. NEVITT: He must have a certain mental faculty if he is able to speak for four or five hours, and I say that, if he has the physical power, he can occupy a whole sitting. The hon. gentleman has occupied that length of time on more than one occasion.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Never.

Hon. T. M. HALL: You cannot restrict speeches, as each member can get up and move an amendment, and thus keep the House going for days.

Hon. T. NEVITT: The hon. member is right in saying that we cannot restrict

[Hon. T. Nevitt.

speeches, but there is a method by which the present Standing Orders can be amended so as to impose a time limit on speeches, and I believe I speak for hon. members on this side of the House when I say that they would be prepared to place a reasonable time limit on speeches. But this proposal is far more drastic, as, if passed, it will take the business out of the hands of the Government, will curtail liberty of speech, and will interfere with our liberties and privileges as members. Those are three very serious reasons why we should not agree to the motion. Another hon. gentleman who occupied a very responsible position in the political life of this country, when the time limit of speeches was introduced in the other Chamber, said, “It was a very crude method to adopt.” If a time limit for speeches is a crude method, how much more crude is the method proposed in this motion? When the Commonwealth Powers (War) Bill was before this Chamber, what was the attitude adopted by hon. members opposite? The Commonwealth Government at that time stated that they were going to take a referendum. The Premiers of the different States in Australia met in conference, and expressed the opinion that there was no necessity to take a referendum at that time, and those gentlemen, who included the present Premier of Queensland, pledged their respective Governments to introduce a measure conferring certain powers on the Commonwealth Government. This would have prevented the taking of a referendum, and would have saved a considerable amount of money. That Bill was passed in the other Chamber without a great deal of trouble. There was certainly a little opposition to the measure on the part of a few members of the Opposition; but, speaking generally, the Bill passed with only a reasonable amount of comment. But what happened [9 p.m.] when it came to this Chamber?

The Premier had pledged his Government, and every other Premier in Australia had done the same thing, and I think every other State had passed the Bill with the exception of Queensland. Amongst the items which it was suggested should be handed over to the Federal Government were the questions of employment and unemployment. What attitude did hon. gentlemen take up with regard to that measure? They not only discredited the present Government by not endorsing what the Premier had promised, in conjunction with the other State Premiers, but they brought forward all kinds of reasons why the Council should not pass the Bill. If the Federal Government had been invested with these powers during the last three months of industrial trouble we have had, they would have been able to deal with matters in a proper manner.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: There was only one State in Australia that passed the Commonwealth Powers (War) Bill. Your figures are altogether wrong.

Hon. T. NEVITT: At the time the Bill was introduced into this Chamber, I think the Premier said that it was under way in every other State of Australia. The Premiers had pledged their word that they would carry the Bill through. At that time the Governments in power in the other States were in power in both Houses.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: They did not carry the Bill—that is all.

HON. T. NEVITT: The Premier of this State was therefore justified in stating what he did, and this Chamber had no legal reason for throwing the Bill out. I hope that hon. members opposite will seriously consider the advisability of withdrawing this motion, because the Minister has said that he is prepared to adjourn at any reasonable hour. I heard the Minister say that he thought 10.30 was a reasonable hour; and a number of hon. gentlemen have already stated, by interjection, that, if the Minister pledges his word, they are prepared to accept it.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Will the Minister pledge his word that he will be satisfied to adjourn at 10.30?

HON. T. NEVITT: I cannot pledge the Minister myself, but he said he considered 10.30 would be a reasonable time to adjourn. There may be special occasions when it may be necessary to sit a little longer. We may not get an Appropriation Bill from the other Chamber till 9 or 10 o'clock in the evening, and under those conditions 10.30 would not be a reasonable hour. If hon. members would interview the Minister, I think there would be nothing in the way of our coming to an amicable arrangement. We should approach the consideration of these questions in a fair and impartial spirit. There is room to disagree without falling out. Some of my best friends have been my political opponents. This motion will not have a tendency to promote the happy feeling which should exist. I appeal to hon. gentlemen to see whether we cannot come to some arrangement.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: See your leader on the matter.

HON. T. NEVITT: I will see what can be done, and whether a spirit of sweet reasonableness is likely to prevail.

HON. R. BEDFORD: I have here a small tome written by a gentleman named "May." He is no relation of Phil May, and his literary style is not much, but he is a clear writer. Before dealing with the motion, I am thoroughly satisfied that the other side of the House is bound to be as reasonable as we have always been. I am quite sure that they have learnt by the reasonableness of the men recently appointed to this Council how sweet reasonableness can be. The Hon. Mr. Hall has a perfect right to move any motion he pleases. His motion was a plea for short hours in the summer. We had not the slightest intention of doing anything attributed to us of the nature of the statement which formed the basis for this motion. It was a mere rumour—probably idle talk. The party which I am associated with is not responsible for any attempt to extend the sittings of the House for the inhuman purpose of doing anything to hon. gentlemen such as has been rumoured. I did not accept appointment here to become an obstruction to others, but because I believed that newer men were necessary for the democratisation of this House to the standards of the Government now ruling in this country. The whole question is largely one in the direction of taking the business of the House out of the hands of the Government—to obtain an automatic majority in the absence of hon. gentlemen opposite. Before we came to the House the Government

were left without a quorum seven times. We were appointed to this House to advise upon and discuss legislation. Taking the words of the Holy Writ of my commission—because it comes with the force of a tremendous tradition behind it—I am sent here "to consent to and advise on laws made for the well-being and peace of the community," but I am not sent here to obstruct or to abolish. The people are the only persons who can abolish. So far as the Council is concerned, I am thoroughly satisfied that the double Chamber system of legislation is a survival of times we have long outgrown, and that this Chamber—if it should exist at all—is a Chamber which should exist and be elected on the basis of the Senate franchise. In coming to this Chamber I did not come as a welcome guest—I have been shown two or three times lately that I am not a welcome guest—but rather as one of the wardsmen who is going to help to put the screen round the bed of the dying, and then telephone for the undertaker. But although "I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him," I intend to give orders that the funeral shall not happen until the people order it by referendum.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Why don't you put the quotation in the proper way?

HON. R. BEDFORD: The hon. member is very strong on quotations, but quotations have their limits; sometimes a man must be almost original. As to the position in regard to this House and my appearance here, and the rather impertinent objections which were made to my appointment here—

HON. T. M. HALL: By the "Standard!"

HON. R. BEDFORD: Yes—naughty boys, of course. I do not mind that—that is the game. The Hon. Mr. Brentnall was almost petulant, not only in this House but in public print, because I, with twelve other disciples of the truth, had come to this place to modernise its thought and to make it almost indicative of the twentieth century. We excuse the Hon. Mr. Brentnall a great deal owing to his advanced age, but he has no right to be petulant; in point of fact, he is disloyal in being petulant at the appointment of a man who is appointed by the "Lord's Anointed" by proxy. If there is one man whose strong suit is loyalty, it is myself; and I am really surprised and grieved, almost to the point of tears, at the idea that anybody could be so disloyal and so pro-Boer, so pro-German, as to question the appointment of a man who, after all, has only had one religion in his life politically, and that is Australia. The Hon. Mr. Thynne, in speaking on the Requisition of Ships Bill last night, very appositely talked on the question of conscription, which had a great deal to do with the matter—I don't think; and he also was annoyed enough to say that I have been appointed here because I happened to drive a pen, or for some reason of that sort. I am sure hon. members will believe me when I say that my pen has never been prostituted or sold for any political purpose; that it has never been used to write anything in which I did not believe; that I voluntarily cut myself off from two newspapers during the conscription campaign, and refused to write "conscription," preferring to write "no-conscription" for nothing. And what I did in the way of my profession shall be done in connection

*Hon. R. Bedford.]*

with every vote I give in this House. Rightly or wrongly, it will be cast according to my lights, though probably not according to the liver of hon. members opposite. I am not going further in this matter if a withdrawal of the motion can be arranged on the assurance of the Minister that he will be, as he has always been, reasonable. Everybody must know that we cannot tie ourselves to any particular time for rising. The Government cannot consent to bind themselves in that way.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: So long as they do not bind us down to a minute I am willing to agree to what is reasonable.

HON. R. BEDFORD: If the Hon. Mr. Hall will signify, by interjection, that he will meet the Minister in the matter, I will quit right away.

Hon. T. M. HALL: I shall have to get the permission of the Council to withdraw my motion. But, so far as I am personally concerned, if the Minister will give us an assurance that he considers half-past 10 a reasonable hour for this House to adjourn, I am quite willing to take his word.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I certainly do, but I do not want it to be retained in a verbal motion.

Hon. T. M. HALL: It will not be in the motion if the motion is withdrawn.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Well, I am satisfied.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Put it on record in "Hansard"—that is all we want.

HON. R. BEDFORD: If the motion is withdrawn, the House generally accepts the assurance of the Minister that he will adjourn at a reasonable time, commensurate with business, and that he thinks 10.30 a reasonable time.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: At the close of the session it may be reasonable to sit till 11 o'clock, or till half-past 11, so that we shall not have to come back.

HON. R. BEDFORD: Well, do I quit?

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Let the Minister give that assurance, and place it on record in "Hansard" that he does not want to keep us here till an unreasonable hour, and that he thinks 10.30 a reasonable hour for adjourning.

HON. R. BEDFORD: On general principles, commensurate with the Government business that is before the House at the time. You will not tie us down to any specified time.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: No; you simply say that 10.30 is a reasonable time.

Hon. W. STEPHENS: Will you break that every week?

HON. R. BEDFORD: No; we will do nothing but what is reasonable.

Hon. W. STEPHENS: Let the Minister say so.

HON. R. BEDFORD: The motion is based on a rumour which I can assure hon. members is baseless so far as hon. members on this side are concerned.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: We want it on record, so that, if there is any breach of the understanding, we will have an opportunity of bringing this motion forward again.

[*Hon. R. Bedford.*]

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I presume the House will not take advantage of the Hon. Mr. Bedford if he resumes his seat to allow the Hon. Mr. Hall to make a personal explanation?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. T. M. HALL: I desire to assure the Secretary for Mines that I have no desire to pin him down to a definite statement, because, from my dealings with him, I am perfectly satisfied that his word is as good as his bond. On the distinct understanding that the Minister considers half-past 10 is a reasonable hour for this House to adjourn, with the permission of the Council, I ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Hon. R. BEDFORD: Commensurate with Government business, mark you.

Hon. W. STEPHENS: What does that mean?

Hon. R. BEDFORD: You are trusting us—that is all.

HON. T. M. HALL: I take it the Minister does consider half-past 10 a reasonable hour to adjourn. The motion will be withdrawn absolutely, and we trust to his honour and the honour of the gentlemen sitting behind him to observe the understanding as nearly as possible.

Hon. W. J. RIORDAN: The strike is off. (Laughter.)

The PRESIDENT: Is it the wish of the Council that the motion be withdrawn?

Hon. W. STEPHENS: Not till the Minister gives an assurance.

The PRESIDENT: The Minister can only speak with the permission of the Council.

Hon. W. STEPHENS: We will give him half an hour if he wishes.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I will give an assurance when the House is rising.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: So far as I am concerned, there is no permission to withdraw the motion until an assurance is given. What is meant by "commensurate with Government business"?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That means nothing.

Hon. R. BEDFORD: All off?

The PRESIDENT: Order! Is it the pleasure of the Council that the Minister be allowed to make an explanation?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I was about three hours explaining to the Council that I am willing to be reasonable on behalf of the Government. I certainly consider, under ordinary circumstances, that half-past 10 would be a reasonable hour for this House to adjourn. Is that sufficient? But the Government do not wish to be tied down by a specific motion such as that moved by the Hon. Mr. Hall. I would point out that it may be necessary, towards the close of the session—

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: That is another matter.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: To meet the convenience of hon. members by asking them to stay here while we are completing the business of the session.

Hon. W. STEPHENS: We have never refused you that yet.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I will give hon. members this assurance—that

the Government have no desire to have all-night sittings in this Chamber or in any other Chamber, and that I consider half-past 10 would be a reasonable hour to adjourn.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Before you sit down, will you make a clear, definite statement that the House will adjourn generally not later than 10.30?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Very often we will adjourn at 9.30.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Will you make a clear, definite statement that we will adjourn not later than 10.30 every night, unless by consent?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. gentleman wants to get back to the motion.

Hon. W. STEPHENS: No; we will take your word instead of the motion.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It may happen that some hon. member opposite is in the middle of a second reading speech at 10.30, and I have no desire to curtail the remarks of any hon. member. I consider 10.30 is a reasonable hour to adjourn, and hon. members will find that, if the motion is withdrawn, I will not go back on that statement, and that there is no desire on the part of the Government to inconvenience hon. members. (Hear, hear!)

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: I do not want to lose my right to speak, so I ask the hon. gentleman, by interjection, whether he will adjourn every night not later than 10.30?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is fixing the exact time, and I cannot do that.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: I reckon that is nothing.

The PRESIDENT: Is it the wish of the Council that the motion be withdrawn?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: No.

The PRESIDENT: The "Contents" have it.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: I distinctly said that I was opposed to the withdrawal of the motion, and I understand that a motion can only be withdrawn by consent of every hon. member.

Hon. T. M. HALL: I can promise the hon. gentleman that, if the undertaking is abused, I shall bring the motion forward again.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I can assure hon. members that they will never have occasion to bring the motion forward again.

The PRESIDENT: Have the negotiations failed?

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: I do not know exactly, but I made it perfectly clear a moment ago that I was not in favour of the withdrawal of the motion.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Hon. Mr. Hall said that he will reintroduce the motion if there is any breach of the

understanding. I can assure him that he will never find it necessary to do so by my breaking my word on behalf of the Government.

Hon. W. STEPHENS: You would not do it personally.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: I only want your promise that we will adjourn not later than 10.30.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Now, the hon. gentleman gets back to the old thing. He wants me to fix a definite time, which the Government cannot do. On many occasions we will adjourn at 8.30, or even at 6 o'clock. It depends entirely on the business.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Then is it understood that, with the exception of the last three or four days at the close of the session, we will adjourn not later than 10.30?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Probably some night at twenty minutes to 11 the hon. gentleman will jump up and accuse me of breaking my word.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Not at all.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I want to be in a position to keep my word.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: I think, under the circumstances, I might withdraw my opposition.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Hon. gentlemen will find that I will stick to my part of the agreement.

The PRESIDENT: Is it the pleasure of the Council that the motion be withdrawn?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PRESIDENT: The motion is withdrawn accordingly.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I beg to move—That the Council do now adjourn—another proof that we are reasonable. The first business to-morrow will be the Farm Produce Agents Bill in Committee, then the State Produce Agency Bill in Committee, next the second reading of the Agricultural Settlers' Relief Act Amendment Bill, the second reading of the Rockhampton Harbour Board Acts Amendment Bill, and then the resumption of the second reading debate on the Valuation of Land Bill.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: What has become of the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act Amendment Bill?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If time will permit, we will next take the second reading of the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act Amendment Bill. I have delayed that Bill in accordance with a promise I made to hon. members representing the sugar industry in this Chamber, so that we might have the report of the auditor on the central sugar-mills and all the other reports necessary for the proper discussion of the Bill. Now that these reports are ready, we can go on with the second reading of the Bill as soon as possible.

Question put and passed.

The Council adjourned at half-past 9 o'clock.

*Hon. A. J. Jones.]*