

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

WEDNESDAY, 5 JUNE 1918

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

WEDNESDAY, 5 JUNE, 1918.

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

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

* HON. A. H. WHITTINGHAM: Before commencing my somewhat brief remarks I would like to take this opportunity of congratulating the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply on the able speeches that they made. No doubt, to some extent those hon. members had a more or less easy passage, as the trend of their remarks was to pat on the back the Government who have again been returned for, perhaps, another three years. I say "perhaps" because we never know what is going to happen.

Hon. W. H. DEMAINE: It might be longer.

HON. A. H. WHITTINGHAM: It might be. I was going to say let us hope not; but, as this is not the party House, it might be out of place for me to say that. (Laughter.) If I may distinguish between the speeches of the two hon. members, I may say that the Hon. Mr. Crampton dealt with his case in a broader way than the Hon. Mr. Nevitt. At the same time I noted down a few of the Hon. Mr. Crampton's remarks for comment. I was somewhat surprised to see that the hon. member had a considerable "set" on the pastoralist and the man on the land. Why that should be I do not know, but it is so, not only with the hon. member, but with a great many supporters of the Labour party, who regard the pastoralist as a man out to make what he can out of his employees and to do nothing to carry on the duties of the State. I hold a different view. I hold that pastoralists are men who have expended large sums of money in opening up the country, and, unfortunately, many of them have lost not only some of their capital but all of it. A few of us in later years have been more fortunate. I am sure that the supporters of the Government, when they come to think it over, will agree that the pastoralists generally have done their share in helping matters along. It rather galls me to read and hear speeches in which the man on the land is run down, and is looked on almost as one to be shunned. I do not think he deserves it at all.

Amongst other things the Hon. Mr. Crampton said that the gap between employers and employees is widening. I cannot say that I agree with him there. I think that, with the legislation which we have passed—and I give credit to the Labour party for some of it—the gap between employers and employees is being reduced. There is no doubt that the Labour party have brought in a considerable amount of legislation that has lessened the gap, and I am honest enough to say that in some cases the legislation that has been brought in was required to bring employers and employees closer together. (Hear, hear!) At the same time I honestly think that the old system of wages boards was more satisfactory than the present system of arbitration awards. When an arbitration award is made the employer is absolutely compelled to stick to the award under penalty of a fine or some other form of

[Hon. A. H. Whittingham.

penalty, while the employee can practically please himself whether he obeys the award or not. He has even been told by one of the judges of the Arbitration Court that he is not compelled to accept the hours or the wages fixed by the court.

Another point in the speech of the Hon. Mr. Crampton which I noted was with regard to the discovery of arsenic in the Stanthorpe district. I must plead guilty to not knowing how arsenic is obtained—I have heard of people taking a little too much at times.

Hon. I. PEREL: Don't you use it for sheep dips?

HON. A. H. WHITTINGHAM: Yes. That is one of the things I was going to allude to. If the Government can develop a good arsenic mine in these times, I think they will be doing good work. The matter of sheep dip may seem more or less unimportant to laymen, but I can assure hon. members that it is a very important matter to the pastoralists in these times. The blowfly is very prevalent in Central Queensland. For years past pastoralists in the Clermont district have been writing off annually about 10 per cent. for sheep killed by the blowfly, and now the pest has got out West, and, unless some sheep dip can be devised to deal with the pest, the losses of sheep must go on increasing, and that means a loss to the State as well as to the pastoralist. Another use for arsenic is in connection with the destruction of prickly-pear. It is a sorry thing to think that at the present time the destruction of prickly-pear is more or less at a standstill so far as poisoning is concerned, owing to the want of some suitable poison to spray over or inject into the pear. It is all very well to talk of chopping the pear down and burning it up. That is an efficacious method of dealing with the pest, but in these times when labour is scarce it is very difficult to get the work done in that way. Probably, if we could get some crushing machine to go over the pear and crush it right out, it might help considerably in getting rid of the pest.

I noted one or two remarks made by the Hon. Mr. Bedford yesterday, to which I wish now to refer. I was rather sorry to hear the hon. member using a biblical quotation with reference to the treatment of moneyed people. He said that, whereas the Government have been beating them with whips, they will now beat them with scorpions.

Hon. R. BEDFORD: I did not say that we were going to do that. I said that must be the trend of taxation owing to the war.

HON. A. H. WHITTINGHAM: I have not seen the proof of "Hansard" yet, so I cannot give the hon. member's exact words, but, when he made the statement, I thought that he must have the ear of the Government to be able to make such a statement. It is a very hard statement to make. The cost of running a business and of living is going up. Not one of us objects to taxation for war purposes, even if it comes to taxing all we have got, or the bulk of it. In this connection, I may say that people who have what might be called large incomes are now taxed over 12s. in the £1. Well, if that is only a whip, what is the scorpion going to be?

Hon. R. BEDFORD: 13s. 6d.

HON. A. H. WHITTINGHAM: If you tax people to the extent of 13s. 6d. in the £1, how are you going to encourage any man

to invest capital in the country? No allowance is made for bad business years or bad seasons. There should be reason in all things—in taxation as much as in anything else. The hon. member evidently thinks 13s. 6d. in the £1 a fair thing. People are now paying up to 12s. 4d. and 12s. 6d. in the £1.

HON. R. BEDFORD: What I meant was that, if 12s. 6d. is a whip, 13s. 6d. would be a scorpion.

HON. A. H. WHITTINGHAM: Well, if that is so, we do not want to get past scorpions and up to snakes. There is one matter with which the Hon. Mr. Bedford dealt in which I heartily agree with him—that is, the amendment of the Health Act. I do not know to what extent that amendment is to go; but, if it is going to deal with the diseases to which the hon. member referred, and which he handled very well—because it is a delicate subject to speak of—it will be all right.

HON. I. PEREL: It should not be a delicate subject to deal with.

HON. A. H. WHITTINGHAM: Perhaps it should not be, but English people do not like talking about these things, though I quite agree they should not feel such an amount of delicacy on the subject. The matter is one that should be dealt with in a very firm manner. I should like to see it dealt with by legislation on the lines of the continental cities, which recognise certain things that we do not. If legislation on those lines were brought in here, it would be much more beneficial to the community than leaving the matter in its present position. I did not quite catch the Hon. Mr. Bedford's point with regard to the brokerage on wool, but I understood him to say that one firm was going to reduce it considerably.

HON. R. BEDFORD: No; I said one firm had stood out against any attempt to increase it.

HON. A. H. WHITTINGHAM: I am sorry I referred to that remark, because it is not a matter for discussion in this House. With regard to the National Political Council, it seemed almost criminal, in the view of the Hon. Mr. Bedford, that people should subscribe to the funds of that body. Before the elections a lot was said about what such and such persons were doing in subscribing to the funds of that body, and it appeared in large print in the newspapers that I had put my name to a letter asking for funds to fight the Labour party. As I said then I say now, that I would put my money into funds at any time to fight the party I was opposed to, not as a member of this House, but as a citizen.

An address on the Speech with which His Excellency the Governor opened Parliament can only be more or less brief, because most of it is old stuff. A good deal of what appears in this year's Speech has been discussed in this House for the last two or three sessions. However, there are one or two statements in the opening remarks with regard to returned soldiers that appeal to me, and that I think will appeal to all members of the Council. The first statement on which I should like to lay stress is this—

“We would be more or less than human if we did not exult in the achievements of our brave Queenslanders at the battle front, or remained unmoved by the

accounts which have reached us of more than one impending reverse being turned into victory by their skill and daring.”

We all appreciate what has been done by our boys at the front, and I think that among all the Australians who have gone to the front Queenslanders have held their own in the matter of daring, so that those remarks are well deserved. With reference to the settlement of returned soldiers on the land, His Excellency says—

“To the problem of making adequate provision for the soldiers who return to Queensland, my advisers are giving the very closest attention, and they have already made satisfactory arrangements for a considerable number of them. The work of settling on suitable Crown land such of them as have a turn for agriculture or its allied industries is proceeding satisfactorily.”

I should like to stress that a little, because we have heard a good deal about land being set apart for soldiers which it has been represented is unsuitable for the purpose. The settlement at Beerburum is supervised by Mr. Rose, who is a very capable and experienced man. I understand that the crops there are coming up, and are giving every indication of being satisfactory. The farms at Stanthorpe and around Brisbane promise well for those who are settled on them. A State cannery is, I understand, about to be erected to assist in the development of the fruit industry.

In the Opening Speech we have this statement with regard to the perpetual lease tenure—

“Many selectors who held land as agricultural farms have brought their holdings under perpetual lease tenure.”

I cannot dispute that statement, but I have my doubts as to this being done to any great extent. I do not think it has been. I have not had an opportunity of seeing the actual figures, but possibly the Minister may be able to give us a little fuller information in regard to this matter. The point made with regard to our timber lands is a very good one. It is surprising to me, as it must be to many other men, to learn that only 1 per cent. of our lands is held for timber production as against 20 or 25 per cent. in Europe. This is a matter that is well worth looking into.

In his closing remarks His Excellency says—

“Much of the useful legislation passed by the Legislative Assembly in the last Parliament was rejected, or seriously mutilated, by the Legislative Council. My advisers consider it their duty to take such steps as will in the future prevent such flouting of the expressed will of the people.”

I hardly think that such remarks should have been put into the Governor's mouth when making a speech at the commencement of Parliament. We know that several members of this Chamber are here supporting only one party; they acknowledge it; but many of us are here with free and open minds to support whatever party we think fit and whatever legislation is good for the country.

HON. H. C. JONES: Question!

HON. A. H. WHITTINGHAM: The hon. member may say “Question,” but it is quite true. I do not think that such words as

Hon. A. H. Whittingham.]

"seriously mutilated by the Legislative Council" should appear in the Governor's Speech.

The Speech concludes with a list of measures, most of which have been before this House on previous occasions. One of those measures is a Bill to amend the Land Acts 1910 to 1917. I take it from some remarks which I read in an afternoon newspaper that this measure contains the repudiation clause which we opposed last session. We have had that measure before us until we are almost tired of it, and it seems to me that, if the Government are going to push it through and make it law, though it is nothing less than repudiation, they should come forward and say, "If you will insert this provision in the Land Act, we are prepared to give the lessees certain concessions." Then the matter might be worthy of some consideration; but to bring it before us again in the same bold and bald manner as a pure act of repudiation is to invite us to treat it in the same way as it was treated before.

Another measure mentioned is a Bill to amend the Marsupial Boards Act. I shall be interested to see that measure, because the marsupial pest is one which has given great concern to the pastoralists for some time. Dingoes are usually included in the Act as marsupials, and it is known to many of us that the dingo pest has now become so serious that in many instances people have had to abandon their sheep flocks and replace them by cattle. I heard of one case the other day where, owing to the dingoes, one station was something like 6,000 or 7,000 sheep short in a period of four months. The measure dealing with this matter will, I am sure, meet with the support of all the members of this House.

Of the Diseases in Stock Amendment Bill I cannot say anything, because I do not know what the measure contains.

With regard to the Constitution Act Amending Bill, I do not know how that will be treated. I am very pleased to think that in all probability the Bill for the abolition of the Upper House is not to be brought forward again, as I am led to believe from remarks made by the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You cannot read that into my remarks.

HON. A. H. WHITTINGHAM: Well, you said it might be something else. I notice that we are to have an increase in taxation—an increase in the income tax, a super land tax, increased stamp duties and succession duties, and increased rents for pastoral holdings, so that we shall, no doubt, have a very busy time in discussing taxation measures. It is to be hoped that, when these measures are brought forward, they will not be framed in too severe a manner, so that they may deserve fair treatment from the members of this House.

HON. I. PEREL: In speaking to this motion, I desire to express my very great satisfaction with the work which has been done by the Government who did me the honour to send me here. While they continue to do such work as they have been doing, I shall be only too pleased to give them the support which they expect from me. There are certain measures proposed that deserve our most serious consideration. In the opening of the Speech satisfaction is expressed with the efforts of the Government in connection with settling returned

soldiers on the land. We are all pleased with the efforts made by the Government in this direction, and proud of the success that has attended those efforts. Anyone who knows the difficulties that attend those people who go on the land in order to earn a livelihood will understand the work that the Government have done in placing returned soldiers in a position where they can get a little land, and will also understand the work those men must be doing on the land in order to achieve their object. My experience with regard to putting people on the land has been that very few people make a success of it. In noting what has been done for the returned soldiers, as a practical man I ask myself this question, "When these men are successfully established on the land from which they are to derive a livelihood, how are they going to dispose of their products?" In the neighbourhood where I am living pineapples are grown, and when I saw my own children going to shops and buying this luscious and much desired fruit for 5d. per dozen, I asked myself, "How can we expect anyone to grow pineapples at that price?"

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Where was that?

HON. I. PEREL: At the Albion. Beautiful pineapples are sold at 2d. each. At any rate, I came to the conclusion that it was impossible for anyone to gain a livelihood by growing pineapples even at twice the price. I also notice with extreme satisfaction that it is the intention of the Government to establish a cannery to can the products of these soldiers. I further notice with greater satisfaction that it is the intention of the Government to give preference to soldiers' products. That is a preference we should all believe in. In fact, I think that those people who believe in preference to unionists will agree—preference to the products of returned soldiers who have gone to the front and done much for us who could not or would not go should have an equal claim on our considerations. Therefore, it is with great satisfaction that I notice that it is the intention of the Government to start canneries.

The Hon. Mr. Leahy said we are not doing so much for the soldiers here as they are doing in Victoria, but that is quite contrary to the remarks of Senator Barnes, who turns an approving eye upon Queensland, and wishes that Victoria and other States would imitate Queensland's example.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I gave you the figures.

HON. I. PEREL: Senator Barnes also gave us the figures, so that it is only a question of credibility; and when it comes to a question of credibility, I prefer to believe a man who does not take a delight in condemning everything in his own State because it does not come from a particular party. I think, if good is done by any party, that party should get credit for it. (Hear, hear!) If the Labour party are doing good for Queensland, why not be generous and give them credit for it? Why belittle their efforts and praise something that takes place in another State?

HON. P. J. LEAHY: We do give them credit on the rare occasions when they do anything deserving of praise.

HON. I. PEREL: That is all right, but you have not given Queensland the credit which it deserves. I can only put it down to

[Hon. A. H. Whittingham.

political spleen on the part of the hon. gentleman, who is one of the crowd who see nothing good in Nazareth—if I may be pardoned for using the term.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: You are getting out of your depth now.

HON. I. PEREL: I must certainly say that I think more of the honourable gentleman than to believe that he would subordinate his honest sentiments to political bias. I know I have done so in the past.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I have never done so.

HON. I. PEREL: I plead guilty to all of this, and I will give hon. members another whip to lash me with. Early in my career in this House I gave them a whip, and they whipped me pretty soundly with it, but still I am sound and hale. At any rate, I desire to be honest, so far as this is concerned, and I am willing to give my opponents credit for all the good they wish to do, and I wish my opponents to give me, or the side I represent, credit for the good we do, instead of continually maligning us. It is a case over and over again of what is known as "stinking fish," and that is a very bad thing.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Who has been maligning you? I have not done it.

HON. I. PEREL: I do not mind how the hon. gentleman maligns me; I am used to that sort of thing, but I plead with him not to malign the State which gives me a living.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I only told you the truth.

HON. I. PEREL: The Hon. Mr. Leahy also referred to State meat shops and State fisheries. I am a plain, practical man who goes among the people, and one who lives close to the State meat shops, and deals with them, principally because it means economy. We go direct to the shop and find it much cheaper than having meat brought to us. The old system of sitting down and having meat brought to you has been discarded. The exigencies of the present conditions cause even well-to-do people to become economical and thrifty. It has taught us a lesson. We now go to the State meat shops to buy the meat, and are pretty well satisfied with it. I would not say that it is as good as the meat we used to get, or that we get the same variety; but, considering we are at war, we are pleased to get any sort of meat, so long as it is good and wholesome. This meat has been a blessing to the community. It has saved inroads into purses depleted by all sorts of calls upon them. I think myself that the money that the State meat shop has saved me will enable me pretty well to meet my income tax. Therefore, I am pleased to see that the State meat shops have been established, and I hope that the Government will go on with this good work.

As for the State fish shops, I cannot say much about them. There is a beautiful building, just what one likes to see, and everything in connection with the building is clean. It is quite a treat to go there and purchase anything, and, if the fish is a little dearer, the one big thing in its favour is the health reason. We are sure that we are getting sound fish, and are not forced to buy fish from hawkers who have brought it from shops which were in many cases responsible for a good deal of sickness to the community, if we are to believe the health officials. Therefore, I commend the action

of the Government in connection with the fish shops, and I hope that they will go along and keep on supplying us with such a useful commodity.

Then, the next thing that meets with my approval is the intention of the Government to preserve timber by going in for forest conservation. Only 1 per cent. of the State lands in Queensland is put aside for timber production, while 25 per cent. is put aside in other countries. That is a very bad state of affairs in this country. It is time that an Australian party came forward to develop and protect the industries of our own country, because this denudation of our forests has been scandalous, wilful, and bad. It makes one feel sorry to think of the criminal neglect of the people in the past who allowed this to go on, until to-day we stand in the position that in a country which should be filled with timber we have to import timber. We talk about doing something for future generations and protecting the liberty of those who are coming after us, but what are we doing? We sell their birthright by alienating the land and destroying the timber, and we have no consideration for future generations. It is our duty to see that timber is grown for those who come after us, and that they shall enjoy the benefits provided more wisely than we have done. Further, in destroying our timber we have destroyed what should be so productive as to give employment to a large number of people. I feel that in the coming years this country is to be filled with a very large and industrious population. We must have people here if we are going to defend our country from the enemies who are supposed to want it. While we have this country we should make it such a fine country as to induce people to come here, where they know their living is assured and good wages are available. If we had timber here, we could have paper made here. I am now talking on a subject that I know a little about. In the past the miserable old sentiment prevailed of never depending upon ourselves, but bringing everything we wanted from other countries. We were asked, "What is the good of manufacturing paper here? We cannot manufacture it here at less than £12 or £13 per ton at the cheapest, and we can land it here at £10; therefore, don't be foolish; don't bother about manufacturing." The consequence was that we never manufactured a ton of paper, but depended upon local enterprise to import it, and then the day came when we wanted paper. In the first place there was plenty of paper and plenty of shipping. Then, I do not know what happened, but it looks to me as if a ring exists which prevents paper coming here, and we are not going to get much paper, and are helpless. A thing that is most necessary for civilisation will soon be exhausted: there will soon be very little paper here. It has now gone up to £55 per ton, and I have received information that it is likely to go up to £70 per ton. This calamity has been brought upon us by the miserable incompetence of legislators in the past, who would not develop native industries. It is up to us to do something.

HON. T. C. BERNE: What are the present Government doing?

HON. I. PEREL: The present Government have got their hands full already.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: The present Government are going to plant the trees.

Hon. I. Perel.]

HON. I. PEREL: If they plant the trees they will have done something far better than those who cut them down and burnt them. I am not going to weary hon. members by going into details. If we had used common sense, we would have been manufacturing our own paper now and been independent of foreign supplies, except of a good class. I think it is our duty to encourage the production of necessities and to let people import luxuries.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Were the experiments at Yarraman successful?

HON. I. PEREL: I am not going to say much about Yarraman. I do not think they ever intended in the first place to manufacture paper there. I think it was only a scheme to get possession of good forest country. I think hon. members will agree with me that it is our duty to develop our industries as much as we possibly can.

The next matter I wish to refer to is the iron and steel industry, in which the position is almost the same. While we could import iron very cheaply we did not bother about manufacturing it, but the time came when we could not import it. The time has now arrived when it behoves us to rely upon ourselves. I must certainly say that I thanked hon. members opposite for what I took at the time to show a trend of feeling on their part towards a certain Bill by voting £100,000, which was afterwards raised to £150,000; but I was told, of course, that hon. gentlemen agreed to that because another Government might come in and throw it out.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: They could do that in any case.

HON. I. PEREL: I noticed that sympathetic feeling on the part of hon. members opposite—(hear, hear!)—and I hope that feeling will continue, and that, when the Bill is again sent to the Council, they will be prepared to give it their favourable consideration. The iron industry is so absolutely essential, that something should be done in the matter. As practical men, hon. members must see that, if this scarcity of iron continues, it is going to stop all progress. It is going to stop industries that thousands of people depend upon. Even the homely jam tin will cease. We shall not be able to manufacture it. Substitutes are now being found for the jam tin. We can scarcely get a sheet of corrugated iron to cover our buildings with. It is more necessary that we should have iron than that we should have anything else. Hon. members opposite should assist in passing the Bill in every shape and form, and I hope that they will do so. I am sure the Government can look to the valuable business instincts of hon. members opposite to help them in making the thing a success.

I noticed a strange inconsistency yesterday on the part of the Hon. Mr. Leahy, who is acknowledged to be a very keen debater. The hon. member said that nearly all State enterprises are failures.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: I repeat it.

HON. I. PEREL: Yet the hon. member is willing to give his support to this industry, because private enterprise will not take it on.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: That is not the sole reason.

[Hon. I. Perel.]

HON. I. PEREL: The hon. member has condemned State railways.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: No; I condemn the management of the railways, which is another matter altogether.

HON. I. PEREL: In connection with his condemnation of the management of our railways, I would remind the hon. member that railways have been built in this country to places where private enterprise would never dream of taking them, and those railways have been losing concerns.

The Hon. Mr. Whittingham made special reference to the pastoral industry. I am pleased to see that the hon. member represents the modern class of squatter, who is an entirely different kind of gentleman to the ancient squatter. The modern squatter has broader views than his father or his forefathers. I am pleased to see that they recognise the work done by the Labour party to ameliorate a lot of the injustices suffered in the past by the working classes. While the sons give us credit for our good work, their fathers would have given us the horsewhip or gaol. In connection with the railways, they have been used in the past to assist the pastoral industry by moving starving stock at reduced rates. In fact, great concessions have been made. Private enterprise would have taken advantage of the necessities of the owners of stock. Instead of carrying starving stock at one-half the usual rates, in all probability they would have doubled the rates.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: How did the Liberal Governments make the railways pay and you cannot make them pay? They made them pay, and at the same time gave a better service.

HON. I. PEREL: I remember reading that, in the days when the hon. member's brother was Secretary for Railways, lengthsmen were paid 4s. 6d. per day, and they had to keep families on that wage, and the Government also let the grass grow to such an extent that it almost grew through the bottoms of the carriages. (Laughter.)

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Both statements are false. The railways paid in 1915, before you came into power. Why don't they pay now?

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Because he is here.

HON. I. PEREL: I have nothing to do with the railways paying or the reverse.

Hon. H. C. JONES: Men were that poor in those days that they could not meet with an accident.

HON. I. PEREL: Another thing referred to in the Governor's Speech is the search for oil. Hon. members will agree that that money has been well spent. The search may end in failure, but it is a splendid attempt to reach hidden wealth far beyond our most glowing expectations. If the bore strikes oil, there will be such a gush of wealth come through that bore that all the alleged extravagance of the Government in buying stations and competing with private traders will be wiped out of consideration.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Is that what they are going "nap" on—finding oil?

HON. I. PEREL: They are not going "nap" on anything. They are trying to get an unbeatable hand, and, if they get it, they will win. If they do not get it, they will

be no worse off than they are at present. The money is being wisely spent, and I hope that success will be attained.

The establishment of baby clinics is something for which great credit is due to the Hon. Mr. Huxham. He has devoted a lot of time to inquiring into the matter, and for the establishment of these clinics he and the party to which he belongs will be honoured in the future.

It is very strange that all the beautiful and necessary legislation which has brought about the present conditions of life in Queensland should have been opposed by the party represented by hon. members opposite. I remember how, in 1892, men like the Hon. Mr. Demaine, the Hon. Mr. Llewellyn, and myself devoted our time and energy and what little intellect we had to fighting to bring about those conditions. We were prophetic. We told the people that, if they would only act together, they would be able to get those things. We told them that they could have old-age pensions, and a minimum wage, and all that sort of thing, if they would only combine and fight for those things. Now that we have secured all those things, Australia is one of the most glorious countries on the face of the earth, and any man who would not die for this country is not an Australian. (Hear, hear!) Australia is a country that is worth fighting and dying for. Any nation that does not give its people the conditions that they should have is not worth fighting or dying for. There is not a country in the whole world that is on a par with this country. A man may beat his wife, and yet that wife will cling to him. That is a strange state of affairs. In the same way you can see nations which starve and ill-treat their people, and yet those people continue to cling to the soil of their native land. They tell me that in Japan the people live on seaweed and rice and under most horrible conditions, and yet the people of Japan are prepared to fight and die for their country. That is one of the most astounding things to be noticed in connection with the human race. I am different to that. I am only prepared to fight and die for what is worth fighting and dying for. I am a materialist. If this country gives me conditions that I want, gives my wife and children the rights they should have, gives us all twentieth century conditions, then I am prepared to fight and die for this country. If it does not give us those conditions, it is not worth fighting and dying for. If I were forced to leave Australia to-morrow, as my father and mother were forced to leave England, do you think that I would be prepared to come back here and fight for the perpetuation of the conditions which drove me out? My loyalty is material and practical—not a farcical and Brummagen loyalty. It is our duty to make this country as good to live in as we possibly can. Men tell us that we should fight and die for the flag and for the country in which conditions of living are so magnificent. I turn round to them and say, "In 1890 and 1892 you opposed every one of those conditions bitterly, and now you tell us that we should defend them. We were more farseeing than you and more up to date."

The measures that are to be submitted to us are all for the good of the community, and I hope hon. members will support them.

Speaking most respectfully, I hope that, when the Bills come to us from the Lower House, the obsession which formerly possessed hon. members opposite that the Government were going to be beaten will have passed from their minds. I hope that they will now justify their existence.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: We have done that already.

HON. I. PEREL: Hon. members did not do it last session.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: The people thought we did.

HON. I. PEREL: Hon. members threw important Bills in the waste-paper basket. They said that they would not consider some of them for six months. We are supposed to be dignified gentlemen in this Chamber. Age is supposed to be dignified.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: What are you here for—to wipe us out?

HON. I. PEREL: I am an obedient soldier of politics. I am going to do the work that I have been asked to do, and which I promised to do.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: We know the voice that is speaking.

HON. I. PEREL: I consider that we had to form parties to fight parties. That is necessary. I presume that some hon. gentlemen think that conscription should be carried in order to fight conscription. But, having formed parties to fight parties, [4.30 p.m.] the time will perhaps come when we shall set an example and do away with parties. I hope so, at any rate. If I was fighting a man and I got on top, I should not attempt to kill him while I was on top, even though he wanted to kill me when I was underneath. When we show you the evils of the party system, I hope all will be honest enough and patriotic enough to abolish the whole thing.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Why do you condemn the party system and yet follow it?

HON. I. PEREL: Because I have to choose the lesser of two great evils.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Then it is an evil?

HON. I. PEREL: Of course it is an evil. My experience is that no matter what measures are put before us you can always find some bad in them.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: We have found a lot of bad in them.

HON. I. PEREL: Nothing is perfect, everything is imperfect, and we should view the measures brought before us in a broad-minded way. I am not hypocritical when I say that I am anxious to do the right thing. If I am not honest, if I am selfish, I want you to understand that I am striving to do the right thing. If we analyse any measure that is brought before us, we shall perhaps find in some cases that such measure contains ninety good points and ten bad ones.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: And we knock out the ten bad ones.

HON. I. PEREL: What I want to prove to hon. gentlemen is that as we cannot get a perfect measure, we should take the nearest

Hon. I. Perel.]

approach to perfection and vote for the measure which contains 90 per cent. of good qualities.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: That is why you go for us.

HON. I. PEREL: I go for you because you have 90 per cent. of bad qualities. When considering a burning question that affects the country, instead of approaching the matter calmly and dealing with it fairly, hon. members find two or three bad provisions, and these bad points are allowed to overlap all the good that is contained in the measure. If I stood as a candidate for a seat in Parliament, I might be possessed of ninety good qualifications, and yet if I were a Roman Catholic I would be put beyond the pale by a certain class, or if I were a Protestant and an Orangeman, that would overlap all my good qualifications in the eyes of other persons. Thus, three or four evils are allowed to overlap 90 per cent. of good.

I now come to the references in the Speech with regard to proposed legislation. I am not in the confidence of the Government, I am not in the confidence of the Trades Hall, and I am not in the confidence of anyone except our own caucus, and they repose confidence in me, and that confidence will be respected as far as I am concerned.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Do you hold a caucus up here?

HON. I. PEREL: We hold caucus meetings. With regard to my coming into this House, as I said, I came here for the purpose of abolishing it. It was our intention to abolish it. I do not think that an Upper House such as this is can meet with the approval of hon. gentlemen opposite in their calm moments, especially in view of the manner in which members are appointed. We on this side have been elected a little differently from the way in which members on the opposite side were elected. We represent the people's representatives, but many members opposite only represent a Premier. We had to stand a ballot, and we are virtually the representatives of the people's representatives.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Does that make you any better?

HON. I. PEREL: This House, as at present constituted, is something like the House of Lords. I do not know whether I am doing the House of Lords an honour or ourselves an honour in making that comparison, but I say there should be some different representation in this House. I am of opinion that there should be some sort of a revising chamber; I am at variance with my colleagues in this respect, but I hold that if it is necessary that they should have a senate in the Federal Parliament, it is also necessary that we should have a senate in our Parliament. It should be nauseous to you gentlemen who have intellect to be nominated to a seat in this House. Hon. members opposite represent very large industries and trade keenness. When I came into this House I was told that I would meet a lot of fogies, but I found to my surprise that I met a class of men such as I do not think the Government representatives have to meet in the other House. I met in this House men of keen intellect. I admit that we have something to meet up here, but I am sure that hon. members opposite all

believe that intelligence should take a stand in this matter. None of them believe in nominating anyone to a seat in this Chamber. My idea is, that if we are going to be a revising chamber, we should prove that we have the necessary qualifications to be members of such a Chamber.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Haven't we done it?

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: The Hon. Mr. Bedford told us that he was nominated by King George.

HON. I. PEREL: That was only a jocular remark, and I do not wish to be drawn off the subject. If this is a revising House, let us prove that we are capable of revising Bills. When I had been in this House for about three months something like ten Bills had come before me, and I was supposed to go through those Bills and understand them so as to know what I was voting on, but I honestly tell you that I did not know a tenth part of what I was voting on.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: We on this side read them all.

HON. I. PEREL: What an outrage it was to put a man like me in a House like this to act as a reviser when I honestly tell you that I did not attempt to revise a measure, and did not understand most of them. I am not ashamed of making this honest assertion. You know it is true.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: But we on this side explained the Bills to you.

HON. I. PEREL: Yes, but your explanations rather tended to lead me astray. All I have to say is that if such a Chamber as this is necessary, let us prove our qualifications for the position. In my opinion this should be an elective House, the members of which should be elected on the same lines as the members of the Federal Senate. Legal gentlemen have to pore over their briefs night and day in order to understand them, and we should have the skill and ability to understand the Bills which are submitted to us, and the necessary time to study those Bills and revise them. But if this is to be a useful House, it should be an elective House, and the members should have to be returned by the people to whom they should show their qualifications. They should gain some diploma or pass some test, as, for instance, a commercial test, an industrial test, a political test, or an economical test. I feel justified in making these remarks because not more than four gentlemen on the other side of the House know what socialism means.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Would you put members of the Assembly to the same test?

HON. I. PEREL: This is a revising Chamber.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Do your party favour an elective Upper House?

HON. I. PEREL: I am speaking for myself on this matter, and I say I would have a qualification for a member of this House. I would have a board of examiners consisting of a professor of political economy, a representative of the Workers' Political Organisation and a representative of commercial interests, and before that board a candidate for a seat in this Chamber should appear and submit himself to certain tests,

[*Hon. I. Perel.*]

in which he should gain a certain number of marks before he would be considered qualified.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Supposing the examiners do not know enough, what then?

HON. I. PEREL: I am speaking seriously on this matter; I do not think it necessary to reply to such a question. I notice that it is the intention of the Government to bring in a Supreme Court Act Amendment Bill.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: What does that mean?

HON. I. PEREL: I do not know. The Government also propose to introduce a Jury Bill. I hope that each of those measures will be an intelligent measure that will be of some use to the country. With regard to the Judiciary Bill, I hope that it will fix an age limit at which judges should retire.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Would you apply that age limit to members of Parliament?

HON. I. PEREL: Yes, to all old, toothless, useless, and blind men. Men who have reached the age of sixty-five years should retire as honoured old men, and be content with the good they have done up to that time. As a rule, old men are nuisances to the community when they participate in its active life. They should be carefully nursed, or be put on the dresser, like good old ancient ornaments. I hope that there will be an age limit fixed at which judges shall retire. When I was in Sydney I saw a judge sitting on the bench administering the laws of the country, and he was so incompetent that the members of the legal profession shook their heads and did all they could to avoid going before him. There was a case some time back in which a litigant who appeared for himself told the judge he was incompetent through old age to preside, and the court threw up its hands in horror. The court was adjourned. It was supposed that the offender would get two years for contempt of court, but he got nothing, for the judge was removed. The whole of the legal profession were afraid to protest against such an infamous thing as that—an incompetent judge sitting on a bench and supposed to be dispensing justice, yet in the afternoon he had forgotten the whole of the evidence which had been given in the morning, and could scarcely read his own writing!

HON. P. J. LEAHY: He is like some politicians.

HON. I. PEREL: The law should not be at the mercy of such a man as that.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Which of our judges is incompetent?

HON. I. PEREL: I am not going to express an opinion about that. I say that old age makes everyone incompetent.

Then I come to the jury system. I will put the position pretty plainly before hon. members. In the past I believe there was a necessity for a special jury, simply because the people in the old days were illiterate, and we have a state of affairs prevailing now that was only suitable for a time of illiteracy. Under the magnificent system of education that Australia has had for the last thirty-five years every man should be intelligent enough to be able to give an honest verdict. If a special jury has to go to a judge for advice, an ordinary jury could do the same. I claim that an ordinary jury, at the present time, is as intelligent and as capable of giving a verdict as a special jury was in ancient times. I, for one, hope that this Bill will mean the

abolition of special juries. My experience of special juries has been a very painful one—not on my own part, because I have lost nothing much, but in connection with an estate I am concerned with. If any hon. gentleman on the opposite side were brought up before a jury comprised of waterside workers they would not expect to get very much justice from them in connection with a political matter. (Laughter.)

HON. H. C. JONES: That is a slander. (Laughter.)

HON. I. PEREL: And we expect very little justice from a capitalistic jury.

HON. W. H. DEMAINE: What happened yesterday?

HON. I. PEREL: I am not alluding to yesterday. If the Hon. T. J. Ryan, the Premier of Queensland, ever had to appear before a special jury, God help him, because a special jury is generally prejudiced in politics.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He is a rich man himself.

HON. I. PEREL: Never mind about that. We should, if possible, look up to justice as an ideal. We should honour justice, and think that justice is our saviour. There is nothing greater on earth than justice, and any man who will advocate the cause of justice is godlike; but any man who will advocate the defrauding or cheating of justice is a bad man. To think that the great and glorious Empire we belong to boasts about all these bloody massacres, this hecatomb of human bodies reaching to the skies, as sacrifices in the cause of justice! What are our courts of justice? Can you go to our courts for justice?

HON. P. J. LEAHY: We hope so.

HON. I. PEREL: You can if you have got the money. You have a poor chance of getting justice unless you have plenty of money to hire people to plead your cause. What do we find surrounding our courts of justice? Going up to the court puts me in mind of one time when I was going through a scrub at Bundaberg. My legs got twisted and my neck nearly got screwed off; I was entangled by lawyer vines; and they are a terrible curse around our courts of law. To get justice in our courts of law you have to swim through a sea of ferocious sharks. If you get there sound, you have to get back again, and you have not much chance to get back whole.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Assuming that is so, how would you alter it? How would you do away with the sharks?

HON. I. PEREL: I would alter it by bringing in modern conditions, and sweeping aside all the privileges up there. All these lawyers and legal gentlemen are bitterly opposed to unionism, and are going to fight it, and yet they are members of a union fifty times more dangerous to the community than any other union you could mention.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: And yet they have put the Premier back, and he is a lawyer.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: There must be some good lawyers.

HON. I. PEREL: Of course there must be some good lawyers. The men who plead for justice are good men; but the men who

Hon. I. Perel.]

shelter criminals from justice are bad men. Yet from the ranks of those men you take judges. I will not delay hon. gentlemen any longer.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: You are doing very well.

HON. I. PEREL: I am extremely pleased at the very patient hearing hon. gentlemen have given me. I hope I have not wounded their feelings. I have spoken honestly, and stated what I thought. I have advocated many good things, which I think hon. gentlemen will approve of. If we give our best attention to our business, and show that we are unbiassed, and want to be fair and just, I do not think the people will be so anxious to abolish us; but, if we behave as we behaved last year, like a lot of children, they will say, "A good riddance" to the lot of us.

HON. A. A. DAVEY: After the most interesting address we have just listened to, I feel somewhat diffident in taking up the time of the House. We have had a general dissertation on what is right and what is just. I think we may give the Hon. Mr. Perel credit for this. I thoroughly believe that he is anxious, according to the best of his lights, to act in a way which he is fully convinced is for the benefit of the people. Unfortunately for him, his hands are somewhat tied. He inferred that this difficulty arose out of the necessity of party government, in which statement there is a very considerable amount of truth. While I have as great a regard for justice as the hon. gentleman who has just sat down, or any other hon. gentleman in this House, I think there is something even higher than justice. Justice is a divine attribute, and so is mercy; but the greatest of all is charity. Now, I hope, and I am inclined to believe, judging from the way this debate has opened, that we are going to endeavour to realise during this session that, whatever our political ideas may be, we are each in our place to do the best we can for the people, and to do it fearlessly. I have had some little experience in political life in the past, and have struggled during the whole of my life to arrive at what is political truth; and, when I have imagined that I have arrived there, I have done my utmost to make that the practice of my life, and I am willing to give every hon. gentleman in the Council credit for the same thing. I believe, from the spirit which seems likely to prevail—if we may judge from the speeches which have been delivered—that we shall this session endeavour to the best of our ability to avoid personalities, and give each other credit for an honest endeavour to do the best we can for the whole community. (Hear, hear!)

To come to the Governor's Speech, there is not, in my opinion, very much material for serious discussion contained therein. The Hon. Mr. Crampton, in moving the adoption of the Address in Reply, gave an historical account of the rise and progress of the Labour movement, all of which was very nice in its way, but all of which was to a considerable extent coloured by the class-conscious idea, which is the dominant motive or power causing the Labour party at the present time to cohere. The hon. member gave us an account of what the Labour party had done. There is no one in this Chamber who is prepared to deny that the Labour

[Hon. I. Perel.

party has done very much good for the worker, but there are always two sides to a contract. If the country is to prosper, it is necessary that there shall be good faith on the part of both employer and employee. To that end, the Labour party, to their credit, advocated such measures as the Wages Boards Bill. After that, realising that it was not much use, they suggested compulsory arbitration. We know, as a matter of fact, that compulsory arbitration is failing for one very simple reason—that is, that the findings of the court seem to be obligatory only upon one party to the issue. If hon. gentlemen opposite will be perfectly honest, they must admit that, if there have been failures in arbitration—which appears to be a very desirable thing—it has not been on account of the employing classes, but on account of the failures of the other party to the arbitration to abide by the decisions which have been arrived at after very serious consideration. I glory myself in this country, and I was pleased

[5 p.m.] to hear the hon. gentleman who has just sat down call attention to the fact that this is really the best country in the world, the country most desirable to live in, and the country for which every member should be, if necessary, prepared to die. (Hear, hear!) The hon. member gave expression to that sentiment, and I think it is a correct one. If there are any people on the face of God's earth who have cause to be grateful, it is the people of Australia. Holding that opinion, hon. members may imagine that I was somewhat surprised when I was unable to find anywhere in the Governor's Speech any statement on the part of the Government that they are prepared to do anything to conserve the glorious conditions that prevail in this country. Not a solitary word of what the Government intend to do to win the war! What is said in the Speech is very nice—

"I am confident you will all share my regret that the terrible war which has now lasted nearly four years has not yet ended in an honourable and enduring peace. Our chief consolation is the certainty that Germany's dream of universal dominion cannot be realised, and that the heroic and costly resistance which the Empire and its allies are offering to her lawless ambition will not have been in vain."

Who is there here who dares to say, in the light of what we know to-day, that it will not have been in vain. If the allies are beaten in this war, it will have been in vain. And who of us can say to-day what the position is? Fortunately, according to the latest reports, the onflow and onslaught of the Germans are somewhat stemmed; but it has been an anxious time, and it is an anxious time still. We are not out of danger, and no man can say with any degree of certainty what is likely to be the outcome of the next month's operations. If this is a great country, every man in it should be prepared to fight for it. If the Government and those who sympathise with the ideals which the Government are supposed to represent are responsible, as they claim, for the glorious conditions under which we live, is it not reasonable to suppose that in a time like this—a time unparalleled in history—a time when the fate, not only of Australia, but of the Empire hangs in the balance—we should find in the Governor's

Speech some definite statement regarding the steps the Government propose to take so that the war may be won, if for no other reason than that we may remain secured in the privileges which we enjoy as Australians? I take a broader view than my hon. friend opposite, who said he was a materialist. There is such a thing as a spiritual empire, and that spiritual empire is of far greater importance than the material aspect, which I admit is important. But it is a very minor matter when compared with the spiritual ideals which dominate men as individuals and nations as national entities. I believe this war is primarily a great spiritual battle, because there is no effect without a sufficient cause. We could not have a race of men like the Germans, in such great numbers and with such great powers, except as the outcome of something that is far deeper and greater than the merely material. This is a war in which all the world trembles; and yet there is nothing said in this Speech—no intentions are expressed by the Government—of doing anything to try and win the war, or to carry out even the resolutions which were agreed upon at the Governor-General's conference some time ago. I do not want to attribute disloyalty to anyone; I would not do it. I have as great an abhorrence of artificial loyalty, or mere flag-wagging, as it has been termed, as any hon. member; but I ask this House if it is not a disgrace that in the opening of Parliament, and the early opening of Parliament too, there is no reference whatever in the Speech to what the Government intend to do to save the destinies of this country and to leave us in possession of the privileges which we enjoy as Australians. Whatever unions and labour organisations may have done in the past—

Hon. H. C. JONES: They have done all the fighting up to date.

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: I was working in the interests of the people before the hon. member was born—certainly before he was old enough to think, if he is old enough now to do that.

Hon. H. C. JONES: It took you longer to grasp the situation than it did me.

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: Yes, but I did grasp something, and that is the thing. It does not matter how long it takes you to grasp a thing so long as you do not miss the substance to grasp at the shadow. I have the substance, I am pleased to say.

Hon. H. C. JONES: It is people like you who are keeping recruiting down to-day.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Order!

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: What is to become of all our labour unions—what is to become of all the advantages that the workers of Australia are enjoying to-day, and rightly enjoying—what is to become of all these things if Britain and her allies are defeated? I was positively told the other day that it did not make any difference whether we were living under German or under British rule. I was told that by an Australian.

Hon. H. C. JONES: That shows the funny company you get into.

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: You will find funny company in the world if you keep your eyes and ears open. I am very glad to find that the hon. member does not agree with that sentiment.

Hon. H. C. JONES: Do I look like it?

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Hon. A. A. DAVEY: I do not judge the hon. member by his looks at all. I would not like to judge the hon. member on them; but I do say that there is only one thing that is of importance to-day, and that is winning the war. We have been called together exceptionally early on this occasion, which would seem to justify the idea that there was really something of importance to be done; and we have a barren thing like this presented to us for our consideration.

Most of the Bills mentioned in the Speech have been before us before. They have been fully discussed. No new light has been thrown on any of them so far during this debate. When they come forward again, if there is any new light thrown upon them, I dare say it will receive the consideration to which it is justly entitled; but there is nothing in this Speech that is worthy of serious consideration at a time when our fate is hanging in the balance.

Hon. E. B. PURNELL: The Federal Parliament is winning the war.

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: Yes, put it all on the other fellow! I have heard it remarked, "Let the Russians fight!" "Let the Federal Parliament do it!" "Let anybody do it but ourselves!" Queensland is a very important part of the Commonwealth of Australia. We have in power a Labour Government—a Government who claim to represent the people who are responsible largely—not wholly—I do not think they would be conceded enough to say that, but they are largely responsible for bringing about the conditions which we appreciate so much to-day. And yet the Government seem blind: they do not seem to be cognisant of the fact that any real danger exists. I suppose it is because they think, "Oh, the Federal Parliament will do it," or "The Russians will do it," or somebody else—anybody but ourselves! We must fight our battles ourselves.

Hon. E. B. PURNELL: We are doing it. You cannot deny that Queensland has done its share. Figures prove that it has done its share in men and money.

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: I do not want to go into the commercial aspect of the question at all—

Hon. H. C. JONES: No, don't touch anything commercial!

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: So far as doing our share is concerned, no man has done his share until he has done his utmost.

Hon. H. C. JONES: I suppose we ought to stop here!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: No man has done his share; the Commonwealth has not done its share until it has done its utmost. Will hon. members opposite tell me that we have done our utmost? Will hon. members tell me that the Commonwealth has done its utmost?

Hon. E. B. PURNELL: Yes, pretty well, and is doing it.

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: Will they tell me that Queensland is doing its utmost?

Hon. H. C. JONES: Certainly, it is.

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: I am prepared to admit the grandeur of the Australian as a soldier. I am prepared to give him a place of honour in the nations of the world. I

Hon. A. A. Davey.]

go further and say that I think, if a comparison were instituted, the Australian would come out on the top as against almost anybody else. But he comes out in that position because he is enjoying the conditions for which his father and his grandfather, and those "old fossils" fought for—the "old fossils" who my hon. friend opposite said, when they got to a certain age, should be poleaxed, or something of that kind.

Hon. E. B. PURNELL: He did not say that.

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: Well, he said that they should be taken kindly care of, and that they should be removed from taking any part in life.

Hon. E. B. PURNELL: Put in an asylum, like you put poor people in.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: According to the hon. member's idea, every man, when he reaches the age of sixty-five years, is to be taken care of by a nurse, and taken out of all public life.

Hon. H. C. JONES: There is only one thing left for him. He is not fit for service abroad.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Lord Palmerston was Prime Minister of England at eighty years of age.

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: If the hon. member looks round to-day, he will find that it is largely the old men who are bearing the greatest amount of responsibility in the world. They are bearing that load of responsibility because, after having made good use of their lives, they have accumulated experience, and they have a maturity of judgment which, unfortunately and not unreasonably, is not found in younger men. After a man has ceased to be physically capable of doing any particular work, it is perhaps time to remove him; but there are better men of eighty years of age to-day than many young men of thirty, or than those young men would be if they lived till they were one thousand years old. You cannot lay down any hard-and-fast rules like that. They would only lead to great hardships in many cases and to serious loss to the country by depriving it of the matured judgment of men who have had long experience. I am very glad that the Government intend to do all they can for the returned soldier. My complaint is that they are doing nothing at the present time, and have given no indication in the Governor's Speech of their intention to do anything to fill the failing ranks of Queenslanders abroad.

There is a reference in the Speech to the forest lands of the State. That is a very important matter. I am pleased to find that the Government are seized with the importance of preserving our forests and of planting new forests and generally safeguarding the position, because it is certain that as time goes on it will be very difficult to get timber in this country.

Reference was made by the Hon. Mr. Whittingham to the part of the Speech in which these words were put into the Governor's mouth:—

"Much of the useful legislation passed by the Legislative Assembly in the last Parliament was rejected, or seriously mutilated, by the Legislative Council. My advisers consider it their duty to

[Hon. A. A. Davey.]

take such steps as will in the future prevent such flouting of the expressed will of the people."

Now, I do think that those were not very nice words to put into the mouth of His Excellency, and I am surprised that the Government did not have better taste than to insert such words in the Speech. It must be recognised that at the present time this Council is an integral part of the Constitution of Queensland, and is entitled to use its judgment in whatever way seems to it to be good. This idea of "flouting the expressed will of the people" is absurd. This House has never flouted the will of the people, and is not likely to flout the will of the people. We have already a means of submitting to the people measures that have been rejected by this House on two occasions, so that there is no possibility of our flouting the will of the people. The Government have been returned with a larger majority than they had before. No one wants to rob them of any credit that is due to them in getting that majority. The elections were cleverly engineered, and the result is that the Government have come back, but to say that because they have such a majority they are justified in doing any mortal thing is not a fact. For the same reason, I might say that this House has a mandate. The question of the abolition of this Chamber was submitted to the people not so long ago.

Hon. G. PAGE-HANIFY: At the last election.

Hon. A. A. DAVEY: Before the last election the question of the abolition of the Council was put before the people, and the people said by a majority of something like 67,000 that they were not prepared to do away with this House. A most important fact to remember is that the large majority in favour of the retention of the Council was recorded in allegedly democratic constituencies. Let us give credit to the Government for having obtained a majority. The political game was open to both parties, and the Government won and came back again. I am not denying them any credit for having done so, but I absolutely disagree with the suggestion that because they have come back with a large majority they have a mandate to abolish this House. They have nothing of the kind. The number of issues placed before the electors at the last election was greater than usual, and apparently the great mass of the working people said, "Well, you come before us with a platform, you promise us a lot of things, you promise us cheap meat, cheap fish, good wages, and short hours; all these things are good, and we will put you back in power again." They have not said that they want this Chamber abolished. However much they appreciate the promises of the Government, they still say, in my opinion, "We must have the Council there as a policeman to watch the Government, and see that the proper thing is done."

There are a good many measures mentioned in the Governor's Speech, but there is one in particular that I would like to refer to before I sit down, because it deals with the subject which has impressed me very much for a long time, and the longer I live the more I am impressed with it. We say that we want to settle people on the

land. I think the time has arrived when the Government should take upon themselves the responsibility of building the main highways in our great agricultural districts, and keep those highways in repair. It is to me a very sad thing to go through some of the beautiful agricultural districts we have near at hand and see the condition of the main roads. Last week I went to Montville. More beautiful country than is to be found there it is almost impossible to imagine, but the roads with which the settlers on the land have to contend are enough to break the heart of any man. The Government should undertake the work of forming those roads.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: That is part of the Government's programme.

HON. A. A. DAVEY: I will support any Government, no matter to which party they belong, who would make the proposal that the Government should take over the control of the main roads of the State and keep them in repair. Until that is done, I do not think we can expect to have good roads in the country districts. The shire councils do their best, but that is not a great deal, and it is a great shame that the development of the country should be retarded to the extent that it is by reason of bad roads. The expenditure of £2,000 on a road or tramway would open up and develop some districts, and would bring a return to the Government in a short space of time, and be a boon and a blessing to the people settled on the land.

With regard to the Popular Initiative and Referendum Bill, there may be something to be said in its favour, but any good that might come out of it will be very little, unless the measure includes a provision giving the people the power of recall. We had a very interesting debate on this subject last session or the session before, and I suppose our old friends will come up for consideration again. There are difficulties in the way of grafting the referendum system on our Constitution, and those difficulties will have to be fully considered.

With reference to the State Iron and Steel Works Bill, I may say that I am anxious to see State iron and steel works established in Queensland, and I am sure that every member of this Chamber is anxious to see such works established and would be prepared to go to any length to see that they are established.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: Then why did you limit the measure?

HON. A. A. DAVEY: There was no limit to what the Government might do under the Bill as it was submitted to the Council. The measure contained a dragnet clause under which the Government might do almost anything. It gave them an open cheque which they could spend on iron and steel works or anything else they liked. The Bill should contain a clear and definite proposal—one that it would not require a lawyer to understand, one that any wayfaring man might understand. Every member on this side of the House is in favour of the Iron and Steel Works Bill. Yet it has been represented by inference in the Governor's Speech that we are not, and that we mutilated the measure. The fact is that the Government could not have spent the money that this House was prepared to grant them up to the present time, and as they needed more money the amount could have been increased from time

to time to an almost unlimited extent. The Bill should have been confined to iron and steel works, and should not have dealt with anything outside such works.

I notice that an Elections Act Amendment Bill is to be introduced. I do not know what it is proposed to do in that measure, but there are any number of things that require amendment in connection with our elections. When this measure comes before the Council I shall give it my best consideration, and, if possible, I shall support it, because I think there is much need for reform in this direction. The great disparity between the numerical strength of one constituency and another constituency is a matter that should be attended to. How the difficulty is to be overcome is a matter that will require consideration, but the Government will be justified in submitting a measure which will bring about a truer representation of the people. I do not intend to say any more. I hope that during this session we shall observe that spirit of moderation and that kindly feeling one towards the other that has hitherto prevailed, and regard each other as endeavouring to do his best for the country. That is the spirit which I intend to put into the work. I say absolutely, positively, and solemnly, I know no party in this House, and if anything good comes from gentlemen on the opposite side who claim to represent a particular party, I shall support it. If I cannot support it, I shall have to oppose it, but I shall not do so in any partisan spirit, but under the deepest sense of responsibility to this House and the country.

HON. T. M. HALL: I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

PROCEDURE RESPECTING APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I move—That the Council do now adjourn.

The PRESIDENT: I must again call the attention of the House to Standing Order No. 16, which distinctly states that at the commencement of each Parliament a Chairman of Committees must be appointed. This is the fourth day of the session, and, if some attempt is not made to nominate a Chairman, I shall have to ask the Standing Orders Committee to meet and frame a Standing Order empowering the President to nominate a Chairman. This delay in nominating a Chairman is a breach of the Standing Orders, and I do not think such a thing has ever occurred in this House before. It is a matter which cannot go on, and I hope that hon. gentlemen at the next sitting of the House will see that it is their duty to make some nomination.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I should like to ask is not the Hon. Dr. Taylor Chairman of Committees until his successor is appointed?

The PRESIDENT: That is so, but still there is a distinct breach of the Standing Order.

Question put and passed.

The Council adjourned at thirty minutes past 5 o'clock p.m.

Hon. W. Hamilton.]