

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 1919**

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THURSDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER, 1919.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Lennon, *Herbert*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock p.m.

PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Return to an order relative to appointees to shire and municipal councils, made by the House, on motion of Mr. Moore, on 28th August last.

QUESTIONS.

STATE BUTCHERIES.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*), in the absence of Mr. Petrie, asked the Premier—

“1. Has his attention been drawn to—  
(a) The statement appearing in an official return recently laid before this House that the State butcheries were supplying 77,000 customers with meat; (b) the statement appearing in an official Government advertisement in the Brisbane ‘Worker’ on 15th May last that the State shops then supplied 20,000 customers?”

“2. Are the above statements true?”

“3. How many hands were employed in the State shops on 15th May last, and how many are employed at date?”

The PREMIER (Hon. T. J. Ryan, *Barcoo*) replied—

“1. No. I might inform the hon. member that up to 30th June last over 3,900,000 customers were supplied with meat from the State butchers’ shops.

“2. See answer to No. 1.

“3. 241 on 15th May; 265 at present time.”

RAILWAY STORES—DEFECTIVE SYSTEM.

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

“1. Has any action been taken to deal with the officer who introduced into the department the defective system in regard to stores, adversely commented on by the recent Royal Commission on the department’s administration?”

“2. If so, what was the nature of such action, and when was it taken?”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. A. Fihelly, *Paddington*) replied—

“1. The system of purchasing stores by local quotation was a temporary arrangement on account of the dislocation of trade due to the war. Now that the war is over, the recommendations of the Royal Commission are being adopted.

“2. No officer was dealt with, as circumstances precluded any policy other than that followed.”

MR. HUGHES’S PEACE LOAN MESSAGE.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*) asked the Premier—

“1. Has his attention been drawn to the message of Mr. W. M. Hughes, Prime Minister, printed in red ink in the ‘Brisbane Courier’ of to-day’s date?”

"2. Seeing that it has been held to be unlawful to carry a red flag on account of its colour, will the Minister make inquiry and see if the use of the same colour to print Mr. Hughes's message is also an infringement of the War Precautions Act?" (Government laughter.)

The PREMIER replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. Yes." (Renewed Government laughter.)

#### APPOINTMENTS TO PUBLIC SERVICE.

Mr. DUNSTAN (*Gympie*) asked the Premier—

"Having regard to the principle of equal opportunities for all, will he endeavour to remove or reduce the present disproportion of appointments available in respect to boys and girls in connection with public service examinations?"

The PREMIER replied—

"The matter will receive my consideration."

#### COST OF WESTWOOD SANATORIUM.

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

"1. What was the estimated cost of the Westwood Sanatorium?"

"2. What did the work actually cost in—(a) Buildings, (b) road making, (c) prickly-pear clearing?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*) replied—

"1. £25,000.

"2. (a) Buildings, including water supply, gas installation, fencing, drainage, septic tank, furniture and fittings, £24,627 15s. 3d.; (b) roadways, £743 12s. 8d.; (c) the hon. member might address this question to the Home Secretary."

#### STATE COALMINE AT BOWEN.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*) asked the Minister in Charge of State Enterprises—

"1. Is a dispute in progress between the management and employees of the State coalmine at Bowen?"

"2. If so—(a) what is the nature of such dispute, (b) how many men are affected by it?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1. No.

"2. See answer to No. 1."

#### BREACH OF CANE PRICES BOARD AWARD.

Mr. COLLINS, without notice, asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"1. Is he aware that a breach of the award under the Cane Prices Board Act has been committed by the Kalamia Mill Company, in refusing to crush the growers' cane?"

"2. Has he taken any steps to see that the cane is harvested, and the company punished, as provided by the Act?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*) replied—

"I have to say I am aware that a breach of the award has been committed, and the Government are now considering

what action will be taken. I can assure the hon. gentleman that the farmers' interests will be properly conserved."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*): I desire, Mr. Speaker, to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the leader of the Opposition be allowed to make a personal explanation?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: On page 772 of "Hansard" for the current session will be found the report of a speech by the hon. member for Port Curtis, in which he makes the following statement:—

"I remember not long ago listening to speeches made in Albert Square by hon. members on the Opposition side, and their political friends—statements that were much more revolutionary in character than the statements attributed by the 'Daily Mail' to Mr. Witherby. One of them went so far as to say to the soldiers, 'You know how to make bombs, and how to use them,' and he also said, 'Boys, there are plenty of jam tins about still.'

"Mr. Macartney: None on this side.

"Mr. CARTER: The hon. member made statements that were intended to incite the returned soldiers, or a section of them, to do evil deeds, to bring about a state of rebellion in this city—inciting them to do something against the Government, and to go in for mob rule. I heard the hon. member for Oxley in Albert Square—"

At this point I rose to a point of order, and the hon. gentleman said—

"I am quite prepared to accept the hon. member's denial, but those who heard him will not."

At a later period of the debate the hon. member for Fitzroy (Mr. Hartley) said—

"The leader of the Opposition on that occasion said—"

referring to the occasion of the meeting in Albert Square, which the hon. member for Port Curtis had mentioned—

Mr. HARTLEY: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. gentleman in order in misquoting what I said in that "Hansard"? I said nothing at all about Albert Square.

The SPEAKER: I am sure the hon. member will accept your correction.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I use the words, at any rate, of the hon. member—

"The leader of the Opposition on that occasion said, 'We are coming to a happier time.' Supporting the motion to-day, he condemns such action."

Mr. HARTLEY: Read what is before it.

Mr. MACARTNEY:

"Speaking of the soldiers who took part in those riots, he made use of these words—

The returned soldiers have now laid it down that they are not going to stand for disloyalty, and would see that a different state of things existed"

in the future. He would say, 'Good luck to them, and the sooner the fullest results of their efforts were obtained the better it would be for the country.'

The shooting of constables at Merivale street; the threat to wreck the 'Standard' office, if they did not apologise, by a number of misled soldiers who had broken away from the bonds of discipline—those would have been part of the 'fullest results,' in the gaining of which the hon. gentleman wished them 'good luck,' and said the sooner they were obtained the better it would be. The better it would be for whom? The better for the capitalistic system. That is what the hon. gentleman meant."

I have the report referring to the meeting in Albert Square.

Mr. CARTER: I heard it. I didn't get it from a report.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The words used by me and reported on that occasion are as follows:—

"In conclusion, Mr. Macartney urged the returned soldiers to observe the law, and act only in a constitutional manner."

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I rise to a point of order. I think there is an apology due to the House by the hon. member for taking up so much time. I move—

"That the hon. member be no longer heard."

(Government laughter.)

The SPEAKER: With regard to the point of order, the leader of the Opposition is taking, perhaps, an unusually long time in the matter, but he should be allowed to make his explanation without interruption.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I thank you for your courtesy in the matter, Mr. Speaker.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS interrupting.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. MACARTNEY:

"If the Government did not do its duty then, when the time came the people would do it for them."

Mr. CARTER: The paper said you said that.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That is a quotation from the "Courier." It represents what I said, and I want to say, in justice to the "Standard," the labour paper, that it reports the speech exactly in the same manner.

## UNEMPLOYED WORKERS BILL.

### THIRD READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I beg to move—

"That the Bill be now read a third time."

Mr. MACARTNEY: Before this Bill is read a third time, I think it is desirable to say a few words in connection with it, particularly in view of the fact that it has been suggested that the Opposition in this House is opposed to the principle of dealing

with the question of unemployment in a fair manner. The hon. gentleman made that statement last night, and I think it is only fair to explain exactly what the attitude of the Opposition to this Bill is. The Bill is designed to meet the question of unemployment in a general sense, and the Opposition party is at one with the Government in a desire to meet that much-vexed question. There is only, as far as I can understand, a difference between the two parties as to the methods which should be adopted to meet it. The Government have put forward a Bill which is inequitable in its terms. It is drastic, and likely to defeat its own object. The Opposition, on the other hand, desire to make it a reasonable, equitable Bill, that would be likely to lay the foundation of a permanent settlement of that vexed question. The Opposition have no objection whatever to a Bill which provides for an insurance to which a fair contribution is made on behalf of both capital and labour, and also on behalf of the Government. The Opposition have no objection whatever to a provision being made for relief works to provide against those periods when there are a large number of unemployed, and the Opposition have no objection to the establishment of labour farms for the purpose of dealing with that section of the unemployed who are regarded as the unemployable. That is the attitude of the Opposition, and any reasonable provisions which are necessary to give effect to that policy the Opposition are agreeable to. We have to approach this Bill from the point of view of the policy of the party which introduces it, having regard to their platform—a platform which goes for the abolition of the wages system, for the destruction of private enterprise, with a view of putting in its place State enterprise; a policy, of course, which is openly admitted, and is not denied, except when the Premier sometimes suggests that it is not wise to point these things out for fear the public may take alarm. However, we have got to look at the policy, and we have to look at the possible effect of this Bill in giving effect to that policy. If the effect of this Bill is to destroy private enterprise, it is therefore calculated to create unemployment. It may further the objective of the Labour platform, and we have to give attention to that, because it seems to me that the Bill is so framed as to be capable of being made a machine for the complete annihilation and destruction of private enterprise, even if it is only entered upon by degrees. That is the point of view we look at it from. I honestly feel that the effect of this Bill will be to put such a shadow over private enterprise as to prevent the extension of private enterprise, and also to shut down existing private enterprises, and so bring about an enormous amount of unemployment, and defeat the very object which the Bill is proposed to meet. I say that that is a most serious position. Take the Bill as it is. You find in clause 7 a most drastic provision, which gives the Government power to do, not only the things which the Government is empowered to do in other clauses of the Bill, but things without limit or safeguard. I do not want to take up the time of the House by delivering a very lengthy speech on the matter, but I do want to call attention to these particular things. It must put those men who have entered upon, or who are prepared to enter upon, enterprise, in this State in an

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unfavourable position to compete with enterprises in the other States. If we are going to have on the Queensland statute-book a provision of this sort, then I say good-bye to the establishment of those secondary industries which we are in hopes may be established in Queensland. It is a matter which we must view seriously. In my opinion, as I said during the Committee stages of the Bill, there is a lot of political fireworks about the Bill. I do not think for a moment that the Secretary for Public Works expects the Bill to be passed, and I believe he put it forward in the hope that it might be opposed by this side, and be rejected in another House, and so give the hon. gentleman's party a cry in the country against the Opposition and against the Upper House. The hon. gentleman last night said that this Bill was not prompted from outside; that the Bill was the sole production of the Government. The Government have been in power about five years, and this is the first attempt made to deal with this particular question; and when we come to examine into the history of it, we find that the legislation is the result of a meeting which took place at the Trades Hall some time prior to the 6th February last, at which the hon. gentleman was present on invitation, and addressed the delegates of the Australian Workers' Union on the subject of unemployment as it then existed. But notwithstanding the fact that he was speaking on the wide subject of unemployment, the hon. gentleman never made a suggestion that the Government had it in contemplation to introduce a Bill of this sort; but, after the address in question, it was decided by the delegates then present that a Right to Work Bill should be introduced, and a committee was appointed to assist the hon. gentleman in drafting that Bill. Hon. members can read the issue of the "Worker" for the 6th February last, and read the hon. gentleman's address. They can read the discussion, and they can read the resolution to which I have referred, and they can also read other articles which appear in the same journal dealing in a general way with this great question of unemployment, and they will find that this Bill exceeds in many particulars in its drastic character the suggestions which were made at that conference, or the suggestions which were discussed in the journal mentioned. I can only come to the conclusion that the hon. gentleman has resented the instructions that he received from the Trades Hall, and that he has put forward a measure which he hopes will meet with an adverse fate, perhaps in the hope that it will snub his friends in the Trades Hall, in addition to furnishing capital to attack another Chamber and to attack the Opposition side of the House. All I can say is that at the last moment I asked the hon. gentleman to drop the Bill and put forward a Bill with reasonable provisions, so that we could unite with him in trying to make the best measure possible. I think we might very well commence slowly with so big and difficult a question. An insurance proposal would be of great benefit, and it would open the way to which additions could be made hereafter, if the same should be necessary. I should like to point out that a Bill of this sort is more calculated to do an injury to the workers than it is to benefit the workers. The workers of the State are divided into different classes. There is a large number of settled workers who have got their jobs year in and year out in all

parts of Queensland, and we have got a class of worker—"casual," as he is called—a large body of whom are migratory, coming from New South Wales, and even from New Zealand, in the sugar season and in the shearing season. We are asked, for the sake of the migratory workers, who could easily have been provided for otherwise, to put a Bill on the statute-book that is going to create dismay and confusion in the minds of the employers, and seriously affect and injure the position and continuity of work of the settled worker to whom I have referred. That is not wise, and the ordinary workers of the State will realise that, and just as fast as the Government persist in their endeavour to put proposals of this sort on the statute-book, they will create consternation in the minds of the substantial workers of this State, as well as in the minds of those persons whose rights they seek to destroy.

Mr. VOWLES: I think the history of this Bill gives hon. members some little insight into the domination by outside sources which Ministers, in particular, have objected to. Unemployment was just as common at the advent of this Government as it is to-day, and yet it has taken them four years to decide that it was necessary to introduce legislation to cope with it, and strange to say, it comes after a debate which took place, not in this House, but in some other place in Brisbane. A meeting of delegates is called, and they ask the Secretary for Public Works to go and address them in connection with the unemployment question. He does so, and yet he told us last night that this Bill was created in the minds of hon. members opposite, and that there was no outside suggestion or domination as far as they were concerned. But a little later on that was exploded when the hon. member for Bulimba got up and faced the Minister with a report of that meeting which took place and at which those delegates were present. To remove any doubt on the subject, I would just like the Minister to refer to the "Worker" of the 20th March, 1919. In an article on the "Right to Work," it started off in this way—

"As a result of the recent Australian Workers' Union suggestions, Acting Premier Theodore announces that probably a Right to Work Bill will be introduced into the Queensland Legislative Assembly during the coming session."

Simply showing that this Bill is the result of instructions that he got from outside sources. Not only did he get those instructions, but a committee was delegated to assist him in drawing up the Bill. The same thing applies right throughout this domination from outside sources. I will quote another article which appears in the "Worker" of 20th February. It is referring to another subject, but it shows the spirit which prevails, and how Ministers are subservient to the opinions and wishes of outside persons. Speaking on the question of the Perth conference—

"Mr. Kelly moved—

"That this delegate meeting of the Australian Workers' Union condemns the two delegates (Messrs. McCormack and Fihelly) from Queensland who voted against their definite instructions from the State political convention on the compulsory clauses of the Defence Act."

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Then he goes on to say—

“Mr. Kelly said that, had it not been for the industrialists of Queensland, Messrs. Fihelly and McCormack would not have been on the Perth political Labour conference. If delegates were allowed to vote as they liked when they had received specific instructions, one would not know where it would end. Delegates were sent to Perth and represented the considered opinion of the political Labour movement of Queensland, and were instructed to reflect that view; yet these two gentlemen had chosen to place their individual ideas before that of the organisation.”

That goes to show what we have always claimed here—that this State is governed by some outside place, and we have legislation such as this brought forward which shows on the face of it that it is impracticable. The Minister, in the concluding words of his second reading speech, said, “It is not brought forward for the purpose of having it thrown out. It is not brought forward for political purposes or for electioneering.” Why does he make that suggestion? He simply makes the suggestion to the Opposition to take up the attitude that this is done for electioneering purposes, and that there is no prospect of passing it. If there is nothing in that contention, I ask why is a copy of the Minister's second reading speech, with a copy of the Bill attached, being circulated throughout Queensland?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: So that the Bill will be properly explained.

Mr. VOWLES: Then, I ask why my speech in reply was not also circulated?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Your speech was not a reply.

Mr. VOWLES: If you are going to have one side of the argument sent throughout Queensland, it would be just as well to give the reply of some other hon. member if mine was not a sufficient one.

Mr. FOLEY interjected.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not think the hon. member argues anything. He simply sits there and cackles. I think that the Bill will not be acceptable to the public, even if it is passed. We see it ridiculed

[4 p.m.] by the worker; it is a joke with every working man you meet. It has been condemned by the working men of Charleville at a meeting, and it has been condemned by a newspaper in Rockhampton which is controlled by the Premier himself. All the big newspapers in the Southern States criticise it. The “Bulletin” criticises it. They ridicule it, and the question immediately arises, “Can we expect people who wish to invest money in new industries in Queensland to come here, where their industry is hampered in all directions when they have an opportunity of starting just over the border of New South Wales, without being subject to such interference?” Apart from the vicious principles in the Bill, it is going out of this House in a most indefinite form, a form so indefinite that, so far as the main features of it are concerned, the people, including members of this House, do not know what the intentions of the Bill are, because it gives unlimited powers to the Governor in Council in many matters, powers which might bring about the ruination of a man's business. We have known

in the past instances where the Government, to our minds, have used the powers reposed in them in a way not to the advantage of individuals, and not to the advantage of the State.

Mr. SMITH: You appear to be making a second reading speech.

Mr. VOWLES: I am making a third reading speech, if not a second reading speech. The Government seem to have been actuated in many of those other cases by ill-will and spite. For instance, in the Mooraberrie case, what advantage was it to the Government to take those cattle, what advantage was it that they should prevent that lady selling them in the market in which she should have sold them, and in the market in which the Government eventually disposed of them?

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not dealing with the question before the House, and he must confine himself to reasons why the Bill should not be read a third time. He is not permitted to make a complete second reading speech.

Mr. VOWLES: I am pointing out that there are hidden powers in this Bill, just as in the Sugar Acquisition Act, and that those powers can be used in a way in which they should not be used, and in a way in which it was never intended by this House that the powers in that Act should be used.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The House has already confirmed those principles in this Bill on the second reading.

Mr. VOWLES: The House certainly has, or, rather, I should say the Government party in this House have done so, because the Opposition is impotent so far as these things are concerned. We have protested against it, and that is all we can do. This House can do anything—we saw that demonstrated a few days ago—but it does not prove that it is right. There is no prospect of ever getting a division in this House in which an hon. member on that side may vote here, although it has happened that hon. members on this side have voted with the Government on principle. Members opposite cannot do so, because everything is cut and dried before it comes into this Chamber, as shown by the article I have read. They are under compulsion; they are under Trades Hall tyranny and dominance. (Government laughter.) They have to do what they are told; they have their instructions from the unions which they must obey, or be politically ostracised—called upon to resign. I think that these are good reasons why this House should not consent to the third reading. All we, as an Opposition, can do is to protest. We are offering that protest so that the people will see that we are doing our duty if the Government are not doing theirs.

Mr. ROBERTS: I would like to offer one or two reasons why the third reading of this Bill should not be passed at this stage, and I would like to get some information from the hon. member in charge of the Bill at the same time. I have a telegram from Toowoomba which I propose to read, with the object of eliciting information. We know that this Bill passed through Committee last night, and evidently it is considered that a statement made by the Minister on Monday to the deputation of employers requires some explanation. We know that the Minister is usually courteous,

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and I have not the least doubt that he will, if possible, give us the information sought for. At any rate, I think the people who are asking the question have every right to see that the information is correctly given. The telegram is dated from Toowoomba to-day, and says—

“ Clause eight section two Unemployed Workers Bill during interview Monday Theodore stated intended definition capital include total funds used in business including reserves, accumulated profits, etc., etc., State Income Tax Act definition different endeavour have former made clear writing.

GRIFFITHS.”

Mr. Griffiths was one of the deputation. He represented the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce, and is a large employer of labour in the city of Toowoomba. Looking up the Income Tax Act, to be found in the Queensland Statutes, vol. 8, page 7173 we find the position clearly set out. It says—

“ The capital on which the percentage of profits of any company shall be calculated shall include the amount actually paid up in cash or value on all shares actually issued by the company—”

Clause 8 of the Bill of which we are now asked to pass the third reading, sets out in paragraph (iii.) of subclause (2) that the Governor in Council may—

“ By Order in Council direct any company or person or firm carrying on business whose taxable income within the meaning of the laws in force relating to State income tax, in respect of the immediately preceding period of assessment of that tax—”

And then it goes on to specify the amounts. That evidently, in the opinion of Mr. Griffiths, is not in conformity with the statement made by the Minister for Works regarding this Bill, and I think the motion should be delayed to afford the Minister an opportunity of making clear what is meant.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I would like to say a word or two in objecting to the passage of this Bill through its third reading. So far as the principle of insurance goes, I, with the other members on this side, most cordially agree with it. It has got to come, and it will come, but we want it to be on a fair basis, a basis that will preserve employment to the people and not destroy it. I know perfectly well that there are firms who have come up from Sydney to manufacture in Queensland. They have very big businesses down in Sydney, and it would pay some of the firms to-day to close up their premises in Brisbane and throw their people out of employment, and send their stuff by boat to Brisbane, and distribute it here, not because of the assessment of £2 in the first year, but because of the unlimited responsibility which stands upon them after that year. No one knows what the end of that will be. I say that a man is a deliberate fool to come and start industries here under conditions like that. We ought to remove those unlimited liabilities under which people are when starting employment, and we ought to make employment as easy as possible, provided that the employers agree to our Arbitration Court wages. So long as they pay the wages which the Arbitration Court demands, they have a right to create employment as far as they possibly

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can, and we should encourage them to come here and create employment. The workers of the State are against the Bill.

Mr. COLLINS: Can you prove it?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I can prove it; I can prove that the workers are waking up to the fact that it is not in their interests to destroy industry, and that it is in their interest that industry shall be encouraged, so that there shall be a demand for labour which shall make labour a very saleable article and bring wages to a higher standard than is fixed by the Arbitration Court. It is no use having high wages fixed by the Arbitration Court, and having only half the men employed while the other half are engaged in relief works. For that reason I am against the Bill. We can trace the history of this Bill to a little red book which was quoted by this party some years ago.

Mr. COLLINS: Quote from it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I shall do so. That book says that all the measures desired by the Labour party cannot be put upon the statute-book in one day, or in one year, or in ten years, but must be enacted step by step as opportunity offers. I am going to trace step by step the causes which have led up to the introduction of this measure. One of the first steps was the land tax, which meant confiscation of the land.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in proceeding on those lines. I cannot allow him to trace the history of this matter step by step, and go all over the country in his arguments.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I will miss that step then. (Laughter.) The next step was the insurance step. Then there was the cruel treatment meted out to the man on the land. This measure is intended to do the same thing—to make the men on the land get tired of the whole business and express a wish that the land should be taken away from them. That is why I, for one, am against the Bill. If it were a measure which would ensure employment to the workers and enable men to make better homes for themselves I would vote for it. Unemployment insurance has to come, but in a very different way from that which is proposed in this Bill. It should be thoroughly controlled by the workers, who should contribute a little—possibly a tenth—towards the insurance fund. Another reason why I am opposed to the Bill is that it makes it possible for large numbers of men to come here from New South Wales during our sugar season and earn £8 or £9 a week, and then hang about without employment and live on the other people of the State till the sugar season comes round again, and in the meantime they will be allowed to exercise the franchise. That is the whole thing. This Bill is introduced merely for the purpose of getting people from other States to come to Queensland for the sugar season so as to ensure their votes at the next election. Our farmers are struggling with drought and low prices. Even with the low prices which at present prevail they could make a living wage if we had good seasons. But it is possible to burden the producers on the land over much.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must know that he is going far away from the subject before the House.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am giving reasons why I am going to vote against the Bill, and one of those reasons is that the Bill will inflict a burden upon the farmers who are taxpayers to shire councils who will have to provide work for the unemployed. The farmers have about sixteen taxes to pay during the year, but a man living in the city can carry on a profession, earning, perhaps, £2,000 per annum, and not be called upon to pay a land tax. It is very different with the farmer. For that reason I say that a man representing a constituency like that represented by the hon. member for Bowen should be ashamed of himself in voting for a measure like this, which increases the burdens on people who are already overtaxed.

Mr. SIZER (*Nundah*): Before the Bill goes through its third reading I should like to say that I am disappointed that we have reached this stage of such an important measure without the Minister having accepted amendments which would undoubtedly have made it a better Bill. Those amendments would, in fact, have made it a workable measure, whereas at the present time it is an unworkable one. The Bill should not be read a third time, because it fails to deal with the fundamental principles of unemployment, and does not in any practicable way attempt to deal with the causes of unemployment. It does not say one word about an adequate system of apprenticeship, which is one of the causes of unemployment: it does not give any incentive to increase production, but practically does the opposite; and it does not give any incentive to people to increase our secondary industries, but, in fact, does exactly the opposite. On those grounds we have every reason to be disappointed with the Bill. The workers and the people of Queensland who may be looking forward to this Bill will have every reason to be disappointed with it, and I am certain that when they become thoroughly acquainted with its provisions and its shortcomings and defects they will express their disapproval of it in a very appropriate manner. I regret that it has been necessary to pass condemnation upon the Bill, the very principle of which should, I think, be admitted by everyone. It is certainly admitted by myself and by other members on this side of the House. We are anxious to provide a system of unemployment insurance, and to make the lot of the worker more stable in regard to employment. We are also anxious that, when the dark days of unemployment come upon him, the worker should find that an adequate system of insurance against that unemployment has been provided. We are further anxious to remove the causes which bring about unemployment, and to increase our primary and secondary production, in order that the State may be able to absorb the thousands and tens of thousands of people who will be willing to come to Queensland in the near future. Because this Bill will do exactly the contrary members on this side of the House think it should not be read a third time at the present moment.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): I should like to say a few words in reference to this Bill on the motion for the third reading.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Stonewalling?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It is not a stonewall. This is one of the most serious things this Chamber has ever had to deal with.

I have risen to support the protest made by the leader of the Opposition against the passing of this measure. A more inequitable measure was never introduced into this Parliament—and we have had many inequitable measures—or into any Parliament in any other part of the civilised world.

Mr. HARTLEY: Is it not a fact that you wanted to put a poll tax of £1 6s. a year on to the workers under this Bill?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am favourable to what has been indicated from this side. The country should provide for the days of unemployment of the worker. The worker himself, if it were put to him, would very gladly pay a small moiety which would be demanded in order to keep up an effective insurance against the days of unemployment.

Mr. HARTLEY: £1 6s. a year was your amendment, wasn't it?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It need not be £1 6s.; that is altogether excessive. A very much smaller amount would do. We would be on perfectly safe ground if the State contributed a moiety, if the employer contributed a moiety, and if the worker himself contributed a moiety. The worker, instead of feeling that he is a kind of chattel in the State, would commence to realise that in the hard and trying days of life, should they come upon him, he would simply be getting his due reward. This Bill, in principle, is just like many other Acts of the present Government. We have had this Government attempting to commandeer men in connection with the Shipping Bill which was brought forward. They failed in that attempt to commandeer human life for their own purpose. They have commandeered the produce of the people, the stock of the people, and now they come down and attempt to commandeer the capital of the benefactors of the country; the very people who are finding employment are the people who have to find further employment in one case, and be taxed in the other. Can anyone imagine any proposal that is going to take the life of a community more than this proposal, simply because it comes down and seizes simply one class of the community, who has to pay for the upkeep of the whole of the unemployed in the community, and at the instance of a council possessed of singularly drastic power to carry on further work in order to relieve the unemployment of the day? I do protest against the singling out of individuals in this particular direction. I protest against the passing of the Bill altogether, because it is singularly un-British, it is unfair, it is the kind of thing that has never been attempted in any land under the sun. Wherever anything of this kind has been attempted, it has been of a contributory nature; it has been universal. If this were introduced in a universal way, I am sure there is not a man on this side of the House but would give it his full and free support.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I desire to move the following amendment:—

“That the question be amended by the omission of all words after the word ‘be,’ with a view to the insertion, in their place, of the words ‘rejected on the ground that it is so drastic and inequitable in its provisions, as they now stand, as to hamper and destroy enterprise, and is more likely to create unemployment than to provide against it.’”

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Speaking to the amendment, I wish to state that I do not think there is any necessity to stress the drastic nature of the Bill. It has been proved over and over again during the course of the discussion that perhaps there has never been introduced into the Legislature of Queensland such a drastic measure as the one the third reading of which we are now asked to carry. It is drastic from the standpoint that it places in the hands, not only of the Minister, but of the council, powers that can be used as an instrument to get at almost any section of the community. I do not hesitate in saying to-day that probably that is one of the principal reasons why the Bill has been introduced, so that the Government may have another rod to carry out the policy of the Premier himself, and inflict upon the community generally gross and grievous injustice. Speaking of the drastic clauses of the Bill—here local authorities are to be taken parallel, and told they are to do certain things. The community, through the local authority, are going to be robbed of the advantage which they have at present of being able to say whether they want the expenditure of money or not. It must not be forgotten that those who are living in that particular area will have to be responsible for the expenditure. It is drastic, too, from the standpoint that, whereas now there is some knowledge on the part of the local authorities as to the expenditure which is to take place during any given period, the power which the Minister is taking to himself is going to absolutely remove that safeguard. I do not hesitate to say it is an instrument which can be used drastically in a way which can be exceedingly detrimental to those who have to foot the bill in connection with these matters. Is there any need to argue this afternoon that it is not an equitable measure? One of the principal characteristics of the present Government's legislation is to endeavour to hit one side of the community. This is a Bill which it has been proved over and over again is going to press heavily upon one section of the community only. I yield to no one in my desire to see a measure introduced which is going to legitimately benefit the man who cannot get work and wants work. I said on the second reading that I knew something of what it is to be out of work—I have known that in my young days—and the terrible associations there are connected with the man who is not able to get work and wants it. But this is inequitable, and is going to defeat the very object which I assume the Bill had in view when it was presented to this House by the Minister. I want to ask: Was the Secretary for Public Works, when he received his orders at those various meetings to which reference has been made by the quotations yesterday and again this afternoon, instructed that it was to be an inequitable Bill? If he were, I can quite understand why he sits in his place and refuses to-day to rise to the occasion, and say that he is going to recommend to his Government to do the fair thing in connection with this class of legislation. Might I draw attention further to the fact that it is out to hamper and destroy enterprise. After all, comparatively speaking, we are only a small community, and anything that is done in the direction of hampering enterprise simply means you are going to destroy the chances of people getting work. If there is going to be prescribed from time to time legislation having the effect of restricting the

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expenditure of money, we are going to add to the unemployed list very materially. In that regard, we are going to insist upon a very much larger contribution than the £2 which is specified for the first year in this Bill. Perhaps there was never a time in the history of Queensland during the last fifteen years when unemployment was so rife as it is to-day. I take it people who know anything about the conditions in Queensland will recognise there are more people out of work now than there has been for a considerable period. What is going to be the effect of a Bill like this? It is going to make shy the man who has money. He will say, "Why should I spend?"

Mr. COLLINS: What will he do with it?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member for Bowen will have the opportunity of telling us something about those sugar people this; is going to press upon very materially. He may deny the fact that it will press upon them very materially.

Mr. COLLINS: What is he going to do with his money?

HON. W. H. BARNES: This Bill, instead of helping the man out of work, is going to force him on to the unemployment market. If a Bill dealing with unemployment is going to be effective—and I may differ from some hon. members on this side—it should be a Federal measure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You differ with some on your side?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I may differ with some hon. members on this side that it should be a Federal measure which should bring into operation what you might call intercolonial free trade in the way of financial assistance in connection with labour generally. This Bill will mean that men will gravitate towards Queensland, and thus create more unemployment. It should be a Federal measure, so that there should be no distinction between a man seeking work in South Australia, Victoria, or New South Wales, or any other State, as the case may be.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Wages are low in Tasmania, so bring them down in Queensland; that is your object.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not believe in low wages, but if the present Government remain in office very long, there will be no wages to pay at all, because there will not be money to pay wages with. Finally, I say it is inequitable, because the Government have contracted themselves out of the provisions of the Bill. Fancy the Government bringing in a Bill, and asking the other fellow to pay, although they are the biggest employers of labour, and contracting themselves out of it! If the Government wanted to do a fair thing by the community, they would not have contracted themselves out of the Bill. In connection with one of their State enterprises they have a surplus—the State Insurance Department. Might they not have come along and said, "We will be generous, seeing that we are taking, by way of insurance, money from sources that were never exploited before, and we will contribute towards this measure." But, no, they want every time to bleed the other fellow, and this is only another move by which they are seeking to raise revenue.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I desire to second the amendment, and in so doing I

would draw the attention of the House to the fact that Queensland is far behind other States so far as the manufacturing industries are concerned. It will be remembered that prior to federation one of the reasons why some of the Southern States—Victoria in particular—were so anxious to get federation was owing to the fact that it would do away with what was then known as border duties. All the States had their own particular border duties, and the interests of each State were more or less protected. Since federation, Queensland, to a very great extent, has been drawing her manufactured articles from the Southern States, Victoria and New South Wales in particular. The result is that those who have come from Victoria and other Southern States can in Queensland buy all sorts of farming implements and machinery, and almost everything they desire that is made in Victoria or New South Wales. That is the position to-day, although during the past few years some industries which have been established in this State are endeavouring to compete with these industries which were fostered and spoon-fed under a high protective tariff in Victoria and other States before federation was brought into effect. The point I want to make is this: That these industries are endeavouring to enable Queensland to compete successfully with the industries in operation in the Southern States, and any further taxation which may be placed on such industries by the Government is likely to be detrimental and to cause many of them to close up. The Minister knows that some of them are practically being carried on at a loss at the present time. We have been told by the Press that now the war is over and matters are becoming normal, the opportunity should be taken of establishing industries for the purpose of manufacturing a great number of the articles which are at present imported into Australia from overseas. I think that is a wise thing to advocate. It would be a splendid thing if many of the articles we daily use could be manufactured in Australia, and not be brought in from other countries. It would give a large amount of employment, and, in every respect Australia would benefit. But, are those people who are desirous of investing their money in those industries likely to come and establish them in Queensland when a Bill such as this is in operation? When a man has money to spend, and he is likely to put it in a particular industry, he travels from one State to the other with a view of finding out where the conditions are most favourable, just as the Government are now endeavouring to find out the most favourable spot to establish iron and steel works. They are doing the right thing in making those inquiries, to find out where the works may best be established, and they have an expert employed who is doing nothing else but inquiring into that matter. Just as it is sensible for the Government to adopt a plan of that sort, so these people who would come from other parts of the world to establish industries in Australia will travel from State to State, and one of their first inquiries will be as to what are the laws operating in the different States. When they come to Queensland and find that they have a Bill such as this in operation, I am sure it will be sufficient to prevent them from establishing their industries in this State. They will, no doubt, be established

in the Southern States, and we in this State will have an opportunity of buying articles which are manufactured in the Southern States. It is no use trying to close our eyes to the fact that Queensland in some particulars is eminently adapted for the manufacture of certain goods; but, when everything is taken into consideration, it is a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence, and any taxation which is likely to place our manufacturers on a worse footing than those in the Southern States must reflect detrimentally upon this State. Those people, when they have an opportunity of establishing their industries in some State where such a Bill as this is not in operation, will naturally select such a State. The hon. member for Bulimba rightly said, if the same conditions were to operate right throughout Australia, it would not place Queensland in a different position to that of the rest of Australia; but, unfortunately, this Bill is a State matter, and the new industries that are likely to be established in Australia during the next three or four years will be established in some other State. There are people at the present time making inquiries in Australia in regard to the establishment of the woollen industry, and there is no reason why Queensland should not be the State chosen for the manufacture of wool. We have wool equal to anything in Australia, and we have everything necessary, but, unfortunately, we are doing everything possible to drive those people away from this State.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You are.

Mr. MORGAN: This Bill is one thing, and there are others that I could mention. Then, in regard to the cotton industry. Hon. members on both sides of the House have been taking a very keen interest in again establishing the cotton industry in Queensland. If we succeed in growing sufficient cotton, and there is no reason why we should not, it will be necessary to have the raw material manufactured into cotton goods, but it is quite probable, if a measure like this is on the statute-book, that when the time is ripe for the introduction of machinery for the purpose of manufacturing cotton, the factories will be established in some other State in Australia where inducements are offered. The trouble with a number of Government supporters is that they are short-sighted; they cannot see beyond their noses. Their hatred of the capitalist is so great that they are prepared to sacrifice this State of Queensland. They say, "We don't want people with money." In fact the whole administration of the present Government points to the fact that the man with money is not welcome to this State. When the capitalists leave the State, I do not know what is going to become of the employees. I think the average employee recognises that the man who provides labour is the friend of the working man, and the man who cannot provide labour is only an individual who has to look after himself. The man who is capable of employing labour, and who has capital, is an asset to this State, and he should be encouraged in every possible way. Then we are told—and it has not been denied—that this Bill has emanated from the Trades Hall. We are now dealing with a measure that has been pushed on the Government by the Trades Hall, and we know exactly how the Trades Hall stands in relation to the present Government. They evidently have proved themselves sufficiently

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strong to compel the Government to bring in measures of this sort, and that being so, they will be strong enough, when this Bill becomes law, to compel the Minister to use the drastic powers contained in this Bill; to compel him to use the Bill in any manner that the Trades Hall may direct. That is one of the unfortunate things in connection with this particular measure. It is not what members of Parliament may say or do in this House; it is what a certain body of men who are directly controlling the present Government—underground engineers who are not responsible in any respect to the people of this State—may desire to be done. It is those men who possess the power to-day, and those men, when this Bill becomes law, will compel the Minister, whether he likes it or not, to put the drastic provisions of the Bill into operation to the detriment of those who have invested their money in this State. I hope the amendment will be carried, and that we will have the opportunity at a later date in this session of discussing some measure that will be likely to be successful—something that will be acceptable to both sides of the House, and something that will prove effective so far as unemployment is concerned. This Bill, as has already been stated, instead of reducing unemployment, will cause unemployment. It will do harm from the very commencement. From the very day that this Bill is put into operation Queensland will suffer. Many new industries that are likely to be established will be abandoned altogether if this Bill becomes law, and anything that will have that effect will not be for the good of the State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The amendment is sufficient evidence of the inherent hostility of hon. members opposite to any measure introduced for the amelioration of the condition of the workers.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No, no!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Hon. members opposite, time and again, and especially this afternoon, have accused this Government of being under some kind of domination.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: You know it is true.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If there is any evidence that hon. members of this House are acting under pressure in regard to the Bill, we have had it this afternoon in hon. members' speeches. Hon. members opposite have shown that from the very outset. Although on the second reading they did protest that they were in favour of some scheme to solve the unemployed problem, their attitude since has been an attitude of studied opposition and bitter antagonism for the purpose of destroying the usefulness of this measure without any desire to put into its place something to accomplish the end that they say they agree to—that is, a solution of the unemployment problem. It is most unusual to treat the third reading stage of a Bill as anything but formal, and when we see hon. members stonewalling and obstructing, as they are doing this afternoon, the passage of the third reading of this Bill, that indicates in itself their desire to see the Bill destroyed, and it indicates further that they are acting under instructions from outside. Take the laboured nature of their speeches this afternoon. The hon. member, who has just resumed his seat, seconded the amendment in a laboured speech, in which he tried to speak as long as possible, in order to delay the passage of the Bill,

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without giving any cogent reason as to why it should not pass. And the amendment itself is not an amendment which should emanate from anyone who is sympathetic towards the solution of the problem. It is conceived in a desire merely to destroy the Bill if it can be destroyed, and this idea of pressure outside is well founded, but the pressure is exercised on members opposite. It seems to me, judging by the speeches this afternoon and the speeches made last night in Committee, that hon. members do not desire to solve the problem. They are satisfied to uphold and carry out capitalistic desires in regard to the existence of a reserve army of labour. The capitalists, as a body, are opposed to this Bill. Hon. members say that it is condemned throughout the country. So it is—by the capitalists. They do not want to solve the unemployment problem. They want a large reserve army of labour from which they can draw, in order that they will have more docile employees than they otherwise would have. The leader of the Opposition this afternoon tried to justify his opposition at this stage on the grounds that the Government would not accept reasonable amendments of the measure, and therefore the whole thing had to be condemned; but the fact is that we accepted six or seven amendments from the Opposition which were reasonable, and which, it was thought, would improve the Bill. But if we had accepted all the amendments which were circulated by the members of the Opposition, what would have been left of the Bill to-day?

Mr. VOWLES: A good Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Nothing but a bare skeleton.

Mr. VOWLES: There would have been a new one.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Every vital clause was to be amended—either cut out entirely or mutilated—by the Opposition. The vital principles affecting the assessment of employers, the constitution of the council, the question of affording relief works, and the other vital principles in the Bill would have been entirely destroyed, and the Bill emasculated by members opposite. And yet they have the consummate cheek to stand there and say they want to improve the Bill instead of destroying it! I want to point out that one of the amendments which members circulated, and which they desired to have accepted, was an amendment to put a tax on the workers in all industries, or prescribed industries, to the extent of £1 6s. a year. That is their idea of solving the unemployed problem! If a man, through industrial exigencies, is thrown on the labour market and is unemployed—well, that is his own fault, and they would put a tax on him over a sufficiently long period of time to build up a fund adequate to keep him or in order to warrant a dole being served out to him during his unemployment. (Opposition dissent.)

Mr. VOWLES: That is not right—three payments, not only one.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The principal contribution under their scheme was to come from the worker. (Opposition dissent.) Under the Bill, employers, and only a certain proportion of employers, would contribute on the basis of something from 4½d. to 9d. per week, and hon. members wanted to make the worker pay 6d. I think

that could not be justified on any grounds whatever. Now, I put this to you—if you take notice of all the speeches made here this afternoon, has the tendency not been in the same direction—that they do not desire to solve this problem, because some intending investors in the Southern States might be deterred from their purpose? The hon. member for Drayton was moved almost to tears, as was also the hon. member for Bulimba, when he contemplated the view that Southern capitalists might take of this legislation. The hon. member for Bulimba establishes a new doctrine in regard to this matter. He wants to revert to what he calls free trade in labour, abandoning the protection of labour altogether. (Opposition dissent.)

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I do not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member used the term. He said, "Let us have free trade in labour."

Hon. W. H. BARNES: That is absolutely misrepresenting me.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It is thought desirable to remove all those restrictions which are considered to be beneficial, and which are no doubt beneficial to the worker, and to adopt this new doctrine of handing the worker over body and soul to the employer.

Mr. VOWLES: That is deliberate misrepresentation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Opposition ignored the gravity of the situation. They desire not to notice the fact that unemployment creates misery, brings about destitution and unhappiness in the families of workers through no fault of the workers themselves. What is the use of being blind to the situation that exists now, that always exists under the wage system, a situation of which no previous Government have ever attempted an adequate solution, a situation which compels the worker at certain periods to be thrown out of work without any prospect of employment or means of livelihood, often reducing him to a condition of perury and want, and bringing misery and starvation in some cases to his wife and little ones. Hon. members would ignore that entirely; they would adopt a callous, cold-blooded attitude—(dissent)—for the purpose of currying favour with certain persons with sums of money to invest, with those who, they say, desire to invest money in Queensland. The object of this Bill is not in any way to destroy industry or undermine business in Queensland. Nor would it have that effect. No one with the grossest imagination can say that it would lead to the ruination of anybody, because special provision is made, even with the small assessment, that if it is likely to be harsh it may in that case be remitted. And the assessment itself is a mere bagatelle compared with the other expenses of carrying on business and industry in this State. It is one of the costs that the industry should look after—the cost of its employees. It is recognised, and firmly established in regard to workers' compensation. Every argument used against this measure could be just as logically used against the workers' compensation scheme, because under that Act there is an assessment upon every employer, and in that case Queensland is more favourably situated than other States, and it might be argued that Southern capitalists would say, "We will not invest in Queensland

because there is a more favourable workers' compensation scheme there." This will not bring a burden to industry, but it will solve the terrible problem which faces Queensland and every other country at the present time. It should be passed if that solution can be brought about. I invited from the Opposition suggestions which would tend to improve the Bill, but all we got was a new scheme which, if adopted, would have meant the destruction of this proposal entirely.

Mr. VOWLES: It would have given insurance against unemployment, with proper contributions.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Hon. members contend that the carrying of a Bill of this kind will somehow injure the credit of Queensland, will tend adversely to interfere with the carrying on of business. I want to point out to hon. members that notwithstanding their gloomy prognostications of the last three or four years of the effects of this Government's administration, notwithstanding their frequent forecasts that business will be injured in Queensland because of this Government's measures and administration, wealth production in Queensland is higher to-day than at any time of its history.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Values have moved higher.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Hon. members predicted ruin, the absolute destruction of industry, but, notwithstanding those forecasts, industry is more prosperous in Queensland than previously. It only shows that this Government, in formulating this scheme, has a due appreciation of its obligations, is not out to destroy anyone, is not out to thrust upon industry an unfair proposition, but is out to recognise what its obligations are not only to industry but also to the workers. Hon. members attempt to make a lot out of the suggestion that the Bill itself did not originate with the Government. I mentioned last night—and I reiterate the statement to-day—that the Bill did originate with the Government. It was conceived by Cabinet Ministers,

[5 p.m.] and they take the full responsibility for it. I do not say, nor

have I ever said, that the workers should never make a suggestion for the amelioration of their conditions or for social and industrial reform. That would be a callous and brutal policy to lay down. The Government have never ignored the right of the worker to think for himself, and to make suggestions for the purpose of ameliorating the conditions of industry, and when such suggestions are made they will be properly considered by the Government, and if they are practical they will be put into operation. If the unions referred to by the hon. gentlemen are sufficiently interested in this question to propound a scheme for the solution of the problem, let them do so by all means. But this scheme originated with the Government, and I think it will find full acceptance with the workers of the State, and will not be condemned by employers, because they will realise that it will not operate harshly in regard to them or interfere with the successful conduct of their business. As far as the creation of employment and the finding of work in carrying on developmental operations or any other works are concerned, the chief burden falls upon the Government, and not upon private employers. Hon. members admitted last

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night that there was only a small number of firms or individuals making more than 15 per cent. profit per annum, or earning incomes of from £5,000 to £10,000 per annum. And they are relatively a small class, and there is no class in the State more able to assist in the solution of this problem than that small class.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Are there many?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There are quite a number of them; many more than the hon. gentleman imagines. If the hon. member is sincere in his question regarding the number of firms and individuals who are making more than 15 per cent. profit per annum, he will find that the Income Tax Commissioner gives some indication of the number of companies who have to pay income tax on the maximum assessment, which is only paid by companies and firms making more than 17 per cent. profit per annum. There are quite a number of such firms, and, in the aggregate, their incomes amount to an enormous sum. It is on those employers that we cast all the drastic obligations in the matter of creating employment, and the obligations only fall upon them with the possibilities of the Government and the local authorities finding employment are exhausted. Anyone who examines this scheme fairly and impartially must see that it is not an unwise or unsound scheme; it is a matured scheme; it is a workable and practicable scheme; and it will tend to solve the great problem which exists in Queensland as well as in other countries.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: We have listened to an avalanche of words interspersed with abuse from the Minister for Public Works, but I do not think it is going to assist us in arriving at a solution of this problem. It may be useful for electioneering purposes, but I cannot see how it will assist us to arrive at the solution of the difficulty with which the Bill proposes to deal. I am just going to outline to the Minister in a very few words what is wrong with this measure so far as we are concerned. We have approached the Bill from the standpoint that unemployment is an evil that has got to be got rid of—an evil that calls for the best that is in us all to provide against. There are two grave defects in the measure. One is the constitution of the unemployment council, which must be biased in its judgment. The lopsided constitution of the council is wrong, and it will render the whole Bill inoperative. The council is to consist of five men, three of whom are practically under the domination of one party in the community, and therefore the council must of necessity be lopsided. We moved an amendment whereby the constitution of the council would have been altered, but, although the Minister admitted that the council is the crux of the whole measure, he steadfastly refused to accept any proposal to alter its constitution. When that amendment was turned down, there was no other course left open to us to safeguard the interests of those concerned in the measure than to record our emphatic protest against the passing of the Bill. The method proposed in the Bill for raising revenue to create an unemployment insurance fund is wrong. The charge which the measure proposes shall be levied on employers will be passed on to the consumer. There is no question about that. It is going to be another burden on the consumer—

another burden on the cost of living. This revenue should be secured by direct taxation, and not by indirect taxation, such as is proposed in this Bill. Members opposite have stood for the policy of direct taxation, but here they have been shortsighted enough to choose a method of indirect taxation that is going to have the very contrary effect to that which they desire. It is going to enhance the cost of living. Every employer who is called upon to contribute to this sustenance fund will add that contribution to the cost of production, so that the man in the street will have to pay an increased price for the articles the employer produces. Therefore, that provision will defeat the very object hon. members opposite have in view.

Mr. BRENNAN: What do you suggest?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: There are many suggestions that might be made. We have suggested that the revenue required should be secured by direct taxation. That would remove the danger which now exists of creating a class feeling in the community, as the employer would not feel that he is singled out. Such a scheme would also remove the objection that the State does not contribute to the fund. At present the State competes in certain enterprises, and it will benefit at the expense of their opponents in the particular businesses concerned. The direct taxation scheme would also remove the objection that a man who does nothing to develop enterprise does not contribute to this insurance fund. There are two classes of persons who derive incomes from different sources. There is the class who derive their incomes from investments, and there is the class who derive their incomes from industry. The man who derives his income from investments is not called upon under this Bill to assist in providing the insurance fund, whereas the man who is engaged in industry, and who is assisting industry, is the very man who is called upon to bear the whole burden. That is one of the weaknesses of this measure, and it is one of the causes which has decided us to take up our present attitude. We did not oppose the second reading of the Bill because we wanted an opportunity to amend it in Committee; but all our amendments, with the exception of a few inconsequential alterations were turned down, and seeing that the Bill now stands to all intents and purposes the same as it stood when it was introduced, we have no other course left open to us than to ask for the withdrawal of the measure. If the Secretary for Public Works takes notice of the discussion which the Bill has aroused, not only in this House, but throughout the State, he will withdraw the measure, and will then have an opportunity of conceiving a measure which is more reasonable and more acceptable and more likely to meet the situation than the one which he is now endeavouring to bludgeon through the House. The Minister referred just now in his remarks to the desire of this side of the House to create cheap labour. That is a cheap insinuation, but it does not cut any ice, because he knows perfectly well that we do not stand for cheap labour. We are just as sincere in our desire to see the working class living under reasonable conditions as are hon. gentlemen opposite. The only difference is that we apply to these problems common sense and business experience, and endeavour to amend these measures with those objects in view; but hon. gentlemen opposite are always rushing

[*Hon. E. G. Theodore.*]

into these impracticable ideals, and because we venture to say that that they are impracticable and are only going to aggravate the position they are trying to cure, we are assailed as being obstructionists—as being the enemies of Labour and anything which is going to assist them in their electioneering campaign. The Secretary for Public Works persists in comparing this with an insurance system, and saying that this sustenance allowance is going to be arrived at just as the insurance premiums are. I would point out to him once more that insurance premiums are calculated on a statistical basis. The contributions to the revenue under this Bill are to be arrived at by the will, or at the wish, of a temperamentally-fitted council. On that point we come back once more to the constitution of that council—which, I repeat, is one of the main principles in this Bill to which we take great exception. The Minister also referred to the wealth production, and said it has been higher in Queensland during the last four years. Why is the wealth production higher in Queensland? It is not that the production has been greater; it is that the world's demand—over which hon. gentlemen opposite had no control—has enhanced the price so greatly of those particular commodities that they have put an inflated idea into their heads. Let me ask him this: What is the use in trying to find comfort in our wealth production, or in the fact of our wealth production being greater, when at the same time he has to look about and find some means of remedying a condition of unemployment in Queensland, which is greater to-day than it has been for the last thirty years? (Hear, hear!) What comfort does he find in the fact that our total wealth production is greater, when at the same time he has to find some artificial means of providing employment for the mass of unemployment which is burdening Queensland at the present moment? I repeat that we have no objection whatever to the Minister conferring with the workers to find out their opinions as to how this measure should be framed to meet their wishes; but we also claim a similar right for the other class of the community, which has to work hand in glove with the worker—the employer—those on the other side of the hedge, so to speak. Their interests should also be considered. It is their interests we have tried to put forward, so that by listening to both opinions we can devise a measure which will be acceptable to all parties.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am very glad to be able to support the amendment, which means the withdrawal of this measure, simply because I believe a very much better Bill can be evolved. Had the Committee been in possession of all the information to which they were entitled when this Bill was introduced, chiefly as regards the number of workers in the land and the number of employers, it would have been a simple matter to have come down with a suggestion that would, I think, have met the demands of every reasonable man in this Assembly. We understand that there are some 76,393 unionists in Queensland.

Mr. COLLINS: There are over 80,000 now.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That helps my argument. In addition to that, there are quite a number of other workers. Supposing the number of workers in Queensland totals 100,000. A simple contribution from those workers of 3d. per week, or 12s. 6d. per

year, and a like contribution by employers, would bring in £125,000 a year. If the Government, as they should, put in their quota of one-third, we would have a further £62,500. Supposing the Government say, "We have burdens enough to bear; we meet the demands of labour and will meet them in various directions, and do not propose to give any portion towards the insurance fund which would thus be created." If that is thrown out, we still have the very amount that the Minister indicated the other evening would be forthcoming as the result of the assessment of the employers. In response to an inquiry of mine, the hon. gentleman stated that he anticipated that the revenue which would come in as the result of the assessment would be some £120,000. By the simple contribution of 3d. per week by the worker and by the employer you have the very total the Treasurer has in his mind he would realise as a result of this Bill. That is a simple proposal which, I venture to say, would be acceptable to every employer and every workman. Will the worker object to pay 12s. 6d. a year? I noticed the other day that the unionists had a levy made upon them of 10s. per year in order to support the "Daily Standard," the Labour newspaper.

Mr. WHITFORD: How much do you pay towards the "Courier"?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Not one penny, as far as I am concerned. If a levy of that kind can be made upon them in connection with the running of a paper, the workers are not going to complain of a levy of 12s. 6d. per year when it is going to provide against their days of unemployment.

Mr. WHITFORD: How much does your firm pay the "Daily Standard" in the way of advertising as compared with the "Brisbane Courier"?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That is my business, it is not yours. We had a very fine display of heroics on the part of the Secretary for Public Works. That will all be taken for what it is worth. In the light of clear criticism, and in the light of the good of the country, too, I am sure the attitude of the Opposition in connection with the introduction of this measure, and the opposition they have put forward to it, will be commended by people throughout the land.

Mr. TAYLOR: I rise to support the amendment of the hon. member for Bulimba, principally because I think the Bill—as is stated in the amendment—is most drastic in its nature and unfair in its operation so far as one section of the community is concerned. Personally, I think that not only the employer but the worker and the Government should make a contribution to this fund. It has been said by several members opposite that the worker should make no contribution whatever. What is it he would be contributing to? He is asked to make a small contribution to a fund which is going to ensure him, according to the terms of the Bill, constant employment. What do workers do to-day in regard to contributing to various matters from which they derive benefits? Take the friendly societies. Throughout Australia men have come together and voluntarily contributed a sum equal to anything from £2 10s. to £3 10s. a year, and what for?

Mr. BRENNAN: £1 a week.

Mr. TAYLOR: Because, as the hon. member says, they can have £1 a week when

*Mr. Taylor.]*

they are ill, and also get medical attendance and comforts in case of sickness, and certain benefits at death. Workers have been the principal contributors to friendly societies. They have not been compelled to do it, but have done it voluntarily, and splendid results have been obtained through their efforts. Then, with regard to the various unions and organisations connected with labour, we find the members of those organisations contributing 6d., 9d., or 1s. per week, for certain benefits which they believe they will derive therefrom. A better organisation is placed before the employers and employees in this Bill, if the methods we propose are adopted, as constant employment would then be ensured. Then there is the matter of life insurance. Men have contributed in that direction in order that, if death comes suddenly, there may be a sum of money available for their wives and children, who will not then be thrown on the world without a shilling. Hon. members opposite get up and complain about small contributions to assist in carrying out this scheme. I contend that the fact that it is going to be a charitable scheme is one of the most damaging features in connection with it. It is going to take away the self-reliance of the workers if the measure goes through in the form in which it is introduced.

The Treasurer, a little while ago, said that the wealth production of Queensland was never greater than it is at the present time. Does the hon. gentleman mean to say that, because a man pays 35s. for a pair of boots to-day that he could have got for 25s. a year or two ago, it is in the interests of the people? Does he mean to say that because the wealth production has increased and everything which the people are using to-day is from 25 per cent. to 50 per cent. or 70 per cent. higher in price than it was, the people are any better off for it? Can there be anything more illogical than such a statement? Then, as has been said during the debate, our secondary industries have enough trouble to compete with the Southern industries at the present time, and anyone who has the best interests of Queensland at heart cannot but regret the lamentable fact that boats are bringing up manufactured articles from the South, the raw products for which were procured from Queensland. Is that a good thing for the State? We talk about sending our hides and wool over the seas. Why, "dash my buttons," we are sending tomatoes from the constituency of the hon. member for Bowen down to Melbourne and Sydney and bringing them up as tomato sauce. And that applies, not only to tomato sauce, but to other lines, such as boots, biscuits, and confectionery. The raw products are being sent down South from Queensland, and we are willing to pay the price of having them manufactured in the Southern States. It is now proposed to put another tax of £2 per head on to the manufacturers. We are trying as hard as we can to block them. Do we not want to enlarge the operations of our secondary industries? Surely, the Secretary for Public Works, and other hon. members opposite, cannot be serious in advocating a measure like this, which will penalise our secondary industries and manufacturers! If the Minister is wise he will withdraw the Bill, and have it remodelled. The Minister, in a very impassioned speech this afternoon, said that we on this side were cold-blooded and callous, but the

[*Mr. Taylor.*

cold-bloodedness and callousness is on the opposite side.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. TAYLOR: The Bill is going to create unemployment, and make us put the clock back in our State. If the Minister is sincere in his desire that the workers shall have constant employment and be well paid for it, he will withdraw the Bill, and have it remodelled and made into a workable measure, and one which will conduce to the best interests of the State.

Mr. WHITFORD: I am satisfied your bosses are shaking you fellows up.

Mr. SIZER: Before this goes through, I want to bring under the notice of the House a most deliberate misrepresentation by the Secretary for Public Works of a statement by the hon. member for Bulimba. That hon. member was advocating that this should be a Federal scheme, under which no set of employers in one State would be interfered with as against employers in another State—that there should, in that respect, be free trade. The Minister deliberately put words into the hon. member's mouth entirely different to what he used, and inferred that the hon. member for Bulimba—and no doubt he attached the imputation to all members on this side—was anxious to have free labour conditions; that there should be no Arbitration Courts or factory laws—that we want cheap labour. It was a most absurd and deliberate misrepresentation on the part of the Minister, and it was unworthy of him to attempt, as cheap political propaganda, to deliberately misrepresent and impute wrong intentions to this side of the House.

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

AYES, 35.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Larcombe
" Bertram	" Lloyd
" Brennan	" McCormack
" Butler	" McLachlan
" Carter	" Mullan
" Collins	" O'Sullivan
" Cooper, F. A.	" Payne
" Coyne	" Riordan
" Dunstan	" Ryan, D.
" Foley	" Ryan, T. J.
" Gilday	" Smith
" Gillies	" Stopford
" Gledson	" Theodore
" Hartley	" Thompson
" Huxham	" Whitford
" James	" Wilson
" Kirwan	" Winstanley
" Land	
<i>Tellers: Mr. Brennan and Mr. Carter.</i>	

NOES, 17.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Macartney
" Barnes, G. P.	" Moore
" Barnes, W. H.	" Morgan
" Bayley	" Roberts
" Bebbington	" Sizer
" Bell	" Swayne
" Elphinstone	" Taylor
" Grayson	" Fowles
" Hodge	
<i>Tellers: Mr. Bebbington and Mr. Sizer.</i>	

Resolved in the affirmative.

[5.30 p.m.]

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

The Bill was ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence by message in the usual form.

## ELECTIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

## SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. SIZER: In addressing myself to the second reading of this Bill, I do so with some difficulty, because since we discussed this matter previously, there has been a change in the Ministry. The hon. gentleman who was in charge of the Bill has been transferred to another department, and another hon. member has been elevated to the position of Assistant Minister for Justice, and that hon. gentleman, I am sure—in fact, it is common knowledge—has entirely different ideas to those of the late Minister in connection with electoral matters. We are all well aware that on the introduction of this measure I endeavoured to secure the adoption of an entirely new principle, but I was not successful on that occasion, probably due to the fact that the Minister was unsympathetic. I am wondering what is likely to happen since the change of Ministers, as the hon. member for Keppel is now in charge of this Bill, and I know he agrees entirely with my ideas, and with the ideas of those people who advocate proportional representation. I have read many speeches, but I have never read a more logical or more lucid explanation of the system of proportional representation than that which was delivered by the hon. member for Keppel in this Chamber some years ago, and I have every reason to believe that he still holds those views. I suggest, now that the hon. gentleman has taken charge of the electoral machinery of this State, that he immediately puts into operation those views which he advocated so ably in this Chamber, and if he does that, I am sure he will have the support of a majority of the people of this State. This is probably the only occasion during this Parliament on which we shall have an opportunity to discuss election matters. Election matters are of vital interest to members of Parliament, because every member is anxious that the most effective system possible should be devised to get an accurate expression of the people's will at election time. I think that is the desire of every member of this Parliament—if it is not, it should be—and it is the desire of the people outside that that system should be in operation. We know that under this Bill it is impossible to bring that state of affairs about. The measure does not propose in any shape or form to remove any of the fundamental defects of our electoral system, or tend to bring about an effective electoral system. All it does is simply to amend some of the machinery clauses. Is that really worthy of the Government? It might be a worthy attempt to deal with the matter if we had an adequate system of electoral law, but we have a system which is antiquated and inefficient, and now we have an opportunity of improving it, and surely that opportunity should be grasped at the earliest possible moment. This is the earliest possible moment, because we have a new Minister, a Minister who believes in that better electoral system, and it is for him to say whether he will put his own beliefs into operation. It may be said, and probably it will be said, that the question on which I have been speaking does not really come under this Bill, and no doubt you might rule that the contention is correct. The fact remains that it is part and parcel of the electoral machinery, and although it may be interwoven with other Acts, it is still the

fundamental principle of representation, and the instrument with which we are dealing in this Bill. The Minister, if he is not able to withdraw the Bill immediately, may be able to go so far as to give the House the assurance, when he addresses himself to the subject, that he will at least hasten the amendment of the Electoral Districts Act, so as to bring\* into operation the sound, broad principles of the scheme which he has advocated in the past.

The measure itself is mainly a machinery Bill which can be better dealt with in Committee. One of the salient points is undoubtedly the lowering of the franchise age to eighteen from the present age of twenty-one. I have not heard the new Minister on the question, but I heard the late Minister, and I must say that the only cogent reason which has been given why the age should be reduced—the only reason which I call a reason—is that the soldiers were sent away to the war at eighteen years of age. That is an argument why the soldiers themselves might have votes at eighteen years of age—I will admit that. The soldiers, when they were away overseas, acquired those manly qualities which distinguish them, their outlook was considerably broadened, they became more educated in big world-wide affairs so as to be in a better position to give an intelligent vote at eighteen years of age. But the fact remains that if the argument in that particular instance is correct, the circumstances generally are certainly not analogous so as to justify its application in all cases. If it is the intention of the hon. member to pin his faith to that argument, I would be quite prepared to move or assist him in Committee to make the eighteen-year-old vote applicable to the soldiers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Upper House refused to grant it last session.

Mr. SIZER: That fact shows that after all the ravings of hon. members opposite, that this side of the House has only to dictate to the other Chamber to have their wishes observed have miscarried, because if we had been prepared to move something in that direction, one would think that if we were hand in glove with them they would accept whatever we moved. I am glad that the Minister for Agriculture has so ably explained our position in respect of the Legislative Council. But, let me say that there will be very very few soldiers who would be eighteen years of age and come under such a provision.

Mr. WHITFORD: Why prostitute the soldiers?

Mr. SIZER: I think the hon. member would prostitute anything.

Mr. WHITFORD: That is your opinion, and I am satisfied that you would, too—don't you forget it. I do not know that you are an Australian, anyhow. You are not a gentleman.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. SIZER: Admitting that a certain number went away at a very early age, an overwhelming majority of them now will be twenty-one years of age at least, and eligible to vote under our electoral law as it is to-day. For that reason I do not really see that the argument applies to any material extent at the present moment. Let us look at the other reasons advanced for the proposal. I maintained on the initiation of



this Bill that the introduction of voting at eighteen years of age is unwise, and I repeat that there is a very small and almost negligible proportion of persons in the community who are competent at the age of eighteen to pass an unbiased and deliberate opinion on vexed political questions. I am prepared to admit that there may be isolated cases of students of political affairs who are naturally enthusiastic about such things, but if there are 1 per cent. or  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.—I doubt whether there would be so many—is that an argument that we should generally lower the voting age to eighteen? Experience teaches us that there is all over the world a general agitation against children leaving school at the age at which they do at present, an agitation for the raising of the schooling age. In many places it has been increased. And, as a rule, those men who are fortunate enough to have opportunities of receiving the higher education of a university have never completed their schooling as it were, until they are often very far past twenty-one years of age. We know very well that men who are in that fortunate position are better educated than those who are in a less fortunate position, and my point is that if it takes until twenty-one years of age and more to qualify for certain high professions, is it possible that those who are not fortunate enough to have such advantages will be able to cast an unbiased and effective vote on the vexed political questions which will sooner or later affect the welfare of the State and this Commonwealth of Australia? I say it is not reasonable, and is not likely to improve Queensland in the future.

Mr. WHITFORD: What about conscription at eighteen?

Mr. SIZER: An hon. member interjects something about conscription at eighteen. Personally, I do not agree with men enlisting at that age, but even if they did, is that a sufficient argument for bringing down the age at which young people can vote? Of course, it is not. As I have said, I will assist the Minister to give a vote to those who are under the age of twenty-one and are away from Queensland at the present time. The reason for the agitation for raising the school age which is going on all over the world is that people are beginning to realise that when children leave school at an early age, they are not sufficiently educated to be able to play their full part in the business of the world.

Mr. COLLINS: Who were the pioneers of that movement? The Labour party.

Mr. SIZER: It does not matter to me whether the pioneers of that agitation were men connected with the Labour movement or with the socialist movement. The fact remains that the agitation is going on, and if it was a Labour agitation, that is all the more reason why members opposite should approve of the argument I am putting forward. For some reason which I do not know—probably hon. gentlemen opposite will be able to tell me—we appear to have lived for many years under the misapprehension that a young person should not be considered to have reached his majority until he has attained the age of twenty-one years. We know that to-day in the eyes of the law no person is recognised as an adult until he has reached the age of twenty-one years.

Hon. J. LARCOMBE: Yes, under the Defence Act he is.

[Mr. Sizer.

Mr. SIZER: I am not dealing with the Defence Act. I say that under our present law no person under the age of twenty-one years can legally enter into an agreement. When the first prize in the Golden Casket was won by a lad under the age of twenty-one years, he was not able to touch the money because he was under age. We will not allow a person to throw away his own property before he reaches the age of twenty-one years, or to do what he likes with that property before he reaches that age. Is it right then to hand over to him the power to deal with matters affecting the welfare of the State when he is only eighteen years of age? I have just been reminded that a man cannot even be married until he is twenty-one years of age without the consent of his guardian. Why are all these restrictions imposed upon young persons? Are those restrictions wrong? Should we do away with them all? Is the object of hon. members opposite to start with the Elections Act, instead of starting with the marriage law or something else? The reason for the introduction of this measure is—I have come to this conclusion reluctantly—because the Government feel that their power is waning.

Mr. SMITH: You would like to believe that.

Mr. SIZER: I would not like to believe it; I do believe it. The Government think they will gain some extra voting strength at the elections if they are able to reduce the voting age to eighteen years. They believe that they will be able to play upon the sympathies of the young people by pointing out to them that if they will only return a Labour man they will be able to secure anything they want—that their wages will be increased, and that they will get more time for football and other things.

Mr. BRENNAN: What is wrong with football?

Mr. SIZER: Nothing at all. I simply say that such arguments will be used for the purpose of influencing votes. The Government power has been shaken most in the metropolitan area, and they hope to be able to gain some added strength by reducing the age at which people will be allowed to vote. For that reason I think the proposal should not be entertained by this Chamber. There are, possibly, some provisions in the Elections Act which need amendment. I do not think any person, no matter on which side of the House he sits, heard with anything but astonishment the answer which was given by the Minister to the hon. member for Oxley yesterday, in which it was stated that there are 40,000 more names on the electoral rolls than there are adults in the State. I admit that the hon. gentleman gave a reason for that.

Hon. J. LARCOMBE: A sound reason.

Mr. SIZER: I do not say it is a sound reason. It is a reason which needs to be analysed, but it shows that there is room for amendment in the provision with regard to the enrolment of electors.

(Sitting suspended from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.)

Mr. SIZER (continuing): I do not think any legislation should be introduced purely and simply for the purpose of keeping a Government in power. I do not see why they should be allowed to gerrymander with the electoral laws. The question of the eighteen-year-old vote is not one which can be seriously entertained by any common-sense Legislature of the present day. There

are other clauses in this Bill which make me think it is for the purpose of assisting the Government. One is in connection with annual courts, which seem to have been altered to suit one class of workers who come to this State annually. One point which should be dealt with was the cleansing of the rolls.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A very important point. The card system is in operation now.

Mr. SIZER: That does not alter the fact that at the present moment it is possible for a man to be on two rolls, and you cannot remove him unless you can prove he is out of the State. That is not the proper thing. It may be that a person is known to have shifted from one place to another, and it can be proved beyond all shadow of doubt, but you cannot remove him from the roll unless he is out of the State.

Hon. J. LARCOMBE: It is a ground of objection if you can prove that a man is on another roll.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. gentleman knows very well that you have to prove, beyond his change of address, that he is out of the State. It is not right that one should have to comply with such a harsh rule. While that remains we never will have clean rolls.

Hon. J. LARCOMBE: He cannot remain on two rolls.

Mr. VOWLES: Under different names. That is done frequently.

Mr. LARCOMBE: He can be on a dozen on that argument.

Mr. SIZER: A person has to go to a lot of trouble to secure all the evidence that an elector is out of the State, although he may know perfectly well he is out of the State. It is a deplorable thing that we have 40,000 more names on our rolls than we have adults in the State. I am hopeful that the Minister will either withdraw this Bill or go on with the Bill, and immediately follow it with another Bill to bring into operation that scheme which will give us an effective electoral system favoured by the majority of the democratic thought of Queensland, and favoured by the Minister himself.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I desire to have a few words in connection with this Bill. The hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat said that he was not prepared to give votes to persons of eighteen years of age. At the same time he said he was quite prepared to give votes to soldiers over the age of eighteen years. In other words, the hon. gentleman is prepared to place the military over and above the civil. I, at all times, stand for the civil and not for the military (Hear, hear!) I do not wish to see, either, this State or this Commonwealth dominated by militarism. If we are going to extend the franchise, what I want to see is that there shall be no distinction between the man who served at the front and the man who did not, because I claim—and claim rightly, in my opinion—that the man who did not leave the shores of Australia filled just as useful functions in connection with the life of this Commonwealth may be, as those who did go to the front. Everybody knows you could not carry on the war without somebody staying behind and producing the munitions of war and the necessaries of life—to carry on the production of the country. The hon. gentleman

said he would support anything which would propose to give the vote to those who had served at the front. The argument has been advanced that this Bill is going to give boys and girls the right to exercise the franchise. The hon. member for Nundah knows full well that under many of our arbitration awards, when a person reaches the age of eighteen years it is recognised that he has the full right to be paid at the rates of a man. If he is recognised as a man under the arbitration award, why should he or she not be recognised as a man or woman in exercising the franchise? I am one of those who, at all times, have recognised that age does not always count so far as wisdom goes. If I wanted to prove my case, all I would need to do would be to look at the Opposition sitting in this Chamber. (Laughter.) What they really want is some young blood in that party over there, but they are not likely ever to get with their conservative ideas. (Hear, hear!) I would not expect men who have been cradled in the lap of luxury, who have never had to struggle to enable them to live, to be full men at eighteen. The men who belong to the working class, who have had to toil from the time they were fourteen years of age—and many of them before they reached the age of fourteen—are well able to use their thinking faculties at eighteen years of age. (Hear, hear!) Considering that the bulk of the people belong to the working classes in all the countries of the world, what is wrong in giving the franchise to both men and women at eighteen? The "Brisbane Courier" referred to this vote as the "flapper vote." They ought to be ashamed of themselves. (Hear, hear!) Why do they not learn something about their own country? If they do not know something about it, I am going to tell them something about it to-night. Do they know that in 1917 the total number of marriages in this Commonwealth was 33,666, and nearly one-fifth of the total number, as far as the women folk was concerned, were below the age of twenty-one. Let me quote from Knibbs's latest official year book, page 181. He says—

"It will be seen that no less than 1,186 males, who were less than twenty-one years of age, were married during 1917. The corresponding number of females was 6,388, of whom six were widows."

In other words, you say to the women folk of this State, and the Commonwealth, "You are fit to be mothers and to carry on the race"—which we all desire should be carried on—"but you are not fit to exercise a vote in helping to make the conditions under which you live." Hon. members opposite, when the war was on, sat back with folded arms, and said to the young men of eighteen, "Go and fight our battles and defend our property; you are the youths of the nation. Go, do all that. You are not fit to exercise the franchise until you are twenty-one, but you are fit to fight at eighteen." (Hear, hear!) I am sorry to say there are many men under the soil of France to-day who were below the age of eighteen. They were fit to defend your property and fight for your King and country, but they were not fit to exercise the franchise, because they were not twenty-one.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: No one objects to their having it at eighteen.

*Mr. Collins.]*

Mr. COLLINS: I say they should have the franchise at eighteen. I have always believed in the youth of a nation, because it has been the youth of a nation that has brought about progress. (Hear, hear!) If hon. members opposite study Buckle's "History of Civilisation," they will find that the French Revolution—which has caused the progress of the nation—was carried out by young men. Do hon. members opposite know anything about St. Just, a young man who was executed at the age of twenty-four, and whose name will be among the immortals? Some of the men who are opposing the extension of the franchise to boys and girls will die and go down to the grave unknown.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: You say "your King and country."

Mr. COLLINS: I always put my country first, and I think every sensible man does that. (Hear, hear!) The country comes first—the King is well able to look after himself. He does not want me to look after him. (Laughter.) I do not go down on my knees at night and pray for him. Would hon. members say that young men have not accomplished much? Have they never heard tell of a young man named Chatterton, who is known as "the Bristol poet," who is amongst the immortals, and who will live as long as the English language lasts—as long as the English literature is on this planet? (Hear, hear!) Do they not know that he was seventeen years and ten months old when he died?

Mr. BAXLEY: That is an exception.

Mr. COLLINS: It is not an exception. I am going to quote some more to you before I sit down. He wrote a poem, the title of which is "A Prophecy on Political Satire," and I would strongly recommend the Opposition to study that poem, because it seems to suit them. I was in the upper library during the dinner hour, and saw two volumes of poems by John Ruskin, some of them written at seven, eight, nine, and ten, and up to twenty-one years of age. I am prepared to say that there are not many men in the Opposition who could produce poems such as Ruskin wrote. Yet he would be told that he would not be allowed to vote until he reached the age of twenty-one. Percy Bysshe Shelley, another man, was amongst the immortals so far as our literature goes. We all know he was expelled from the University at the age of seventeen, owing to his advanced ideas. We all know that he did splendid work, and he died and passed out at the age of thirty. Keats, another brilliant writer, wrote many things before he reached the age of twenty-one. He died at twenty-four, and yet he is amongst the immortals. Many men do not live; they only vegetate. (Hear, hear!)

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: They are vegetarians. (Laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: I question whether some men whom I have seen at seventy or eighty years of age have lived at all. A man should not be judged by the number of years he lives on this planet, but by what he accomplishes, or tries to accomplish. I know, from my own experience, that at eighteen I was quite fit to give a vote. I do not find that wisdom comes with age. Some men, the older they grow, the more conservative and stupid they become. (Laughter.) You have only to look at the Opposition. (Loud laughter.) That party has no chance until

they get younger men in the party. Many people come to the gallery and look down into the Chamber, and they say to me, "Your party, Mr. Collins, consist of young men," and I said, "Rightly so, too; they are the hope of the future for the world." (Hear, hear!) Hon. members opposite said they were the hope of the world in the war, but now, when we propose to extend the franchise to the age of eighteen, they are not fit and proper persons to exercise it. I was one who, when organising this State, always encouraged our youth, and some of them, owing to my efforts, are occupying very high positions in the Commonwealth to-day. It is to the youthful members of the community we have to look for progress of ideas. So far as inventive faculty goes, as a rule, a man does not invent after he is sixty or seventy years of age—he generally invents when he is young; he improves machinery of production when he is young—yet the party opposite would refuse to men like Edison, who, I have no doubt, did a good many things before he reached twenty-one—

Mr. G. P. BARNES: He is not vegetating now.

Mr. COLLINS: He is still progressing. I want to encourage youth. Then, again, we had William Pitt, the younger, occupying a very high position in Great Britain at a very early age, and I have no doubt he was fit to exercise a vote at eighteen. He might have been better able to exercise it than some people at eighty. If you are going to judge people by age, I am inclined to think that a young man of eighteen is better able to exercise the franchise than people at from ninety up to one hundred, yet no one proposes to disfranchise those people. When you grow old everyone knows that you gradually become conservative. I even feel myself, at times, that I am getting conservative—(loud laughter)—and I get alarmed to think that I am growing conservative. I try to keep pace with the times. I think it is to the youth of the country that we have to look for progress, and then we find them referred to—as the "Courier" did the other day—as "flappers." What do they really mean? I had to look it up in the dictionary to see what is really meant, as I never heard of the word before. Fancy referring to our young women as "flappers"! (Laughter.) It is an insult to their intelligence, and I hope they will take notice of that. Those "flappers," as they are called, are fit to be mothers. The law does not stop them from becoming mothers. The hon. member made reference to the law. Why does not he study "Knibbs." If he did that, he would be better informed, and he would know something about the country we are living in. He would know that the third greatest marriage age is below the age of twenty-one. Hon. members opposite talk about building up a great nation; that they want to increase the population. They should encourage early marriages, and then they will get the population. I take it that if we give the franchise to men and women of eighteen years of age, it will follow, as a matter of course, that other matters in connection with the law will have to be altered. I am one of those who has always believed that we should make it easy for a man to get on the roll, and make it very hard for him to be knocked off the roll. There is not a great number in my electorate who are not on the roll, judging by the figures at the last election, because I represent an intelligent

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electorate. (Hear, hear!) The more young men there are on the rolls, the better will it be for all progressive men. I hope that this Bill will not meet the fate in another Chamber that was meted out to a Bill which we passed here to extend the franchise to soldiers over eighteen years of age. I hope that this Bill will be passed through both Chambers. It does not worry me in the least what other countries of the world have done. I am not concerned with what they are doing. Just a short time ago we were discussing another Bill which may be in advance of what is being done in other countries of the world, but I am only concerned with what we are doing here. As I said on more than one occasion, we blaze the track. We have blazed the track in many directions, and let us keep on blazing the track which leads to progress.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GRAYSON (*Cunningham*): Since I have been a member of this House, I have always been in favour of a free and liberal franchise. One of the first measures I supported in Parliament was one providing for one adult one vote. It has been stated by hon. members opposite that no member on this side voted for the principle of one adult one vote.

Mr. WHITFORD: The leader of the Opposition did not.

Mr. GRAYSON: I do not know how the leader of the Opposition voted on that occasion, but I know how I voted. I have always been in favour of every male and every female at the age of twenty-one years being given the right to exercise the franchise. In a State like Queensland every opportunity should be given to enable people to exercise the franchise at election time, and no effort should be spared by the Government in the way of instructing returning officers in the country districts to see that every male and female is enrolled on the electoral rolls for Queensland. There is one clause that I would like to see inserted in the Bill, and that is a clause to compel people to exercise the contingent vote when there are more than two candidates. The contingent vote is not effective unless it is made compulsory, and I am surprised that the Minister in charge of this Bill did not introduce a clause of that nature. I have had an experience of an election where there were three candidates, and out of nearly 700 contingent voters only 400 exercised the contingent vote. Under those circumstances, we do not get a fair and true expression of the will of the people, and the only way to make the contingent vote effective is to make it compulsory. There is absolutely no reason for allowing children of the age of eighteen years to be enrolled on the rolls of the State and allowed to vote.

Hon. J. LARCOMBE: Why do you compel them at eighteen years of age to shoulder a rifle in defence of the country? That is in the Defence Act.

Mr. GRAYSON: There is no comparison whatever. The correct age at which a person should be allowed to exercise the franchise is twenty-one years.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Why? Give some reason.

Mr. GRAYSON: I do not think the lowering of the age to eighteen years will benefit the Ministerial party one iota.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Then why oppose it?

Mr. GRAYSON: I oppose it entirely on principle.

Mr. WHITFORD: You are opposed to anything democratic.

Mr. GRAYSON: I have supported more democratic measures than any man sitting in this House. I have always supported measures that would assist the working class in Queensland. I have been a worker all my lifetime, and my sympathies are entirely with that class. I listened very carefully to the speech delivered by the Minister who introduced this Bill, and I must say that he explained its provisions very thoroughly, but the hon. gentleman did not give any valid reason why the age limit should be reduced to eighteen years. We all know that children of eighteen years of age have not had time to study political economy. Indeed, they are often at school or college at that age. Right throughout the Commonwealth the age limit is fixed at twenty-one years, and I contend that twenty-one years is a fair and reasonable age at which any person should be allowed to exercise the franchise. The clause extending the polling hours up till 8 o'clock to bring that provision into line with the Commonwealth electoral law is certainly a good one. In the Cunningham electorate during the last election several electors thought the poll did not close until 8 o'clock and they were thereby disfranchised. I certainly approve of that provision, and I think the Commonwealth and State electoral laws should be assimilated as much as possible. I do not wish to take up much time on [7.30 p.m.] this Bill, but I simply wish to say that I hope before the Bill passes the Minister in charge will introduce a clause to make the contingent vote compulsory.

Mr. HARTLEY: You would like it, wouldn't you?

Mr. GRAYSON: I would like it.

Mr. WHITFORD: For the benefit of the National party.

Mr. GRAYSON: I do not see that it is in favour of one party more than another.

Mr. HARTLEY: Not a wealthy party like the National party, who could put up a dummy candidate?

Mr. GRAYSON: Hon. members sitting on the other side claim to be democratic, and yet they will not make it compulsory for every man to use this vote at election time.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The hon. member for Bowen from his remarks would seem to foreshadow his retirement from politics, on account of his becoming too conservative in his old age, and believes in the young man ruling; and I am very sorry he has come to that conclusion, because I, for one, shall always be delighted to listen to him, because although I differ very much from his train of thought, yet we are convinced of one thing—that he is sincere in what he says, and, therefore, he will always receive the appreciation of this side of the House. (Hear, hear!) I listened to the arguments advanced by the Minister for

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Agriculture in introducing this measure, and I have listened to the arguments which the hon. member for Bowen has advanced as to why the voting age should be reduced from twenty-one to eighteen. I purpose dealing with some of those arguments in the few moments at my disposal. In the first place, the argument is advanced that if we permit men to go and fight for us at the age of eighteen, then certainly the age for voting should be reduced to eighteen. I cannot follow that argument at all. I admit that if a man is called upon to shoulder a rifle and go and fight for his country across the seas, he is certainly entitled to vote for that country, but I cannot see by what reasoning that argument can be extended to show that a man who stayed at home should enjoy similar privileges.

Mr. WHITFORD: Suppose their mothers were dependent on them.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: If the means which were proposed by this side of the House, and supported by many hon. members opposite, had been adopted for conducting the great war through which we have passed, the only businesslike way of conducting it, there would have been no necessity for boys of eighteen to be called upon to shoulder a rifle. I would like also to say that the men who went to the other side at the age of eighteen have been broadened in mind, and that to such an extent that they are really much older than their years—a doctrine which has been acknowledged and admitted by the hon. member for Logan. Further, they are not eighteen at the present moment, and they will not be eighteen when the Act comes into force, if it ever does. They probably will be up to full mature age of twenty-one.

Another point the hon. member for Bowen has raised is that, seeing that boys of eighteen are admitted to enjoy the same wages as men of mature years under the Arbitration Court awards, they should be allowed similar privileges in regard to the franchise. In my opinion, that is trying to make two wrongs a right. I think that one of the great causes of discontent with the Arbitration Court is the fact that a man, perhaps of thirty years of age, with a wife and three children, is called upon to exist on the same wage as a boy of eighteen, and while that state of affairs exists, so long will we have discontent on the part of the man who is performing his natural functions, and has the responsibility of a wife and three children. I was glad to notice in the schedule of the Unemployed Workers Bill a differentiation between the man who has dependents and the man who has not; but that is a distinction which has not yet been acknowledged in the Arbitration Court. So that, in my opinion, the argument that, because a boy enjoys the same wage as a man of thirty with a wife and children, he should enjoy the same franchise, is an endeavour to prove that two wrongs make a right.

The hon. member for Bowen has also referred to early marriages. He has advanced statistics to show that there are many marriages of persons under the age of twenty-one years. I have yet to understand and appreciate that marriages effected at such young ages are an advantage to the country. In my opinion, marriages at immature ages are distinctly detrimental.

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The hon. member for Bowen has also advanced the argument that if a boy is working at fourteen years of age and upwards, he should be allowed to enjoy the franchise at a much earlier age. I think he would be on much safer ground if he argued that boys ought not to be called upon to work at fourteen, that the age of education should be carried to sixteen instead of fourteen, and that the immature years of the coming generations should be spent in education, and not in attempting to study problems which their powers of comprehension do not permit them to understand.

The hon. member for Bowen, in whose arguments I was very much interested, has also referred to there being many outstanding exceptions—examples in the world's history of young men who have been what you might call pillars of intelligence. There is no question that that is so, but this Bill is not meant to give votes to those exceptions. The Bill is meant to give votes to the masses, and I would ask the hon. member, if he wants to study the other side of the question, to walk down Queen street or the main streets of any of our cities at this hour or an hour or two later, and see what the youth of eighteen is doing in the streets, in order that he may ascertain whether he is fit to exercise the vote for the conduct of this country. Please understand that I am not attempting to belittle youth. I have a boy eighteen years of age, and I would certainly not endeavour to trust him or suggest trusting him with a vote in the country's affairs. I want him to spend his young years in education, in following some intellectual pursuits, rather than endeavouring to unravel the mysteries of politics such as are indulged in in this State at the present moment. Just imagine a boy of eighteen trying to understand the debates which take place in this House, and asking him to take the wheat from the chaff! It would be a problem that would take men four times the years of eighteen to understand, without asking a boy of so immature years to comprehend what is endeavoured to be done. I want to point out, too, that it seems extraordinary that you are going to put the responsibility of making the laws of this country upon boys of eighteen years, whereas, in the eyes of the law, he is irresponsible until he is three years older. It is an incongruous position; you are endeavouring to put the cart before the horse.

I want to ask hon. members opposite to carry their minds back to what has been the main cause of our industrial trouble during the last year or two. Those who studied the reports of the strike which took place in Charters Towers, when the Premier's policemen were held up by the railway men of the Minister for Railways, will know that it was stated that it was the youth of Charters Towers who were at the root of the trouble. Does it not show that it is the irresponsible who is the great cause of our industrial unrest to-day? Again, as I am reminded, who were those who were prosecuted for breaking into Rooney's and Shaw's shops at Townsville during that time? Were they not boys of immature years?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: My recollection is that it was so. Does it not show that boys of that age are irresponsible? Do not for

one moment think that I want to depreciate youth. I think that we should rely on the youth of our race more than on any other section for the advancement of this country, but do not throw responsibilities on the shoulders of youth before they are prepared to take it. Let them spend their tender and immature years in intellectual pursuits and in learning trades and professions before thrusting upon them matrimonial responsibilities and the responsibilities of the franchise.

Now, I would like to deal for a few moments with the question of the cleansing of the rolls, and it is regrettable that the Minister in charge of the Bill is not in the House, because it is a matter on which we might get some information. He very frankly gave me a reply to a question regarding the state of the rolls in Queensland. He gave us figures which at first sight are somewhat startling. There were something like 50,000 names on the rolls at the last election in excess of the adult population of Queensland. I do not take alarm at those figures on studying them, because I think that 40,000 of them were reasonably accounted for as he accounted for them—that is, if we make due allowance for the fact that there were probably that number of our men across the seas. Therefore, it makes the disparity appear very much worse than it actually is, and reduces the number to 10,000, but even that disparity is sufficiently serious. If there were 10,000 names on the rolls at the last election in excess of the adult population, that is a very serious matter. I took the trouble to-day to go very carefully into this question, and I had the opportunity for a conversation with our Principal Electoral Officer. I was very satisfied indeed with that conversation. He showed me that the system he has introduced is going to help in the purification of the rolls.

Mr. WHITFORD: Did you square him?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: No. I did not square him. I find that when one goes frankly and openly to a Government officer and asks for information that he is entitled to get, he usually receives that information. In that conversation I found out one or two things to which I purpose calling the attention of the House. As far as I understood the officer, there are only 2,000 names on the rolls in Queensland to-day in excess of the adult population. He informed me that this is accountable for by the fact that there are a certain number of duplications which the officers cannot trace, but which he hopes to be able to trace at no distant date. The system of records was explained to me, and a weakness was apparent in that when you turned up the name of "John Smith" you would probably find some hundreds of cards bearing that name. How is it possible for the electoral registrar to find out the John Smith who is the particular elector? The address of the elector is given, and that permits of the names being dissected to a certain extent. Under the old system the card also asked for the age of the elector. I understand that now that information is not insisted upon. I should like to know why, because it assists the electoral officer in dissecting the names. I submit to the Minister that he should consider that point, because I think all of us will admit that on the purification of the rolls the satisfactory result of the elections largely depends. I should also like to suggest that

with a view to purifying the rolls the registrars of marriages should be required to notify the Principal Electoral Officer of all the marriages which take place in the several electorates. It will then be a simple thing to remove from the rolls the names of all those single women whose marriages have been registered. I think hon. members will admit that if it was incumbent upon the Registrar to notify the Principal Electoral Officer of the name of each woman who enters the matrimonial state on a certain date, and relinquishes her maiden name and takes another, that would materially assist the officers to keep the rolls clean.

I am now going to touch on the much-vexed question of the removal of names from the roll. The Commonwealth system is that if a man leaves his place of abode, his name is immediately struck off the roll, and it is incumbent upon that man to seek re-entry upon the roll at the first opportunity. If he does not seek re-entry, he is liable to prosecution, and such prosecutions are carried out, the object being that when an elector leaves a particular electoral district he should be compelled to get his name inserted on another roll as soon as possible. This assists the electoral officers to keep the rolls clean and pure. I cannot find that any exception has been taken to that system. The State system is different. There is no attempt made to remove a man's name from the roll if he changes his place of abode. Although the department have the power to prosecute a man who does not enrol for his proper district, yet they permit a man to remain on the electoral roll after he has removed from the district for which he is enrolled to another district. They persist in the attempt—I do not say purposely—to keep the rolls impure. If they adopted the system that is in vogue in the Commonwealth, that would assist them very materially in the purification of the rolls. The recent Australian Labour Conference at which the Premier and the Treasurer were present, passed a resolution, which I presume will mean another plank in the Labour party's platform, to the effect that the Commonwealth rolls should be the basis for all elections, State and Commonwealth. I think such an arrangement will be an advantage. Several rolls means a duplication of enrolment and a duplication of officers, and that should be avoided. I suggest to the Minister that he should keep this matter in mind. His own Premier and Treasurer have indicated that sooner or later the State rolls must be brought into line with the Commonwealth rolls, so as to remove the duplication which exists at the present moment.

Now, I will touch on a question which I think hon. members opposite must admit cries for immediate attention. They have always propounded the doctrine that one man should have one vote.

Hon. J. LARCOMBE: That is another Act altogether.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Well, I will make the suggestion that the earliest opportunity should be taken to rectify the position which exists to-day. We have all come to the one conclusion—whether we are old conservatives such as the hon. member for Bowen described members on this side of the House, or the young blood which is in evidence opposite, though some are getting grey-headed we have all come to

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the conclusion that we must accept the one-man-one-vote principle. If that principle is carried out to its logical conclusion, it means that each vote should have equal power in this House. What is the use of a one-man-one-vote principle unless that vote helps to put into this Chamber equal representation to make laws for the people? If that is admitted to be a fair deduction, as I think it must be, see how the whole thing is nullified by the fact that a gentleman occupying a front seat opposite represents 1,800 electors, while one gentleman on the front bench on the Opposition side of the House represents some 12,000 electors. It means that the hon. member for Chillagoe carries six votes to one by the hon. member for Bulimba.

Hon. J. LARCOMBE: That is only a temporary circumstance.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It is not so temporary as the hon. member opposite would make us think. He has had the machinery in his power to alter this at any moment. There is no need to pass any amending law; he can rectify it as soon as he has a mind to. When I say that, of course, I refer to the office-bearer. I do not refer to him personally, because he has not had an opportunity of showing what his intentions are in this regard. But I do submit it is humbug and hypocrisy to talk about "one man one vote" when we have exemplifications of one man exercising six votes as against the other man's one. Surely the Government can set about removing this anomaly which is creating so much discontent! Let them remove from their mind, if they possibly can, the suggestion that the Opposition is going to get some advantage or disadvantage from it. Let them look at it from a fair point of view, and ask themselves whether a voter in Chillagoe should have six votes, to one vote by the man in Bulimba. It is not fair, and it is not just. Let members opposite who stand for the democratic rights of the people, for the "one-man-one-vote" principle, show by their actions that they mean what they say, and redistribute these seats on the lines I suggest. I do not purpose taking up the time of the House much further.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I have something else to do—that is the only reason. Otherwise I would go my full time. I think the Minister who is in charge of this Bill, when he introduced it, spoilt his case from the inception, because he started out with an apology. He said although it was proposed to give these boys and girls at eighteen a vote, they probably would not exercise it until they were twenty-one—undermining the very principle they have attempted to establish as being the reason why they are bringing this Bill in. I can only read into it that inevitable writing on the wall, which is causing three, four, or five hon. gentlemen opposite to find new places in which to rest their weary heads. I can see that they recognise in the younger generation, in eighteen-year-olds—those who attach more importance to the question of shorter hours and greater wages than they do to the problems which older men are fit and have sufficient experience to tackle—I can only see that they look upon that younger and more inexperienced class of voters to give them that new lease of life which they know the more

experienced and intelligent mass of the population are not prepared to give at the present moment.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): It is very interesting to hear the discussion by members of the Opposition. I would like to know how it came about that the age of twenty-one should be a fixed age whereby a person's intellectual capacity should be such as to enable him to exercise the franchise. After all is said and done, it is purely a legal fiction, brought about by the old barons—not the beef barons—of England; men who fixed the age for those they wished to have a vote. It was not twenty-one years of age, it was at the expiration of the twenty-first year. That is to say, nobody had a vote until he was really twenty-two years of age. That was the early fiction, which later became confined to the twenty-first birthday. There is no reason why that should not be reduced. A number of the States in America confer the franchise at eighteen years of age. I do not see why this party should not follow such a line in treating the coming brains of the State of Queensland. We find in all children's legislation that the child is protected up to the age of seventeen years. The Orphanages Act of 1879, the Industrial and Reformatory Schools Acts, 1865 to 1906, the Guardianship and Custody of Infants Act of 1891, Children's Protection Act, 1896, the Juvenile Smoking Suppression Act of 1905, and the Firearms Act of 1905 all protect the child up to fourteen years of age. In some cases they have a special penalty up to the age of seventeen, thereby inferring that at seventeen the child is well able to look after itself. We know very well that the parents' right to take a child after fifteen or sixteen years of age is in the discretion of the child's feelings regarding the parent. Judges will not even interfere with the child's wishes in that respect. They say when the child is over fifteen years of age it should decide for itself which parent it is going to follow. That principle is only brought about by the fact that judges recognise that the child is able to exercise a discretion at that age as to its own future welfare. Furthermore, we find that scholarships and junior and senior examinations for the University go to show that up to the age of eighteen he is a child, and at that age he is a child no longer. They finish their education about the age of eighteen. Having to pass such a stiff and severe examination as the senior examination for the University, should be sufficient that the child will be able to exercise an intelligent vote. The same argument was used when it came to the adult franchise, that females should not have a vote. We find the same argument prevailing at the time of the Married Women's Property Act. It was contended that married women would not know what to do with their property. The whole of the laws are based on that one claim, that up to a certain time, and with certain individuals, the whole decision is to be left to them entirely. I think the Minister is doing right to make it incumbent on the child to appreciate responsibility as early as possible, not at the age of twenty-one, but at the age of eighteen. A child can take up land at the age of eighteen; he is not a child, but a man. At the age of eighteen a person will be called an adult after this Bill becomes an Act. I think the age at which a child should have the right to think for himself should be eighteen. They should

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be entitled to make a will at that age. We know the child is going to be encouraged by having the franchise, and we will get the best out of him in his earlier years. I trust the Bill will be passed.

Mr. JAMES (*Logan*): I rise to support the second reading of this Bill, perhaps not with as much enthusiasm as I would the second reading of a Bill to further eradicate prickly-pear or other matters like that—because I consider Bills of this sort, while trying to arrive at a true principle, create really no great difference in the affairs of the State as the result of their passing. I do not think there will be a very great difference in the state of parties in this House as the result of the passing of this Bill to reduce the voting age from twenty-one years to eighteen years, because, as far as I can see, in all the previous extensions of the franchise we have had, such as in giving a vote to women—extensions other than those on a class basis—there has been no change at all in parties. But, although not so enthusiastic in a practical way myself, I have been wondering somewhat at the very narrow-minded, and, I might say, bigoted outlook on the part of some members of the Opposition who seem to think that there is some vital principle at stake, that we are getting at them in some way or taking up a wrong stand in demanding a vote for people of eighteen years of age. There must be a limit somewhere—whether slightly higher or lower matters very little—

but the attitude of the Opposition [8 p.m.] is so extraordinary that it seems to me it is simply the Conservative spirit which prevents them from giving anything away at any time in any shape or form. I think that is the basis on which the Opposition stand, the attitude they take on all matters. There is one argument against the passing of the second reading of this Bill which I may state here—it is not so much against the principle as it may be considered a practical obstacle—that is, that it might in some way interfere with the co-ordination of the State and Commonwealth electoral rolls by having a different age at which people have the right to vote. I think that one of our greatest problems at the present time is the recasting of our State and Federal Constitutions, because we find that almost every measure brought before the House is both a State and Federal matter, and it is hard to say where the State ends and the Federal begins. For instance, in the scheme of unemployment insurance, our State insurance office, banking, land taxation, income taxation, and arbitration, and most problems with which we are faced, there is a conflict between the State and Federal authorities, and the co-ordination of the Constitution of the Commonwealth and the State must become one of the most vital questions, and anything that will go towards preventing the accomplishment of that must be a drawback to some extent. As far as I can see it will be impossible to have a common State and Federal roll, if the people entitled to vote in State elections are not so entitled in the case of the Commonwealth. That is an objection, but it is not an objection to principle, because, taking it from the theoretical standpoint, the method of procedure is not to leave the age as at present on the State rolls, but to fix our age limit at a proper standard, and then ask the Federal Government to conform to it. Although it might be considered a practical

objection, yet, as a matter of pure theory, in fixing the age to vote at a proper limit, we are merely setting a lead to the other States and the Federal authorities.

I was rather interested when the hon. member for Nundah referred to the capacity of people to give a well-reasoned and mature vote. I do not know when the age of maturity is reached. I do not think that any biologist has yet fixed that period.

Mr. MORGAN: You do not grow after you are twenty-one. (Laughter.)

Mr. JAMES: We do grow after twenty-one. I am far heavier to-day than I was eleven years ago, but, if there is any difference I would say that old age is rather inferior to youth in that capacity for analysis which should be conducive to right voting; otherwise, why should we find that in the Upper House, where some of our older politicians are aggregated, they always vote against the interests of the people?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MORGAN: They have only got wisdom at that age.

Mr. JAMES: But it is not so much a matter of wisdom, after all. It is not the wisdom of the man at eighteen as opposed to the man of seventy, but the interests of the man of eighteen as opposed to those of the man of seventy, which is the basis of the thing. It is the matter of interest on which we vote. These parties are not elected according to age. We do not find all the old people in the State voting for the opposite party, and all the young people voting for this party, but we do find that all the big business men and capitalists vote for the opposite party, that certain farming interests vote for another section, and that certain industrialists vote for this party. There is nothing to quarrel about in that; but it establishes the principle that Parliaments are elected, not according to the wisdom, but according to the interests of the people who vote. We have had it firmly established that as far as earning a living and many of the most important functions of life are concerned, the age of eighteen is an age of maturity. As to the legal disabilities of persons under twenty-one years of age, I can simply say that the old adage fits the law very well—that the law is blind. No doubt, the fixing of the age to vote at eighteen will be the forerunner of the age of maturity in law being fixed at eighteen. In the electorate of the hon. member for Murilla, I know a selector who was not much over eighteen. The hon. member, by opposing the second reading of this Bill, which amends section 9 of the Elections Act, wishes to prevent that selector from having a say as to what shall be done to him by law in regard to his selection.

Mr. MORGAN: Why not make the age sixteen, because there are selectors sixteen years of age in my electorate?

Mr. JAMES: I think I said a little while ago that I was not particular to a year or two one way or the other. (Opposition laughter.) I approve of the argument of the hon. member for Oxley that, instead of a young man of sixteen being forced to go out and battle with prickly-pear, he should be still going to school at that age. But we know that in many walks of life, the great majority of young men, except those who are clever or fortunate enough to be able to attend the University, at the age of

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eighteen are branching out and earning their living, and fighting the battle of life. The voting of the people of the State does not take place on lines of clearance according to age, but according to interests, and we must maintain the principle that every interest in the State shall be represented to its full capacity. It makes very little difference to the principle that, as hon. members opposite know full well, men of a mature age have generally larger property interests than in early youth. They know that many young people of comparatively well-to-do parents are out earning their own living at the age of eighteen, and working for employers who have the right to dismiss them if they think fit, and voting according to their interests, but that later on in life they, too, if they have brains and initiative, may accumulate wealth, and vote differently. Hon. members opposite wish to keep disfranchised citizens whose interests are opposed to theirs, and whose votes they do not get.

Mr. WARREN: They were saying that a long while before you were born.

Mr. JAMES: That argument of the hon. member for Murrumba is one that returns to him with boomerang effect, because the hon. member for Oxley admitted that in the Workers' Compensation Act a certain principle, established by usage, was right, but he denied the same principle under the Unemployed Workers Bill because it was new. Hon. members opposite are those guilty of repeating the same old platitudes from one year's end to the other until the people weary of them, and they lose their seats in the transaction. I do not think anyone will say that a man of thirty, simply because of his age, can be said to be more entitled to a vote than when he was twenty. Often I have very grave doubts as to the capacity of the general elector—I am waiting for the Opposition to use this against me at the next elections—I have often doubts as to the capacity of the general elector to understand the complex problems that are placed before him at election time. I do not think that the average elector who has to earn his bread and butter by working from morning to night; I do not think the farmer who has to work on his farm from early morning till sundown—I do not think these men have time to properly study political problems. I do not think they have time to analyse the intricate problems of finance and constitutional questions that would tax the ingenuity of lawyers like the Premier and the leader of the Opposition. But we know that they cannot do so, but we know that they vote intelligently according to their interest. They vote for the man who is going to help them in their own business or their own job, and they will do that as long as we have conflicts of interests in the community. And while we have representatives elected according to those interests so will we have a constantly changing public opinion, and a constantly changing Parliament to meet the changing needs of the country.

Mr. D. RYAN (*Townsville*): I would like to say a few words on this amending Bill. I am sorry that the criticisms of hon. members have not been aimed at the amendments; they have mostly been aimed at the principle of the Bill. It is rather amusing to find that the criticism has been largely devoted to that particular amendment giving the franchise to Australian natives of eighteen years of age. It is rather amusing to find people who have been only a few

months in this country refusing to give Australian natives who have been eighteen years in this country the right to vote. These inferior immigrants and adventurers who have been here only a few months, in their eloquence, are denying a vote to the Australian native who has been here for eighteen years, and whose father and mother went out into the backblocks and pioneered the country. Hon. members opposite want to stop my sisters, my brothers, my sons, and my daughters who are eighteen from having a vote. The hon. member for Aubigny is quite willing to give a vote to the shepherd whom he employs, and who has been here for three months only, and yet he would deny a vote to his own son who has been reared in this country, and who has lived here for eighteen years. Is that a fair thing? It is the colonial fallacy that nothing produced in Australia is any good. I heard the hon. member for Oxley say, "Go down to the street corners and see what the youth of the country are doing."

Mr. MORGAN: What are they doing?

Mr. D. RYAN: I suppose they are enjoying themselves. And why should they not? In a free Australia why should they not be at the street corner or anywhere else. The hon. member did not say "Look at the old men. Look at those old rascals opposite." (Laughter.) "Look at those old fellows over twenty-one: those old rascals are enjoying themselves in the starlight, and in the moonlight. (Renewed laughter.) But he doesn't threaten to deprives them of their vote on that account. In Townsville the other day an old man seventy years of age, Jack Chapman, fell foul of the law. Because Jack Chapman dared to defy the law, as many better men have done, a savage judge, under a savage system, inflicted on that old man of seventy years of age the savage sentence of three years. That is what is occurring under our laws, and then hon. members opposite talk about giving responsibility to boys—giving responsibility to youngsters!

Mr. VOWLES: You would take away Jack Chapman's vote because he is seventy years of age.

Mr. D. RYAN: This old man was at one time an editor of a newspaper. He is a scholar and a gentleman, and because he broke the law for some reason or other, he was given a savage sentence of three years by a savage judge under a savage system, and then the hon. member for Dalby laughs.

Mr. MORGAN: Why don't you get him out again.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask that the hon. member be allowed to continue his speech without interruption.

Mr. D. RYAN: This thing occurred under a law made by old men, made by old society, and made by old custom. This amendment of the law seeks to give young people a chance of making younger laws, better laws, freer laws, quicker laws, and cleaner laws, and I hope it passes.

Mr. WHITFORD (*Burrum*): After hearing members of the Opposition on this Bill, one naturally must criticise what they say. I notice that they do not say anything of the old Elections Act. In the Consolidated Acts, 1885-1913, there were no less than sixteen ridiculous questions to answer by the claimant for enrolment. No. 4 asked—

"What was the date of your birth?"

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And that followed question No. 3—

“Are you of the full age of twenty-one years?”

Surely, that was answered by No. 4! Question No. 5 was—

“What was your place of birth?”

And further down we find question No. 10—

“Have you *bonâ fide* and continuously resided in Queensland for the last preceding twelve months?”

Twelve months' residence in Queensland before one could have a say in making the laws, and if he happened to be a returned soldier, he would find that where a suit of clothes cost him £5 5s. before he went away, it would cost him £12 12s. when he came back! (Laughter.) A man would have to be back twelve months before having a voice in the affairs of his country.

Mr. GRAYSON: Quite right.

Mr. WHITFORD: “Quite right,” says the hon. member—that a returned soldier should be back in Queensland twelve months before he has a vote! I am very glad that the hon. member interjected. The people of Queensland will know him in the future.

Mr. GRAYSON: I did not say anything of the kind.

Mr. WHITFORD: Question No. 11 was—

“If so, in what place or places?”

That is to say, the nomadic worker, who has to travel from one place to another, has to say where he has been during the whole preceding twelve months. He might have to specify fourteen places. One would think that it was a defective cross-examining him on a criminal charge. Question No. 12 was—

“If you are not a native of Queensland, when did you arrive in this State?”

Mr. MORGAN: Anything wrong with that?

Mr. WHITFORD: There is a lot wrong with it. The Commonwealth law does not ask that. The Immigration Act does not require that. Why ask such ridiculous questions? If a man is an Australian, it does not matter what part of Australia he is in. If he has been twelve days in Queensland he is a taxpayer of the State in respect of everything he buys, eats, drinks, smokes, or wears. Question No. 13 asks—

“If you are not a native of Queensland, by what means did you arrive in this State?”

A man might have to stoop down and say that he came from New South Wales—he walked. I would, naturally, say, “Per boot.” If you came by steamer you had to state the name of the steamer. It is a wonder they did not ask you to give the number of the train. Anything to put an embargo on democracy! Why claim that you are going in for democratic laws, as hon. members opposite did, when you pass such laws as that? I fail to see anything democratic in the Act or in any other Bill discussed in this House up to that time.

Mr. MORGAN: You say that a man should be able to get on any roll he likes.

Mr. WHITFORD: I say nothing of the kind. Do not judge me by yourself. The hon. member would have Toowong Cemetery on the roll if he thought his seat was in doubt. Question No. 14 was as follows:—

“Have you *bonâ fide* and continuously resided in this electoral district for the past preceding two months?”

In connection with that, I would like to mention what happened in 1915. A man of

the name of Frank Bagley worked in the Isis Central Mill for ten months in 1913, and then left in February, 1914, on a holiday, which consisted of working as a fireman on the coastal boats of Australia. He came back in the following July from Brisbane, in order to be in time for the crushing in 1914, and under this most beautiful Act, for which members of the Opposition are responsible, he claimed to be on the roll, and vote for the 1915 election. He was asked to put his name on the roll by one of our organisers. I do not mind telling hon. members that, because it is the duty of every man in Queensland to be an organiser—I have always been one, and intend to be one. This man was seven weeks and three days in that particular district, and a policeman was sent to ask him if he had made a false claim. He made a statement to the police. He told the truth, and gave exactly the date on which he arrived at the Isis Central Mill to follow his ordinary vocation. About two or three days afterwards he was arrested for making a false declaration, and had £120 bail put on him, and he was in gaol for a week before we could get him out. Then hon. members opposite say they are democratic! There was another man at Childers named Doyle, who was charged before the late Judge Rutledge, and got eighteen months' gaol, but obtained the benefit of section 656 of the Code. I happened to be in the district and to be connected with the case, because I knew something about it, and took a keen interest in the matter.

Mr. MORGAN: Were you the organiser who got his name on the roll?

Mr. WHITFORD: I'm not the organiser that you are. I am not an underground engineer like you are. I am telling the honest truth, and hon. members do not like it. I do not know that it is any use to them. The hon. member smiles, but it is at the back of his head. (Laughter.) I am one of those who believe that a person of eighteen years of age is quite capable of exercising a voice in this country. Hon. members would argue—and it is not so far distant when they did argue—that lads should go to the war at the age of eighteen. If a man is prepared or able to fight for his country at eighteen, he at least should have a voice in the affairs of his country.

Mr. MORGAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. WHITFORD: Why do you not practise what you preach?

Mr. MORGAN: We do.

Mr. WHITFORD: You do—I don't think!

Mr. MORGAN: You will have a chance of voting for an amendment in that direction.

Mr. WHITFORD: It does not follow that a man who went to the war is the only one entitled to vote. There are any number of lads who have fathered the homes of their widowed mothers at eighteen years of age; I know such lads in my district to-day. Do you think that they were justified in going to the war? Were they not under an obligation to look after their parents and younger brothers and sisters? The hon. member for Oxley said he had a son at eighteen years of age. I do not know that he is any older than I am. I think he is a good deal older in years but not in brains. (Laughter.) But, at any rate, he showed he had not much respect for his son when he said that he was not entitled to a vote.

Mr. MORGAN: That is not so.

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Mr. WHITFORD: He does not believe in the boy or man of eighteen years having a vote. He has not much respect for his own son. I have a daughter who is twenty-two years of age.

Mr. MORGAN: Well, she will have a vote.

Mr. WHITFORD: She has had a vote, and don't forget that; and my son will have a vote at the next election. I consider that the hon. member for Oxley was wrong in stating that persons should not have a vote at the age of eighteen years. Personally, I should like to see the elector's [8.30 p.m.] right system in operation in Queensland, as it was in New South Wales. The first vote I had was a vote on the elector's right system, and I claim that if that system were brought into existence in Queensland, it would be a very good thing for the State, because every time an elector votes a stamp would be put upon his elector's right, and there could be no duplicate voting. Members opposite have talked about the duplicate votes, but I have never seen that in my electorate. There may have been duplicate votes in other electorates, but I have never seen any in my electorate, and I do not think there is anything in that argument. There may be two "John Smiths" or "Tom Jones" on the roll with different numbers. Those persons do not know whether their number is 925 or 926, and they might take either number.

Mr. MORGAN: Do you believe in the elector's right?

Mr. WHITFORD: Personally, I believe in the elector's right, but I do not believe in the right being abused, as it was in New South Wales. But I certainly believe in the principle. The hon. member for Oxley stated that boys of eighteen years of age and under committed breaches of the law at Townsville by raiding a place called "Rooney's." I heard the hon. member for Townsville state that an old man named Chapman, who was seventy years of age, got three years' imprisonment for that offence. That proves that it was not boys of eighteen years of age who were responsible for the raiding of Rooney's at Townsville.

The present Elections Act provides that eight questions may be put to electors, and it says that six months' residence in the Commonwealth of Australia and three months' residence in Queensland will qualify a person for enrolment. If that is not fair and democratic, I do not know what is. This Bill proposes to amend that Act by providing that persons of the age of eighteen years shall have the right to vote. I believe that the average working man in Queensland is the man with a large family, and the man who is the biggest taxpayer, particularly when the profiteers who support hon. members opposite raise the prices of the necessities of life. Those profiteers are now urging members opposite to fight this Bill for all they are worth. You have only to read the articles which appear in the "Courier" and "Daily Mail" to see that such is the case. The hon. member for Cunningham said he would like the Minister to make the use of the contingent vote compulsory. At the last Federal by-election at Corangamite, in Victoria, on the 14th December last year, Scullen, the Labour candidate, received 9,773 votes, Knox, the Tory candidate, received 5,430 votes, Gibson, a dummy for the Tories, received 6,135 votes;

Coldham, another dummy, received 1,112 votes; and Leaper, 845 votes. Those were the primary votes as counted after the ballot was closed. When the contingent vote was counted, the Tory dummy candidate, Gibson, got in by a majority of 3,640 votes. That is exactly the kind of thing the Federal Government are trying to bring about to-day.

Mr. MORGAN: What do your figures prove?

Mr. WHITFORD: That the party who are prepared to put up three candidates against one Labour man think they will score by making the exercise of the contingent vote compulsory. I am not in favour of such crooked business, and that is what the contingent vote means. In past days, when the postal system was in vogue, people went 10 yards away from a polling-booth and compelled an elector to vote, otherwise they would get the sack from the mines. That was done by the supporters of the hon. member for Burrum. If the Opposition had their way, they would still have the postal system of voting allowed. I shall support the Bill in all its stages for all I am worth.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. TAYLOR: Most of the arguments in connection with this Bill have evidently centred around the proposal to reduce the age of voters from twenty-one years to eighteen years. Some of the arguments brought forward are fairly ingenious, but a good many of them have no bearing on the subject under discussion. As far as the youths are concerned, I take it every man in this Chamber has great admiration for both the boys and girls; if he has not he should not be here. We admire youth, and we like to see youth progressing and prospering and coming to the front as much as possible; but I do not think it is a fair thing to put upon a youth eighteen years of age the responsibilities associated with political life in this State. The hon. member for Bowen brought under our notice a galaxy of wonderful men to whom posterity and the people of our own day are indebted for the work which they did. I would like to draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that nearly every man whom he quoted to-night died a young man. The nerve strain and the brain strain on those particular men he brought before our notice, in almost every case, sent them to an early grave. If that shows anything it shows quite clearly that these men were extraordinary geniuses in their generation. But that does not prove that it is a right and proper thing that the franchise should be extended holus-bolus to those who are eighteen years of age. Those people whom he mentioned, no doubt, were quite fit to exercise the franchise in this or any other country, but they were only a few, and, unfortunately, for the times in which they lived, they all died at a very early age. I think it is just as well that our boys should remain boys and our girls should remain girls until, at all events, they reach the age of twenty-one.

Mr. COLLINS: Are you opposed to early marriages?

Mr. TAYLOR: I am. I am opposed to marriages at eighteen. I believe if the hon. member had a daughter who was proposing to get married at the age of eighteen he would not look with a very favourable eye on it. I take it, with any family man whose children have grown up to the age of eighteen, nineteen, or twenty years, if he

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had his way his daughter or his son would not enter into matrimony at the age of eighteen, nineteen, or twenty. That is my honest conviction, and I speak as one who has sons and a daughter of his own grown up to the age of eighteen and over.

Mr. COLLINS: One-fifth of all the marriages in Australia take place under the age of twenty-one.

Mr. TAYLOR: Because a certain number of marriages have been contracted at that age, it does not say it is the right and correct thing to do. Because a girl enters into matrimony at eighteen or nineteen, and happens to become a mother at such an age, does not justify this extension of the franchise. The matter has been brought forward in this Chamber that under our Land Act young fellows are entitled to take up land at sixteen years of age. Most young men and young women have to choose their avocation in life about that time, but it does not necessarily follow that they should be saddled with the whole responsibility associated with politics. I say, keep the young people out of politics, at all events, until they reach the age of twenty-one. Any boy or girl reaching the age of twenty-one can get married as soon as they like. I do not believe in late marriages. I believe if the young men and young women married, in many instances, earlier than they do, it would be better for them and better for the country. Unfortunately, a good many of them do not, but wait until later on in life, and, probably, in many instances, make very great mistakes. The question of the fighting age has been brought in. I said before, when speaking on this matter, that if I had my way no boy of eighteen would have gone. I am very sorry that any boys of eighteen did go to fight. But because a man is a good fighter it does not say he is suited for everything in life. Because a man may have particular strength of body, and because a boy of eighteen may be able to go and do a man's work, it does not follow that he has all the qualifications of citizenship at that age. I contend that you can educate a boy or girl up to the highest possible standard, probably at eighteen or nineteen years of age, but unless you have added to that education, experience, they are apt to fail—and fail lamentably—when they are asked to carry out certain responsibilities and duties in civil life. You cannot have experience and education at one and the same time, as a rule. It has been pointed out to-night that some of the men who went away to fight crammed into three or four years of their life there a lifetime's experience. There is no doubt they gained an enormous amount of experience in those three short years. That simply means that you put on to young years an experience which should probably have come with mature years, very likely extending over a period of twenty or thirty years. I think this particular clause in the Bill is setting the clock back. I quite agree with the hon. member for Logan in that I do not believe it will make an atom of difference so far as parties are concerned. That does not enter into my mind, because the same number will probably grow up with the same conviction to twenty-one years as they have at the present time. I do not intend to dwell any longer on that particular aspect of the subject. If hon. members on the other side of the House would only consider the question seriously from all

aspects, they would recognise that quite a number of the arguments which have been brought forward in support of this change do not carry any weight. It is a big and drastic change. As one member said this afternoon—I think it was the hon. member for Nundah—how is it that after all these long years we are only commencing to find out now that a boy and girl should have a vote at eighteen years of age? We are going to throw aside all the traditions and old customs which probably have safeguarded quite a number of our institutions. We are going to put them on the scrap-heap, and go in for what has been called, by some, advanced or progressive legislation. My own opinion of the matter is that, instead of being progressive or advanced, it is a step in a backward direction. I think it is a Bill we have a right to speak and vote against as much as we possibly can. With regard to the purification of the rolls, everyone admits that it is probably a very difficult matter. Surely, there must be something wrong in a system which will allow electors to remain on the roll for four or five years after they have left the State. I am quite prepared to give to the Minister in charge of this Bill the names of some in my own electorate who have been away from this State for four or five years and they are still on the roll. What does it mean? It means that if those persons from Western Australia visited Sydney, Melbourne, or Brisbane, at election time they could get a vote.

Hon. J. LARCOMBE: Why did not you have them objected to?

Mr. TAYLOR: I had no reason to object to them.

Hon. J. LARCOMBE: It is a ground for removing them if they have been outside the State.

Mr. TAYLOR: It may be a ground for removing them, but it is a pretty hard job to get them off. I know they are in Western Australia, and have been away for that length of time. I think greater responsibilities should be thrown upon the elector. I do not think everything should have to be carried out by the Electoral Office. Some very excellent suggestions, I thought, were made by the member for Oxley to-night—and probably they may be carried out—in connection with the Electoral Office. The first one that he made was in connection with the registration of deaths. I do not know whether the registration of deaths is communicated to the Electoral Office or not, but, if it is not, it ought to be.

Mr. McLACHLAN: That is laid down in the Act.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am glad to know it. Then, he referred to registration of marriages.

Mr. McLACHLAN: That is referred to in the same section of the Act.

Mr. TAYLOR: If that is so, I have nothing further to say with regard to it. We know that there is a constant change in an electorate during the three years which elapse between one election and another. People are constantly removing, or getting married, or dying. In order to cope with these things, much more responsibility should be thrown on to the elector than is the case at present. He should be made to do something more to assist the Electoral Office when he makes a transfer from one

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district to another. I hope that the Minister will do something in this direction. Our aim and object should be to have a correct roll, irrespective of parties, and, if a party goes down because it has not a majority, the will of the people must prevail. Under the Act, all those who do not vote are liable to be fined, but that provision has never been carried out by any Government. I am satisfied that any party which wins an election is not going to carry out that provision of the Act, and fine people who do not vote. I know that instructions were issued to returning officers that they were not to send out notices to people asking why they did not vote and requiring them to state their reasons. If that is going to continue, it will not assist the Electoral Office in keeping the rolls pure and clean. I think that if an elector were notified that, if he could not show good and sufficient reasons why he had not exercised the franchise he would be struck off the rolls, it would go a long way to purify our rolls. I hope that the Government will not insist on the eighteen years old vote. It is a change which will create chaos and trouble, and will not be in the best interests of Queensland.

At five minutes to 9 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Bertram) took the chair as Deputy Speaker.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I desire to say a few words on this important measure. I certainly do not agree with the age of voting being reduced to eighteen, not that I think that it will affect the result of the elections, but I think it is a pity to bring boys and girls into a matter of this description. It is a pity that they are not boys and girls longer than what they are.

There are many reforms which are necessary in connection with our electoral rolls. I do not think we are represented in a proper way, because, while some electorates are very large in area, some are very small, and there is any amount of room for the exercise of the brains of hon. gentlemen on the front Treasury benches to rectify the abuses which exist. I have heard no reasonable argument in favour of reducing the age limit. It appears to me that it is merely a matter of getting votes. Governments come and go, and this Government will go—"the handwriting is on the wall"—whether it is sooner or later. Hon. members opposite may joke about this matter, but history repeats itself, and, sooner or later, the Government will go, and, like a drowning man clutching at a straw, the Government are seeking new fields of exploitation. We are giving this vote in the same way as in the past it was given to women. Not that it was wrong to give the vote to women—it was a very right thing—but it was done in New South Wales for political purposes. I was in favour of it myself at the time. In this case it is done for a political purpose, and it will be a pity if it becomes law, and our boys and girls are brought into electoral conflict.

A great deal has been said about the boys that went to the war. If you went up to Victoria Barracks and looked through the attestation papers of the boys who went to the front, you would find very few of them who were of the age of eighteen. There are soldiers within my hearing who will know that that is so. I had a great deal of battling to do in connection with attestation papers at Enoggera, and in regard to

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those which passed through my hands there were not 5 per cent. of men below the age of eighteen. That was up to 1916. I allow that afterwards there was a larger percentage, but it was not a considerable percentage at any time. If we are going to reduce the voting age to eighteen, we might just as well say that because boys are able to take up land at sixteen the vote should be given to them at sixteen.

At three minutes to 9 o'clock p.m.,

Mr. GRAYSON: I beg to call attention to the state of the House.

Quorum formed.

Mr. WARREN: I was going to say that in view of the services rendered to the Empire, it is quite right to give the boys who went to the front a vote, irrespective of age, and there is not one member on this side who would refuse to give that vote. There has been a certain amount of abuse of the old Liberal party in regard to former electoral Acts. I say that our electoral Acts have been in process of constant evolution, and have been getting better and better; but I cannot say that we are getting any wiser when we attempt to reduce the voting age to eighteen. As I said before, it is just as proper to give the vote to those of sixteen years of age who are settled on the land. In this new country boys are going on the land at sixteen, but it is only the same as boys going into a trade. They

are going on to the farms to [9 p.m.] learn their trade; they are acquiring homes for the future, and nearly always with the assistance of their fathers. It is not right simply because these boys are taking up land to give them the franchise although many of them are battling under difficulties. As one hon. member said, they are battling with prickly-pear and other problems, but I do not think these boys are asking for the franchise. In fact, I go so far as to say that the boys and girls have not asked for the franchise. In times past we know that the women of New South Wales did ask for the franchise and they were only battling for their rights, but I have never heard of a meeting asking for the franchise for boys and girls, and I do not believe one boy or one girl is troubling about this. One hon. member on this side stated that the Minister, in introducing the Bill, said it might not be used. I thought we had compulsory voting. It is a mockery I know, because, as the previous speaker said, there are no prosecutions in that regard; and if there are no prosecutions there can be no compulsion. If we are going to have compulsory voting let us have compulsory voting, and if a boy of eighteen is fit to vote then compel him to vote. I say the boys of eighteen do not want the vote and it is a pity to bring them into political life at that age. They would be far better on the football field building up vigorous frames to enable them to fight the battles of life. For those reasons I do not agree with that amendment of the Act. But we do need electoral reform very much. We do need better conveniences in the country; and I will say for the late Assistant Minister for Justice that when any matter was brought before him in regard to polling-places he assisted in every way possible. I want to be absolutely fair to the hon. gentleman and I was very sorry to hear hon. members of the Government side make

the references in the manner they did to past Ministers who ran elections. No doubt at their time they did well, and if it had not been for the liberal manner in which elections were run in those days we would not have had the present Government in power to-day. It was the liberal manner in which things were handled in those days that made it possible for the present Ministry to occupy the Treasury benches to-day.

Mr. BUTLER (*Lockyer*): Of course, it has been said that this is the age of youth, and there is no doubt about that. A lot of the arguments raised by the Opposition concerning this question will not bear close investigation. It must be patent to members of the Opposition that a good many young men and women of eighteen are better qualified to settle political questions of the day than are their parents. They know as well as I know that that is the truth. An old man of seventy-five in the Lockyer electorate informed me that he was not going to vote for Mr. Armstrong at the last general elections, but that he was going to vote for Mr. Hughes. Of course, he had a vote. My point is that if some people lived to be 275 they would never be able to cast an intelligent vote on any subject. I recognise that it would be rather an extraordinary thing if we had a Cabinet composed of young men of eighteen, but I recognise that under this Bill such a thing is possible. I am sure that that would be an indication of progress. I am sure that members of the present Cabinet have no immediate hope of youths taking their places in the way I have indicated. A number of people have remarked that age does not indicate wisdom, and we know that that is true. A lot has been said about an intelligent vote; that by giving a vote to boys and girls of eighteen we are going to do away with the intelligent vote. I wonder if any member of this House seriously believes that hon. members on the other side or that we on this side are returned only on the intelligent vote of the electors.

Mr. WARREN: There is no doubt about that.

Mr. BUTLER: I am very pleased to know that some hon. members opposite, at any rate, believe that they are returned on an intelligent vote. I think it is probably true that the Opposition, the same as ourselves, are returned up to a certain extent on the intelligent vote, but I do not believe that 75 per cent. of the electors of Queensland, or of Australia, or of any part of the world, have a thorough knowledge of the questions upon which they vote at the ballot-box.

Mr. SIZER: That is a slander on the electors.

Mr. BUTLER: It may be a slander, but it is true, due very largely to our old system of education and entirely due to the social system under which we live. The emotion is a thing that operates most at election time and not intelligence—emotion and imagination. That is so, and I think the emotions and imaginations of those of eighteen are higher and better than the emotions and imaginations of those over that age. I do not think any great harm will be brought about by allowing young people of eighteen years of age the right to vote. I think the hon. member for Windsor used the old argument of "Why have we waited so long for this thing? Why is it that we have not

until this year discovered that young people of eighteen should be allowed to go to the ballot-box and vote?" He said, "Why throw aside old traditions?" He must know that we are living now in a quickly changing world. It took the race probably a longer period of time than our minds can conceive of to realise that we can look upwards and think. It took us centuries before we woke up to the fact that we had a right to ask for the vote. It took us centuries before we got any of the reforms that we have achieved. Although it is rather late in the day, probably, to amend the Act in the way indicated, I say that no great harm is going to be done.

I also think that the other clauses of the Bill that are going to extend the voting hour and make the Act more up to date are going to be good. We all know that after every election we find extraordinary things happening in regard to the rolls, and I am sure the Opposition recognise that the department and the present Government do intend to purify the rolls to the fullest possible extent. I therefore hope that the Bill will be carried.

Mr. BAYLEY (*Pittsworth*): The principal interest to-night has centred round the question of the age at which the franchise may be used. What is the object of the Government in introducing this amendment of the law? In the first place, I take it that they wish to please those who are boys and girls to-day—they are looking forward a few years. They are hoping to tickle the fancies of the young boys and girls who later on will exercise the franchise, and who will very likely vote Labour when they have the opportunity, as a result of the Government's action in this regard.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why should they vote Labour?

Mr. BAYLEY: Because they will be pleased—their vanity will be excited at the action of this Government in seeking to give them the power which has been kept from them by previous Governments. Then, no doubt, the Government are quite satisfied that the proposal will greatly improve their position at the next election. We can take that for granted, for the great majority of the votes cast by boys and girls—for they are only boys and girls, children of eighteen years of age—will be thoughtless votes. Boys and girls of eighteen do not, as a rule, follow out ideas to logical conclusions. In more than ninety cases out of a hundred they have set their hearts on having a good time, as children will do, and as children should do. I think that we should not impose heavy responsibilities on them in this regard, but the Government are afraid that they will require every assistance which they can possibly gain at the next election in order to enable them to continue in office, and so they are desirous of securing the thoughtless votes of boys and girls of eighteen and nineteen. As the hon. member for Windsor pointed out, no desire whatever has been expressed by boys and girls of eighteen and nineteen for the franchise.

Mr. FOLEY: You said that about the women who asked for a vote.

Mr. BAYLEY: The women showed in no uncertain way that they intended to have the vote. They fought, and fought heroically, for that right, and they have got it. But it is one thing to give a vote

*Mr. Bayley.]*

to a woman of intelligence and experience, perhaps the mother of a family, and it is quite another thing to give a vote to a boy or girl of eighteen. We know, of course, that large numbers of the boys and girls of eighteen are intelligent. They may have had splendid education, but at the same time they have not had the experience which alone will enable them to cast an intelligent vote. They have no idea of matters pertaining to politics. It has been stated by each member who has spoken on the Government benches that members on this side were anxious to send boys of eighteen years to fight for them overseas. That is absolutely uncalled for, and incorrect. No desire was expressed by this side, or anyone representing the National party throughout Queensland, to send them away to fight at eighteen years. We know that for many years past we have had on the statute-book a law which provides that boys of eighteen years of age may be called upon for home defence within Australia. I would ask which party introduced that Act? It was the Labour party, led by Mr. Fisher. So, we find that when members of the Government charge the Opposition with bringing about that state of affairs, they are barking up the wrong tree.

In one clause of the Bill we find that the contingent vote is touched upon in a certain way. I think it is a great pity indeed that the Government have not seen fit to provide for a compulsory contingent vote. The Government claim to be democratic. They say that they wish the will of the people to be expressed in the very best possible way, and yet they have made no provision whatever for the compulsory contingent vote. Unless we have a compulsory contingent vote, we cannot possibly expect a clear, a definite indication of the will of the people when there is a multiplicity of candidates in an electorate.

A good deal has been said about cleansing the rolls, and I think it is a pity the Government have not seen fit to take steps in this regard. At the present time it is very difficult to cleanse the rolls. I know that in my own electorate there are quite a number—and in some other electorates far greater numbers—of electors on the rolls who have not been resident in those electorates for many years past. Such a condition of things should not be allowed to continue. It is passing strange that the Government have not seen fit to amend the law so as to provide for the cleansing of the rolls.

Mr. FOLEY: What do you mean by cleansing them—cutting out all the Labour voters?

Mr. BAYLEY: I do not mean that at all, but I think it is highly desirable that the names of men and women who have not resided in an electorate for very many years should not be allowed to remain on the roll of that electorate. It is absolutely necessary that when a man definitely leaves an electorate his name should be removed from the roll, and he should be compelled to have his name placed on the roll for the electorate in which he actually resides. I trust the Government will see fit, in Committee, to make such an amendment as will go towards purifying the rolls. I hope they will see fit to bring in an amendment which will provide for a compulsory contingent vote, so that the will of the people may be ascertained in no uncertain way.

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Mr. G. P. BARNES: I have listened to some rather remarkable reasons why the vote should be extended to boys and girls of eighteen years of age. Perhaps the hon. member for Lockyer gave the most remarkable reason why the vote should be extended to those young persons, when he said that in many cases persons above twenty-one years of age who have voted at previous elections did not give an intelligent vote. Rarely has the House heard of so empty and so contradictory an argument. Surely, neither the hon. member for Lockyer nor any member who thinks with him is really ready to denounce pretty well 75 per cent. of the votes as being given through a want of intelligence. If I remember rightly, about 50 per cent. of the votes recorded at the last election were in favour of the party represented by the Government, and 47 per cent. odd in favour of the Opposition party. Are we to understand that about 75 per cent. of the votes so recorded for the Government were unintelligently given? I am not going to be so unkind as to imagine that the hon. member really meant that, but he certainly said it. But, be that as it may, I fail to see how it is possible that we are going to reach a higher standard of intelligence by giving the franchise to boys and girls of eighteen years of age. It has been claimed by many members on the Government side of the House that we are going to reach a higher state of perfection as the result of the proposed extension of the franchise. One reason given by the hon. member for Bowen in favour of this extension of the franchise was that many thousands of young women in the land had married and become mothers under twenty-one years of age. The hon. member asked if women who had assumed the responsibilities of wifehood were not entitled to a vote. It is a matter for debate whether the 9,000 young women he referred to have, after all, acted rightly, and whether, if they had to live their lives over again, they would repeat what they have done. In any case, I am not quite sure that we should encourage that kind of thing so early in life. As far as I am concerned, it seems to me a lamentable thing that persons should imagine that it would be a good thing for the State to allow persons who are irresponsible, to a large extent, to reflect their opinions by a vote given at the parliamentary elections. The fact is that there has been no cry outside for this change in the franchise. There has been no demand for it. At no meeting that I have ever attended has it been whispered that boys and girls of eighteen years of age should be given a vote, and certainly the boys and girls of the land have not given any indication that they desire to possess the privilege of the franchise. We are simply foisting upon them a thing they do not want, and forcing upon them a responsibility that they are not thoroughly fitted to discharge. We have heard of the exceptions graphically quoted and earnestly referred to by the hon. member for Bowen, in which men in early life did good work for their country. But there are not many Ruskins and Pitts. They are the exceptions, and if we are going to make a change in our electoral system in order to do justice to odd prodigies, such as have been named by the hon. member for Bowen, we shall make a mistake. My hon. friend, the member for Windsor, says that probably the

percentage of such exceptions is about two in one million or one hundred million, but, whatever the figures may be, I do not think such exceptions are worth considering. We have no right to cause disruption in our system of franchise in order to meet the cases of a few odd individuals. Can we seriously contemplate for one single moment the handing over of the management and control of the affairs of the country to the young life, the boys and girls, and seeing them occupying seats on these benches?

Hon. J. LARCOMBE: That point is not involved, because they will form only a small proportion of the voters.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: They will form a very fair percentage of the voters. We already have a fair sprinkling of youthful life in this Chamber, and I am not going to say that we are losing by it. Men who, like the Acting Minister for Justice, show talent and ability, ought to be encouraged to come into the House; but it would be a mistake to run the risk of having mere boys and girls who have just left school occupying high positions in the country. I should like to make a reference or two to the provision in the measure, which will enable visitors to the country to exercise the franchise. We have men coming here during the sugar season, and perhaps during the shearing season, from the Southern States. They remain here a few months to work, and then return to Tasmania, New South Wales, or Victoria, and are still entitled to vote. With regard to the provision which says—

“Subject to this Act, any person who, being enrolled for any electoral district, has permanently left Queensland, and has thereafter lived outside of Queensland for a continuous period of six months, shall not be entitled to vote.”

Anyone could drive a coach and four through that provision. A casual visitor to Queensland, who comes here in order to enjoy the high wages paid, may become a resident of the State for a time, and then return to the South; and it would be a very simple matter for him to vote at the next election, for provision will be made for voters in the South to record their vote, as was done at the last election. Residents of that kind are really not residents of Queensland. Their homes are in either Tasmania or some Southern city, and they are not entitled to a vote in Queensland. If they are entitled to a vote in Queensland, certainly

[9.30 p.m.] they are not entitled to a vote in New South Wales or Tasmania, as the case may be, and it should be for them to elect where they are domiciled. It is quite clear that the provision in those clauses is intended to meet cases of that kind, and to offer the widest encouragement and the greatest inducement for men to enjoy a vote which should not be theirs.

I think some of the anomalies which exist regarding the size of electorates might well be considered by the framers of this Bill. The Government, for some reason, best known to themselves, have not considered it their duty to do away with the strange anomalies that exist. It is unfair that one man's voice should be equal to six in the case of another. Had it suited the Government, had they been conscious of their duty, had they realised what they should have done, and what would have been right, they

would quickly have righted this matter. Whilst amending in one direction they could have amended in the others. There is no direction in which the Bill should have received more earnest consideration than in the direction of the redistribution of seats. I very distinctly oppose the main principles of the Bill, and I am hopeful that in Committee amendments which will be proposed from this side will be accepted.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): Some of the statements made by the Opposition certainly call for comment. Their attitude is that of all conservative bodies towards all measures of reform. If one were to analyse their speeches in this Chamber to-night and go to the library and read up the speeches delivered in the British House of Commons in 1831 against the Reform Bill, it would be seen that the arguments are almost identical. We are told by one member that we are going to extend the franchise to a lot of thoughtless people. As a member who has had the privilege of the training of a debating society, I am prepared to say, without fear of contradiction, that there are debating societies in Brisbane in which there are young men eighteen years of age, and I am prepared to get a team of three and back them against any three of the Opposition, before any judge.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Will you put money on it?

Mr. KIRWAN: Yes, I am prepared to put money on it. I am prepared to admit that you could pick three out of the Government side who might be beaten, too.

Mr. SIZER: Is the hon. member for Brisbane one of the three?

Mr. KIRWAN: Yes, I am prepared to admit that I may be beaten. I am not like members of the Opposition, I do not set myself up as having more intelligence than some of the youths of the country. Some of the young men I know have just as much intelligence to record a vote as hon. members of the Opposition. They talk about intelligence. I was in Adelaide at the last Federal elections, and went into the polling-booth at the Town Hall there, and saw the great commercial men of New South Wales, Victoria, and Western Australia, who were visiting that city. The hon. member for Merthyr was with me, and we saw the spectacle of not one of those men knowing who the candidates were for whom they had to vote. They did not know who the Senate candidates were for Western Australia. Yet nobody on the Opposition side would suggest they were not fit to have a vote. They did not know the difference between the Labour candidates and those representing their own particular party. The Opposition take up the attitude that a vote should be given for intelligence. I remember the time when it was proposed to extend the franchise in this and other States, and the attitude they took up was that you should not have a vote except you had a stake in the country. It did not matter how intelligent you were. That has been dropped overboard as far as this Bill is concerned, and they lodge the objection of intelligence. They argue that the average boy and girl in Queensland at eighteen years of age does not know sufficient of politics. I believe I am justified in making the statement that those young people would give as intelligent a vote as the great mass of the people.



Another point made by the Opposition is that this Bill does not provide for what they call "purifying the rolls." We know perfectly well their idea of purifying the rolls. It was only the other day I was reading in a back number of the "Brisbane Courier" an article entitled "Bulcocking the rolls." (Laughter.) Those of us who have been associated sufficiently long with political parties in this State know what that particular phrase stood for. We know that instructions were issued by the political party representing the views of hon. gentlemen sitting on the Opposition side, to electoral registrars, as to the method in which they should "purify and cleanse the rolls." The "Courier" of that date was evidently more keen on honest administration than perhaps it is to-day, with the result that it wrote that article.

The hon. member for Warwick declared there was no demand for the vote. He also said it would be passing a measure which would have the result of conferring a vote on to what he called "irresponsibles." He drew a picture of the possible results to this country if this measure were passed. This all goes to prove that the party with which the Opposition are allied, and the political views for which they stand, ever and always fear any progressive measure, particularly an extension of the franchise. Why should it be argued, in view of our public school system, that there is any more danger in extending the franchise to these boys and girls of eighteen years of age, than it was to extend it during the passage of the Reform Bill in England in 1832, or later when Gladstone introduced his great Reform Bill about forty years afterwards?

Mr. BAYLEY: Why not make it ten years?

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. gentleman can make it the *reductio ad absurdum*. I am not prepared to do that. We ought to use intelligence in discussing a measure of this kind, and not put up ridiculous aunt sallies and say, "Why not give a vote to ten years?" There is a possibility of getting a child of ten attending a State school to discuss politics as intelligently as some people who have a vote to-day. It is necessary for the hon. member to provide "How to vote" cards at every election so that those who are supporting him may know how to vote. It is necessary for every candidate to do it. Every candidate knows that even those who have the privilege of the franchise to-day expect a candidate who is soliciting their votes to be in the position of sending a motor-car for them, otherwise they will not vote. They look upon it as a personal matter. When you come to take the general standard of political education of the great mass of the people, I think that if you were to put those of eighteen years of age, when they obtain this franchise, in a special class by themselves, you would find their vote would be just as intelligently given as that of the great mass of the people. When it was proposed to extend adult franchise to the people, we were told the same as we are being told to-night by members of the Opposition. It was said that women did not understand politics; that it was not right to ask them to attend political booths and give a vote; that they knew little and cared less about political economy, and could not understand the interests which each particular party

{*Mr. Kirwan.*

stood for, and why, therefore, should they be given a vote? No member of the Opposition to-night would advocate that the franchise should be taken away from women, yet, when it is sought to extend it in this instance, the same old arguments which were trotted out against the franchise to women, and which were formerly used against manhood suffrage, are used against the extension of the franchise to a broader sphere than that which obtains in Queensland.

Mr. SIZER: You have heard the hon. member for Lockyer say that 75 per cent. of the people do not know what they are voting about.

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. member has not had a great deal of experience, but he has enough to know that there were quite a number of people who turned up at the last Nundah election who wanted to know who the Nationalist candidate was, notwithstanding that the hon. member had toured the electorate and the Press of Brisbane had freely advertised his political candidature.

Mr. SIZER: They did not make any mistake.

Mr. KIRWAN: But, as I pointed out, the hon. member had to keep an army of supporters at the different polling-booths to look after his interests. If he disagrees with my statement, let him test the matter next time, and not have anyone with cards to look after his interests at the next election, and then see if he gets in. The hon. member for Warwick, in common with other hon. members opposite, found fault with this Bill because it does not provide for a redistribution of seats. It is refreshing to know that hon. members opposite, when they are in opposition, advocate these particular principles. I have said in the House before, and I repeat it, that, if they sit in opposition for another ten years, they will become good, sterling democrats by advocating principles which, when they were on the Government benches, like the Liberal party in Victoria, they would not listen to. In Victoria to-day, under a Liberal Government—and the Liberal party have had control of the reins of Government from the establishment of representative government in that State—we find that in metropolitan electorates, represented by Labour men, the average number of electors on the roll is 35,000—as big as a Federal electorate in Queensland. In the country electorates, which are represented by Liberals, the average number on the roll runs from 5,000 to 7,000 voters.

Mr. SIZER: Give the averages in Queensland.

Mr. KIRWAN: I am quite prepared, when the opportunity is afforded in Committee, if the hon. member will produce the Queensland figures, to give the Victorian position, to show what the disparity is. I am satisfied that the system in operation in Victoria is far worse than anything in Queensland. The hon. member for Warwick, I think, will admit—because, generally speaking, he is prepared to be fair—that in Queensland, as a growing State, there is a greater possibility of the electorates increasing in strength than there perhaps is in a largely settled State like Victoria. We have seen considerable advancement around Brisbane for the last ten or fifteen years in

the suburban areas. Take the electoral district of Nundah, for instance. Ten years ago, from Northgate to Virginia, I do not suppose there were a dozen houses, but today there are streets of houses, and that only goes to illustrate my argument that in Queensland the suburban areas are becoming more thickly populated, and even the country electorates are increasing, because our State is large and affords plenty of avenues for population to settle down. It will be apparent to any hon. member that the necessity for a redistribution of seats in Queensland will more often grow and disparities arise in connection with the relative numbers in our electorates than in any of the other States. I think I am correct in stating that, after the redistribution of electorates in 1911, the 1912 election was the first to take place on the new basis. The Liberals in Victoria are not consumed with a burning desire, when they have the opportunity, to rectify the anomaly, as the hon. member for Warwick terms the voting strength of the different electorates. I think we may pass this particular measure, notwithstanding the opposition with which it has met. In fact, I have come to the conclusion that the more opposition any measure brought in by this side meets with, the more reason is there that this party should stick to it and see that it goes through. There is no necessity to be pig-headed. The fact is that the Bill contains some essential principles that are worth fighting for. The other day I was reading an article by Sir Samuel Griffith, the ex-Chief Justice of the Commonwealth, and he used some memorable words, which are as true to-day of the Opposition as they were of the Opposition which fought him when he brought in some well-known progressive measures at the time he was Premier of this State. He said that the average conservative is always in favour of doing something for the working men or the people generally until you bring in a measure embodying it, but as soon as the measure is brought in, the whole force of the Opposition displays itself in condemning the measure.

Mr. FOLEY: They are up against you.

Mr. KIRWAN: I hope this measure will go through. I, at any rate, do not expect to get a large percentage of the vote which hon. members opposite think will come to Labour members as the result of the passage of this Bill. It is possible, even with the extension of the franchise, for non-progressive parties to hold the reins of office. It was at one time thought in this State that, if it were possible to pass adult suffrage, it would be the end of parties holding the views of hon. members opposite, but we have discovered that it is still possible for a non-progressive party to sit on the Ministerial benches.

Mr. SIZER: This will be an attempt to rectify the anomaly?

Mr. KIRWAN: No, it is not an attempt. I am pointing out that every extension of the franchise has not brought about what was predicted by those who opposed it. The very people who opposed adult franchise, because they believed it would mean their doom, are still able to get on the Treasury benches, notwithstanding that we have got adult suffrage in the States of the Commonwealth. Quite a number of people believed that with the enfranchisement of 7,000,000 people in Britain as a result of

the Electoral Act passed there prior to the last election, the conservative element would have been wiped out as the controlling power in British politics, but, as a matter of fact, we find it more firmly entrenched than ever. The people who opposed that Bill believed that it would put on the Treasury benches the full strength of the Labour element; but, as a matter of fact, the powerful moneyed influence in Great Britain is more firmly entrenched on the Treasury benches than at any time in the history of Great Britain. Therefore, it is not to be predicted that with the passage of this Bill it will not be possible for the Opposition to get into power at the next elections. If such a thing should happen, I wonder how hon. members opposite would reconcile their predictions with the actual result. As far as the political parties are concerned, this measure will make very little or any difference, as was the case with the extension of the franchise to women. I trust that the Bill will be passed, and that Queensland will show that it is out to attempt things which evidently some of the older countries of the world are afraid to touch. Let us not be deterred by the Jeremiah cries of hon. gentlemen who represent the particular views held by those who now sit on the Opposition benches in this House.

At ten minutes to 10 o'clock p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not know that the hon. member for Brisbane has been very convincing in the speech which he has just delivered. The sum total of that speech seems to be that if this franchise is granted it will not make very much difference, and, therefore, we ought to offer no objection to it. I think a Bill that requires the support of reasoning of that sort, cannot be a very substantial one. It is usual that a great reform movement such as this should be submitted to the people; that it should be the subject-matter of discussion on the platform before the Government undertakes to translate it into statutory law. I am not aware that the subject-matter of giving infants a vote has been before the people.

Hon. J. LARCOMBE: It is a plank of the platform.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It may be a plank of the platform now, but unless it is put before the people in the policy speech of the Premier, it cannot be regarded that the Government has a mandate from the people to translate it into legislative action. A lot of things may be in the platform, but until they are put before the people and discussed before the electors they are not ordinarily made the subject-matter of a Bill before Parliament. If the hon. member will suggest that this Bill is part of the Barcaldine policy or part of the Townsville policy put before the people and discussed on the platform, then I could understand his argument.

Hon. J. LARCOMBE: It is in the platform.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman will have some difficulty in making this House believe that this matter was placed before the country, and that the Government got a mandate from the country to embody it in an Act of Parliament. It may be quite true that our electoral laws may be worthy of the consideration of this House from many points of view, such as the subject of proportional representation, which would

*Mr. Macartney.]*

give the people an opportunity of having the varied interests of the State represented in this House, or a policy of compulsory preferential voting, which would perhaps also enlarge the choice of the people. I may say that as far as I am concerned, that the party on this side of the House would not offer any objection to such a proposal, and are quite prepared to discuss the subject with the Government with a view to adopting either principle. Another matter which calls for the attention of hon. members of this House is the matter which has already been mentioned to-night by the hon. member for Brisbane; that is the question of one vote one value, or a redistribution of seats. The hon. member for Brisbane said we had a redistribution here in 1911. I think the redistribution took place somewhere about 1910. Many changes have taken place in Queensland since then. The hon. member pointed out that Queensland is a place subject to quick changes owing to its vast areas and owing to settlement in different parts of the State, and I quite agree with him. Ten years have gone by, and vast changes have taken place. The electorate of Bulimba has been mentioned in contradistinction to the electorate of Chillagoe, but those are not the only two electorates in regard to which there is a very great divergency in point of numbers. Many other electorates have very many more electors than their proper quota, and there should have been a redistribution long since in the interests of Queensland and in the interests of this House. Therefore I say there is quite a number of electoral matters which might be put fairly and properly before this House without entering upon what must appeal to many people as something in the nature of a joke in conferring votes on the infant population of the State. There cannot be any particular reason for it. Many of the young people of eighteen are at school or other educational establishments. Many are starting in the very early days of their apprenticeship, and there can be no reason for conferring a vote on them. If we confer the vote on children, we might as well release all those laws which are for the protection of infants. As a matter of fact, if any hon. gentleman cares to read the text-books on the subject of infants and guardians, he will find a vast body of laws provided for the protection of the infant and infant's property, and they are protected by the courts until they obtain the full mature age of twenty-one years. They cannot deal with their own property. Of course, there are, perhaps, some exceptions under our land laws with a view to inducing young people, probably further advanced than most of their age, to settle upon the land, but that is a quite exceptional instance. If we are going to confer the franchise on them, then the next step is to remove from them the protection which their infancy gives them, and that would not be a good thing for them or for the State, and would not help towards their education and advancement. It has been said that the franchise is conferred on youthful people in some of the States of America. I have here the "Statesmen's Year Book," of 1913, a book which has been published for fifty-five years in succession, and I have been unable to find any of the American States that have that particular franchise. I am not prepared to say that there may not be one or that there may not be two, but I have not been able to put my finger on any. But I find in the States of

New York, New Hampshire, and other States, that there is only a manhood suffrage, and the vote is not even extended to women. I find, as compared with Belgium, France, and Italy, that we in Queensland are up to date already, if not much in advance of those countries, so far as a wide extension of the franchise to the people is concerned. In Belgium, in cases the franchise is restricted to people of thirty years of age; in some cases to twenty-five years of age, and in one case an extra vote is given to responsible persons, having lawful issue, of thirty years of age.

In France, I think, the suffrage is manhood, at the age of twenty-one. It is not quite clear whether in Italy it is manhood suffrage or citizen suffrage, but the age is twenty-one. At any rate, I have been unable to find among European countries any suggestion of a franchise based on the age of eighteen years. We have nothing to go on. Hon. members on the other side say, "We lead; others follow." I think that they have been carried away by a certain amount of swelled-headedness. They have certainly carried out the instructions of the recent Labour conference, which decided that the franchise should be extended. Naturally, members on the other side think in the light of their conference decision—that the people have spoken and they are acting on a mandate of the people. That may be the reason for the measure. Personally, I agree with certain members on this side of the House who have suggested that members opposite see in the possible ignorance or want of experience of the young people the possibility of a greater amount of support for the more attractive programme which they can put before the people, people who are unable to calculate what the result thereof may be. I think that hon. members might be wise if they dropped the Bill altogether and tried to let the people of Queensland imagine or believe that they are responsible beings, willing to carry out affairs in the interests of the State in a proper way to the end of providing the greatest amount of prosperity and happiness. I do not think that members opposite can be taking this thing really seriously. At any rate, nothing that hon. members on the other side have said is going to affect the attitude of members here in regard to what appears to me to be a mad scheme. We do not know or consider what the effect is going to be on the votes of the people; we know what is a reasonable and proper attitude to adopt, and we express ourselves from that point of view.

I do not want to detain the House by going into other matters. I can only say that, in regard to any provisions that affect the question of having a properly constituted roll on which everybody who is entitled to vote is enrolled, and on which nobody is included who is not entitled to vote—because, I think, that is a fair basis between party and party—we are prepared to help the Government. There is no desire to have an improper roll to help this party. All we want is a perfectly fair, clean roll, and allow the votes of the people to settle who shall represent them in this Chamber. One cannot help noticing what has been going on for the last three or four years in connection with elections conducted in the State. One cannot help noticing the transfer of the electoral department from the Home Department to the Justice Department. I would like to know the true, inward meaning of

[Mr. Macartney.]

that. We know that, in connection with the conduct and management of our electoral rolls, the police rendered the Home Department the greatest assistance in connection with the maintenance and supervision of the rolls, and that the administration of that department was the most convenient. The change was made for a purpose; we have not been told what it was. We have certainly seen certain things in connection with the soldiers' vote as exercised at the last election. We have seen things that are calculated to make us just a little bit suspicious. When we come to these provisions in the Bill, I hope the Government will discuss them with a view to doing that which is fair and that which is right, and enable us to get a roll to which we can all have recourse with the satisfaction of knowing that the election will be conducted on a fair basis. But, so far as the infant vote is concerned, I can only assure hon. members on the other side that it will have the strongest possible opposition from members on this side.

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

The consideration of the Bill in Committee was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at five minutes past 10 o'clock p.m.