

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

WEDNESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 1919

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PAPERS.

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

Report of the Department of Public Lands for 1918.

The Gas Regulations of 1919.

STATE LAND AND INCOME TAX STATISTICS.

HON. T. M. HALL: In the absence of the Hon. A. J. Thynne, I ask leave to move the notice of motion standing in his name.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Hear, hear!

The PRESIDENT: Is it the wish of the Council that the hon. member be allowed to move the motion in the absence of the Hon. Mr. Thynne?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. T. M. HALL thereupon moved—

“That there be laid upon the table of the Council a return showing—

(a) The total amount of State land tax levied during the last financial year.

(b) The total number of taxpayers upon whom such land tax was levied.

(c) The total amount of State income tax levied during the last financial year.

(d) The total number of taxpayers upon whom such income tax was levied.”

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I just wish to say—

The PRESIDENT: Order! This is an unopposed motion, and it must be submitted without debate, unless the hon. member is rising to a point of order.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I wish to raise a question of order. The rule on the subject provides that one hon. member cannot move a notice of motion standing in the name of another hon. member. If it is an unopposed motion—which means practically a formal motion moved on behalf of the Government—it may be moved by another hon. member, but no other motion can be moved by an hon. member in the absence of the hon. member who has given notice of the motion. The Council might have been treated with some courtesy in the matter and been informed whether the motion is unopposed or not.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I gave the Hon. Mr. Hall my assurance that the motion would not be opposed.

HON. T. M. HALL: Hear, hear! The Hon. Mr. Fowles was not here when the assurance was given, but the Minister agreed that the motion should not be opposed.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: There has been no notification to the Council to that effect, and we have not been informed what private arrangements have been made.

HON. T. M. HALL: You came in too late.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: The Minister is not opposing the motion, so that it is all right.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The Council should have been informed that it was unopposed.

The PRESIDENT: As there is opposition to the motion, I cannot allow it to be moved in the absence of the Hon. Mr. Thynne. The motion therefore lapses.

WEDNESDAY, 22 OCTOBER, 1919.

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

CHANGES IN CABINET—FORMATION OF THEODORE ADMINISTRATION.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones) said: I desire to inform the Council that the Ryan Ministry has resigned, and that His Excellency the Governor entrusted the Hon. E. G. Theodore with the task of forming a Ministry, which he has done. Its personnel is as follows:—

Vice-President of the Executive Council, Premier, Chief Secretary, and Treasurer—Hon. E. G. Theodore.

Secretary for Railways and Minister of Justice—Hon. J. A. Fihelly.

Secretary for Mines—Hon. A. J. Jones, M.L.C.

Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—Hon. W. N. Gillies.

Home Secretary—Hon. W. McCormack.

Secretary for Public Lands—Hon. J. H. Coyne.

Secretary for Public Instruction—Hon. J. Huxham.

Secretary for Public Works—Hon. J. Larcombe.

Minister without portfolio—Hon. J. Mullan.

I now lay on the table a copy of the “Gazette Extraordinary” dated to-day, containing a notification of these changes.

[Hon. E. W. H. Fowles.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I rise to a point of order, if the President will permit me. I certainly did not understand the Hon. Mr. Fowles to oppose the motion.

The PRESIDENT: If any exception is taken to the motion being put, it must lapse in the absence of the hon. member who gave notice of motion.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I certainly did not understand the Hon. Mr. Fowles to take any exception to the motion being put.

The PRESIDENT: When I asked the Council whether there was any objection to the Hon. Mr. Hall moving the motion in the absence of the Hon. Mr. Thynne, the Minister indicated that he had no objection to offer, and on that ground I allowed the motion to be moved by the Hon. Mr. Hall. Immediately the Hon. Mr. Fowles rose to a point of order, and he is quite right, and as he has taken exception, the motion must lapse.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I did not understand the Hon. Mr. Fowles to oppose the motion at all, but only to be desirous of getting information.

The PRESIDENT: Under the circumstances the motion should have gone without debate.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: The Hon. Mr. Fowles rose for the purpose of getting information as to whether the Minister intended to oppose the motion or not. As it appears there is no hon. member opposed to the motion being submitted in the absence of the Hon. Mr. Thynne, I trust you will allow the motion to go.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It may clear the atmosphere if I say that probably I should have risen after the Hon. Mr. Hall had moved the motion and stated that I had no objection to the motion. When the President asked if it was the wish of the Council that the motion should be moved by the Hon. Mr. Hall in the absence of the Hon. Mr. Thynne, I said, "Hear, hear!" The Government do not offer any objection to the motion, and, if the Hon. Mr. Thynne wants the information quickly, I am prepared to table the information. I may say that I am prepared to do that whether this motion is carried or not.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PRESIDENT: "May" is quite clear on the point. At page 218 of the 12th edition, he says—

"Except in the case of an unopposed return, a motion for leave of absence, or a notice standing in the name of a member of the Government, which may be moved by a colleague, no motion, or amendment which requires notice, can be moved by a member other than the member in whose name the notice stands."

Before allowing the Hon. Mr. Hall to move the motion, I took care to ascertain that the Minister had no objection to that course being adopted; but it was necessary that, under the circumstances, the motion should go without debate. When the Hon. Mr. Fowles got up, I called his attention to that fact, and consequently the motion must now lapse. If the Hon. Mr. Thynne wishes to get the information sought for in the motion, he will have to give fresh notice. My ruling is that the motion lapses.

SUCCESSION ACT OF 1906 DECLARATORY BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: This Bill has been introduced in compliance with a suggestion made by the Supreme Court Bench. Mr. Justice Lukin, in concluding his judgment in the case of Mary Mahoney, said—

"It is therefore desirable, I think, that the attention of the Legislature should be drawn to the matter, so that they may consider the advisability of bringing in an amending Act definitely declaring their will in the matter, and so set all controversy on the point at rest."

There seems to be some ambiguity as regards section 2 of the Succession Act of 1906. That section provides—

"The real and personal estate as to which a married woman dies intestate after the commencement of this Act shall be distributed between her husband and her children or her next-of-kin in the like manner and proportions in which the real and personal estate as to which a married man dies intestate is distributable between his widow and his children or next-of-kin."

The Succession Act Amendment Act of 1895 provides—

"The real and personal property of every man who shall hereafter die intestate, leaving a widow, but no issue, and no mother who is a widow surviving him, shall in all cases, where the net real value of such real and personal property shall not exceed £500, belong to his widow absolutely and exclusively."

If the estate is more than £500 in value, the widow gets £500 certain, and her share of the value according to the Succession Act.

Three out of five judges of the Supreme Court are of opinion that the 1895 Act is not a law which alters the manner and proportions in which the real and personal estate as to which a married man dies intestate is distributable between his widow and his children or next-of-kin. They say that the 1895 Act only takes £500 out of the estate for the benefit of the widow in certain cases, and in all other respects leaves the estate to be distributed according to the principal Succession Act. Therefore, they say, the 1906 Act does not in any way apply the 1895 Act to the case of a married woman dying intestate without issue, and not survived by a widowed mother. Consequently, in the case of Mary Mahoney, a married woman who died leaving an estate of less than £500, leaving a husband and certain next-of-kin, and leaving no issue and no widowed mother, the court held that the husband did not take the whole estate, but only his share under the principal Succession Act. Therefore, the law applies differently to a married woman dying intestate and a husband dying intestate.

The courts are not entitled to take into consideration the intention of Parliament, in interpreting either this Act or any other Act.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: They must take the intention from the language of the section

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I agree with the hon. gentleman. They must take

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the Act as we pass it, and not the intention of Parliament as a whole or of either branch of the Legislature. It would be a dangerous thing if judges were to be expected to take into consideration the intention of Parliament when giving their judgments. The intention of Parliament in this matter was made quite clear by the hon. gentleman who introduced the Amending Bill in this House in 1906, that is, the Hon. Mr. Macpherson. I shall not quote his short and very clear speech, but I refer hon. members to "Hansard" for that year, page 707. I understand that the Bill was introduced in this Chamber by the Hon. Mr. Macpherson. That hon. gentleman was very clear on the matter, but it appears that the Bill was not made so clear. I shall quote a few words from the speech of Mr. Blair, who handled the Bill in the Legislative Assembly. He said—

"The object of the Bill is to put the real and personal estate of a married woman who dies intestate after the Bill becomes law on exactly the same footing as the real and personal estate of a man who dies intestate."

To sum up, that Act was intended to make the law the same in all respects with regard to the estates of married women dying intestate and married men dying intestate. The court has held that the Act has failed in its purpose, and all that this Bill seeks to do is to remove the doubt which has arisen. I believe that the legal members on the other side of the House will appreciate the amending Bill and the attempt which is made in it to remove a doubt which has arisen in connection with the existing law. We often hear the Hon. Mr. O'Shea say that it is his desire always to "clarify" a Bill. The Hon. Mr. Fowles, who is also a legal gentleman, has also stated several times that it is his desire to make Bills as simple as possible.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: This is a good Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think that the law should be made perfectly clear in all respects—at any rate, as clear as the Legislature can make it. This Bill is to carry out the intention expressed by Parliament in 1906, and unless hon. gentlemen can argue that the opinions held by the gentlemen who introduced the Bill and the Houses which passed the Bill are not correct, I think the Bill should pass. The only objection which can be offered to this Bill is that something has occurred since. But I may say that the amending Bill will not interfere with any estate that has been distributed or has been partly distributed. The amendment "partly distributed" was inserted in the other Chamber. Unless the opinion of Parliament has altered since 1906, I believe that hon. gentlemen will see the justice of this measure, which only seeks to carry out the full intention of Parliament as constituted in 1906. I move—

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

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: It seems to me that this Bill is all right. Apparently it has passed the Lower House, and they have made an amendment in the measure. Of course, the Government have got themselves into such a position that one is always distrustful of anything they do in the way of fresh legislation of this kind, and one is

always looking for a dragnet clause. But there does not appear to be any dragnet clause in this measure, and the amendment introduced in the other Chamber provides that the Bill shall not be made retrospective, and that it shall not apply to estates which have been distributed or partly distributed since 1906. Under the circumstances, I think the Bill can go through, but I would suggest to the Minister that as it is a technical measure and I have not seen it before, it would be advisable not to go on with the Committee stage until to-morrow.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: I have had an opportunity of reading the two clauses of this Bill, and it seems to me that there is nothing in it to which we can offer any objection. The two clauses embody the intention of Parliament as expressed in 1906, which was that a widower should have £500 as a first charge upon an estate in certain cases. The decision of the court in the Mahony case in February of this year was that the statute of 1906 does not give the widower that right, and a suggestion was then made by their honours that the statute should be brought into conformity with the expressed intention of Parliament in 1906. I may be allowed to quote a few words from the judgment of the court in the case of Elliott Bros., Limited, v. Commissioner of Stamp Duties, recently decided by the Full Court. The Chief Justice, after reviewing the history of existing Succession and Probate Duties Acts, said that the court were of opinion that the petitioners were right in their contention. His honour went on to say—

"Before parting with the case they could not refrain from expressing their satisfaction that it only compelled the court to put an interpretation upon a very small portion of the enactments contained in the Act of 1913, or thereby inserted in other Acts. They could not refrain from expressing a fervent hope that Parliament would find some early opportunity to make the provisions of the Succession and Probate Duties Acts a little less chaotic, and a little more intelligible and workable than they were at present. The court considered the appeal should be allowed, and that the court should declare that duty on the said sum of £10,328 15s. 10d. was to be assessed at the rate of 9 per cent., and should order the respondent to pay to petitioners their costs of and incidental to their petition and appeal."

So that the Commissioner for Taxes had to pay costs in the very first case which occurred under the amended Succession and Probate Duties Act. That, I think, rather imposes the responsibility on this Government of cleaning up the last Succession and Probate Duties Act, and the introduction of this measure should have afforded them a convenient opportunity for doing that. However, one may compliment the Government on so soon acceding to the desire of their honours to bring in a measure which will make the provisions of the Succession and Probate Duties Act in this particular conform with the intention of Parliament.

Question put and passed.

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

[Hon. A. J. Jones.]

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT SAVINGS BANK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: This is a Bill to amend section 22 of the Queensland Government Savings Bank Act of 1916. In moving the second reading of the Workers' Homes Bill, I intimated to hon. gentlemen that it was the intention of the Government, as expressed by the Treasurer in the other House, to amend the Queensland Government Savings Bank Act so as to make more liberal provision under the workers' dwellings section of that Act. The Workers' Dwellings Act was passed some years ago, and it has been operating with considerable success, but the Government recognise that the measure is not sufficiently wide in its scope, and we propose in this Bill to amend section 22 of the Government Savings Bank Act.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Has the Workers' Homes Bill received the assent of the Governor yet?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think not. That Bill went back to the Legislative Assembly with five amendments in it.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: This Bill depends upon the other passing.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Not entirely. In passing the other Bill it would be wise to amend this Bill also. I intimated that in my second reading speech on the Workers' Homes Bill.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: What do you suggest?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is provided in this Bill that a person receiving £416 per annum may take advantage of the Act. Under the present Act only those persons in receipt of £200 per year, or less, can avail themselves of its advantages. Under this Bill the Commissioner may advance 16s. in the £1 as against [4 p.m.] 15s. in the £1 at present. There is a very good reason for that—to make it a little easier for people to establish homes of their own. Under the existing Act the Commissioner can only grant up to £350, whereas this Bill makes provision for an advance up to as high as £800. That is a distinct improvement, and hon. members cannot complain about it because they amended the Workers' Home Bill by placing in it a limit of £1,000, where no limit existed, on the amount which the Treasurer or the Minister in charge might grant for the establishment of the home. It was a very generous amendment, and I am not discussing its merits or demerits. The Government intended to exceed £1,000, I take it. The only objection to the amendment was the question whether it was competent for this Chamber to amend the Bill in that direction. The hon. gentleman can hardly oppose this increase to £800 when they inserted in that Bill a maximum amount of £1,000.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: I am not opposing the proposal, but is not £800 rather a large sum for a worker's dwelling? Would the ordinary worker require it?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think it is not too large. When the Workers' Dwellings Act was passed many years ago a house could be built much more cheaply than it can now.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Will the present increase be permanent?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not know that there is likely to be any immediate reduction. We have to deal with things as they are. Hon. gentlemen know that the price of timber is pretty high, and our forests are being somewhat depleted. I think the time will come in Australia—and especially in Queensland—when the iron and steel industry is firmly established here, when we shall build houses of reinforced concrete.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: A very good idea.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Cement is one of the principal by-products of an iron and steel works. There was a time when the slag was a hindrance, but now it is converted into cement. We will be able to reserve a lot of our timber and build houses of slag cement that will be very suitable for the climatic conditions of Queensland, and be very durable. I know in our department we are having prepared estimates of certain houses.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: How would it compare with the cost of wood?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It should be much cheaper, providing the cement is produced more cheaply than it is being produced to-day. Hon. gentlemen will admit that the Act needs amending in the direction in which this Bill seeks to amend it—to make the advance a little higher, because of the greater cost of material and for other reasons. I feel sure hon. gentlemen will treat this Bill in the generous way in which they have treated the other measure, recognising that it is a good Bill, introduced in the interests of the people. I beg to move—That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I do not see any great objection to the Bill. We recognised recently that it is advisable to have a higher limit to the amount to which a worker is allowed to go in erecting a building. The Minister has said that the present cost of material and everything else required in building a house is largely in excess of what it was when the Workers' Dwellings Act was brought in. There are three features in the Bill. The amount of the income of a person who is able to borrow is raised from £200 to £416. That is slightly different to the way in which it was put in the Workers' Homes Bill, under which he was to be a man with a certain income after he had paid his income tax. I do not think it is a judicious thing to increase the limit from 15s. to 16s. When you have a margin of one-quarter you are going quite far enough. It is taking a considerable risk—more than is taken by outside lenders. A large number of lenders will only go up to one-half. I am not prepared at the present time to oppose the limit. I think £800 is very fair, seeing that the cost of building is nearly double what it was when the Act was passed. I suppose it would take now nearly £800 to put up a house which then could be put up for £300 or £400. Taking the Bill all round, I think it is one that should have the sympathy of this House, as it will enable a larger number of people to build their own houses. I am glad that under this particular Bill they will be able to get freehold. I am glad to see the Government are not attempting to put in

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that most objectionable feature of perpetual lease.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is a very good reason why the other Bill should not have been amended. They have the option of freehold under this Bill.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I again say that any man who got the opportunity would sooner have freehold than perpetual lease. The Minister, I know, will not agree with me; but he will find that, although the Workers' Homes Bill is in operation, there will still be a very large number of people who will prefer to come under this measure. I hope it will continue to have the same success as it has had in the past. In going through the Commissioner's report the other day, it was very satisfactory to see that the losses had been very small compared with the amount of money that had been spent. I hope that that will continue, and that we will still be able to look to the Act as one which has been of very great assistance to a very large number of workers throughout the State.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: There are two main points with regard to this Bill. One is the repayment of money to the Government. I understand that the repayment will be at the rate of 3s. per week per £100. That runs into £156 in a year, which is £7 10s. for the year, allowing for 5 per cent. interest and £2 16s. redemption. The basic wage may have to be raised, and also the question faced of whether we can get the money at 5 per cent. If we have to pay 5½ per cent.—as New South Wales has had to do, and then get only £98 for the £100—it means that the total amount will not be paid back to the Government in twelve or fourteen years, but it may take twenty or twenty-five years. The amount of loss made already, I understand, is trifling. In a few cases they have overlent and the property has not brought in the amount which has been lent upon it. I think the Government may be congratulated upon following the good example of the Liberal Government in this matter and extending the benefits of the Workers' Dwellings Acts. The question might arise as to whether people in receipt of a salary of £400 a year might not possibly be able to save enough to build a house for themselves. That would have been so if the cost of living had not been so high. Thousands of the pioneers of Queensland, with an income of less than £400 a year, have built themselves very comfortable houses, indeed, without going to the Government for any support. I would suggest to the Minister that, while we are amending section 22 of the Act, we might bring about also a very desirable amendment in section 16. I would be prepared to move that it be an instruction to the Committee to amend also section 16 of the Act. That section refers to unclaimed deposits with the Savings Bank. Any money to the credit of any depositor in the Savings Bank is kept there bearing interest for seven years. At the end of seven years that money, if not claimed, is put into an unclaimed deposit fund, and no more interest is paid on it. In September of every year they publish a list in the "Government Gazette" indicating what people have got money in the Government Savings Bank that they knew nothing about. For instance, I received this a couple of weeks ago from a kind friend—

"I notice in the 'Government Gazette'

[*Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn.*

of the 6th instant, volume cxiii., No. 151, amongst the unclaimed deposits in the Government Savings Bank an amount of £5 3s. 10d. in your name.

"This notice is published in pursuance of section 16 of the Queensland Government Savings Bank Act of 1916.

"If you are the gentleman referred to, I presume you do not wish this amount to go to the consolidated revenue."

(Laughter.) Section 16 of the Act says that the Government have to publish in the "Gazette" only the amounts over £3. I think we might reduce that to £1, because, in the aggregate, the Government get the free use of a good deal of money in the form of unclaimed deposits. For the sake of a line of print, they might as well bring welcome news to probably a couple of hundred of unwitting depositors in the bank, and, instead of £3, at any rate, make the amount £2. Then, there is a paragraph in section 16 which says that the list published in the "Government Gazette" in September of every year must be exhibited at the bank and all the branches throughout Queensland. We should make the list include all those who have got £2, plus interest, which would be a fair thing. The list would be a little longer, but would cost practically nothing more, and it would include the names of those who have small deposits there, which may mean something to people sometimes. The "Government Gazette" is exhibited in all the Savings Banks every year, and it used to be exhibited in the post offices. I do not think it would be too much to ask the Government to send a copy of the "Gazette" to every one of the depositors.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: And exhibit it in the police courts, too.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: That is an excellent suggestion. The Act at present reads—

"After such publication a copy of such list shall be publicly exhibited for such time as the Commissioner directs in the bank and every branch thereof in Queensland."

The Government have the names and the last addresses of the depositors, and I think they might send each depositor a copy of the list, which is only a couple of pages in the "Gazette," and it would only be 1d. postage. I suppose as much as £30 or £40 sometimes accumulates there, belonging to people who know nothing about it, and that might be a welcome windfall in some cases. The Government might well send that list to the last known address of the depositors.

HON. E. B. PURNELL: Do you think it is a lapse of memory on the part of most people who leave money like that?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: You may remove to another part of Queensland, or to New South Wales, and forget you have left anything in the bank. The present Act reads—

"Such list shall set forth the names and addresses of such depositors so far as they are known."

And in the "Government Gazette" the names and addresses, as far as they are known, are actually set forth. The Government could easily, I think, find three-fourths of the proper owners of that money. If it is in order, and will be acceptable to the

Minister, I would move that it be an instruction to the Committee—

The PRESIDENT: You can move that at a later stage.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Yes, I can move it at a later hour of the day. I think this is an opportune time to make these improvements.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Do you wish to go into Committee this afternoon?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: We would have to do this before we go into Committee.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We had better go into Committee to-morrow.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: At a later hour of the day I will, by leave of the House, move that it be an instruction to the Committee that they be empowered to make the necessary alterations in section 16 of the Government Savings Bank Act.

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.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

FIRST READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR MINES, this Bill, received by message from the Assembly, was read a first time.

The second reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

SEAFORTH REPURCHASED ESTATE BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: As its title indicates, this Bill is a measure to enable the Seaforth Estate, which was acquired under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act of 1894, to be dealt with as Crown lands.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Does that mean dealing with it as perpetual leases?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Yes, it is Government land now; it is a repurchased estate under and subject to the Land Acts of 1910 to 1918. The estate was purchased in 1899. The area of the estate, hon. gentlemen will remember, is 6,198 acres, and the purchasing price was £22,622, or about £3 13s. per acre. The estate is situated in the Mackay district, and since its repurchase by the Government of the day, in 1899, not one acre of the land has been taken up, and is not likely to be if the cost of purchase is added to the land.

HON. G. S. CURTIS: Has it been lying idle ever since?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think the Crown get a rental of something like £25 a year. I am not sure, but I think the estate is now held either under a special lease or an occupation license. As hon. gentlemen know, an occupation license is not an expensive tenure. The Trust Account at the Treasury shows a debit of £32,123, although no interest has been debited to the estate since 1910. The object of the Bill is to get the land settled as quickly as possible, in the ordinary way.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Nearly as bad as the Warra coalmine.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Warra coalmine is not nearly as bad as this estate.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: It could not be any worse than it is.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I would be out of order in referring to the Warra coalmine.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: That would not be unusual, would it? (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I try not to be out of order. I will have an opportunity of giving the correct figures and the position in regard to the Warra coalmine.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I think the Auditor-General is pretty correct, is he not?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I know that there is no loss of £27,000 on the Warra coalmine, whatever the Auditor-General or anyone else says about it. The object of the Bill is to get the land settled in the ordinary way. I think it will probably be a good thing for the district of Mackay, and for the State generally, if the estate, which is handy to Mackay, is settled. Evidently the land was overvalued. The Government purchased it at too high a value. I said it was overvalued, but I do not think it was overvalued by the officials of the Lands Department. Speaking from memory, I think one Crown lands ranger valued the estate at something like £1 per acre. However, the land is not of very good quality. The Government of the day, in purchasing the estate, I believe, considered the land to be of pretty good quality, but they were mistaken in that. The object of the Bill is quite clear, and it is very desirable to settle the estate in the ordinary way. Many people in the Mackay district may be desirous of taking up the land under the newer conditions, and the high cost of the purchasing price will not be added to their rental under the perpetual lease system. Personally, I believe, broadly and generally in connection with land settlement, in giving settlers land of a good and secure tenure—and perpetual lease is a good and secure tenure—and as cheap as possible. Then what little capital they have can be used in developing the land. In [4.30 p.m.] that way we are likely to get our lands, especially our agricultural lands, settled rather than if we charge a high price for the land, because, after all, land is only valuable in accordance with what it will produce. I hope the Council will pass the second reading of the Bill and agree to put it through Committee as well. I have much pleasure in moving—That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: The Minister has made a fairly lucid explanation of the purposes of the Bill, but he will pardon me if I ask him a few questions in the course of the comparatively brief observations that I intend to make. I would like to know first whether it is intended to settle any returned soldiers on this land. If what the Minister has said about the land is correct, I think that the Government, or the soldiers' settlement committee, or whatever body deals with the business, should consider the matter for a very long time before they decide to settle any returned soldiers on this estate. We have heard a good deal about Beerburum; but, if I had my choice of settling at

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Beerburum or at Seaforth, I would certainly prefer Beerburum. There is some inferior land there, but there is also some good land.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: I have read the second reading speech of the Secretary for Public Lands, and also other speeches in the debates in the other Chamber, but there was no intimation in them of the Government having any intention of settling returned soldiers on this land.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: That is nothing. This Government do lots of things without any intimation of their intention to do them. Nothing that the Government would do would surprise me in the least.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: This is a new Government now.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: There is only one new Minister; it is really only a shifting of Ministers about. We have no change in the Government here, which is something at least to be thankful for. The Minister gave us some ancient history with regard to this Seaforth Estate, and we may admit that an unduly high price was paid for the estate. The Minister stated that some officials of the Lands Department had valued the estate at something like £1 per acre. I have not looked up the records of the estate recently, but I remember that some high official of the department, who was supposed to be a very competent man, went to Mackay, inspected the land, and discussed the purchase with the local people, and it was upon his report that the Government of the day purchased the land.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think it was Mr. Gray.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I do not think it was Mr. Gray. I am not sure, but I think it was the late Mr. Hume. I know from the newspapers that the people of Mackay were very anxious that the Government should purchase the land, and they made representations to the Government and to this official as to the suitability of the land for purposes of closer settlement.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think it was Mr. Hume.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I think it was; I am generally correct in any statement I make. (Laughter.) There can be no doubt that too much was paid for the land and that it is not suitable for the purposes for which it was acquired, because it is inconceivable that, if it were suitable for closer settlement, the land would have been allowed to lie idle all these years. I do not know whether the Government have made any special effort lately to induce any person to take up the land, but I will frankly admit that they are more likely to get the land taken up by providing that it shall revert back to the Crown than if the land can only be taken up under the provisions of the Closer Settlement Act. Now it will become Crown land again, and I take it that it will be dealt with just in the same way as Crown land that has never been alienated.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is so.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I presume, of course, that the Government will throw it open under the perpetual leasehold system. I hope, if that is so, that the proclaimed purchasing price upon which the rent is based, will not be too high. It is better to get the land taken up, no matter how small the rent may be, than to have it lying unused as

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it is now in the hope of getting a higher rent by and by. The first object of the Government should be to get settlement; the amount of revenue they may derive from the land is a secondary consideration. Hon. members on this side prefer the freehold system as being most conducive to getting the best results from settlement; but, whether it is taken up under the freehold system or under the perpetual lease system, what we want to see is the settlement of the land. I do not know whether the Government have any more repurchased estates that have turned out badly, but I think this is the only bad purchase that was made under the Closer Settlement Act, and, having regard to the operations of the Act as a whole, bearing in mind that 5 per cent. or 10 per cent. has to be added to the purchasing price to make up for losses, the system should not be condemned merely because there has been one bad bargain out of twenty or thirty purchases made under the Act. Under the circumstances, I think we shall be doing the right thing in not opposing the Bill.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

(Hon. W. F. Taylor in the chair.)

Clause 1—"Short till"—put and passed.

Clause 2—"Seaforth Estate made subject to Land Acts"—

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: The clause provided that all money received in respect of land forming part of the estate should be placed to the credit of "The Closer Settlement Acts Trust Account (Seaforth Estate)" in the books of the Treasury; but it concluded with the words—

"until the Governor in Council makes other provision for the disposal of the said moneys."

Seeing there was a debit of a very large sum against the estate in the Treasury books, any moneys received in respect of the land should certainly be placed to the credit of the Seaforth Estate account in the Treasury. If the Governor in Council were authorised to dispose of the moneys received in any other way, they might be paid to the credit of the State fish shops, or they might go to reduce the loss on the trawler, or to reduce the deficit on the working of the State saw-mills, or to make up for some of the other losing speculations of the Government. He thought the Minister should not be given power to use the money for any other purpose than to pay it to the credit of the estate in the Treasury books. The Minister might use the money to provide relief for the unemployed, or he might even use it for paying the £200 extra that it was proposed to pay members of the other Chamber. That might be the real reason for inserting those words in the proviso. Perhaps the Minister could give them some information as to the reason for inserting those words.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: Not being the Treasurer or the walking encyclopedia of the Government, he frankly admitted that he did not know why those words were inserted.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Better knock them out.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: He would suggest that the hon. member should allow the Bill to pass through Committee and give notice of a question on the subject, and he (Mr. Jones) would gladly answer it.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: It will be too late then. Delete all the words after the word "Treasury."

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: He could not be expected to give the information asked for on the spur of the moment. He had just read the speech of the Secretary for Public Lands in the other Chamber, and the question was not raised there at all.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: That is nothing. There are lots of things they don't raise there.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: We are the revising Chamber.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: He would endeavour to get the information for the hon. gentleman if time permitted.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Adjourn the debate until to-morrow, then.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: There was no need for that. There was a reason for the insertion of the words, and if hon. members would keep the debate going he would interview the Treasurer and get his opinion on the matter.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: The proviso said that the moneys received in respect of the land should be paid to the credit of the Seaforth Estate account. If they retained the concluding words of the proviso to which he had called attention, £1 might be paid to the credit of the account, and the next day £12,000 received from the land might be used for some other purpose.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: Can this Chamber constitutionally amend the clause?

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Of course we can.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: It is dealing with money.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: There was very little that the Council could not do, in spite of all that had been said about their not having the right to amend money Bills.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: But you do not suggest an amendment. You only ask for information.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: The information given by the Minister might necessitate an amendment. He wanted to make sure that, at any rate, some of the money that was going to be received in respect of the land, whether by rent or otherwise, would go to the reduction of the debt on the estate in the books of the Treasury.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: The clause says that the money shall go to that fund.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: "Until the Governor in Council makes other provision for the disposal of the said moneys." Those words quite negated the value of the proviso.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: There may be some reason for the insertion of those words.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He was quite willing to do what he could to assist the Minister, and if the hon. gentleman could convince him that those words were necessary he would withdraw his opposition to that part of the clause.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: On the second reading of the Bill he pointed out that no interest had been charged against the Seaforth Estate since 1910. Probably that was the reason for the insertion of those

words at the end of the proviso. The estate was purchased for £22,000; interest had been debited against it until 1910, and the debit balance in the books at that time was £32,000. The facts he had mentioned might account for the insertion of those words in the proviso.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: As he understood the position, a certain amount of money was debited to the Seaforth Estate trust account. That estate had, apparently, been a losing proposition for many years. The Government now expected that under this Bill they would be able to let the land under the perpetual lease system to tenants who would pay a certain rental per annum. The clause provided that, in the first instance, the money should go to the "credit of the Closer Settlements Acts Trust Act (Seaforth Estate)" in the books of the Treasury. That seemed very proper, but he confessed that he could not understand the provision which said that the money should be so credited "until the Governor in Council makes other provision for the disposal of the said money." Under that provision it would be possible for the Governor in Council to take those moneys and include them in the ordinary revenue, and still leave a debit against the estate in the books of the Treasury. He thought that whatever money was obtained from the estate should be placed against the debit at present standing against the estate in the books of the Treasury. That seemed to be sound business, but, apparently, the Government wished to take this money and place it to the credit of the Consolidated Revenue Account.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: He was in a position now to inform the Committee that the object of the two last lines in the proviso was to enable the Treasurer to keep trace of all moneys received, but it did not matter very much whether those words were retained or omitted. They were inserted simply with a view to meeting the wish of the Treasurer in the matter, and he hoped hon. gentlemen would accept his explanation and allow the clause to pass.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He could not say that he saw very much in the explanation given by the Minister. It might be his denseness, but it seemed to him that the Treasurer, if he had any supervision at all over moneys received from the estate, would be able to check every penny received. However, the attention of the Treasurer had been drawn to the matter, and he had no doubt that their remarks would have the effect of ensuring that the account was properly kept, and he would not press his objection to the words.

Clause put and passed.

The Council resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment; and the report was adopted.

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

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL, No. 2.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

HON. T. NEVITT: This is a Bill that principally affects the other Chamber. It does not affect this Chamber, except in the case of one official. I think that hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House must

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come to the conclusion that the salary at present received by members of the Assembly is not adequate for the services performed.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: That is a question.

HON. T. NEVITT: It may be a question, but the majority of people nowadays have come to the conclusion that £300 per annum for a man in the position of a member of the Assembly is not sufficient. If members of the Assembly attend to their duties as they should do, they will have very little time to devote to private business. That being so, I think—and I believe the majority of the people of Queensland think so, too—that members of the Assembly should be paid a reasonable rate for the services they render the country. I had the pleasure of being a member of the other Chamber for three Parliaments, and I expressed my opinion on the floor of that Chamber some ten years ago with regard to this matter. I said that £300 a year, to use a bush phrase, was only a tucker job. If £300 a year was only a tucker job ten years ago, what is it to-day? When I made the circuit of about one-half of the electorate I represented at that time, I had to travel 1,000 odd miles in the coach, so that my railway pass was valueless to me in making the tour of my district. After every session I went to the two main centres of the electorate—Normanton and Burketown—but I could not go to Camooweal, as that meant travelling an additional 520 miles. It used to cost £22 10s. for coach fare in visiting the places I have named, and on the top of that I had to pay my hotel expenses. At quite a number of places there were no hotels, and I had to camp out. At that time I had practically no family, because my family were grown up, and were able to provide for themselves, but I found the £300 per annum inadequate to recompense me for my services and reimburse my expenses. What, then, must be the position of members of the Assembly who have four or five children, and have to visit distant electorates? It should be borne in mind that many calls are made upon members of the Assembly.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: The more you give them the more calls there will be made upon you.

HON. T. NEVITT: The hon. gentleman has had experience in the other Chamber, and he knows something of what those calls are. I can say quite truthfully that I was unable to answer many of the calls which were made upon me for subscriptions.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Put a clause in the Bill making it illegal for members to pay subscriptions.

HON. T. NEVITT: That would be a very good provision, but I do not know whether it would be accepted or not. I remember that on one occasion, when I was contesting an election, there was a race meeting to be held about a fortnight before the election, and my opponent gave £25 as a

[5 p.m.] subscription to that race meeting.

An appeal was made to me to give a donation, but I could not afford it, and I did not give the money. Nevertheless, I was successful at the election.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: You spent the money in different ways?

HON. T. NEVITT: I had not too much surplus money out of £300 at the end of

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twelve months. Unfortunately, I was in that Chamber for five years, and I contested three elections.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I contested four elections in seven years.

HON. T. NEVITT: On one occasion the representative of His Majesty was the cause of the dissolution of Parliament.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Did not the Labour party pay all the election expenses?

HON. T. NEVITT: They did not pay my expenses. On some occasions I was assisted. I know, as far as the organisation the hon. gentleman belongs to is concerned, quite a number of their incidental expenses are paid.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I can assure you I never had a penny.

HON. T. NEVITT: It may not be so as far as the hon. gentleman is concerned. We know it takes place in the country. I may have received some assistance at election time, but certainly none when I visited the electorate between the elections. To say the £300 is sufficient for gentlemen occupying positions in the other Chamber is saying what is not in accordance with fact.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Do we want seventy-two members there?

HON. T. NEVITT: That is another question.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I think it is very material.

HON. T. NEVITT: It may be material, but it is not before us at the present time. The hon. gentleman introduced a Bill in this Chamber a little while ago, and succeeded in getting it through. There is nothing to prevent his bringing in another Bill. Some hon. members, speaking in the other Chamber, have gone so far as to say they are verging on bankruptcy on £300 per year. I think this Chamber will be taking a very serious responsibility on themselves if they are going to insist upon a salary being paid to members in the other Chamber which might land them in the Insolvency Court.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: They are not compulsorily members of Parliament.

HON. T. NEVITT: That is quite so. Neither is it compulsory for the hon. gentleman to remain in this Chamber.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: No; but he does not expect the country to pay for it.

HON. T. NEVITT: That is a debatable point. I think I have heard the hon. gentleman say that a labourer is worthy of his hire. That being so, it would be an argument for an extension of the principle we are now debating. There is something more than money in this world. There are things worth striving for which are even of greater importance than the obtaining of money. But as long as our existing social conditions last, we have to get a little to tide us over our troubles. I hope the hon. gentleman will look at this matter from a fair and impartial standpoint. I think only one member in the other Chamber offered any objection to it, and that was the leader of the Opposition. Members of the other Chamber are perfectly right in expecting a fair remuneration for services rendered. It has been said that quite a small number of members in the other Chamber—and there are very few in this Chamber—know much about the Northern and Central

portions of Queensland. I remember on one occasion, when this question came up for discussion in the other Chamber, I advocated that members of Parliament should be compelled to travel through Queensland so that they would know something about the North and the Centre. We are called upon frequently to legislate on matters directly affecting the interests and the welfare of Central and Northern Queensland. A large percentage of the members who record their votes know little or nothing of the conditions that are prevailing there. Men who are called upon to legislate for the country should have some knowledge of the country. If it is suggested that the members should have experience of the North and Centre, hon. gentlemen should provide them with the means which will enable them to get there and see the country. The only way in which that can be done is by increasing their salary, as is suggested in this Bill. I think the first session I came into this Chamber a Bill was introduced by the Government giving them power to commandeer some shipping on the Queensland coast for the purpose of relieving the shipping troubles of the North. This Chamber, in their wisdom, did not think that was necessary. I had just come down from the North of Queensland. I venture to say that had the majority of members of this Chamber been in North Queensland and seen the conditions under which the people were living—the mills had to be stopped; they could not go on crushing because of the congested state of the wharves and sheds, and there was no shipping to bring it down—a number of gentlemen would have voted differently on that matter. No wonder quite a number of the Bills we pass in this Chamber are unsatisfactory, when conditions of that kind prevail! I think some provision might have been made in the Bill with a view to seeing whether it would be possible for a leader to be appointed on the other side of the Chamber, and possibly a secretary provided for the party. If that were done, I am quite satisfied that the business in this Chamber would be conducted with better results to both sides of the House. Speaking generally, we are getting along very well. The Hon. Mr. Hall and myself are able to make arrangements by which the business is very much facilitated. An extension of that principle could well be undertaken.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: How can you have a person to lead something that does not exist?

HON. T. NEVITT: The hon. gentleman may repeat that as often as he likes in this Chamber, but the hon. gentleman knows perfectly well that the party lines are just as sharply drawn on that side of the Chamber as they are on this. I will give a case in point where I think the suggestion I make would facilitate the business. Once or twice during the present session the Minister has moved the second reading of a Bill. The hon. gentlemen have not been able to continue the debate, although the Bill has been in their possession in some cases a week or a fortnight.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: He went on with something else. There was no time lost.

HON. T. NEVITT: The Minister, on one particular occasion I am thinking of, had prepared himself for the business as it appeared on the business-sheet. He had to undertake other business in which he had not had time to prepare himself, and he

would not have been able to give information to hon. gentlemen if they had asked for it.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: That was a solitary case.

HON. T. NEVITT: It was not a solitary case. It has occurred on several occasions. If a secretary were appointed to hon. gentlemen opposite his duty would be to look up everything in connection with any matter and supply it to them. I think that a sense of fairness and equity will appeal to hon. gentlemen, and that they will support the second reading of this Bill.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I was surprised that the Minister, when introducing this Bill, did not inform the Chamber that there was a mandate from the people in favour of it. That is what he usually does in connection with Bills. I know he did it several times last year. He told us there was a mandate from the people.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Or that it was a war measure.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I do not see how, by any stretch of imagination, this can be considered as a war measure, seeing that the war does not now exist. If war existed, it could, in some sense, be made out to be a war measure, but there is no war now. Mr. Hughes, who did a large amount of work necessary in settling the war and bringing it to a successful issue, is amongst us, and we may dismiss the idea that it is a war measure.

HON. L. McDONALD: That is sarcasm.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I would like the Minister to tell us whether there is any mandate from the people in favour of this measure, because this Chamber, which more truly represents the whole of the people than the other Chamber, would, I am perfectly certain, respect a mandate from the people, if it exists. If I, for one, could be induced to believe that the majority of the people were in favour of increasing salaries from £300 to £500, or some other amount, I should support it.

HON. L. McDONALD: Are you in favour of it personally?

HON. P. J. LEAHY: If the hon. gentleman will possess his soul in patience, and allow me to follow the even tenor of my way, he will get my views in due time. Evidently, there is no mandate from the people, as, if there were, the Minister would tell me. I have asked him, and he is silent.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: Many of the candidates spoke in favour of increased salaries in their election addresses.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Will the Minister tell us what candidates spoke eighteen months ago and advocated an increase in salaries, and how many of them?

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: When I was a private member I always advocated it.

HON. L. McDONALD: It is a part of the Government policy.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Is it a plank in the Government platform?

HON. L. McDONALD: Yes. The Labour convention approved of it.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Which Labour convention was that?

HON. L. McDONALD: The last Labour convention.

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HON. P. J. LEAHY: I am inclined to think that, if it is a plank in the Labour platform, it is a thing I ought to oppose, because I am quite certain that the majority of the planks are such as would not appeal to me, or any other intelligent member of the community. (Laughter.) However, I would like the Hon. Mr. McDonald and the Minister to remember that, if it is a plank in the Labour platform, that is not a mandate from the people.

HON. L. McDONALD: From the majority of the people.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: That plank was never submitted to the people.

HON. T. L. JONES: Is there not a general mandate from the people?

HON. P. J. LEAHY: You cannot bring in everything under a general mandate. We know that the people have returned the Government, as they returned other Governments; and yet, at different times, they have disapproved of individual acts of Governments, and if they had had an opportunity of giving a vote on those acts they would have gone against the Government.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: They never got the opportunity.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: They never got the opportunity. Would the Hon. Mr. McDonald be good enough to tell me when this became a plank of the Labour platform?

HON. L. McDONALD: I said the last Labour convention approved of it.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: When was that held?

HON. L. McDONALD: 1917.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Even if it is a plank of the Labour platform, that is quite a different thing from its being a mandate from the people. At the time of the last election in March, 1918, I read a fair number of newspapers, and in only one or two instances did I see any reference on the part of candidates to an increase of salary.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: You saw a lot of references from your own party, though.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: No; so far as my memory serves me, there were references by members of the party which the Hon. Mr. Page-Hanify honours by his support, and those were the only references.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: Your party made it an issue of the election.

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

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: They did, and were turned down.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: As far as I know, there was no large number of members on either side of the Assembly—because that is a Chamber which has two sides, unlike this Chamber, which has only one side. (Laughter.) As far as I know, no considerable number of members on either side brought this matter before the people.

HON. A. SKIRVING: You could not make that an issue of the election.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: You could have told the people. "If I am returned to power, it is my intention to vote for an increase of £200 a year to members of the Assembly." I know something of newspapers, and there was very little in them in the way of reference to this subject; in fact, this was a kind

of thing which it was desired to keep in the background as far as possible. I think we are, therefore, safe in coming to the conclusion that there is no mandate from the people in favour of this measure.

HON. L. McDONALD: You control only one class of newspaper.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: The papers in which I am interested gave a very much fairer report for both sides than those with which the hon. gentleman has been identified. For instance, what does the hon. gentleman think of a paper which says—as a certain Labour paper said this afternoon—that Mr. Hughes came to Brisbane and got a cold reception? That is the sort of newspaper which I have not been connected with. My papers never gave any reports of that kind.

HON. L. McDONALD: You cannot say that he got a warm reception.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: If the paper had said he got a cordial reception, that would have been a more correct description. However, I am not going to be drawn off the track. I say again that there is no mandate from the people. Whilst a mandate from the people would be a reason for passing the Bill, the fact that there is not a mandate does not necessarily mean that we should not pass it. I want to be perfectly fair.

HON. L. McDONALD: Did you get a mandate from the people to turn down the Unemployed Workers Bill?

HON. P. J. LEAHY: There is no action of my life I am more proud of than the fact that I assisted in doing that. I would be out of order if I referred to that Bill.

There being no mandate from the people, our duty is to consider this Bill upon its merits. What are the merits or the demerits of the proposal? I heard it stated outside, and I have seen it stated in newspapers, that the salaries ought to be increased because the cost of living has gone up. But neither the Minister nor any other hon. gentleman gave us any information as to what extent, if any, the cost of living has gone up since March, 1918, the date of the last election. I think it will be found that there has only been a very trifling increase in the cost of living since then.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We are only asking for a trifling amount.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: You are asking for an increase of 66½ per cent. We should bear in mind the fact that this question was not brought prominently before the people at the last election, and that there has been no material increase in the cost of living since last March twelve months, although there was a very considerable increase in the cost of living prior to last March twelve months, as compared with pre-war prices, but I do not think there has been a very large increase since then. We have to remember, further, that if we pass this increase of £200, it will remain as long as Parliament lasts, but the increased cost of living is not going to remain for ever. There will be a tendency in the course of a few months, or a year or two, for everything to approximate to pre-war conditions, because living will have to come down to something like pre-war figures. The £500 a year, however, will continue to be drawn, notwithstanding the decrease in the cost of living.

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There are other aspects of the matter to be considered. We come to the question of the number of members in the Legislative Assembly. The Hon. Mr. Fowles, in his speech, gave certain figures with regard to the members in the Parliaments of the different States and the salaries they receive, and I have no desire to unduly prolong this debate by repeating what the Hon. Mr. Fowles mentioned, which is recorded in "Hansard." Hon. gentlemen will recollect that this State is the only State in Australia that has not reduced the number of members since the inception of federation. All the other States have made reductions, and, in some cases, very sweeping reductions. In New South Wales, at the time of federation, I think the number was 125. Soon after federation, the question of reducing the number of members in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly was considered, but the members could not agree to pass a Bill to make the reduction, so they decided to submit the matter to a referendum of the people. The Labour party, I think, were then in opposition; in fact, it is a certainty that they were in opposition, because if they had been the Government they would not have had any referendum submitted to the people on that subject. At any rate, they opposed the reduction of members. Eventually, three figures were submitted to the people for their decision—125, which was the existing number, 110, and 90—and the people, by a considerable majority voted for ninety, which was the lowest number, and probably if there had been a lower number still the people would have voted for it. Remember that New South Wales has, in round numbers, according to the most complete figures, a population of something like 2,000,000—it is within about 15,000 short of 2,000,000. I do not think that our population in Queensland in round numbers exceeds 700,000, so that New South Wales, with practically three times the population of Queensland, has only eighteen more members than Queensland. It is true enough that in New South Wales the members now receive £500 a year, but in proportion to population and revenue, if we were to be paid on the same basis in Queensland, our members would only get about £200 a year. The New South Wales people now, on the basis of population, are relatively getting less money than members in Queensland.

Hon. G. PAGE-HANIFY: That is not a fair argument.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: It is fair, to some extent at least. We must consider the ability of the State to pay any money that we are going to raise from taxation, and it is particularly necessary at this juncture, when we bear in mind the financial condition the country has drifted into, that we should very closely scrutinise any item of expenditure. I have no desire to go into figures in detail, but I make the bald statement, which is probably correct, that by the way things are going, there will probably be a deficit of £1,000,000 at the end of next June.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Oh, no!

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: We know that the Treasurer last year expected that he was going to have a small surplus after paying off the deficit of the previous year. We know that the balance was the other way round, and if we had paid the deficit of the previous year out of retrospective taxation,

as the Treasurer said he would do, last year's deficit would have been £500,000. We know there has been an award which increased railway wages by £200,000, and we know that expenditure generally is going up, so that everything indicates that we are going to have a thumping deficit at the end of next year.

In view of this financial drift, is [5.30 p.m.] this a proper time to increase the payment of members of Parliament? Furthermore, I understand that there are in the public service certain persons getting £300 a year who have not had any increases recently. Is it right for members of Parliament to increase their own salaries by 66⅔ per cent. and not give any increases to public servants, who probably give just as good value for the money they receive as members of Parliament?

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Not as members of the Council.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: In speaking on this subject, of course, I am referring to members of the Assembly, because I am glad to think that there is no proposal to pay members of the Council. It is something to know that we are prepared to do the right thing without remuneration. Another question arises—a very important question, too. Are these superior individuals in the Assembly—these men who want to abolish this Council, and think, young as many of them are, that they have the wisdom of all the ages—are they not getting sufficient salary to enable them to live in decent comfort? Are they not getting a living wage?

Hon. R. BEDFORD: That question does not require much consideration. They are not.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: The hon. gentleman does not give anything much consideration. I am giving this matter very full consideration, as we on this side give to all Bills that come here. We must remember that the parliamentary session does not usually last more than five months. Many of the members of the other Chamber—I do not know exactly how many, but certainly some of them—are engaged in businesses for which I presume they receive a certain sum of money. It is true there is a limited number of members who represent remote constituencies, and who, perhaps, have not the opportunity of carrying on businesses of their own during the period when Parliament is in recess, and it is possible that some distinction ought to be drawn between those members who come from remote places at considerable expense, and who are not able to supplement their parliamentary income, and those who live in and around Brisbane, who can make very material additions to their incomes. That is a question that might be arguable, and I do not say that some discrimination would be altogether unfair; but there is no discrimination at all shown in this Bill. It proposes to give just the same remuneration to the men who represent a metropolitan constituency, and who may be engaged in a profitable business—many of them are commission agents or are engaged in some other remunerative calling—as is given to the man who comes 500 or 1,000 miles to attend to his parliamentary duties, and who has to depend solely on his parliamentary salary. Figures have been quoted in this Chamber regarding the salaries paid in the Parliaments in most

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of the other States. Speaking from memory, I think that in South Australia and Tasmania, and in some of the other States, they do not get more than £300. In fact, I think in some cases they get a smaller amount; so that by comparison it does not seem to me that members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland have much to complain about. After all, everything in life is a matter of comparison. I do not suppose the Hon. Mr. Bedford would seriously dispute that.

Hon. R. BEDFORD: I know there is a tremendous difference between myself and you.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Of course there is. It is all a matter of comparison. I would compare one man with another in order to show that he is a good man. Supposing I wanted to form an opinion with regard to the Hon. Mr. Bedford, I would take some other man as a standard, and see how the hon. member compared with that man.

Hon. R. BEDFORD: I suppose you would take your own standard with regard to insincerity.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: I do not know how to reply to a remark of that kind.

Hon. R. BEDFORD: I knew you would not. That is why I made the remark.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: I hesitated because the reply I intended to make would have been out of order. Any effective reply to anything the hon. member says would be out of order. If we take the standard of the other States, there does not seem to be any justification for increasing the salaries of members of the Queensland Assembly. In other States they have refused to increase the remuneration. It was recently suggested in Victoria that the payment of members of Parliament should be increased. That is a State that the Hon. Mr. Bedford knows something about, because he tried unsuccessfully two or three times to become a member of the Assembly there.

Hon. R. BEDFORD: I never tried to become the member for Bulloo.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: The suggestion caused such an outburst of public feeling against it that the politicians did not go on with it.

Hon. R. BEDFORD: You know that you told me you were against conscription, but it was not to be known outside.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: The hon. member is incapable of telling the truth in regard to anything.

The PRESIDENT: Order! This cross-firing must cease. The hon. gentleman must confine himself to the question before the Council.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: I was addressing my remarks to the Bill. I was making a comparison with the other States, where presumably members are as high-class as they are in this State, and yet they are not receiving the remuneration which it is proposed to give members of the Queensland Assembly under this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Federal members receive £100 more.

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Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Will anyone seriously contend that the average member of the Assembly in Victoria is not equal to the average member in our Assembly, and that he does not do as valuable work? If the Victorian member is not underpaid—and he does not appear to, and they are much better able to pay more there than we are because they wound up the year with a surplus—is a member of the Assembly in Queensland worth any more, especially when we are not in such a good financial position as they are in Victoria?

Hon. W. R. CRAMPTON: Most of the members in Victoria can travel to Parliament House from their constituents by tramcar.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: A large proportion of the members of the Queensland Assembly represent constituencies within a radius of 12 miles from the General Post Office, and they can all travel to Parliament House by tramcar or rail; yet it is proposed to increase the salary of every one of them by £200 per annum. Even if Victoria is a small State, the members outside Melbourne have to travel a greater distance to attend to their parliamentary duties than the men who represent the urban and suburban constituencies around Brisbane. In considering this question it is desirable to take a comprehensive view, and not merely a Brisbane view. Let us go to the Mother of Parliaments in Great Britain, and what do we find there? Within the last few years members of the House of Commons have been paid £400 per annum.

Hon. W. R. CRAMPTON: And £100 for travelling expenses.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: I am not certain about that. But will anyone seriously suggest for one moment that the average member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland comes up to the average standard of members of the House of Commons.

Hon. L. McDONALD: Easily. They are only chair-warmers there.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: The members of the House of Commons have to deal with world-wide issues and with enormous sums of money. If their services are valued at £400 per annum, the value of members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland should be considerably less. One might make similar comparisons with the payment of members of Legislatures all over the continent of Europe. I certainly know of no State with a small population like ours which pays the members of its Legislature such a salary as is proposed to be given under this Bill. Considering all these things, what is the duty of this Council? It would be very much more pleasant for members of the Council to get up and say nice things about members of the Assembly, and to say that we are perfectly willing to give them another £200 a year; but I take it we are here to a very large extent not only as the custodians of the people's rights and liberties, but as the custodians of their money. If we had only one Chamber, there is simply no limit to the salaries that the members of that Chamber might fix for themselves. If this Chamber were not in existence the members of the Assembly might pay themselves £1,000 per annum. But as we are here, and as I hope we will continue to be here, one of our duties clearly is not only to deal with ordinary legislation, but to decide, so far as

the question comes within the scope of our duties, what salary members of the Assembly shall be allowed. Surely it is not a proper thing that men who are employees should fix their own salary! These men in the other place are the servants of the public. That is all they are. Very often the servant thinks he is the master; but we do not think so in this House. Some of the arrogant gentlemen in the other House think they are the masters of the public.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

HON. P. J. LEAHY: They are the servants of the public. Yet, if we pass this Bill, we shall be allowing these servants of the public to fix their own salaries and without having consulted the people. If they want to do the proper democratic thing, they should submit the question to the people by way of a referendum, and say, "Are you in favour of giving us an extra £200 a year, or are you not?" Then the people would have an opportunity of deciding the question. The Government profess to believe in the principle of the Initiative and referendum, but I notice they are very chary about submitting anything to the people by way of referendum except the question of the abolition of this Council; and we know what happened when they submitted that question to the people. I have come to the conclusion that, in view of all the circumstances, my duty as an individual member of this Council is to vote against this increase until such time as I have some satisfactory indication that the people are in favour of it. As has been very often stated in this Chamber, every man is a law unto himself here, and probably all the members on this side—I use "side" for want of a better term—(laughter)—may not see eye to eye with other members on this question; but I believe that all the arguments that have been used so far have been against any disturbance of the existing salary paid to members of the Assembly. When any important proposal is submitted to us, I think it is the duty of the Minister in charge of the Bill to make out a good case before he can expect any parliamentary body to endorse it.

HON. L. McDONALD: Do you think £300 a year is a sufficient salary for a member of the Assembly?

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Will the hon. gentleman give notice of the question?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: He won't answer it.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I will answer it, and I say that some members of the Assembly are not worth that amount. However, I was proceeding to say that it is the duty of the Minister to make out a case in favour of his Bill, and it is the duty of the Hon. Mr. Nevitt, or any other hon. member supporting the Bill, to make out a case in its favour. What does their argument amount to? We merely have the statement that members of the Assembly are underpaid, but no reason has been advanced to show that they are all underpaid.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I could not live on the salary when I was a member of the Assembly.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: That is a different matter. The Hon. Mr. Nevitt said it was necessary to give a member of the Assembly

more salary in order that he might be able to spend more money on racecourses and other things. The hon. gentleman told us that an opponent of his gave £25 to a race meeting.

HON. T. NEVITT: And he was worth £50,000.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: The inference from the remarks of the hon. gentleman was that various calls are made upon members of Parliament, and, therefore, that their salaries should be increased in order to enable them to meet those calls. Is it not perfectly obvious that if you adopt that principle and give a man a larger salary the calls or demands on the individual member will go up in proportion to the salary he is paid? What is the good of giving a salary to a man if he is compelled to spend that salary on racecourses or in other ways? When the hon. gentleman was speaking I ventured to suggest by way of interjection that it might be a good thing to provide that a member of Parliament shall not give anything by way of donation to race meetings or any other institutions, with the exception of hospitals, because if a man is well off and is in receipt of a large income, he may give liberally, and thus purchase support. Members of this Council are not in favour of anything which will play into the hands of a candidate who is unduly favoured with this world's goods as against the candidate who is not so well favoured. I was asked if members of the Assembly are worth the amount they are paid. I say candidly, in the first place, that I believe this country would be better governed if we had only forty members in the Assembly, and, secondly, that it is my conviction that there are many members of that Chamber who would not be able to make £300 a year outside Parliament. I do not say how many of them there are, but I do not suppose a single person will contradict the statement I have made.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: Isn't that beside the issue?

HON. P. J. LEAHY: No; it is very material to the issue, because a certain number of members of the Assembly could not possibly make £300 per annum outside Parliament. Yet it is proposed that they should be paid £500 per annum. If we discriminate and say to one man, "You are worth £300 per year," to another, "You are worth £400 per year," and to another, "You are worth £500 a year," we should introduce a very dangerous principle. If we were to discriminate in this House, we might say that the Minister for Mines is worth £1,500 a year; and look at the amount of jealousy that would cause. I contend that we must rule out of our consideration any proposal to discriminate, and that whatever salaries members of the Assembly are to receive—whether their present salary or some larger salary—must be given to all.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Could you base it on attendance?

HON. P. J. LEAHY: It may be said that that is a reasonable and practical proposal, but when one remembers that a man may attend Parliament pretty regularly and yet not contribute in a very intellectual manner to the debates, it is a question whether he is as useful a member as one who does not attend so regularly, but shows more aptitude

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for public business. Therefore, I am afraid we must admit that whatever salary we give must be paid to all, irrespective of ability or attendance. No member on the opposite side of the Chamber has attempted to controvert my statements that some members are not worth £300 a year; and if we are asked to vote £200 extra to men who are not worth £300 per annum, surely that is an absurdity! This thing goes back to last March. It is well known that last year we gave members £200 a year extra for a period of twelve months. I took a reasonably prominent part in connection with the passing of that £200. Some persons may blame me, and some may praise me, for my action in the matter, but I do not propose to say anything on that aspect of the matter. When this £200 was last year camouflaged as an allowance in an Appropriation Bill, many of us doubted the sincerity of the Government in stating that it was an allowance to meet the expenses of a referendum campaign against the Council. I was reluctant to be a party to refuse to pass the £200 per annum when it was put on the Estimates in order that the question for or against the Council might be put before the country. I said, "If we reject this proposal, what will the people say? The people will say, 'The Legislative Council have refused to give this extra £200 a year because they are afraid of a campaign conducted by members of the other Chamber.'" In any case, I have not the slightest doubt that if we had refused to pass that money that would have been urged by members of the Assembly as a reason why the Council should be abolished. That was one of the reasons why I did not oppose the proposal. Whilst I had serious doubts as to the purposes for which the money was to be used, I did not go the length of voting against it. This money was included in an Appropriation Bill, and whilst this House has claimed, and has frequently acted upon that claim, that it has power to amend money Bills, we thought it would be a serious responsibility to throw out an Appropriation Bill which included the whole of the money necessary for public expenditure, even though it included also the increased allowance to members. It does not follow, however, that any opinions we expressed on that Appropriation Bill last year commit any of us to a proposal to make the £200 extra a permanent charge on the revenue of the country.

From one point of view the Bill is very important. In fact, I might say that, to many members, it is more important than the whole Labour platform. From other points of view, perhaps, the Bill may be regarded as of less importance. I have endeavoured to give some reasons—I think, if I may say so, some good reasons—why this Council should not vote in favour of the Bill. All I will do now is briefly to recapitulate some of the arguments I have used. Surely it will be admitted that this is about the most inopportune time a Bill of this kind should be introduced! Everybody knows there is a crying need for economy. Instead of doing anything to economise or lessen the burdens of the people, we find the Government introducing a Bill to increase the salaries of members and add considerably to the already heavy impositions that are made upon the public. Then, I think it is a sound principle to lay down that a man should not be the judge in his own case. We have hon. members in the other place,

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without displaying any anxiety to consult the people or place the facts before the people, voting themselves an extra £200 a year. I should think a party that professes to believe in popular rule should, at least, submit a thing of this kind to the people before forcing the Bill into law. I think most members on this side of the Chamber, along with myself, believe in that principle. I am perfectly satisfied that, if any proposal of this kind were submitted to the people at the present time, it would be defeated by an overwhelming majority; because, from what I know of the people, they have formed a very different estimate of the value of members in the Assembly to that formed by those members. Another important thing is that at no election was this a vital or even an important issue. If it were referred to at all, it was clouded up. There was not one word said, as far as I know, to indicate that a Bill of this kind would be proposed during the present Parliament. Eighteen months ago all the members in the Assembly were glad to accept their present position at a salary of £300 per year. Had they not chosen to accept a position at that salary there was no need for them to come forward as candidates. Plenty of others were willing to do it. The honest thing was to say, "If we have an opportunity, at the earliest possible moment, we intend to do so and so." Nothing of that kind was said. Then, again, if this Bill were to become law, it should be accompanied by a Bill that would reduce the number of members of Parliament, and also by a Bill that would bring about a redistribution of seats. We know that, at the present time, in some electorates there are four or five times as many electors as there are in other electorates; one vote in some electorates is worth four or five times as much as in others. That is an entirely undemocratic position. I do not purpose saying any more on the matter, but I am perfectly certain that the manner in which this thing is being attempted to be forced through is undemocratic. From a variety of causes, the Government evidently feel that to-night they have a majority in the Council, and evidently they are determined to force through the second reading of this Bill to-night at all hazards, fearing that, if it is postponed for another day, there might be a majority against it. If the proposal is a just one, what need is there for this indecent haste? Will it not stand the light of criticism?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: This Bill has been before the House the whole week.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Would it be jeopardised if a vote were not taken to-night? Why does not the hon. gentleman give us ample time for calm reflection? (Laughter.) Why does he not give us time to permit of the attendance of members who are absent to-day, not knowing that this Bill was coming on? If this Bill is a right one, and if the hon. gentleman is not afraid of the vote of the majority, why does he force it through to-night? Why is the thing done behind the backs of the people without any mandate from the people of the country? What will the people of the country say with regard to a Government who rush through a proposal of this kind in such a manner?

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: They will see through you and your friends.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: The public had an opportunity of forming an estimate of myself and my friends two years ago, and we know they gave a majority of 63,000 in our favour. I do not think the public have altered their opinion with regard to us since; though it is possible that, owing to certain things having happened since the referendum—many Labour members have been put in the Council since then—the public might form a different conclusion; but if the Council were constituted as it was two years ago, the verdict would be given in a more emphatic manner than it was on that occasion. I have not heard any logical or convincing argument on any side that would induce me to favour this Bill. If I thought this was a just Bill, why should I oppose it? We have a duty to the whole of the people of Queensland, who gave us a vote of confidence such as never yet has been given to any Government, and we have to show the people of Queensland that whenever any attempt is made to do behind their backs, and probably against their opinions, something which is unfair or undemocratic, it is the business of this Chamber to defeat those things or at least to delay them until the people have had an opportunity of pronouncing upon them.

HON. L. McDONALD: Do you think that £300 is a sufficient salary for a member of Parliament?

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I am satisfied that, for seventy-two members £300 is as much as the position is worth. If it is desired to give more, let the number of members be reduced, but do not increase the total liability of the public. If the Government happens to have a chance majority on this occasion, and will take advantage of that fact to force this Bill through and get something which they would not get if there were a full attendance of members of the Council, the Government and the party can take the responsibility of their actions.

HON. R. SUMNER: I do not intend to delay the Council many moments. I am going to support the Bill, because I believe it is a just Bill. I believe the salary ought to have been increased some time ago. I think the hon. member who has just sat down will bear me out in my argument. I have had some experience as a member of the Assembly.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: So have I.

HON. R. SUMNER: Unless the hon. member or myself had had some other occupation or source of income, he knows the salary paid would not have been sufficient. I do not know whether it might not be a good thing to increase it to more than £500, with a condition attached. The Hon. Mr. Fowles will follow me in this. In the church to which that hon. member belongs they fix the salary of the ministry with a condition that the ministers shall not enter into any other occupation which will add to the emoluments of their office. It is all very well for hon. members in this Chamber who have other sources of income to come here and practically spend their time and give their services to the community gratis. Suppose they had no other source of income, would they be able to do that? I think this Council ought unanimously to agree to the increase in salary. The Assembly have passed it practically unanimously. It might

be a good thing to increase the salary to £1,000 per year, and make the proviso that no man should have any occupation which would add to the emoluments of his office as a member of Parliament. If members have no other source of income and have to do their work as members on £300 a year, not only is it not sufficient, but it is no credit to the community. Recently somebody called my attention to a copy of "Hansard" in which a member on one side began to criticise certain members of this Chamber. Another member later on did the same thing. Within the next week, I think it is the duty of members in this Chamber to take the characters of members in the Assembly, analyse them, and give the history of some of those people. I propose to have a "go" at it in the near future.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

HON. R. SUMNER: Anyhow, I support this Bill because I think it is a right thing to do. I have no other reason. I have advocated for many years that the salary should be increased. We passed this afternoon a Bill dealing with workers' dwellings. We say that the conditions of life have altered so much as to justify increasing the amount of advance for a workers' dwelling from £350 to £800. Even members on the other side of the Chamber, when the Workers' Homes Bill was before the Council, thought that that was not sufficient, and they made a limit of £1,000. That shows that the conditions of living have altered to such an extent that to get a cottage in which to live the price has gone up from £350 to £800.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: It was to give them a better cottage.

HON. R. SUMNER: The Board of Trade in New South Wales have fixed the minimum rate of £3 17s. 6d. per week, and I hope it will be followed here.

HON. G. S. CURTIS: A strong protest is being made against it.

HON. R. SUMNER: It is practically the law in New South Wales, and will be followed right throughout Australia in the near future. The man who had £500 or £1,000 a few years ago is worth only half that in purchasing value to-day.

HON. G. S. CURTIS: Owing to the large amount of taxation placed upon him.

HON. R. SUMNER: What have we to do with taxation on the imports which are coming here? Prices are still soaring. Even to-day prices are higher than during the period of the war.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: They have not raised the salaries in America.

HON. R. SUMNER: I think they have—I do not say the salaries of members of Parliament. From what we can read [7.30 p.m.] and gather from American politics, they do not want any salaries at all there. I will say this—and I do not think any hon. gentleman can deny it—we can congratulate ourselves that Australian politics, so far, have been kept clean. There have been very few cases, if any, of corruption; I do not know of one single concrete case in Australia. I know that investigations have been made in New South Wales with regard to certain matters, but they are sub judice. I do not think there is one case in Australia where there has been

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corruption in our political life, and I hope that day will never come. I think if corruption does come in, anybody having anything to do with it should be cast out of public life. In order to keep our politics as pure as we can, it is only fair that we should pay members a living wage, and I do not think the present salary of members of the Assembly is a fair living wage. Many hon. gentlemen opposite have had experience as members of the Assembly, and they cannot tell me that they can carry out the duties of a member of Parliament and live properly on the salary which is being paid. On the grounds of justice and righteousness, we should pass this Bill, and there should not be any difference of opinion about it. I think hon. gentlemen opposite will admit in their own hearts that £300 is not sufficient, and that they will vote for the Bill if they vote as they feel. I do not think I need labour the question. People say that the matter has not been before the country, and one hon. gentleman mentioned the referendum. But why submit the question of whether there should be any tax or not to a referendum of the people? We know that it is impossible to do so.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: You do not trust the people, evidently.

Hon. R. SUMNER: The hon. member is an ex-Treasurer, and he was not a bad one when he was there, but would he, while Treasurer, have submitted every measure of taxation, such as income tax or land tax, to a referendum of the people? If we did so we should also submit the whole question of the public service to a referendum. The salaries of the Under Secretary have as much right to be subject to a referendum as those of members of Parliament.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: They have an Industrial Court.

Hon. R. SUMNER: That would apply to the salary of the Railway Commissioner as well. I think hon. gentlemen ought to do the right thing. If they think £300 is sufficient they should vote for it; but I do not think it is sufficient. I do not think £500 is enough, but I am going to support that amount.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Move an amendment to increase it if you do not think it is enough.

Hon. R. SUMNER: I would be out of order, because it is beyond the functions of this Chamber to increase amounts. I think £500 is a fair thing, and I hope hon. gentlemen opposite will hesitate before they vote in opposition to the Bill.

Hon. C. F. NIELSON: When this Bill was first mooted I gave the matter consideration, and decided to vote in a certain direction, but I also decided that I would not vote without expressing my opinions on the matter. As you are all aware, I have been a member of the Lower House. It is twelve or thirteen years ago since I was a member of the Assembly. So far as the sufficiency of salary goes, whatever may be the increase in the cost of living since that date, I can conscientiously say that £300 a year was not sufficient for a country member twelve years ago. (Hear, hear!) There is another reason. I have come to the conclusion that, in order to attract what might be termed the middle-class men of the community to take an interest in politics, and give them an opportunity, if they have a bent or ambition,

which is natural to most men, to benefit their fellow-men, the salary should be increased. At the present time, apparently, the only people who can honestly afford to be in the other House are either those who are, fortunately, so well off that they need no salary at all, or a man such as was described by the Hon. Mr. Leahy this afternoon who could not earn anywhere near that amount outside. But the middle-class man who has a little business, or the professional man, even in the city, cannot afford to be a member of the Assembly, because the tenure of the office is merely temporary. If he does his duty to his constituents and gives them his prompt attention, he must sacrifice his personal business. It does not matter whether he is only keeping a fruit shop; his business will have to go. We have seen men in the past who have spent a period of years in the Assembly, and when they have left the Assembly they were many years older and had nothing, their business or profession having gone. Personally, I paid dearly for being a member of the Assembly, so that I would rather be here on no salary than in the Assembly with £300 a year. As to whether a reduction in the number of members ought to have been in the policy of the Government put before the electors or not is quite immaterial to this question. The stand I take is that if payment of members is the policy of Queensland, then the payment should be adequate. The Hon. Mr. Leahy stated that there was any number of men who were not worth £500 a year, but that is no argument against an increase of salary. It is for the electors to say: "If we have to pay £500 a year we will elect a man who is worthy to be our representative and entitled to the salary." That is their business. We cannot discriminate. The representative of a suburb of Brisbane is in a far better position than a member who comes from a distance. The average country member has to leave his family in a country town or on a selection, and he has to keep them there and also keep himself in the city while attending to his parliamentary duties, which do not terminate with a session of Parliament. He is called upon by his electors throughout the year, even when Parliament is not sitting, to come to Brisbane and attend to the wants of his electors, and every time he moves it costs him money. Then, we know that the financial calls on a member of Parliament are more numerous than they are on a private citizen. I do not suppose there is an individual in this Chamber who, if he were living quietly in his little cottage, could not live on £300 a year; but that is a totally different thing from being a member of Parliament. The argument has been used that this increase should have been brought before the electors last time. This Parliament has not long to run. The question will be brought before the electors, who, if they resent the increase which has been agreed to by the other Chamber, can say so, but from my observation and contact with people, no reasonable person thinks that a member of Parliament is not worth £500 a year. They may say there are individuals who are not worth £500 a year; but the principle is what we are considering, not the individual, and it is for the electors to choose an individual to represent them who can earn £500 a year. My main objection to the retention of £300 a year is the fact that just as no payment to members limits the

[Hon. R. Sumner.]

representation to one class of individual, so an inadequate salary does the same. The salary ought to be sufficient to enable a man to represent them. If I do I can afford it, because I am getting a reasonable recompense." I have known members of Parliament to leave the House a lot poorer than when they went in. I know some members to-day, who do not throw their money about—who are practically teetotalers and live in the most frugal way, who are no better off on the 31st December than they were on the previous 1st of January, and if they got out of Parliament to-morrow they would have to start to scratch without anything behind them. I look upon it that the responsibility in this matter is not with us, but with the other Chamber, the members of which will have to account to the people for their actions.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: You might say the same about the Council Abolition Bill.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: I might say the same about many things, but, to be correct, I would not do so about the Abolition Bill. It is not for us to judge and count heads and value individuals in some other place. The first point is what is the position worth? (Hear, hear!) The next point is that the electors have the duty of finding a man worthy to fill the position. I intend to vote for the second reading of the Bill.

HON. G. S. CURTIS: I have listened attentively to all that has been said about this matter. It seems to me that the question as to whether £300 a year is a sufficient salary for members of the Assembly is one which we have nothing to do with. The question is whether there was a mandate given at the last election to increase the salaries of members of the other House. It is quite clear that that issue was not placed before the electors. It was not included in the programme submitted by the Government, and the fact that several candidates mentioned it in their election speeches in a casual sort of way counts for nothing. Our position is analogous to that of trustees who have been appointed to manage an estate, and who have agreed to undertake the management for a certain term of years at a certain fixed rate of remuneration. Supposing those trustees, without any authority from the owners of the estate, helped themselves from the funds of the estate by increasing their remuneration, we know what would be thought of such conduct. We are here as trustees for the people of Queensland. The Hon. Mr. Nielson said that we are not deeply concerned in the question, but that it is a matter that concerns the Assembly only. But the Parliament of Queensland consists of two Houses, and we in this Chamber have an absolute right to reject any Bill which involves the expenditure of money. Our right to amend money Bills has been questioned, but there is no doubt about our right to reject such Bills. The question of whether £300 a year is sufficient payment for members of the Assembly is not a matter which concerns us at all. The question is whether at the last election a mandate was given to the members of the Assembly to increase their salaries. It is manifest that no such mandate was given. Those who were returned entered into a contract with their constituents to serve them in this Parliament for three years at the present salary. This Bill violates that contract, and the argument

is irresistibly in favour of the rejection of the measure. Nothing has been said to-night about the value of voluntary services; but we know that for many years after the establishment of Queensland we had voluntary service in the Legislative Assembly, and the members of our early Parliaments gave just as efficient service as the members of Parliaments for many years back. It was considered one of the glories of the British Empire that so many able public men were always willing to give their services to the country voluntarily. Unfortunately, that has been impaired to a considerable extent by the payment of members of the House of Commons, which followed almost immediately on the passage of the Parliament Bill, which converted the permanent veto of the House of Lords into a suspensory one.

HON. R. BEDFORD: You don't believe in payment of members at all.

HON. G. S. CURTIS: I do not. I think it would be a good thing if we could do without it. I think that payment of members and universal suffrage are bad things, and that they have brought about the deterioration of Parliament and of representative government. I consider that the personnel of the early Parliaments of Queensland, when there was no payment of members, compared very favourably with that of our Parliaments for several years past. John Stuart Mill pointed out that a deterioration in the calibre of members of Parliament and of representative government would follow from the extension of the suffrage, and that has been the case. Undoubtedly, it has tended to bring down the ability of members of Parliament to the dead level of collective mediocrity. I do not think there has been any appreciable increase in the cost of living since the election took place last year. When the election took place was the time for candidates who were not satisfied with the salary then paid to say distinctly that they would vote for an increase if the opportunity offered. They did not do that, and now, as trustees of the public purse, we would be failing in our duty if we did not protect the public funds. I believe that this Bill should be accompanied by two other Bills—one providing for a redistribution of seats, and the other a Bill for the reduction of members in the other House. Unquestionably, the present electorates violate the principle of one vote one value, and, with respect to a reduction in the number of members, all the other States have reduced the number of members in their Legislative Assemblies, including New South Wales, which has a population just about three times that of Queensland, and yet has only a few more members in the Assembly than we have. Something has been said about the taxpayers: but the taxpayers in Queensland are a very small percentage of the population. The whole burden of taxation falls upon less than 23,000 people. Large sums have been piled upon their shoulders since this Government came into power—a Government who represent the manual labourers and others who contribute nothing, either directly or indirectly, to the State Treasury. To quote John Stuart Mill again, such a burden should not be placed upon the shoulders of a small section of the people by those who contribute nothing. In Queensland it represents only about 3 per cent. of our population.

The PRESIDENT: Order! This is not a question of contributing to taxation.

Hon. G. S. Curtis.]

HON. G. S. CURTIS: It is a gross violation of the principles of democracy. I do not think I need say anything further on the subject. The Hon. Mr. Leahy's speech should carry conviction to any unprejudiced and unbiassed person. We have no right to go behind the backs of the people and spend public money without a special mandate from the people.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: It is unfortunate that a question such as this cannot be approached apart from party. It is a question that we ought to be able to consider entirely on its merits.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Well, you try and do so.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: I am going to try. It is quite evident that the question is being considered just in the same old way of the "ins" and "outs," and is being used as a political catch-cry. It brings about the position that in the Assembly we had the spectacle of an Opposition that pretended to oppose the Bill, and stepped out of the way so that it should not be lost. We are going to have exactly the same spectacle in this Chamber to-night. I am satisfied that this Bill is going through. The Hon. Mr. Leahy and the Hon. Mr. Curtis made a good deal of the question that there was no mandate from the people. It is ridiculous for this Council to raise the question of a mandate from the people, seeing that they have been consistently and persistently violating every expressed wish of the people for the four and a-half years that the Labour Government have been in power. What makes an issue at a general election? I claim that this question was an issue at the last general election. Under our Constitution we have a recognised Government and a recognised Opposition. The Government lay down a policy, and the leader of the Opposition lays down a policy; and will hon. gentlemen say that this question of a probable increase in the salaries of members of the Assembly was not prominently before the electors at the last election?

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: It was not.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: It was. Is it not a fact that there was a full-page advertisement inserted in the newspapers by those who were leading the campaign for the party which hon. gentlemen on the other side altogether belong to, in which it was stated that, if the Labour party were returned to power, one of their first acts would be to increase the salaries of members of the Assembly to £1,000 a year? When the Opposition put that question before the electors in that way, they did so as prominently and it became just as effectively an issue with the electors as if the Premier had included it in his policy speech. I regret that he did not do so, because I am satisfied that it would not have made one particle of difference to the result of the elections, because the people generally approve of honest, reasonable payment for services rendered. I claim, therefore, that, taking that view, there is a mandate from the people on the question, because, if the people had believed what the Opposition said and had opposed an increase of salaries, they would not have returned the Ryan Government with the triumphant majority that they did. Therefore, that argument, to a great extent, is blown away. If hon. gentlemen will face the question fairly, I am sure they will be

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guided by what the Hon. Mr. Nielson has said. I am glad to see one hon. member on the other side who is prepared to stand up and face this issue just on its merits. I am quite sure there is not one man here who, in his own conscience, can say that £500 a year at the present time is more money, taking the purchasing value of that money, than £300 a year was at the time that was fixed as the amount to be paid to members of the Assembly, and endorsed time and again by the people.

HON. G. S. CURTIS: They were paid £150 a year at one time.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: The amount was first fixed at £300, then it was reduced to £150, and it was afterwards increased to £300, and then subsequently £24 a year was added for expenses. I claim that the purchasing value of that £324 at the time it was first paid was quite equal to the purchasing value of £500 at the present time. Hon. members do not pretend to argue that it was not; but they say that there are members in the Assembly who are not worth the amount they are now being paid. That is really not an issue, and it is a matter that we have no right to judge. It is a matter for the electors who elected those members. But there does seem to be something in the argument that, as Parliament fixed the salary in the first instance and altered it in the second instance without any direct reference to the people, it is just as right for Parliament to-day to fix the salary at a higher amount as it was in the first instance to bring in payment of members. If the elected representatives of the people are paid an adequate sum, men of ability will be attracted, and we will not be in the position in which we now find ourselves, that only those who have other means of livelihood can afford to enter Parliament. Hon. gentlemen cannot defend the undemocratic

[8 p.m.] suggestion that only those who are rich in this world's goods should be able to come into the Legislative Chambers and make laws for the people. Everyone admits now that no man can perform the duties of a member of Parliament legitimately and properly on a salary of £300, unless he has other sources of remuneration. It is a very bad thing that men should have to divide their time and divide their brains, instead of devoting their whole brains to the business of the country. The principle of payment of members has been established in Australia. In fact, it has now been established in the Mother of Parliaments.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Would you apply it to this Council?

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: I regret that the time is not opportune to give some reasonable remuneration to members of this Chamber.

HON. R. BEDFORD: It should not exist.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: Well, that is the policy of the Government—we stand for the abolition of this Chamber. If the matter is put to the people in a way in which they can exercise their calm judgment, and they say that something should be done to place members of this House on the same level as members of the other Chamber, then, of course, we should bow to their will. If we want a Parliament that really represents the people, we should make the conditions

such that any of the people, irrespective of what their worldly possessions may be, may be able to take their place in that Parliament. I recognise that a great deal that has been said here is quite insincere. We are in the same position in this Chamber as members are in the other Chamber.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: You are speaking for yourself.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: I am speaking for myself entirely. I am a perfectly free agent in this House, the same as the hon. member, and I am free to exercise my own judgment on such a matter as that which is now before the House. My own judgment is that this is a just Bill, and that the increase of salary to members of the Assembly is long overdue, and should have been paid to them four or five years ago. There is no sound argument that can be raised against that contention. There is no argument against this measure, except that it may be an advantage to one side in politics to throw it out. In my opinion this is a matter entirely for the Assembly. We cannot amend the Bill, and I do not think members opposite are going to take the responsibility of throwing it out to-night. I hope that the Bill will be passed, and I am very glad to have the opportunity of raising my voice in favour of it and of voting for it.

HON. P. MURPHY: I was impressed with the speech made by the Hon. Mr. Nielson, who declared that when he was a member of the Lower House the salary was not sufficient. If twelve or fourteen years ago, when that hon. member was in the Lower House and was getting £300 per annum, that was not a sufficient salary for a member of Parliament, it cannot, by any stretch of reasoning, be urged that it is a sufficient salary to-day. I very much regret to say that the Hon. Mr. Leahy did not impress me with his speech to-night as he generally does impress me when he addresses the Council. It seemed to me that his heart was not in his speech.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I was very earnest.

HON. P. MURPHY: It would take much stronger arguments than those advanced by the hon. gentleman to prove to me that he was earnest in his opposition to this Bill. The hon. gentleman said that the Mother of Parliaments was paying her members £400 a year, and he argued that that was a reason why we should not give members £500 a year in Queensland. I think the inference from those facts is very opposite. A carpenter in Australia is receiving 14s. or 15s. a day, whereas if he were in the old country he would be getting only 7s. or 8s. a day.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Not now.

HON. P. MURPHY: Well, take the railway men who were recently on strike in the old country. They have got an increase to £2 10s. a week, and I believe the great majority are getting £3 and £4 a week. The Hon. Mr. Leahy went round the whole compass to find arguments against this proposed increase in the salaries of members of the Assembly, but they were very weak arguments. Other hon. gentlemen who have spoken against the payment of members were also very weak in their arguments. I was much more impressed by the practical

arguments of those who spoke in favour of the Bill. If we look at electorates like the Mitchell and Gregory, and other constituencies in the Northern and Western parts of the State, we see that the electorates are very large, and I venture to say that it would cost £400 or £500 to contest one election in such large districts. The expenses of travelling there are enormous, and, as we know, we have triennial Parliaments, so that an election takes place every three years. We also know that donations have to be given by members of Parliament to different race clubs, and to various schools of arts, in their electorates, besides to other institutions, so that I question very much whether even £500 a year is a sufficient salary for a member of Parliament. The labourer is worthy of his hire, and so is a member of Parliament. Members of Parliament, it will be admitted, are, as a general rule, abler men than the common crowd. Who will say that the Labour members in this Parliament are not as able as any crowd who have ever been in office in Queensland? I venture to say that they could easily select another Ministry from the Labour men in the Assembly. It is no good to say that the members there are not as intelligent as any other class. They are as intelligent as any other class, and they deserve to be paid accordingly. Every member of Parliament is deserving of reasonable remuneration for the services which he renders the country.

HON. F. McDONNELL: I do not wish to prolong this debate, but there are some remarks of the Hon. Mr. Leahy to which I should like to refer. The hon. gentleman made it a particular point that this matter had not been submitted to the people at the last general election. I remember—and the Hon. Mr. Stephens and the Hon. Mr. Curtis must also remember, as they were members of the Assembly at the time—that in 1896 the payment of members, which then amounted to £150 a year, was increased, and the question was not brought before the constituencies. It was not one of the questions of the day. The Hon. Sir Hugh Nelson was Premier at the time. The first measure brought down to that Chamber by Sir Hugh Nelson was a Bill to increase the payment of members from £150 to £300 per annum, and that was done without any mandate from the people. I think the Hon. Mr. Stephens, who was supporting the Government of the day, will bear me out in that statement. When Sir Hugh Nelson brought in the Bill he made it very clear that he was not in favour of payment of members, but that he brought in the measure to increase their salaries because of a demand which had been made on both sides of the House, and on that occasion their salaries were increased by 100 per cent. That was done without the question being made a party question or even a prominent question of the day, and I would remind the Hon. Mr. Curtis of the fact that he was a member of the Assembly at the time, and that he did not oppose the passing of that Bill, but accepted the payment of £300 per annum. The way in which this question has been dealt with by hon. members who have opposed the Bill is paltry and mean. Is not the labourer worthy of his hire? The ordinary shop assistant, if he has attained the age of twenty-four years, gets £4 per week. The cost of living has increased to such an extent that £10 per week is scarcely equal to £6 a week a few years ago. The

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Hon. Mr. Leahy was member for the Warrego for a short time.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Seven years.

HON. F. McDONNELL: Well, the hon. gentleman knows very well that the expenses of a member of Parliament are going on all the time. The Hon. Mr. Nielson has dealt with that phase of the question, and has referred to the numerous calls made on a member of Parliament that must be answered. I do not suppose that anyone wishes that a member of Parliament should have to live in such a way that he cannot bring up his family respectably and in comfort. At all events, I think, looking at the matter from a pounds shillings and pence point of view, £10 per week is little enough for a man occupying the position of a member of Parliament. Many members of this Chamber find it very hard and very difficult to attend here without payment, and, if this Council is to continue, I should certainly say that its members should receive payment as well as members of the Assembly. Of course, there are more men in this Council who are in a position to come here and give their services free than there are in the other place. They have not to bear to the same extent as members in the other place the expenses connected with the constituency. Of course, hon. members in this Chamber have claims as public men to which, I have no doubt, they respond according to their means. We all are desirous at the present time of seeing people getting a fair wage. I do not think £500 a year is one penny too much. On the contrary, I would be prepared to support a provision for £600 or £700. I think our Queensland Parliament stands out as the foremost Parliament in Australia from the standpoint that there has been less graft in connection with it than there has been with any other Parliament in Australia. In my twenty-five years' experience of both Houses I have never heard of a case of graft. I think that is a record of which Queensland might well be proud. I hope this Council will, without division, accept this Bill.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I do not know that it is necessary to say very much at this late stage of the debate. I think most has been said that can be said for and against. I fail to see that the arguments in favour of the Bill are at all convincing, or are sufficient to compel us to assist in passing the Bill. A great deal has been said regarding whether £300 is sufficient or not. We are not concerned with that. What we are concerned about is members of the other House helping themselves to an increased salary without any submission of the question to the people of the country.

Hon. F. McDONNELL: It was done in 1896.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: If it were wrongly done in 1896 that is no reason why it should be wrongly done in 1919.

Hon. F. McDONNELL: Your own party did it.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: A question like this should be submitted to the people as a clear issue at election time. That was never done. Until that be done, I say the present Parliament have no right to add anything to their own salaries without authority. Members of the other House came in under a contract, practically, that they were going to get £300 a year. They agreed to that, and they came prepared to

take that amount and be satisfied. Now they turn round and say it is not enough, and they are going to help themselves to another £200 per year. The strange part of it is, it is not satisfactory to their own newspaper. I find that the "Daily Standard" of 25th October last year, when the question of £200 being tacked on to the Appropriation Bill was before the Chamber, said they did not think it was the right thing for members of Parliament to add to their salary without first either getting the consent of the people or putting it before the Industrial Court. The "Standard" also on that date said that Parliament were putting themselves above the people and above justice.

Hon. R. BEDFORD: The "Daily Standard" can be as crazy as any other paper.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: It is the leading Labour authority.

Hon. R. BEDFORD: It is not.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: It voices their opinions and directs their actions.

Hon. R. BEDFORD: It does not.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: That is the general reputation it has. I do not think the Hon. Mr. McDonald will agree with the hon. gentleman in what he says. It has already been stated that this Bill, if brought in at all, should be accompanied by two other Bills. One of those should make provision for a redistribution of seats in order to abolish the inequalities which at present exist in Queensland, where we have one electorate containing 12,000 electors and another with only 1,200. There is an absolute inequality there. I say that that ought to be remedied. In addition to that, there ought to be a reduction of members.

Hon. R. BEDFORD: Some electorates here are too big already.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: When federation was brought about, it was distinctly stated that a reduction of members would be made. All the other States of Australia have made the reduction. Why should Queensland be behind and not come into line with the others? Then, what are the salaries in the other States? In Western Australia they get £300 a year; in Victoria, with twice our population, they get £300 a year. In New South Wales, with three times our population, the amount is £500, and they had a reduction of members. In Tasmania and South Australia it is £200 a year.

Hon. R. BEDFORD: They are getting £300 now.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Apart from anything else, I say it is not the proper thing. I quite agree with the "Standard" on this one occasion. There is a further aspect that could well be enlarged upon, and that is that this is not the proper time, financially, to load the country up with an extra £13,000 a year. We have an immense deficit, admitted by the Government to be £170,000, but which the Auditor-General says should be £500,000. The Treasurer came before us last year and said, "I am going to get £300,000 from retrospective taxation, which is going to wipe out the deficit of last year." Instead of wiping it out he put that into the consolidated revenue for this year, with the result that the Auditor-General says if he had been honest he would have shown a deficit of £500,000. Under all the circumstances I have mentioned, I think this

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Council would be perfectly justified in refusing to pass the Bill. Eighteen months hence, when there is a general election, will be the time for the Government to submit to the people the question of whether they are to get an extra £200 or anything else.

HON. L. McDONALD: Do you think £300 is sufficient salary for a member of Parliament?

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Candidly, I do not think it is. I make no "bones" about that, but I say that that is not the question at the present time. The question is: Is the other House justified in helping themselves to an extra £200, or £500 if they like?

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: They are taking the full responsibility of their actions.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: They have taken a good deal of responsibility. They spent a million in unforeseen expenditure last year, without any justification. However, I do not think there is any need to labour the question. I certainly shall oppose the Bill at the present time.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: This measure has at least one redeeming feature about it—it is an honest coming forward and saying, "We want another £200 a year." It is very different to what was done last year, when £200 was taken by false pretences. The money has been voted and accepted, and it has not been earned. It was said it was for a specific purpose. The Labour party has not done one halfpenny worth of work towards earning that £200.

HON. A. SKIRVING: And some members of the Opposition who said they would not take it have taken it.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: That does not justify it. The men who did that are as much to blame as are the men who originated the "grab." The question of payment of members has been dragged into this. I do not know that it really enters the field of debate at the present time. That is a question which has a very serious effect generally upon legislation and upon politics. To my mind the invasion of payment of members into legislative bodies is just as evil as the invasion of professionalism into sport, and I think it is just as injurious in effect. The question of whether £300 is sufficient for an hon. member in another Chamber, to my mind, is not before this Council at all. The allowance of £300 a year was, in the first instance, put forward as a sort of reimbursement for personal expense. It was not intended to be a salary. It has degenerated into the notion of being a salary. I doubt whether legislation has been improved by that invasion. I think it would have been better without. I think that men who do as we are doing in this Chamber—giving the best that is in us without remuneration—get better results than the men who are simply grovelling along under the belief that they are working for a salary in making laws. The question of whether or not this Bill should be passed is, to my mind, one which should be taken, first of all, from the point of view of whether it is a decent, honest, honourable thing for hon. members to vote themselves a sum of £200, and make it retrospective back to last March. To my mind the retrospective "grab" is indecent, and is not to be commended.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: It is quite a usual one with this Government.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: The electors have had no opportunity of deciding whether or not hon. members should receive any increase in their remuneration—or, as they like to call it, their salary. I think it would have been a decent thing for hon.

[8.30 p.m.] members in another place, and also in this Chamber, to have deferred the matter until the next general election, and then to have let the people know what is definitely proposed and decide the matter. If a majority of members are returned in support of the proposal, I, for one, would not vote against it. I do not think any man should be a judge in his own case. If a man has a claim, there should be some arbiter or umpire to decide the claim—a man should not be placed in the position of deciding his own case. He should agree to let it be decided in the proper way by the proper tribunal, and in this case the proper tribunal is the people of Queensland.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: The matter has been kept before the people.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: The Government kept it well under the "cush"—they did not bring it forward in the way it should have been brought forward. It was not part of their policy speech, and was not put forward by any member as part of the policy of the Government.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: Why not give a decent salary?

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: I do not think this is a salary. This is really a reimbursement Bill for expenses.

HON. R. BEDFORD: What do you call it?

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: You can call it what you like. The men who are now clamouring to increase it without reference to the arbiter are the men who accepted the contract with the electors and said they were satisfied. They are not compelled to continue the game—they can pull out of it whenever they like. Let those who are not satisfied do so, or else let them wait until they get a proper decision. It is anticipated that there will be an election in the middle of next year, if not earlier, and it would be a decent thing for hon. members in another place, as well as those who are advocating their case here—

HON. R. BEDFORD: It won't be next year.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Don't be too sure.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: There is the Federal election eight months before its time.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: I find that most of them defer to the last moment the question of whether they will get a renewal of their term or not, and not one of these men would decline £500 at the next election.

HON. R. BEDFORD: That is one of the worst sweating arguments ever used—that if you can get men to be members at an unpayable rate, the unpayable rate should be continued.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: When men enter into a contract it should be respected. If you would appoint a taxing-master in this question I would be content. The taxing-master, in this case, should be the people of Queensland.

AN HONOURABLE GENTLEMAN: They had no "say" in your coming here.

Hon. T. J. O'Shea.]

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: They had more "say" in my coming here than in the hon. gentleman coming here.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: This is a time in which, if the Government had any sense of decency in its financial proposals, it should be the last to enforce further burdens on the taxpayers. The necessity for economy is being preached everywhere—to Governments, business men, and all round.

HON. R. SUMNER: They are all preaching it, but nobody is practising it.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: The Government who preach it, and should act on it, are the most profligate of the lot. Not only do they not practise economy, as far as the general expenditure of the State is concerned, but they actually grab at the Treasury, and now put into their pockets another £200 a year, dating from last March. They are not content with it from the present time, but must grab backwards and get hold of as much as they can. I wonder they do not go back seven years.

The question of payment of members is interlaced with the question of the reduction in the number of members. Every State in the Commonwealth, since federation, has reduced its members except Queensland, which has seventy-two members, and I would be quite correct in saying that the work would be better done by forty members.

HON. R. SUMNER: You might do it better with one if you got the right man.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: I am not prepared to agree with that. However, I think we might take a leaf out of the book of the other States in that respect, and admit that there is far too much money spent and too much time taken up over legislation in Queensland. There is too much legislation, and we would be far better off if we had a good deal less. The session might, with benefit to the State, be condensed into a period of from twelve to fifteen weeks a year. We all know what a great amount of time is wasted at the beginning of every session, both in the other Chamber and in this—particularly in this. The first six weeks, as a rule, is so much waste time, and it is really an absurdity to call on country members to come down here to do nothing, and to drag even city members from their avocations just to form a quorum to do nothing. I am one of those who are sufficiently enthusiastic to believe that we give our best work for that which our enthusiasm drifts towards, irrespective of remuneration.

HON. R. BEDFORD: For instance, being a solicitor.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Hon. gentlemen in this House have devoted more time, energy, and ability to the service of the country than many members in another Chamber, and hon. gentlemen in this House receive no remuneration. I think that this Bill is only the forerunner of another measure which has been foreshadowed here to-night by two or three hon. gentlemen—that provided we get £500 a year for members of the Assembly we shall get £200 or £300 for members of this Chamber. I think it will be a mistake to increase the remuneration of members in another Chamber without reducing the number of members. If one proposition comes along, the other should accompany it;

[Hon. T. J. O'Shea.

they are natural corollaries. The question of economy runs right through the whole gamut of legislation at the present time. It has been truly said that any Government must be judged by its finance; and, if that is so, the present Government must be condemned. Their finances are shocking. The extravagance of the Government is absolutely unchecked. They seem to have no control over their expenditure. The one idea in their minds is to get as many Government institutions as they can—to employ as many people as they can—in the fond hope that they will grab all their votes and those of their families. I would point out that there has been no similar increase in remuneration—or, if you like the more objectionable term, of salary—of members of Parliament in any other State in the Commonwealth. Why should Queensland, at a time when it is suffering from most confused finance, rush into further extravagance in this respect, without any mandate from the people, or without having given them an opportunity of saying "Yes" or "No"? The question of the retrospective grab in the Bill, I think, is radically wrong and indecent, but it is only in keeping with the rest of the Bill. I am not prepared to say that £300 a year is sufficient remuneration for a man who is engaged in work of that sort, if he were occupied all the year round, but we all know that the duties of Parliament only require his attention four or five months of the year.

HON. R. SUMNER: You know he has to represent his constituency and give all his time to it.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: I know that members are constantly doing odd jobs, fetching and carrying for electors, which I think is the despicable part of the whole thing. I do not see why a man, because he is a member for a constituency, should be carrying the butter and potatoes and running messages for every elector in the place.

HON. R. BEDFORD: Have not honorary legislators capitalised their position and been paid by a sidewind?

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: I do not think there are any such on this side.

HON. R. BEDFORD: The reason why paid members came in was to do away with the corruption of an unpaid House.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: I deny that statement. I say that legislators, before payment of members came in, were just as pure, and just as bad, as members are now. I do not think that any reflection can be cast on legislators in Queensland as a body. I think when they worked voluntarily they did it just as honestly and laboriously as they do now. They did not kow-tow to electors as members do at the present time, which I think is a reprehensible thing in the representation of any constituency. I think that, for a number of reasons, this Bill should not be passed at the present stage. Later on, the electors will have an opportunity of approving of it if they like, and increasing the salary of members—call it wages or salary, or whatever you like. I will conclude by moving—

"That all the words after the word 'be' be omitted, with a view to inserting the words 'read a second time this day six months,' for the following reasons:—

1. The people of Queensland have not yet been given an opportunity of expressing their will on this proposal of the Government to increase their own salaries.

2. No one should be the judge in his own case.

3. The proposed increase in salaries has not been a vital, or even important, matter at any general election.

4. Present members of Parliament were elected by taxpayers on the basis of a continuance of the present salary.

5. It is desirable that the efforts of the Government should be directed rather to reducing the present high cost of living than to increasing their own salaries.

6. The present measure should have been accompanied by two measures introducing reforms which are very widely desired, namely, the reduction of members to a reasonable number—a reform that has been introduced into all the States of Australia, except Queensland—and the redistribution of seats so as to accord with the democratic principle of one vote one value.

7. In view of the present urgent need for national and individual economy, it is desirable that Parliament should itself set a high example of minimising the cost of government, and not make personal advantage a reason for increasing the present alarming succession of deficits.

8. No similar increase in members' salaries has, since the war commenced, been made in any State of the Commonwealth, and like propositions have been publicly condemned wherever they have been recently proposed.

9. That retrospective payment to 16th March, 1919, is bad in principle."

HON. E. H. T. PLANT: I intend to oppose the amendment. The question has been very well debated, and we have heard many speeches on both sides; but I do not feel inclined to give a vote without stating my reasons for that vote. Now that payment of members has become a national question, that is not likely to be altered. I believe that it is better to pay a salary which will attract good men, and I do not think that £300 is sufficient for a member of the Legislative Assembly. I did not like the way in which members of the other House got the £200 extra last year; but, at the same time, I quite believe that they are entitled to more than £300, especially country members, who are put to very much greater expense than town members. A town member can attend to his business, and, perhaps, does not suffer the same loss as a man who has to leave his business for five or six months in the year, and who is put to the expense of living here and, perhaps, maintaining his family in the North or West. That is a great handicap to the country member. My own idea is that the country member should have at least £100 a year more than the town member, and I do not think that that would be adequate compensation to him for the loss he sustains in coming to attend to his parliamentary duties. I have known numbers of instances

in which members have actually ruined themselves by becoming members of Parliament, and having to neglect their businesses for the sake of the small emoluments which they received as members of Parliament, and which by no means compensated them for the amount they had to pay in contesting elections. I believe that this measure should be accompanied by a Bill for a reduction in the number of members in the Assembly. That is one point I am very strong upon. As soon as we get federation we should have had a reduction in the number of members. We ought also to have a redistribution of seats, as there is a great anomaly at present in the number of electors in different constituencies. I hope the Government will see their way clear to deal with both these questions before the next election. I intend to vote for the second reading of the Bill.

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

CONTENTS, 22.

Hon. R. Bedford	Hon. F. McDonnell
" F. Courtice	" P. Murphy
" W. R. Crampton	" T. Nevitt
" W. H. Demaine	" C. F. Nielson
" A. Hinchcliffe	" G. Page-Hanify
" A. J. Jones	" I. Perel
" H. C. Jones	" E. H. T. Plant
" T. L. Jones	" E. B. Purnell
" G. Lawson	" W. J. Riordan
" H. Llewelyn	" A. Skirving
" L. McDonald	" R. Sumner
Tellers: Hon. A. Hinchcliffe and Hon. C. F. Nielson.	

NOT-CONTENTS, 17.

Hon. J. Cowlishaw	Hon. C. F. Marks
" G. S. Curtis	" E. D. Miles
" B. Fahey	" T. J. O'Shea
" E. W. H. Fowles	" A. H. Parnell
" H. L. Groom	" W. Stephens
" T. M. Hall	" A. J. Thynne
" A. G. C. Hawthorn	" H. Turner
" J. Hodel	" A. H. Whittingham
" P. J. Leahy	
Tellers: Hon. T. J. O'Shea and Hon. A. H. Whittingham.	

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I move—
"That the President do now leave the chair and that the Council be put into Committee of the Whole to consider the Bill in detail."

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Will there be any use in suggesting to the Minister that he might take the Committee stage of this Bill to-morrow? There may be some amendments that we would like to propose, and it is desirable that we should be given time to put those amendments in form. I am sure that the Minister, with his usual sense of fair play, will see the force of this argument. Of course, if the hon. gentleman does not do so, he has his brutal majority, and we can only submit.

Question put and passed.

The PRESIDENT: As the Hon. Dr. Taylor thinks it is not advisable for him to take the chair, being pecuniarily interested in the Bill, I call upon the Hon. W. Stephens, one of the Temporary Chairmen, to take the chair.

Hon. W. Hamilton.]

COMMITTEE.

(Hon. W. Stephens in the chair.)

Clauses 1 to 4, both inclusive, put and passed.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: He thought this Bill should not come into operation or have any force or effect whatsoever until after it had been submitted to the people by way of a referendum, and until after the people had given an affirmative vote for the Bill. This was an essentially democratic proposal, and if hon. gentlemen opposite were the democrats they claimed to be, he should look to them for support for the amendment he was about to propose. He moved that the following new clause be added after clause 4:—

“This Act shall not come into operation until after it has been submitted to the voters by way of referendum and after they have voted in favour of it.”

The amendment was somewhat crude, as its preparation had been hurried, but it was sufficient to express what he desired to have embodied in the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He opposed the amendment, and doubted whether it was really in order.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Don't you believe in the referendum?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. gentleman should give notice of the question, and he would answer it at the proper time. If the amendment was not out of order, as he believed it was, it was certainly an attempt to destroy the Bill, as it would have a similar effect to the amendment moved by the Hon. Mr. O'Shea on the second reading, to the effect that the Bill be read a second time this day six months. However, he did not wish to prolong the debate, and hon. gentlemen could take a division on the amendment.

Question—That the new clause (*Mr. Leahy's amendment*) be inserted—put; and the Committee divided—

CONTENTS, 16.

Hon. J. Cowlishaw	Hon. P. J. Leahy
“ G. S. Curtis	“ C. F. Marks
“ B. Fahey	“ E. D. Miles
“ E. W. H. Fowles	“ T. J. O'Shea
“ H. L. Groom	“ A. H. Parnell
“ T. M. Hall	“ A. J. Thynne
“ A. G. C. Hawthorn	“ H. Turner
“ J. Hodel	“ A. H. Whittingham

Tellers: Hon. T. M. Hall and Hon. T. J. O'Shea.

NOT-CONTENTS, 21.

Hon. R. Bedford	Hon. F. McDonnell
“ F. Courtice	“ P. Murphy
“ W. R. Crampton	“ T. Nevitt
“ W. H. Demaine	“ G. Page-Hanify
“ A. Hinchcliffe	“ I. Perel
“ A. J. Jones	“ E. H. T. Plant
“ H. C. Jones	“ E. B. Purnell
“ T. L. Jones	“ W. J. Riordan
“ G. Lawson	“ A. Skirving
“ H. Llewellyn	“ R. Sumner
“ L. McDonald	

Tellers: Hon. F. McDonnell and Hon. T. L. Jones.

Resolved in the negative.

[*Hon. P. J. Leahy.*]

The Council resumed. The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment; and the report was adopted.

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

WORKERS' HOMES BILL.

MESSAGE FROM ASSEMBLY.

The PRESIDENT announced the receipt from the Assembly of the following message:—

“Mr. President,—

“The Legislative Assembly, having had under consideration the Legislative Council's amendments in the Workers' Homes Bill, beg now to intimate that they—

“Disagree to the amendments in clause 2, page 1, line 13; and clause 13, page 5, lines 44 and 45—

“Because the policy of the Government is opposed to the further alienation of Crown lands. Further, it is considered that easier terms can be extended to the purchasers of homes under the Bill by the granting of leaseholds than would be the case if freeholds were granted.

“Disagree to the amendments in clause 2, page 1, lines 18 to 20; clause 6, page 5, line 47; and clause 10, page 5, lines 21 to 23—

“Because such amendments interfere with the undoubted and sole right of the Legislative Assembly to direct, restrict, or condition the expenditure of public moneys; and this right cannot be waived by the Legislative Assembly, nor can it be conceded to the Legislative Council; and

“Agree to all other amendments in the Bill.

“WM. LENNON,

“Speaker.

“Legislative Assembly Chamber,

“Brisbane, 22nd October, 1919.”

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR MINES, the consideration of the message was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I beg to move—That this Council do now adjourn. The first business to-morrow will be the third reading of the Constitution Act Amendment Bill, No. 2, to be followed by the Committee stages of the Succession Act of 1906 Declaratory Bill and the Queensland Government Savings Bank Act Amendment Bill, the third reading of the Seaforth Repurchased Estate Bill, the resumption of the adjourned debate on the motion for the second reading of the Popular Initiative and Referendum Bill, and the resumption of the adjourned debate on the motion for the second reading of the Elections Act Amendment Bill.

Question put and passed.

The Council adjourned at twenty minutes past 9 o'clock p.m.