

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 1920

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 25 NOVEMBER, 1920.

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

QUESTIONS.

CYCLONE INSURANCE AND WARNINGS.

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*) asked the Attorney-General—

“1. In view of the approaching cyclonic season in North Queensland, is it his intention to introduce a measure for cyclonic insurance this session?”

“2. Has he seen the system of cyclonic warnings drafted by Captain Rhodes, harbour-master at Rockhampton? If so, will he join with the Northern members in making representations for its adoption?”

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*) replied—

“1. The matter is receiving consideration.

“2. I have seen the system of cyclonic warnings drafted by Captain Rhodes, and can assure the hon. member that the Government is always ready to give full consideration to any proposals regarding cyclonic warnings, or anything else affecting the welfare of North Queensland.”

PROPOSED STEEL WORKS AT BOWEN.

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

“1. Has his attention been drawn to an article appearing in the ‘Brisbane Courier’ of 23rd instant dealing with the establishment of steel works at Bowen?”

“2. Will he take steps to prevent such slanderous and erroneous statements regarding the climatic and industrial conditions at Bowen, and North Queensland generally, from being scattered broadcast?”

“3. Does he not consider such statements inimical to the best interests of land settlement, and to the expansion of industrial enterprises in Bowen and North Queensland?”

“4. Will he ascertain the mortality rates for Bowen during the past five years, and Newcastle, in New South Wales, for the same period?”

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*) replied—

“1. Yes.

“2. I am afraid it would be impracticable, however desirable, to devise some means for preventing the publication of statements such as those referred to which arise from ignorance and an imperfect knowledge of the matter dealt with. It is well known that Bowen possesses a cool and regular temperature, which is no greater than places 10 to 15 degrees further South, including the southern portion of New South Wales.”

“3. Yes.

"4. The mortality rates for the registry district of Bowen and Newcastle, New South Wales, respectively, are—

| Bowen. | | Rate per 1,000 of Population. |
|------------|--------|-------------------------------|
| Year. | | |
| 1915 | | 9.59 |
| 1916 | | 9.13 |
| 1917 | | 8.85 |
| 1918 | | 12.05 |
| 1919 | | 14.11 |
| Newcastle. | | Rate per 1,000 of Population. |
| Year. | | |
| 1916-17 | | 11.99 |
| 1917-18 | | 11.49 |
| 1918-19 | | 13.73" |

PRICES OF STATE BEEF.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*) asked the Minister in charge of State enterprises—

"1. What was the average price per lb. paid by the State to various meat-works for beef supplies—(a) on 30th December, 1919; (b) on 30th June, 1920?"

"2. What was the average price charged by the State butcheries to the public for beef—(a) on 30th December, 1919; (b) on 30th June, 1920?"

The TREASURER (Hon. J. A. Fihelly, *Paddington*) replied—

"1. (a) and (b), 4½d. was the average price for the year ended 30th June, 1920.

"2. (a) and (b), 5½d. was the average price for the year ended 30th June, 1920."

WHEAT PER S.S. "PORT CHALMERS."

Mr. FRY (*Kwailpa*) asked the Minister in charge of State enterprises—

"1. Is the wheat now being shipped by the s.s. 'Port Chalmers' the property of the Queensland Government?"

"2. What is the quantity being shipped?"

"3. Does he know the condition and quality of the wheat now being shipped?"

"4. Will not the quality of this wheat seriously damage the reputation of Queensland?"

"5. Is the wheat fit for human consumption?"

"6. Is the wheat being inspected before being shipped, and by whom?"

"7. To whom has the wheat been sold?"

"8. What is the purchasing price?"

The TREASURER replied—

"1. Yes; State Produce Agency.

"2. About 16,000 bags.

"3. The wheat is 'Adelaide B quality milling wheat,' numerous cargoes of which have been shipped previously in the South.

"4. No; wheat will be invoiced as 'Adelaide B quality milling wheat.'

"5. Yes.

"6. Yes; by officers of State Produce Agency capable of inspecting; any wheat not considered fit for shipment is being held back.

"7 and 8. By arrangement with Australian Wheat Board wheat is being shipped on consignment to Commonwealth

Wheat Committee, London, who have undertaken to place it in best markets."

AUCTION SALES FOR PUBLIC CURATOR.

Mr. FRY asked the Attorney-General—

"1. What was the total amount realised during the twelve months ended 30th June last from auction sales conducted by order of the Public Curator?"

"2. What auctioneers, during that period, conducted sales on behalf of the Public Curator?"

"3. What indebtedness was incurred by the Government to each, inclusive of all amounts paid or as yet unpaid, in respect of commission on such sales by auction?"

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL replied—

"1 to 3. The information is being obtained."

STATE MOTOR-CAR IN CARNARVON ELECTORATE.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*) asked the Premier—

"1. Was any State motor-car in use in the electorate of Carnarvon during the two months ended 9th October last?"

"2. If so, for what purpose was it being used, how many days was it in use, what was its itinerary, and what was the cost to the State of its tours, inclusive of wages and expenses of driver?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1 and 2. Inquiry will be made."

CONSTRUCTION OF STATE ABATTOIRS.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*) asked the Premier—

"When does he intend to proceed with the construction of State abattoirs at Weolston, which his Government proposed to begin in 1915?"

The PREMIER replied—

"When circumstances justify such action."

PROPOSED DENATIONALISATION OF BABINDA HOTEL.

Mr. PETRIE asked the Premier—

"In view of the overwhelming majority given by the people of Queensland, and of the Babinda district, against State control of the liquor traffic, is it his intention to denationalise the Babinda Hotel?"

The PREMIER replied—

"No; the result of the recent poll was in favour of continuance, and the State Hotel, Babinda, will continue to operate its residential and other facilities to serve the interests of the people of that district."

EXPENDITURE ON STATE IRON AND STEEL WORKS.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*) asked the Minister representing the Secretary for Mines—

"What is the total amount expended to date on account of State iron and steel works—(a) Yampi iron ore expenditure, (b) all other expenditure?"

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*) replied—

"(a) and (b) £11,058 14s. 10d. to 31st October, 1920. This amount includes expenditure in connection with the inspection and investigation of the Yampi Sound iron ore deposits, but not the purchase price, which is £33,000 (£3,000 cash which has been paid, and £30,000 in debentures carrying 6 per cent. interest, which have been issued)."

HAMILTON COLD STORES.

Mr. FLETCHER asked the Minister in charge of State enterprises—

"1. What is the estimated cost of the Hamilton cold stores when completed?"

"2. What is to be the total cubic capacity of cold storage space when completed?"

"3. Is he satisfied with the manner in which the cork contract has been carried out in connection with these cold stores?"

"4. Does he not think the contract was negotiated in a very irregular manner?"

"5. Will he institute a public inquiry into all matters surrounding the placing of the contract, and the carrying out of same?"

The TREASURER replied—

"1. £250,000.

"2. Gross content of all buildings, 1,737,036 cubic feet; net capacity of cold storage space, 604,800 cubic feet.

"3. Yes.

"4. No.

"5. Quite unnecessary."

STATE CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC.

Mr. FORDE (*Rockhampton*) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"Will he urge the Cabinet to agree to the early establishment of a State conservatorium of music in Queensland, and thus bring within the reach of the sons and daughters of the poorer people of this State the expert tuition of the best professors of music and singing in Australia at a nominal charge?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. J. Huxham, *Buranda*) replied—

"The matter will be brought before Cabinet."

RAILWAY JUNIOR CLERKS' APPOINTMENT.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. (a) Is it a fact that certain surplus junior clerks, between the ages of eighteen and twenty years, of the various head offices of the Railway Department, were transferred to other Government departments during the last twelve months; (b) if so, what was the reason necessitating such transfers?"

"2. (a) Is it a fact that, a short time thereafter, a brother of the hon. the Secretary for Railways received a position in the head office of the Railway Department in a clerical capacity, and is now receiving £250 per annum; (b) that his age is between eighteen and twenty years?"

"3. Is it a fact that other junior clerks of the same age, with years longer service, competent, and on the permanent staff, only receive £135 under the award?"

"4. Is it a fact that such appointment referred to in the previous questions was not confirmed—that is, the person was not placed on the permanent staff of the Railway Department, because it would have meant placing him on an equality with other junior clerks at a reduction in salary of approximately £100 per annum, to conform to the award?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Kippel*) replied—

"1 to 4. As there was a surplus of employees in the Railway Department in March last, a number were seconded over to other Government departments. At that time I was Minister for Works, and J. N. Larcombe acted as my private secretary. In April last a Ministerial rearrangement took place. The Hon. J. A. Fihelly became Treasurer and took his private secretary from the Railway Department to the Treasury Department, and my secretary accompanied me to the Railway Department. At that time J. S. Strachan, who assisted as railway private secretary, was away on holidays. On his return I promoted him to the position of private secretary, and J. N. Larcombe took up Strachan's duties at less salary than Strachan was receiving."

DECENTRALISATION OF PUBLIC OFFICES.

Mr. GREEN asked the Premier—

"Will he arrange for the decentralisation of all public offices so as to facilitate the work of the principal departments in North Queensland, whose operations are frequently delayed through having to await decisions from the Brisbane office on matters of minor importance?"

The PREMIER replied—

"If the hon. gentleman will be so good as to specify the public offices whose operations are 'frequently delayed' I will have the matter inquired into."

FORESTRY WORK IN THE NORTH.

Mr. GREEN asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. What was the total amount spent on forestry work north of Mackay during the year ended 30th June last?"

"2. Will he immediately instruct the Forestry Department to initiate a scheme for the conservation of Northern timbers?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrego*) replied—

"1. £5,482 7s. 4d.

"2. A scheme of conservation of Northern timbers is being initiated, and will be developed so far as funds permit."

COMMONWEALTH BANK AGREEMENT RATIFICATION AND STATE ADVANCES BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the TREASURER (Hon. J. A. Fihelly, *Paddington*), this Bill was read a third time, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

CONTROL OF AIR NAVIGATION BILL.
INITIATION.

The PREMIER, in moving—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirability of introducing a Bill to refer to the Parliament of the Commonwealth the control of air navigation; and for purposes connected therewith?”—

said: I do not know whether hon. members desire to suggest they are opposed to the transfer of these powers to the Commonwealth Government or are anxious to uphold the glorious rights of the State in regard to this question. At any rate, the Bill itself carries out what was agreed to at the Premiers' conference, when it was decided that such powers should be transferred to the Commonwealth, in order that we should have uniform legislation dealing with air navigation. Representations were made at the conference, showing it was urgently necessary and it was desirable that legislation should be uniform and be controlled by the Commonwealth. The Imperial authorities have evinced some interest in the matter, and are pressing the States to take some action to have the main principles of the recent International Aerial Navigation Convention legislated upon and carried into effect. It was decided by the States to transfer the powers to the Commonwealth by the introduction of the necessary legislation.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I do not think there will be very much opposition from this side of the House, as far as this proposal is concerned. I think we are all satisfied that uniformity should exist and that legislation should be introduced as soon as possible. Personally, I think we have all seen instances of indiscriminate flying over towns, which has been the cause of accidents in some cases. A regulation should be brought in to save the public from such danger. I read quite recently of a case which happened at Longreach, and I was talking to a person who saw an accident resulting from some fancy flying which was done by a man who evidently was not very anxious about his own wellbeing. We should protect the public interest, and the sooner legislation is made in this direction the better it will be. I do not think there will be any opposition to the Bill from this side of the House.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): I think this is one of the things that should be controlled by the Commonwealth.

The PREMIER: This is a change of policy, isn't it? (Laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES: In connection with aerial navigation, the time may come—I hope it will not—when even Australia will need it from the large national side, as it may be a necessary instrument of defence. I, therefore, think it should be controlled by the Commonwealth Government.

The PREMIER: What is the difference in principle between transferring these powers and those relating to the Savings Bank?

HON. W. H. BARNES: Probably, if I started to show—as I could—the big difference there is, the Speaker would pull me up.

Mr. MORGAN: There is no revenue in this.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is perfectly certain that in this case there is an absolutely

big difference, and, as an hon. member has interjected, there is no revenue in this, but there is some cost.

Question put and passed.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*), in moving—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirability of introducing a Bill to amend the Local Authorities Acts of 1902 to 1917 in certain particulars?”—

said: I do not want to deliver a second reading speech at this stage. I just want to say, briefly, there are several amendments of the Local Authorities Acts contained in this Bill, the most important of which is the intention to alter the franchise. The other amendments are those which have been suggested by the local authorities' conference.

Mr. CORSER: Would you consider that the most important one has been suggested by the local authorities?

The HOME SECRETARY: It may have been; I have not noticed it. There is no use dealing with the question at this stage. I will have something considerable to say on the second reading stage. I, therefore, formally move the motion standing in my name.

Mr. VOWLES: I rise to state that, in my opinion, it is not desirable to introduce legislation in the direction suggested by the Home Secretary.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: We have had this principle before this Chamber on other occasions.

The HOME SECRETARY: This comes of giving information.

Mr. VOWLES: It is just as well we should know, because we are being asked to consent to something being desirable which the House knows we strongly object to. On the last occasion on which we discussed this matter it was plain that this was one of the planks of the Labour platform on which the Government had been returned to power, and given a mandate to put into operation, together with other principles. The position is reversed very much now. During last election no plank of the Labour platform was more the subject of criticism than the alteration of the franchise with respect to local authorities. On every platform on which I spoke in the country I pointed out to the people that if they returned the Labour Government this and certain other legislation was going to be put upon them, and in those electorates in particular there was a revulsion of feeling against the present Government, and when the general result was known we discovered that the people in the country were not behind the Government and their platform, but behind the gentlemen who are now sitting in opposition.

The PREMIER: Which section of the Opposition?

Mr. VOWLES: If the Premier knew his business, he would know that Parliament recognises only one Opposition.

The PREMIER: I know that your party obtained fewer votes than the National party.

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Mr. VOWLES: It is no good the hon. gentleman talking about my party or somebody else's party. Let him talk about his own party and the anti-Labour candidates, and he will find that the gentlemen in Parliament to-day who are opposed to his principles represent a majority of the people in the country. That being so, what moral authority has the Home Secretary or the Government to bring in a principle such as this, when the people have distinctly told them they do not want it? We have always been told the Government stood as a democratic Government. Although it has a larger number of representatives in the House than we have, it does not represent a larger number of people in the country, and it cannot conscientiously or morally attempt to put into effect any of the principles which the people have voted against. Without going into any further detail with respect to that one subject which the Home Secretary spoke about—because we do not know what the others are—I say it is not desirable that we should have anything to do with an alteration of the legislation in the direction suggested.

The HOME SECRETARY: I think you will agree with the others.

Mr. VOWLES: I'll express my opinion when I see them. At present we know there is something objectionable, and we are going to raise our voice against it, and say that in the interests of the country it is not desirable.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Minister, in moving this resolution, stated that the principal thing was the franchise. That was about the only information he gave us.

The HOME SECRETARY: You used to give a lot of information, didn't you?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am very glad the Home Secretary recognises that when I was a Minister I gave a great deal of information.

The HOME SECRETARY: You gave no information.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I was noted for the information which I gave to the other side. (Government interruption.)

Mr. FRY: And was correct when he gave it.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is not the question, however. The question is that the hon. gentleman has given notice of something which he knows is manifestly unfair, and is not democratic. Now, what is the position to-day?

Mr. SMITH: It is essentially democratic.

HON. W. H. BARNES: No, it is not essentially democratic. The parties who pay the rates should have the votes.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are entirely out of order in discussing the matter at this stage.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am dealing with the franchise. Is the Home Secretary the Speaker, or are you, Sir? Is he going to try and boss the show this afternoon in his characteristic fashion? It is fortunate we have you in the chair, Mr. Speaker, and we are not going to have the Home Secretary bossing the show. (Laughter.) It is perfectly certain that the hon. gentleman has been whipped up in this particular connection by outside forces. I believe right down at the bottom of his heart the hon. gentleman would say this was not a fair proposal.

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It is perfectly certain that this Bill is going to do a grave injustice to local authorities. Now, what is the position with regard to local authorities? And, surely, they should be considered? Again and again, by an almost unanimous vote, they have said the proposal which the hon. gentleman is now seeking to introduce by this resolution is manifestly unfair. Some of us here to-day know that when the hon. gentleman or some of his colleagues—the present Minister for Public Instruction, for instance—have been present, they have had a bad time when they have attempted to discuss the question of adult suffrage.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The local authorities always gave me a good time.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman has a very poor idea of what a good time is. The fact remains that the principle was opposed, again and again, practically by a unanimous vote. The local authority men have always extended their usual courtesy to every Minister when he was speaking.

Mr. SMITH interjected.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member for Mackay talks about democracy, and yet he says that we should not expect anything else from the men who have been returned by the people in connection with local authorities. It is perfectly certain that the Home Secretary is simply obeying the behests of someone outside, who says this must be done, and he comes along and tries to twit us with being in two sections.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not twit you.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The fact remains that the Government, who have a minority of votes, are the ones who are seeking to introduce this thing. The public are not behind them in this action. It is only, as you, Mr. Speaker, know, by the way in which the electorates were dealt with that they succeeded in getting back at all. Yet they come along and claim that this is democracy. Well, save us from democracy of that kind.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I am going to object strongly to this amendment of the Local Authorities Acts.

Mr. SMITH: We expected you would.

Mr. MOORE: Naturally, you would expect it. Any ordinary sensible man would expect it. (Laughter.) We know it has been brought in by outside dictation. We recognise that when the present Minister for Education was Home Secretary and went to local authority conferences, he felt very uncomfortable at having to mention this question.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No, never!

Mr. MOORE: But individuals were forcing him to bring in something in which he did not believe. It is exactly the same with the present Home Secretary. He knows it is an unjust thing—it is unfair—but he has to do what he is told. Unfortunately, that is the position to which we have come to-day.

The HOME SECRETARY: Don't you be too sure about that.

Mr. MOORE: I am quite sure of it, because we know the present Home Secretary is a sensible man and believe in fair play, and if he were left to his own individual opinion I am quite satisfied he

would not bring in anything that is undemocratic, such as this is. Is any-
[4 p.m.] thing fair that allows a man to step in and put a mortgage on another man's property and walk out and allow him to pay for it? The thing is absurd.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: That is far-fetched.

Mr. MOORE: It is not far-fetched at all. The Home Secretary states that the other amendments he is bringing in were advocated by the local authority conference. Why should he select the one voted against on five separate occasions and bring it in as the chief one.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am not bringing in every one of the amendments which have been recommended.

Mr. MOORE: No; then why pick out the one that we unanimously voted against and bring it in as a special one. This Bill was before the House on three previous occasions; you had an opportunity to put it to a referendum of the people and did not take that opportunity.

The HOME SECRETARY: You must admit, as a local authority man, that there is some change necessary.

Mr. MOORE: What I object to is that we have had this unanimously voted against on five separate occasions, and still it is brought in as the main one.

Mr. SMITH: Voted against by whom?

Mr. MOORE: By the councillors who have been elected by the people of Queensland.

Mr. SMITH: By a section of them.

Mr. MOORE: We had men of all political beliefs at that conference. Why, we had the chairman of the council giving a banquet to Mr. Filbally when he went to speak politically at Helidon, and the whole council were vying with one another in pointing out how much they supported the Labour party, except on this one point.

The HOME SECRETARY: Oh, no!

Mr. MOORE: Two members of this House at one time attended a conference, and they voted for it because they had to obey their caucus—they could not help it. But I say there were people of all political beliefs at the local authorities' conference, and they unanimously voted against it.

Mr. SMITH: The local authority is a Tory organisation.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member for Mackay does not know what he is talking about. It is not a Tory organisation at all. It comprises people of all political beliefs who have been elected by the people of the district to run the affairs of the district.

Mr. KIRWAN: What was the first resolution they passed at the last conference? That showed their political belief.

Mr. MOORE: Because a man believes in justice and fair play, it does not show his politics, or it should not do so.

Mr. KIRWAN: It was not a motion recording justice and fair play.

Mr. FORDE: Do you believe in one man one vote?

Mr. MOORE: I am opposing this amendment.

Mr. FORDE: I know you don't.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I would ask the hon. member for Rockhampton not to interject.

Mr. MOORE: I do not believe in representation without taxation, and that is what this Government is trying to bring in with regard to this Bill.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why not wait until the second reading to discuss the matter?

Mr. MOORE: I have every bit as much right to object to it now as then. We have objected to it every time, and it has been objected to at every conference.

Mr. FORDE interjected.

Mr. MOORE: It is all very well for the member for Rockhampton to try and get in political electioneering stuff because he is going for a plebiscite. (Laughter.) All the questions he has been asking lately have been with the one point in view. I do not take any notice of that sort of thing. I am looking after the interests of the people who put me here, and strongly object to a measure such as this being brought in. Just as in the wheat Bill they put in something unpalatable to the farmers, so in this they are trying to force us to accept something that is not fair. I would rather have no amendment at all, if we are going to have this provision brought in, than have the amendment we have asked for with this tacked on to it.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): The Minister has given notice of his intention to bring in a Bill to amend the Local Authorities Act "in certain particulars." The only particular he is giving us is in connection with adult franchise. Certain other particulars for certain other purposes mentioned in the Bill, he says, are recommendations from local authorities. I hope if they have come from local authorities, he will give effect to those recommendations, but adult suffrage is a thing to which the local authorities are practically unanimously opposed, year after year at their conferences. For the last five or six years the conferences in Brisbane have passed a resolution condemning this principle, and I say, further, that, not only have the local authorities condemned it, but the electors of Queensland have condemned it on two occasions. The last occasion was when the electors of Queensland returned this Government to power with a minority of 20,000 electors.

The HOME SECRETARY: Nonsense!

Mr. KING: They have no mandate from the people to bring in this amendment. When the Act passed the Lower House and went to the Upper House, it was thrown out there, and that was one of the reasons why a referendum was taken for the abolition of the Upper House. The people of Queensland endorsed the action of the Upper House by refusing its abolition. I say it has been before the people on two occasions, and the electors have said, "We do not want it."

Mr. MORGAN: I wish to move—That the words "in certain particulars" be deleted. The Minister has told us that he does not intend to bring in all the amendments suggested by the local authorities—only some of them. He may pick out a few to his own particular liking—a few which will, perhaps, suit his particular party. Amendments may be discussed and recommended to the Minister year after year which, perhaps, may not be dealt with in

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any shape or form. If we are going to amend the Bill, let us deal with the matter fully and conclusively now, so that the Bill when once amended will last for years. We do not know what amendments the Minister has selected. The men connected with the local authorities have occupied their positions for many years; they are unpaid and do the work for the good of the country generally. The Minister says he has selected a certain number of amendments recommended by the local authorities; but there is not a man in this House to-day I suppose—not even the president of the Local Authorities' Association—knows what resolutions he has selected.

The HOME SECRETARY: We are responsible to the people; not to the president of the Local Authorities' Association.

Mr. MORGAN: If responsible to the people, you would not bring in an amendment so far as franchise is concerned at all. The people said distinctly on the last occasion the question was put to them that they did not believe in adult franchise. The ex-Minister, when introducing a Bill previously, said, "We have a mandate from the people; the people have endorsed our policy." On this occasion the people turned it down by 20,000 or more votes.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Cut that out.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. MORGAN: You have no right to be on the Treasury benches at all.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. MORGAN: You are occupying your positions under false pretences. No Government that had any respect for itself would stay there for one moment.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. MORGAN: You know that what I say is true, Mr. Speaker. We should have an opportunity of dealing with every one of the amendments recommended by the local authorities, and not only the ones which the Minister likes to bring forward. The recommendations have, no doubt, been carried by a huge majority. The Minister is not furnishing us with any particulars. He tells us practically nothing, and, as an ex-Speaker, the Minister knows perfectly well that if we allow the resolution to go through at this stage we will be told we have lost our opportunity to get in any amendment, and would only be able to deal with those brought forward by the Minister. This is the stage at which we should see that we have an opportunity of widening the scope of the Bill. We are not going to lose our opportunity. We are going to endeavour to see, when the amendment to the Local Authorities Act is brought before the House, that the amendments that have been recommended so often by the local authorities will have an opportunity of being discussed by both sides of the House. I move accordingly—That the words "in certain particulars" be deleted.

Mr. CORSER: I rise to second the amendment which, I contend, will make possible the will of the local authorities being embodied in a Bill. Many amendments that the local authorities have asked the Minister for for years he has never been anxious to bring along. There has been a desire from time to time to introduce an amendment for adult franchise, and the Minister has

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received a rebuff from the other place. Now he comes along with a Bill, the specific purpose of which is really to force this amendment. I would like to see the position of trade unionism in Queensland if the Minister were to suggest that the Industrial Council be elected on an adult franchise. There is a very conservative idea existing in our Trades Hall operations, and the councils there see that only those who have paid their dues have a say as to who shall be their councillors in industrial matters.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you think the unions would object to the employers' federation?

Mr. CORSER: Not all of them. I think you would get a lot of help from some of them. I think if the Minister wants to be consistent he would admit that it would be a fair thing for the general public to have a say as to who should be their representatives on the Industrial Council. The Minister made a boast that he elected more council representatives than anyone else.

The HOME SECRETARY: So I did elect more.

Mr. CORSER: In the Gayndah district, the hon. gentleman would not elect the man wanted by the people of Gayndah to the local council, but, instead, he asked Mr. William Demaine—

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not ask him.

Mr. CORSER: The Minister asked that gentleman to recommend a man, and he appointed a man to the local council against the wishes of the people there. An alderman was proud and bold enough to resign when he found how he had been elected to the Gayndah Town Council. He was elected against the wishes of the aldermen and he was a Government nominee. We know that there are very many amendments asked for by the local authorities at the conference held in Brisbane every year, but these amendments are not receiving the attention and consideration that they should receive from the Minister. In fact, there are many matters in connection with local government which have not received much attention from the Government since the Hon. George Appel administered that department. (Hear, hear!) We know that the local authority representatives have brought before the notice of the Minister many matters of great importance, but the hon. gentleman has not given a kindly ear to their consideration at all. If there is such a desire to assist our local authorities, why don't the Government bring forward the suggestions made by the local authorities conference every year? Why don't the Government provide the necessary money for the local authorities to carry out the conditions that the wages boards have placed them in? Why not bring forward some scheme whereby the local authorities can raise money to carry out those works which are essential? I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment. I hope the words will be deleted, so that the local authorities will have a say as to what amendments they would like to see inserted in the Bill.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I also support the amendment.

Mr. SMITH: Another Daniel come to judgment.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes, it is about time that we did come to judgment. (Government laughter.) The people of this State have given their judgment, and the Govern-

ment are now waiting for the sentence. The people have already judged, and it will not be long before the sentence is carried out. I support the amendment, because there are other things that we need to consider in connection with local authority matters besides those mentioned by the Home Secretary. We know that there are clauses in the different Bills passed through this House which are ruining the shire councils and city councils at the present time. I believe the Home Secretary mentioned about a certain shire council at Helidon, which gave a party to the Premier or someone else. I believe there is a dispute now as to whether that money was rightly spent or not. The rate-payers are rising up in arms against it, and there is going to be a fierce contest against the councillor who was responsible. The reason for that entertainment was that it was not a shire council matter, but a political matter. In fact, these days everybody is getting paid for politics, and not for working at all. We know that in the public service the public servants are paid for joining a union and not for working at all.

The SPEAKER: Order!

HON. W. H. BARNES: Before the amendment is put, I may say that it will be recognised again and again in this House that we have found ourselves in the position that, after the Bill has been introduced, we are absolutely shut out from altering the Bill in any way.

The PREMIER: You are against it.

HON. W. H. BARNES: No, I am in favour of the amendment, which will include anything that will be of benefit to local government which is of importance. This amendment is a proper one; and, bearing in mind what the Government have said about the local authorities, I am surprised that the amendment has not been accepted.

MR. WINSTANLEY: Did you accept every amendment when you were Minister?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman knows that I was a model in that respect.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Did you ever accept a similar amendment?

HON. W. H. BARNES: Mr. Speaker, your memory will be better than the Attorney-General's. You will know that I accepted all amendments that were reasonable.

MR. VOWLES: I rise to support the amendment. We have been given very meagre details as to what this Bill is likely to contain. We have only been told one principle which it will contain. I would like to know if the Bill makes provision for payment to members of local authorities.

The HOME SECRETARY: If I gave you that information at this stage, every member on that side would want to discuss its merits or demerits.

MR. VOWLES: If we are going to introduce a Local Authorities Bill, why not make a good job of it at once. I remind the Minister that promises were made to the local authorities that amendments would be introduced; and now that we have got the opportunity to introduce them we should bring them forward. I consider that we should have some provision in our local authority laws whereby the Crown will be compelled to pay something for the upkeep of the roads that are destroyed by the timber teams in the timber districts. I have here a record of the proceedings of the

last conference of local authorities held in Brisbane. I see a number of important resolutions were agreed to.

The HOME SECRETARY: A lot of them are very useful.

MR. VOWLES: Yes; and now that we have an opportunity of putting them on the statute-book we should do so. The local authorities' conference is held every year, and now is the time to bring forward the suggestions adopted at those conferences.

The HOME SECRETARY: We don't amend the Arbitration Act every time there is a trades union conference.

MR. VOWLES: The only thing we have after a trades union conference is a strike. We know that the laws are not observed by the members of trade unions. One thing where legislation is necessary is in connection with the valuation of perpetual leases. At present it is altogether on a wrong basis, and it should not be adopted in connection with freehold land.

The HOME SECRETARY: I will see that that is included.

MR. VOWLES: That may be one of the things that is included in the Bill. If the amendment is carried it will be competent for any member to bring forward amendments on other subjects than those mentioned by the Home Secretary. While we are at it we might as well amend the Act and be prepared to do what is just. Generally the amendments that are introduced are from a city point of view or a departmental point of view, and the Minister does not look on matters as being of extraordinary importance to people in outside places. Hon. members opposite think that they have greater experience of Queensland than members sitting on this side; but when they come to put their ideas into practice we find that they are always wrong. The Minister would be wise to accept the amendment, and give us a chance to divide on the different principles brought forward. If they are not acceptable to the Government they can be dropped. There is wisdom in a multitude of counsellors, and many desirable things can be suggested to the Chamber by members of this House.

MR. FRY: I intend to support the amendment, and I hope the Minister will accept it. If he will not accept it, it will look as if he is afraid. There are many provisions in the Local Authorities Act that should be amended, and these provisions are well known to the Home Secretary. I thought we would have had an opportunity of bringing forward amendments in the Local Authorities Act, and probably they will not be provided for in this amending Bill. Without repeating it over and over again, I think the Government should accept the amendment, seeing that we on this side represent the majority of the people.

MR. KING: There is one point I would like to get some enlightenment on. I have already stated that the local authorities submitted many resolutions to the Home Secretary, and he has expressed himself in favour of a good number of them. What I want to know is, are all of these resolutions to which he has expressed himself as being favourably inclined been included in this Bill? The Minister expressed himself in favour of certain proposals put forward by the local authorities at different deputations, and I would like to know if they are included here.

Mr. King.]

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I think that the information by the hon. member for Logan is worthy of some reply from the Home Secretary. It will be recognised that the hon. member for Logan is the secretary of the Local Authorities' Association and is in close touch with the requirements of the local authorities. There are some matters which I would like some information on. I would like to know if the Minister is going to override the local authorities in the matter of interfering with gambling. We know that the Government have given permission for gambling, such as the liberty fairs, when the local councils have objected to them. If there is anything at all in giving votes to the people, then when the people elect representatives to the council, the council should be able to give an expression of opinion as to what is required, and it should not be left to the Government to override the people elected by the ratepayers. Another matter, which I have referred to in this House is the necessity for the Brisbane people supporting the Brisbane Hospital. In amending the Local Authorities Act, we should make provision for the metropolitan area maintaining their hospital. That is part of the Labour party platform.

The HOME SECRETARY: What about Toowoomba?

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: You can include Toowoomba, if you wish it, but I am speaking about the Brisbane Hospital. At present the rest of Queensland has to support its own hospitals, and also pay its share of the costs of the upkeep of the Brisbane Hospital. It is time that was stopped, and here is an opportunity for the Government to show their sincerity. The Home Secretary asked us whether, after an industrial conference, they immediately amended the Industrial Arbitration Act. I would say to the Minister that they do not even wait for those conferences. We had an exhibition this week, where, between Friday and Monday, they put an amendment into an important Bill at the request of certain people. The word has only to go forth, the dictation to be issued, and immediately they fall into line. I think the amendment is reasonable and sound, and, if the Minister desires to consider the requirements of local authority legislators in this Chamber, he will give this opportunity of ventilating these matters.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowoong*): I must apologise for my absence when the Home Secretary was introducing his motion, and should like to say a few words with reference to his statement that we did not amend the Arbitration Act after every conference. The opportunity presents itself now of making the Local Authorities Act something worthy of the name. The Local Authorities' Association have submitted certain matters to the Home Secretary, who is prepared to bring down to the House those matters with which he is in agreement, but he does not say anything about the other matters.

The HOME SECRETARY: You would not suggest that he would bring in the matters with which he does not agree?

Mr. MAXWELL: One hon. member said that in a multitude of councillors there is wisdom, and, seeing that the local authorities have taken time to consider these matters, which are of very great importance, the hon. member might, as a matter of courtesy to the

[*Mr. T. R. Roberts.*

association, give an opportunity to discuss them in the House.

The HOME SECRETARY: You will have an opportunity on the second reading. That is the place to discuss it.

Mr. MAXWELL: The motion provides for amendment of the Act "in certain particulars." What harm would it do to accept the amendment? I know full well that when the time comes we will have it pointed out to us that the Act is to be considered "in certain particulars" only, and that is not a fair position. It is all very well for the hon. member from his own standpoint or his party standpoint, but there are other matters with which he may not be in agreement which should be discussed.

The HOME SECRETARY: You will find yourself voting with the Opposition on many things you do not agree with.

Mr. MAXWELL: Will I? Perhaps the hon. member is measuring me in his own bushel. I shall vote for the amendment in order to widen the scope of the Bill, and give us an opportunity to make it better than it is.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): Possibly, if the Minister disclosed in greater detail the "certain particulars" involved in the motion there might be no necessity for the amendment.

The HOME SECRETARY: You know that if I did, they would discuss the merits and demerits of every one of the proposals at this stage.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I do not know that.

The HOME SECRETARY: You amended the Local Authorities Act two or three times, and you never accepted this amendment.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Possibly not, but then I was in agreement with the local authorities. (Hear, hear!)

The HOME SECRETARY: So am I.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. member has admitted that the main principle in the Bill is the broadening of the franchise. A natural corollary to that proposal, which would give voting power to every elector of the State, would be to consent to the rating of Crown lands. The hon. member knows that if this amendment were not carried we could not provide that local authorities could rate Crown lands. Another matter of great moment to local authorities is the question of empowering them to deal with vegetable pests, more particularly prickly-pear, which are spreading from the seed beds on Crown lands. We would be unable, in terms of the order, to introduce an amendment which would throw that liability of keeping those lands clean—and it is a just liability—on the Government. The hon. member for East Toowoomba mentioned the conduct of fairs which are practically nothing more nor less than gambling institutions, to which local authorities strongly object. If the Minister had disclosed that he proposed to deal with matters of that kind, which, to my mind, are of vital interest to every member of the community, and not alone to local authority taxpayers, the amendment would not have been necessary.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why did you not give that power?

HON. J. G. APPEL: Because, as I have said, I always acted in conjunction with the local authorities. Matters were discussed

with them, and agreed upon, and a draft Bill was submitted to them for their review—(Hear, hear!)—and the Bill was only introduced after the local authorities had agreed to the amendments in it.

The HOME SECRETARY: And you cut out a lot of their amendments.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: By agreement, after discussion. Why does not the Home Secretary follow that policy? If he did, I can assure him there would be no difficulty in passing this legislation, and when passed it would be of benefit to the community. The local authorities are carrying out great work. They are not paid for their services, and I found that, by acting in conjunction with them and conferring with them in reference to any amendment which they desired, and which I thought should be introduced for the benefit not alone of the local authority ratepayers but of the whole community, the result was a more effective and beneficial measure. I refer again to the necessity for compelling the Crown to eradicate pests from Crown lands. To-day they are the breeding grounds for all vegetable pests. The Minister may say, "Why did you not do that when you had the power?" For the reason that I assisted the local authorities by subsidy to deal with those pests, but immediately the caucus Administration came into power things were changed.

Mr. SMITH: That is not so.

The HOME SECRETARY: We increased the subsidy.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: I think the local authorities would be satisfied if the Government were prepared to assist in the eradication of that one prickly-pear pest. I can assure the Minister that if he gives consideration to the amendment it will not be to his discredit, but for the benefit of every section of the community.

Mr. GREEN: I desire to support the amendment. I look upon the proposed Bill as one of the most important measures we shall have to deal with this session. I certainly think the Minister would be well advised if he accepted the amendment. I feel sure that it is the object of every member in this House to make the Local Authorities Act a measure of which Queensland might well be proud.

The HOME SECRETARY: It would take three months of the time of this House to do what you propose.

Mr. GREEN: If it took three months, it would repay us amply, for we would be discussing an important measure affecting every local authority and to a certain extent every individual in the State. Local authorities have many spheres of activity. One of the most important has to do with public health, and they discharge their duties in that respect under difficulties. They get very little thanks for what they do, and less pay. They receive very little consideration from the Government at present occupying the Treasury benches in many respects, very little encouragement in the great work.

The HOME SECRETARY: We were pretty good to you, you know.

Mr. GREEN: Perhaps I am a little bit favoured in that respect. The local authorities of Townsville have carried on their work satisfactorily and well, and creditably, and I think they owe nothing to the present or any other Ministry for what

they have done in developing Townsville and making it what it is to-day. It may be considered that the local authority conference represents the Tory element, as has been said. I do not admit that under any circumstances. I believe they are broadminded men representing every section of the community. They are men who are not afraid to express their opinions, but are out to serve their fellow-men and the communities they represent in the best manner possible. Every suggestion they bring forward—every recommendation they make—they have carefully weighed. They have been considered by the local authorities chiefly interested in the light of the circumstances under which that local authority is worked. Therefore I contend, with all due respect to the Minister who is in charge of this Bill, that he can receive valuable advice and assistance from the Local Authorities' Association in making this a Bill worthy of the State. I cannot see why the hon. gentleman does not desire the assistance of members on this side of the House in making this a perfect measure.

The HOME SECRETARY: I will accept your assistance.

Mr. GREEN: Yes, in certain particulars. We know the local authorities' conference has suggested certain things, and that in the minds of members of this House who are connected with the local authorities there are certain suggestions which have not gone before any local authorities' conference, and they would assist the Minister materially in that respect. Therefore, I intend to support the amendment, and I trust the Minister will see the wisdom of accepting it.

The HOME SECRETARY: I will give you an opportunity later on in this Parliament.

Mr. GREEN: I take it from the interjection of the Home Secretary that the universal franchise clause must be brought into effect, under instructions, at once. In view of the elections which take place in connection with the local authorities in February next, all I ask is that this side should have a fair opportunity of suggesting amendments to this Bill which will make the Bill perfect in every respect.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): It is rather difficult to understand the opposition to this amendment. Personally, I am quite unable to understand it. It must be admitted that, so far as the local authorities of Queensland are concerned, they have carried on an immense amount of voluntary work without any aid whatever in the interests of the State.

The HOME SECRETARY: Let them continue the good work.

Mr. TAYLOR: I hope they will, but from indication this afternoon it seems perfectly clear the Government will not allow them to continue that good work. We are simply going to create another political machine by the amendments which the Minister seeks to introduce into the Local Authorities Act.

The HOME SECRETARY: We are only going to alter the machine.

Mr. TAYLOR: The alteration of the machine is simply going to spoil it. Sometimes by altering a machine you can improve it and get better work out of it. I contend the proposed alterations of the Minister are going to spoil the machine absolutely and completely. My experience of local authorities' work is that local authority men by

and large are animated by the one desire to do the best they possibly can in the interests of the whole of the people in the particular area in which they operate. For that purpose they maintain an association which does not disband after a local authorities' conference has been held at a particular time of the year, but they consider local authority matters throughout the whole of the year. Surely that is a demonstration that these men are sincere and earnest in their desire to carry out local authority work in the most efficient manner possible. The Minister, by interjection, said it would take three months to do certain things. I am not aware of any local authority in the whole of Queensland having asked the Minister to introduce this particular legislation. I challenge the Minister to bring forward evidence to show that one local authority has come forward and asked him to bring in the particular amendment which he proposes to introduce by this Bill. Surely there is something significant about that. If anyone should have a knowledge of local authority matters, surely it is the men who have been carrying on local authority work throughout the State for many years, and surely their opinions are worth something even supposing they do not run in the same direction as those of the Minister. Surely he should be able to bring before this House, as evidence that a change is required, the fact that some local authority has asked that this change should be made. I intend to support the amendment.

The HOME SECRETARY: They do not want their privileges interfered with. Some of them have two and three votes.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oakey*): As far as I was able to gather, the Minister merely stated that the one change which was going to be effected was in connection with the franchise. He refused to give the Chamber other information which, it seems to me, it is quite time we should have. It is another instance of the fact that if we want to get information as to what the intentions of the Government are, we must refer to their publications. I propose, therefore, for the information of hon. members occupying the Opposition benches, to read an extract appearing in to-night's "Standard." We will therefore obtain from the "Standard" that information which we cannot obtain from the Minister. This is what it says—

"MUNICIPAL REFORM.

"BILL COMING TO-DAY.

"Adult Franchise and Triennial Elections.

"Dealing with Slum Areas.

"A big but much belated departure in municipal government will be made in the amendment to the Local Authorities Act which the Home Secretary (Mr. McCormack) will introduce in the Assembly at to-day's sitting.

"Foremost of the new features of the Bill will be the wiping out of the old property qualification for voting at elections, and the introduction of the adult franchise."

That is just as far as the Minister thinks the Opposition are entitled to information. The "Standard," however, has been good enough to give us further information. It is just as I said last night—that we have to look outside this Chamber at all times for the intentions of the Government. It goes on to say—

"Triennial elections will be held, and

[*Mr. Taylor.*

the mayor or chairman, as the case may be, will be elected by the people. In connection with the elections, the State electoral rolls will be utilised."

That is quite interesting. Our 65,000 ghosts will once more be made use of in municipal elections. This article proceeds—

"There are also other new provisions in the Bill. For instance, power will be given to local authorities to exempt from rating properties occupied by incapacitated soldiers and sailors, men suffering from industrial diseases, or people in receipt of the old age or invalid pension. Power will be given to deal with dilapidated premises or slum areas."

I see no reference to power being given to local authorities to stop liberty fairs, two-up schools, and such like institutions which receive the moral support of the Government. It says further—

"At present the general rate which a council can levy is limited to a maximum of 6d. in the £1 on the unimproved value of the land. This limitation will be removed."

I have pleasure in giving that information to the Opposition, seeing that the Home Secretary has not seen fit to give it.

The HOME SECRETARY: They never got that information from me.

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

AYES, 35.

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Mr. Barber | Mr. Kirwan |
| " Brennan | " Land |
| " Bulcock | " Larcombe |
| " Collins | " McCormack |
| " Conroy | " Mullan |
| " Cooper, F. A. | " Payne |
| " Cooper, W. | " Pesse |
| " Coyne | " Pollock |
| " Dash | " Riordan |
| " Ferricks | " Ryan |
| " Fihely | " Smith |
| " Foley | " Stopford |
| " Forde | " Theodore |
| " Gilday | " Weir |
| " Gillies | " Wellington |
| " Gledson | " Wilson |
| " Hartley | " Winstanley |
| " Huxham | |

Tellers: Mr. F. A. Cooper and Mr. Forde.

NOES, 28.

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Mr. Appel | Mr. Kerr |
| " Barnes, W. H. | " King |
| " Bebbington | " Logan |
| " Brand | " Macgregor |
| " Cattermull | " Maxwell |
| " Clayton | " Moore |
| " Corcor | " Morgan |
| " Cestello | " Nott |
| " Deacon | " Petrie |
| " Elphinstone | " Roberts, J. H. C. |
| " Fletcher | " Roberts, T. R. |
| " Fry | " Swayne |
| " Green | " Taylor |
| " Jones | " Vowles |

Tellers: Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Fry.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Original question put.

[5 p.m.]

Mr. FLETCHER: I would like to voice my objection to the introduction of this measure. We have seen a great deal of bad legislation introduced by this Government, and a great deal of legislation the effects

of which were problematical at the time and which has turned out most disastrously, but I certainly think they have never introduced anything which is likely to prove so disastrous as this measure. The effect will be felt right throughout the community. It will hit their own supporters in a way they least expect, and a great number of their own supporters, I am sure, do not want a measure of this kind. It may be all right in some towns or shires, but in others it may result in a great waste of public money and money subscribed by the property-owners. Seeing that the Government have a minority of 20,000 votes in the whole of Queensland, which is really in effect a referendum of the people as far as they are concerned. They stand for the referendum, and I challenge them to put this matter to a referendum, and we will then see how they stand.

Original question put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 55.

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Mr. Barber | Mr. Kirwan |
| „ Brennan | „ Land |
| „ Bulecock | „ Larcombe |
| „ Collins | „ McCormack |
| „ Conroy | „ Mullan |
| „ Cooper, F. A. | „ Payne |
| „ Cooper, W. | „ Pease |
| „ Coyne | „ Pollock |
| „ Dash | „ Riordan |
| „ Ferricks | „ Ryan |
| „ Fihelly | „ Smith |
| „ Foley | „ Stopford |
| „ Forde | „ Theodore |
| „ Gilday | „ Weir |
| „ Gillies | „ Wellington |
| „ Gleeson | „ Wilson |
| „ Hartley | „ Winstanley |
| „ Huxham | |

Tellers: Mr. Ferricks and Mr. Foley.

NOES, 29.

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Mr. Appel | Mr. King |
| „ Barnes, W. H. | „ Logan |
| „ Bebbington | „ Macgregor |
| „ Brand | „ Maxwell |
| „ Cattermull | „ Moore |
| „ Clayton | „ Morgan |
| „ Corser | „ Nott |
| „ Costello | „ Petrie |
| „ Deacon | „ Roberts, J. H. C. |
| „ Elphinstone | „ Roberts, T. R. |
| „ Fletcher | „ Sizer |
| „ Fry | „ Swayne |
| „ Green | „ Taylor |
| „ Jones | „ Vowles |
| „ Kerr | |

Tellers: Mr. Brand and Mr. Sizer.

Resolved in the affirmative.

OFFICIALS IN PARLIAMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The objects of this Bill are to increase the number of Ministers from eight to nine, to permit of eight to sit in this Assembly and to provide the salary for an additional Minister. The reason for the introduction of the Bill is that the administrative duties of Ministers of various departments have enormously increased; and here I am reminded of the fact that at the recent election the leader of the Nationalist party, in his manifesto to the people, is thus reported—

“Dealing with industrial matters, Mr. Barnes said the growth of industry and the frequency of recurring troubles clearly pointed to the fact that it was absolutely essential, in the best interests of the State as a whole, that provision

should be made for the creation of a Minister for Labour.”

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: That does not say an extra Minister.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is no good hon. gentlemen trying to quibble now. What do they mean by creating a Minister of Labour? (Opposition interruption.)

Mr. FRY: It is not a new Minister.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Of course it is a new Minister. Then, again, the leader of the Nationalist party—the hon. member for Bulimba—stated—

“It was also proposed that a special Minister should be appointed to deal with the important question of health.”

So that they propose two additional Ministers, and, therefore, they can hardly object to one additional Minister. I might also mention that I think the deputy leader of the Country party—the hon. member for Aubigny—stated in the last Parliament that there should be a Minister for Health, so that we have quite a number of hon. gentlemen on the other side committed to the amendment which we propose. As far back as 1899 the Philp Ministry had ten Ministers to their Cabinet.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They were not all paid.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: As the hon. gentleman states, it is true they were not all paid, but it is just as wrong to have non-payment of Ministers—worse even than to have non-payment of members. I say the principle is unsound.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You mean to say some of them paid themselves?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: “Evil be to him who evil thinks.” Further, the New South Wales Cabinet comprises thirteen Ministers, the Victorian Government twelve, and the Commonwealth Government twelve; and the Commonwealth Government at present propose appointing an additional Minister.

Mr. MOORE: How many more people have they down there?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am going to show that, owing to the vast area of Queensland, the administrative duties are rendered more difficult in Queensland than in any other State. Hon. gentlemen know that Queensland is essentially different from any other State, and it is divided into three great geographical divisions, rendering the administration of duties much more difficult than might otherwise be, and as a proof of that, we have men in this House advocating separation, on the ground that it is more difficult to administer North and Central Queensland on account of their remoteness from the seat of government.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Therefore, it proves conclusively that it is more difficult to carefully administer the affairs of Queensland than any other State. There has been an enormous increase in the administrative duties of the various departments. I will just give you a return showing the number of Acts in existence to-day as against the number which were in existence in 1895 when this Act was passed. I am only doing this because of the exception taken to this Bill the other night. I thought the Bill would have gone through unanimously. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. FRY: You are not serious.

Hon. J. Mullan.]

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It went through the last Parliament after a very short discussion indeed.

Mr. VOWLES: No; it did not.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The leader of the Opposition almost gave it his blessing.

Mr. VOWLES: No; he did not.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He did not agree to it, but he was not seriously opposed to it. Probably on that occasion he was looking forward to the elections, in which, no doubt, he was disappointed. (Government laughter.) We will commence by showing the number of Acts administered by the Department of Agriculture. In 1835 there were nine Acts administered by that department, and to-day they administer thirty-three. The Home Department administered fifty-one Acts in 1836 as against seventy-four now. The Justice Department had twenty-one Acts to administer then, and thirty-nine now. The Treasury had twenty-two Acts to administer then, and fifty-nine now. There was only one Act administered by the Works Department in 1836, and there are fifteen now. There were ten Acts administered by the Lands Department in 1836, as against twenty-four now. The Chief Secretary's Department had ten Acts to administer in 1836, and they have seventeen now. In the Public Instruction Department there were four Acts to administer, as against seven at present. The total number of Acts administered in 1835 was 132, while to-day there are 263 to administer. I think that those figures afford convincing evidence of the necessity for a change. I don't suppose it is necessary for me to refer to the importance of the legislation passed since 1835, or to the importance of the administrative work carried out. In industrial matters we have had the factories and shops legislation, which has enormously increased administrative duties. We have also had the inspection of machinery and scaffolding, the labour exchanges, and also the Workers' Dwellings Acts, which have enormously increased the work of the Government. We also have the Workers' Accommodation Act, the Workers' Compensation Act, and the State insurance, including fire and life.

Mr. VOWLES: Have you not got expensive Commissioners and managers in those departments?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If my friend ever becomes a Minister—although the chances look to be rather remote at present—he will learn that it is not the duty of a Government to give carte blanche to any Commissioner. I personally object to government by commission. In the Agricultural Department we have the co-operative Agricultural Production Act. The Agricultural Bank Act, the State Produce Agency, the Stock Acts, the Dairy Produce Acts, the Sugar Cane Prices Act, and others, all adding considerably to the duties of the Minister. In the Mines Department, owing to the increase in the administrative work of the Mines Regulations Act, the Minister's hands are pretty full. In the Home Department the duties which were recently added to the administrative work include those connected with the Brisbane Hospital.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The issuing of gambling permits takes up a lot of time.

[Hon. J. Mullan.]

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: And watching crook companies take a bit of time, too. (Government laughter.) I have got my eyes on a few of them now. (Renewed Government laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: You ought to keep your eyes on the fish shops. (Opposition laughter.)

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The administration of the State Children Act involves an enormous amount of work on the Home Secretary. Every case has to be decided on its merits and submitted to the Home Secretary. You can imagine the thousands of cases that have to be dealt with in the course of a year.

Mr. VOWLES: You will want half a dozen Home Secretaries.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Not necessarily. We want an increase within reason. The Public Curator Act has also added to the duties of the Justice Department.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Did you say that every particular case under the State Children Act is referred to the Home Secretary?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am told that every case is submitted for his approval or disapproval. In connection with the Justice Department we have also added to the statute-book a Poor Prisoners Defence Act, which has added to the duties of that department, and a Fair Rents Act, which has also considerably increased the work.

Mr. VOWLES: What has the Minister got to do with that?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Minister has got a great deal to do with it. The Minister is responsible for the due and proper administration of the Act. The Government must take the responsibility so long as we have responsible government.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I thought the court had all to do with it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. gentleman knows quite well that there are also administrative duties attached to it. In the Lands Department there have been additional Lands Acts to administer. There is also the Soldiers' Settlement Acts, and so on. We have passed a Main Roads Act, and in the immediate future, no doubt, it will add to the duties of the department. The Profiteering Prevention Act has also been added to the duties of Ministers. The Treasurer, I am sure, will be able to tell you that the land and income tax laws have also added to the labours of the Minister in that department.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The Minister has got very little to do with that.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I know that he has a good deal to do with it. The hon. gentleman occupied the Treasury for a long time, and he knows that it is necessary to exercise a great supervision over those departments.

The TREASURER: He was never in his office.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: That is absolutely false.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. gentleman when Treasurer gave part of his time to his private duties, and only part of his time was given to the State. He would be conversant with the duties of the various

departments if he gave his full time. The hon. gentleman just gives the fag end of his time to the State.

The HOME SECRETARY: We get evidence of that here every day.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: That is not so. You don't like being cornered.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Anyone who has had a most casual acquaintance with the Home Department must recognise that the work there is too much for any one Minister. (Hear, hear!) One hon. gentleman on the Opposition side of the House has gone through that department, and, I am sure, he can frankly confess to that. Then, there are the various business undertakings of this Government since they came into power. You cannot increase one business undertaking without increasing the administrative work of the department, if the work is to be done properly. Since coming into power we have established State stations, State butcher shops, State canneries, and State sawmills, and, as the hon. member for Kurriipa is so eager for me to mention it, I may say that we also established State fish shops.

Mr. FRY: There are some in the court now. The State fish shops will be the downfall of the Government if you are not careful. They stink enough when you go across the river. (Laughter.)

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Then the State smelters and mines at Chillagoe have been added to the duties of the Ministers. Then we have the State treatment works at the arsenic mine. (Opposition laughter.) Hon. members opposite laugh, but they are very glad to avail themselves of the arsenic at less than commercial rates.

Mr. CORSER: We cannot get it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Then we have got the State coal mines. All these add to the State's activities and cast further responsibilities and duties on to the Government.

Mr. MORGAN: Why did not you mention the State "pub"?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will leave that to the hon. gentleman. He will not overlook it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What about the Minister for Justice? You have not mentioned him yet.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Like Rip Van Winkle of old, the hon. gentleman was asleep when I was referring to that department. Take the Railway Department. That is a department which represents a capital of £42,000,000. When we are dealing with a big venture like that, an expenditure of £500 per year is not very large.

Mr. FRY: You have a staff to run the railways.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Do you think the staff should be allowed to run amok, and do what they please? What is the good of having administrative government?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: What is the Minister doing?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He is doing his duty, and doing it well. Everybody who has given any consideration at all to the question must recognise that the difficulties of administration since the Officials

in Parliament Act was passed in 1906 have enormously increased. Hon. members opposite must admit that careful administration was never more necessary than it is to-day.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We recognise that the world is going through a stressful time. Every State and every Government is faced with a difficult situation and it is more necessary that there should be careful administration, and careful as it has been in Queensland in the past, we want it to be more careful by the appointment of an additional Minister. A close supervision over all the departments is absolutely necessary. If you want that close supervision you must have the additional Minister which we suggest.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: He must have ability.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Some hon. gentlemen who have the most to say know the least about the duties of a Minister. Those who have had Ministerial office know that the duties are great. In addition, a Minister has to attend Parliament during the session, he has to attend Cabinet meetings, and, like hon. members on the other side, he has to attend his own party meetings. All these things take up time.

Mr. VOWLES: And unemployed deputations.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We have always done that when the necessity arose. All these things take time. Just imagine squabbling over £500 a year when all these duties have to be performed! At the present time we are looking after the duties attached to Ministerial office and dealing with a revenue and expenditure which combined amounts to £23,000,000 to £24,000,000. That is a very considerable sum to deal with. It shows the necessity for close scrutiny and supervision in connection with the revenue and expenditure amounting to that sum.

[5.30 p.m.]

Mr. MORGAN: You forget the expenses.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Well, the hon. member need not forget them when the necessity arises. Of course, I know that in the past the practice with Governments, prior to Labour's accession to power, was to be content to remain in Brisbane; not to go out into the country and meet the people and make themselves conversant with the conditions in the country. Not so with this Government. This Government recognise the necessity that Ministers should familiarise themselves with conditions in the country. We have, therefore, travelled the country at length and endeavoured to become acquainted with the wants of the people. It should be possible for every member of the Government to do that for successful administration, and also that members should, where practicable, be given the opportunity.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Some of them were very thirsty. (Laughter.)

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: One thing is pretty clear—that there were either too many Ministers in 1905 or there are not sufficient now. Hon. members opposite remained in office with too many Ministers if there are enough to-day.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Two wrongs do not make a right, anyhow.

[Hon. J. Mullan.]

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I say that, in the best interests of the successful administration of Queensland, it is desirable to have an additional Minister, and as the Bill was introduced and discussed in the last Parliament, and was also discussed here a few days ago, I do not think it necessary for me, at all events, to say any more on the matter than to move—That the Bill be now read a second time.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: It is very amusing to hear a Minister giving such reasons for the introduction of a Bill as the Attorney-General has just put forward, very amusing to hear him urge a further contribution from the consolidated revenue at a time when the Government are preaching economy all round. There is no question that it is an admission of bad administration and ineptitude in every direction. (Disorder.) The hon. member sought to justify this change by asking us to take into consideration the number of statutes on the statute-books, as compared with the numbers in the past. Does he include all the amending Acts that have been passed?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You know they are not included.

Mr. VOWLES: Are they not merely amendments of existing Acts which have been administered and required the same amount of energy in the past? Is it not a strange thing that in 1914 the Home Secretary was able to perform the duties of Home Secretary and the Minister of Mines—and in those days there was business to be done in the Mines Department.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: How did he do it?

Mr. VOWLES: There is virtually none now.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: And the Minister was never there.

Mr. VOWLES: I have had many occasions to go to that office, and I can assure you that Mr. George Appel was always to be found in his office, and he was notorious for being a good administrator and a man who was sympathetic to everybody who went there, more so than the present Home Secretary.

The PREMIER: Did not the late Premier have to write to Southport and ask him to come back and attend to his business?

Mr. VOWLES: Yes, he did, on one occasion, I am sorry to say, but on how many occasions would we have had to write to England, to the United States of America, or to New Zealand, to find different Ministers who were junketing there at public expense and get them to come back to attend to their business? The Premier himself was on salary when he went home. He admitted to us the other night that he went away on a trip to Europe and certain countries in time for which he was being paid, in order to make a holiday for himself. If one man happened to be away at Southport for one day—

The PREMIER: One day?

Mr. VOWLES: Or two days, or a week, how much would the time occupied by the hon. member, when he was not supposed—

The PREMIER: That is personal.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member's interjection was unfair and very unkind, and he

[Hon. J. Muilan.

does not like it when the same thing is brought home to him.

The PREMIER: You object to our calling attention to the shortcomings of your late Minister.

Mr. VOWLES: We do not, but if you do, we can draw attention to your shortcomings.

The PREMIER: All right; fire away, I won't object.

Mr. VOWLES: Over the new departments referred to by the Attorney-General we have expensive commissioners and managers. We have men looking after State insurance, the Public Curator's office, and State enterprises, men who are receiving salaries larger than Cabinet Ministers' salaries. What functions fall on the Minister? Nothing but functions of interference, with the result that everyone has been glad to get out of his billet and leave the Government to look after itself.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is not so.

Mr. VOWLES: I can quite imagine that when it comes to the end of the financial year the Minister has a good deal of worry and thought to see how he is going to bring about a credit balance in some of the enterprises, to see what items are to be held over from the year's transactions and postponed until the next financial year, and to see what information is to be suppressed from the public. That, to my mind, is the way in which Ministers engage their time in those departments.

Mr. SMITH: That is the way your party did.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not know what the hon. member's party is doing. Is it not only recently that we found the present Treasurer occupying how many positions? He was a sort of Pooh Bah before the late election. He was acting Premier and I think Attorney-General, and I forget how many other things, but he was everything he could take upon himself. Although here you had a professional man in the party capable of filling the position of Attorney-General, you had a layman.

The PREMIER: Are you annoyed about it?

Mr. VOWLES: I am not, but I say it is rather remarkable when members talk about the necessity of a new Minister, and say that the Home Secretary is doing the work of three or four, that he goes into every application personally. Is he doing the work of the Under Secretary as well? It seems to be childish for the Minister introducing this Bill to expect us to swallow some of the statements he has given us. We do know that there is, on the part of the supporters of the Government, an anxiety to get as many plums as possible, and the main complaint is that there are not enough of plums to go round, and the creation of another one means appeasing another member. I have here a copy of a book called "Personality," and there is an article there which is written by a friend of the Premier.

The PREMIER: Not a friend of mine—most scurrilous.

Mr. VOWLES: A gentleman, named Gunner Taylour, who during the election times and in the past was always a very strong supporter of the Ryan and Theodore Government.

The PREMIER: No, not of the Theodore Government.

Mr. VOWLES: He is a gentleman who was always to be found on Labour platforms when it suited him, because he was a soldier and a soldier of Labour tendencies. We will just see what he says in reference to these billets.

Mr. STOPFORD: Is he an authority?

Mr. VOWLES: I do not know, but he is a gentleman who is sympathetic with the Government. He says—

"The Cabinet is a sort of Upper House within the Government section of the Legislative Assembly. Private Labour members would like it abolished. That is, while they are not considering themselves as eligible for the next preferments in portfolios. A Labour Government ought to be democratic enough to share the spoils of office amongst the whole Parliamentary party. If equality of opportunity, extolled by the Labourites, means anything at all, it means equality of income. If the honourables of that august committee known as the Cabinet were to apply the doctrine of equality of sacrifice in the service of their country, they would pool their pay. Then mere private members of the Government side would receive an increment of about another £150 a year. Although the constituents of the seventy-two electorates of Queensland would not suffer an allotment of forty or so extra State motor-cars, no objection would be raised to the creation of additional honorary portfolios. Ministerial rank could be then achieved by all the Government supporters. Mick Kirwan might be minister for Press clippings; somebody else could be minister for refreshments. Frank Cooper would be minister for morals; Bill Cooper, minister for mule herds; Cuthbert Butler would shine as minister for "dry" farming; Jim Stopford, minister for mimicry; Forgan Smith, minister for national spirits"—

The SPEAKER: What is the hon. member quoting?

Mr. VOWLES: I am quoting what is apropos of the question under discussion—that is, the creation of another portfolio. He goes on to say—

"Albert Whitford, minister for wardrobes; John Gilday, minister for abat-toirs; Francis Forde, minister for correspondence."

That is the opinion of a man who has been a great advocate for the Government in the past. It goes to show that all the Government are after is the spoils of office, the plum; and the main trouble, as I said before, is that there are not enough plums to go round.

The PREMIER: Is that what led to the dissension between the Country party and the Nationalist party as to the leadership of the Opposition?

Mr. VOWLES: I do not know that there was any dissension.

The PREMIER: When the Treasurer had to settle the dispute?

Mr. VOWLES: It might be just as well, now that the hon. member has referred to that question, to reply to the statement made by the Acting Premier during the election. He says that he was asked to settle that dispute. Let me tell you that he was not asked. The gentleman who was asked to settle the

dispute, if dispute there was, was the Speaker, but the other gentleman butted in and sent for me and the hon. member for Bulimba. We flattered his vanity, and he was satisfied, and that was all we cared.

Mr. KIRWAN: How many rounds did you box?

Mr. VOWLES: Only one. Is that not the fact of the matter? The hon. member's statement was not correct, as many other things he said were not correct.

The TREASURER: Of course, you know that £200 had to be allocated.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member is trying to sidetrack the question. The question is whether any reasonable ground has been given to this Chamber for consenting to the appointment of a Minister and the expenditure of the amount of money involved?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Did you advocate the appointment of another Minister.

Mr. VOWLES: No.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You did.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: And the hon. member for Bulimba, too.

Mr. VOWLES: The policy of the hon. member for Bulimba is quite different from mine, and in any case the creation of another Minister does not mean the expenditure of another £1,000 per annum. Why can there not be sub-branches, such as there were before, in many of the departments? Only last night we took away from Queensland the control of the State Savings Bank. Consequently, we relieved the Treasurer or some other Minister to a very great extent. Why can he not devote the time which was required of him in administering that branch of his department to administration in some other direction, and earn his "screw"?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He will, with this additional Minister also.

Mr. VOWLES: I heard a suggestion, I think, from one of the members of the Government that, in his opinion, every member should get £1,000 a year, and every Minister £1,050, and then there would be no fighting, because it would not be worth it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What do you think about it?

Mr. VOWLES: I do not think we ought to raise our salaries, and I hope you will not bring forward a Bill for that purpose while I am in the Chamber.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You would like to draw it.

Mr. VOWLES: If you were to total up the number of hours that the Cabinet Ministers have lost in their trips abroad—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They are working night and day.

Mr. VOWLES: You would find that they would be more than the working hours of one man in a year. What did we gain by the trip of the Treasurer to America? We never even got a report from him. The hon. member went away and occupied the time for which he was being paid out of the public purse by having a jolly good holiday. The loss of time that that hon. gentleman caused to his department, the wasted time which the Premier himself has brought about in his department, the trips to New Zealand which

Mr. Vowles.]

the Home Secretary had at public expense recently—if you summed them all up, you would find that it represents all the working hours of one Minister for the year. (Government interruption.) It is not the fact that the work is accumulating to any great degree. Ministers can make work if they like to ferret into everything for political purposes. They can create another department, such as they have now, which is ruled by one of the Ministers for political purposes only, and wastes a lot of time which might be devoted to more advantageous purposes. If they were to do the things which are supposed to be done, they would have more spare time. Judging by their general appearance, their efforts on behalf of the people are not breaking down their constitutions.

The PREMIER: That is a very fine joke.

Mr. VOWLES: It is probably the result of some of the nice trips they have had at the expense of the people. When we spend our time breaking ourselves down we go away and pay for our own recuperation. Hon. gentlemen opposite go for trips round the globe, and they give us nothing in return. We are asked to believe another appointment is necessary. As far as the expense is concerned, it is only a small item. It is the principle I am concerned about. The work is really not there, and it is only a matter of finding another job in order to appease somebody on that side of the House.

Mr. SIZER (*Vandal*): I agree with the leader of the Opposition when he said that if there were any reason why this Bill should not be carried it is to be found in the weakness of the argument of the hon. gentleman who introduced it. No argument was placed before this Chamber as to the necessity for the Bill. The only thing we know is that in the past there has been in the Government the system of having an honorary Minister and there has been a pooling of salaries which has curtailed the salaries of Ministers to that extent; and probably to overcome that difficulty it was thought necessary among the members of the Cabinet to have an additional Minister. I am inclined to think that probably, if an additional Minister is appointed, there will very soon be another honorary Minister.

The TREASURER: Your leader told me six years ago that another Minister was wanted.

Mr. SIZER: The one argument the hon. gentleman tried to bring forward was that the National party advocated new Ministers in the election campaign. I say emphatically that there is urgent need for the departments we mention to have a Minister, but it only requires a reshuffling of the duties of Ministers, and it can be accomplished without any additional expense. If we found it necessary to have a further gentleman to administer a department there would be no reason why that gentleman should not be an honorary Minister. There is nothing in the contention that hon. members on this side advocated increasing the full-paid Cabinet Ministers at the election. It would be an easy matter to rearrange the positions, as has been done in other States.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Quite a simple thing!

Mr. SIZER: I am glad the hon. gentleman realises it, because he is out of Brisbane quite a lot, and there are times when the Press has reported the fact that there are

[*Mr. Vowles.*

only two, or probably three, members of the Ministry in town.

Mr. SMITH: Do you think they should all be confined to Brisbane?

Mr. SIZER: If they should not be confined to Brisbane, the need for keeping them in Brisbane cannot be so pressing, and, therefore, there is no necessity for another Minister.

Mr. RIORDAN: They do not get into the country enough.

Mr. SIZER: Victoria has eight full Ministers and four honorary Ministers, and they are able to carry on the administration of the country. I venture to say the administration of Victoria is equal to that of Queensland. (Government interruption.) Now, let us look at New South Wales. There is the Chief Secretary and Minister of Housing (two departments), the Minister for Agriculture (separate Minister), the Minister for Lands and Minister for Forests (two departments), the Minister for Mines, Labour and Industry (two departments), the Treasurer, the Minister for Public Instruction and Local Government, the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Railways (two departments), and the Minister for Public Health and Motherhood (a new department). Then there is an Assistant Minister for Justice, and there is a Solicitor-General and a Vice-President of the Executive Council. Those Ministers are able to carry on the work in New South Wales by administering two departments. We come to Victoria, and we find the Premier carries out the Premiership and Commissioner of Crown Lands and Survey. The Treasurer has no other duties. There is the Minister for Railways, the Minister for Mines, the Minister for Public Works and Water Supply, the Minister for Public Instruction and Forests, the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General, the Minister for Agriculture, and one gentleman performs the duties of Chief Secretary, Minister for Labour, and Minister for Public Health. There are four Ministers without portfolios. Then we come to the State which is most nearly on a par with Queensland, and that is South Australia.

Mr. RYAN: Oh, rubbish!

Mr. SIZER: It is nearer than any other State. They have six Ministers, and there the Premier carries out the additional duty of Attorney-General, the Treasurer carries out the duties of Minister for Education; there is the Minister for Lands, Immigration, and Repatriation; there is the Chief Secretary and Minister for Marine; the Minister for Public Works, Railways, and Industry; and the Minister for Agriculture, Irrigation, and Mines. I will say again the administration of South Australia is equal to that of Queensland. If we go to all the other States we will find that Ministers occupy more than one position. In Queensland we find the Premier carries on also the duties of Chief Secretary; the Treasurer also carries out the duties of Public Works; then we have the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General; and then we have one Minister for each of the following:—Public Instruction, Home Secretary, Railways, Mines, and Agriculture. They each are carrying on one portfolio. I say there is ample room for any additional work which has been created to be placed upon the existing Cabinet. We have heard much regarding the additional

Acts which have been placed on the statute-book. It would have been better had many of them not been placed on the statute-book. A large number of them are connected with State enterprises. The Minister in charge of State enterprises is governed to a great extent by his expert Commissioner. If he is not he should be. It is impossible for one Minister to be able to control effectively the number of businesses there are in the State to-day. If the effect of their administration is to be judged by the results of those industries, I am inclined to think the sooner that portfolio is done away with the better. The Minister pointed out that they are over-worked and need an additional Minister. Last year there was one Minister abroad, and after the elections there are Ministers absent from their offices for quite a considerable time.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Do you object to that?

Mr. SIZER: The Ministers who are controlling their departments know best whether they have time to leave their departments. On many occasions when they leave their offices there is no necessity to leave them.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We are the best judges of that.

Mr. SIZER: That is so. The pressing need for them to be present cannot be an argument for an additional Minister. I do not want to say anything about the trip the Premier had to Great Britain. The fact remains that the Government was carried on while he was away, and I do not think the administration was any more lax than when he was present. The present Treasurer, when he was Minister for Railways, went to America, and the Government went on just the same. In fact, I think it went on a lot better while he was away. He went to Great Britain at an expense of £1,800 to get information as to how to run the railways. When he returned he ran away from the railways. The Minister for Agriculture, before the election campaign took place, was absent from Brisbane for a considerable time. When Mr. Ryan was Premier he was continually out of the State. For that reason, I say no proof has been given to this House that an additional Minister is necessary. Mention was made particularly of the Railway Department. My opinion is that if a Minister were to do less at the Railway Department, and give more control to the Commissioner for Railways, we might have a much better system than we have. A policy I would advocate would be that of less interference by Ministers with responsible heads of departments. Let those men, who are experts at the work, do the work, and let the Minister secure executive authority whenever necessary.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are the first man to get the Minister to override the Commissioner when you want it. Everyone of your party does that.

Mr. SIZER: I have no recollection, personally, of having done such a thing.

The TREASURER: You knelt on my mat for months to get a station at Nundah.

Mr. SIZER: I have no recollection of having gone over the head of the Commissioner or of having tried to get the Minister to undo something which the Commissioner had done. On every occasion when I have had requests to make I have made them to the person having authority

to grant them. In the case raised by the hon. gentleman—

The TREASURER: I didn't raise the point; you did.

Mr. SIZER: I say there was a request made, and I simply furthered it. If it is the Commissioner who has the granting of a request, I go to him, and if it is the Minister, I go to him. I say emphatically I have not been to a Minister asking him to override the decision of the head of the department.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, you have; you have been to me.

Mr. SIZER: I say I have not asked for it on any occasion.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, you have; and it is a personal matter. The less you say about it the better.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. gentleman might raise it. I can assure him that I have recollections of what he is mentioning—(Government laughter)—and if he is prepared to take on that discussion, it is no concern of mine, and it does not weaken my argument one bit. I say emphatically again that I have not been to a Minister to override the head of a department, and I do not believe members on this side go to Ministers with that object.

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

Mr. SIZER: At the tea adjournment I was saying that, in my opinion, an extra Minister was not necessary. I was brought to the point raised by the Minister when he said there was necessity for careful administration, and he advanced that as an argument for the appointment of an additional Minister. I fail to see where the Minister indicated that an additional Minister is going to make the departmental administration any more effective than it is to-day. I am inclined to think that it will be just as bad or just as good—the only difference will be that there will be an extra Minister. And if it comes to the point of careful administration, I think that is something entirely foreign to the present Government, and the only thing they should do if they are anxious to have careful administration is to give way to some members on this side of the House.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Who on that side of the House. You have not a majority.

Mr. SIZER: I say members on this side of the House represent the majority of the people, but, unfortunately, on account of the imaginary boundaries of the State, we have been deprived of carefully administering the affairs of the State, and hon. gentlemen cannot get away from that point. They know they went to the country and had more votes cast against them than for them.

The TREASURER: We had more votes cast for us than your party did.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: More votes were cast for the Government than for all your parties, eliminating National Labour, which you cannot claim.

Hon. W. H. BURNES: National Labour would never have voted for you.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They did not proclaim in favour of you. We have a majority.

Mr. SIZER: I am quite correct in saying there were more votes cast against the Government than for the Government.

The TREASURER: We had twice the number that your party had.

Mr. Sizer.]

Mr. SIZER: Had the question been placed as a referendum the Government would have been defeated.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Not at all.

Mr. SIZER: Of course, I know it is in keeping with the Government's policy of making Queensland safe, not for the democracy they speak about, but for the members of the Cabinet, and of defeating the will of the people wherever they can. That seems to be one of the greatest needs for an additional Minister. I can only think that probably one advantage of an additional Minister would be that the unemployed at some time would not find a difficulty in meeting one of the Ministers; they might be able to find one of them if there was an additional Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You have a lot of sympathy with the unemployed.

Mr. SIZER: So far as administration of the department is concerned, the Minister said that no complaint had been brought against the Electoral Department. I know of some complaints—probably not against the officers in this case, but they certainly are complaints against the hon. gentleman's administration of it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What is wrong?

Mr. SIZER: Just prior to the election letters were sent to Government members stating that the following gentlemen were electoral officers in their electorates, and would invite members of the Government side to make any recommendation as to whether they desired any alteration.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You ought to produce the letter.

Mr. SIZER: We can easily produce a copy of it. It was signed by the hon. gentleman, but not in his capacity as a Minister. We were not given an opportunity of getting information.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Did you ask for any information?

Mr. SIZER: No, I didn't.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Then, what are you growling about? You got all the information you asked for.

Mr. SIZER: We also know that further back the Minister was communicating with his own supporters in connection with the election. We also know that the administration of the by-election was none too satisfactory. (Interruption.) I believe I am correct in saying, also, that in the recent general election the hon. member for Herbert was sworn in before the whole of the votes were counted.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There would be nothing irregular in that, anyhow, so long as there was no likelihood of the other man getting a sufficient number of votes to defeat him.

Mr. SIZER: I have reason to believe that there were a sufficient number of votes outstanding to alter the decision were they cast for one candidate. I do not think there is anything in the contention of the hon. gentleman when he attempts to hold up the electoral administration as a beacon of the Government. I fail to see in any way how an additional Minister can make the administration any more efficient than it is to-day, and I am of the opinion, therefore, that an

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additional Minister is unnecessary, and for that reason we are justified in opposing it, which I certainly intend to do to the best of my ability.

Mr. FORDE: I wish to make a few observations on this measure before it passes through. It is hardly necessary for anyone to reply to the futile criticisms of hon. members opposite, who are not sincere when they say an additional Minister is not necessary in Queensland.

Mr. KIRWAN: Some of them advocated it during the election.

Mr. FORDE: As the hon. member for Brisbane says, some of them advocated it during the election. The hon. member for Bulimba, in his policy speech delivered on the 14th September, definitely stated, "The appointment of a Minister of public health is regarded as essential to the well-being of the community"; and the hon. leader of the Opposition stated, in the course of his campaign, that an additional Minister was necessary. Hon. members like the hon. member for Albert and the hon. member for Bulimba know quite well that the Government of this country cannot be carried out efficiently and economically with the present number of Ministers, especially in view of the growing number of departments they have to look after.

I speak as one who does not expect to get a position because of the appointment of an additional Minister. I recognise that there are several hon. members on this side of the House who have prior claims to myself in that direction. It is not for the sake of giving any hon. member a position that I speak in favour of the measure, but because I recognise that in the best interests of this State an additional appointment is necessary.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I suppose a re-arrangement might bring it nearer.

Mr. FORDE: Well, the hon. member will never get near it again. A big section of his party repudiated him and got away, because they knew he was most unpopular in the country. However, he is the leader of the small Opposition—of the very tinpot Opposition. (Interruption.) He is the leader of the party that polled the least number of votes, and we are members of the party that polled the greatest number of votes. There were half a dozen parties on that side of the House.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: But still one Opposition.

Mr. FORDE: We polled the greatest number of votes, and I maintain that, in the best interests of Queensland, an additional Minister is necessary. The leader of the Opposition, in the course of his speech, said that in the Denham Government one man looked after two departments—the Mines Department and the Home Department. Probably he carried the designation of Minister for Mines and Home Secretary, but it is doubtful whether he was able to look after those departments.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: He did it very well, anyhow.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: When the vouchers were about he did it all right.

Mr. FORDE: As someone said, he signed the necessary papers, but he did not have time to go into the necessary details of the department. He could not supervise the

work of the permanent officials when he was expected to look after two departments.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: He will put you right in a few minutes, I am sure.

Mr. FORDE: I know the hon. member for Albert did as well as he could be reasonably expected to do under the circumstances, but it was impossible for him to give sufficient time to both departments. The hon. member for Nandah suggested that a reshuffle would overcome the difficulty with which the Government is confronted to-day. Probably he would like to have an opportunity of getting the additional appointment as Minister; he would not oppose it if there were any possibility of that, but there is not. A reshuffle would not reduce the work in any way whatever. He also compared South Australia with Queensland, and quoted the fact that in South Australia there are six Ministers. But South Australia is a much different State from Queensland, and I am pleased to say that we are in the habit of establishing precedents, and any Government that has not that habit and is not courageous enough to do so is not fit to occupy the Treasury benches of a growing State like Queensland. Queensland is an infinitely more important State than South Australia. Our area is 670,000 square miles, and our population 730,000. South Australia has an area of 380,000, with a population of 450,000—very much different. Why our railway mileage is 5,469 miles, in comparison with 2,290 miles in South Australia. Hon. members opposite say, "If we appoint an additional Minister it will mean an expenditure of £1,000." They overlook the fact that it would only need an additional expenditure of £500, and that money will be more than saved by more efficient administration. I know myself that Ministers are overworked. Frequently I have gone to Government departments and have had to wait half an hour—an hour sometimes—and very often I could not get an interview with the Minister at all.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: The unemployed have to wait all day.

Mr. FORDE: The Ministers are sympathetic towards the unemployed. The hon. member for East Toowoomba ratted on the party that was truly sympathetic with the unemployed.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FORDE: I contend that Ministers are overworked, and they are unable to go into the details of their departments as I would like to see them doing. I know that hon. members opposite would like to see a government by bureaucracy. They do not believe in a democratic form of government, such as we have to-day. They would have a government by commissioners and Under Secretaries.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You have government by Trades Hall.

Mr. FORDE: We hear that sort of tripe from the hon. member for Drayton. Probably he does not know any better.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is true, anyhow.

Mr. FORDE: Anyhow, government by the Trades Hall would be infinitely better than government by men like the hon. member for Drayton. I believe in the system in vogue in Great Britain, where they have parliamentary Under Secretaries. They have members of Parliament in those positions who

are sympathetic with the Government in power at the time. They look after detail matters, and the Minister looks after big questions of policy. These things might come in Queensland in the future. Some hon. members say that the Ministers are out of Brisbane too much; but I believe that the Cabinet Ministers should travel through Queensland as much as possible, in order to learn all they can about this great State. I know that, in conjunction with my colleague the hon. member for Fitzroy, I have endeavoured to get Ministers to come to Rockhampton. We want Ministers to learn the great potentialities of the Central district, and see for themselves where our Fitzroy River should be dammed, and where we desire water conservation and irrigation to take place. I am pleased to say that the Minister for Mines did come to the Central district, and the hon. member for Fitzroy and I had the privilege of going through the country with him; but he had to hurry back to Brisbane to attend to the growing work of his great department. We believe that there should not be any tie on Ministers to stay in Brisbane all the time. I maintain that the appointment of an additional Minister will enable the Ministers to do more useful administrative work, and will give them an opportunity of travelling through Queensland. In that way they will get to learn the requirements, not only of Queen street and Bulimba, but also of the country districts.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: And attend social evenings.

Mr. FORDE: I know the hon. member for Bulimba would be a wet blanket at any social evening. Hon. members know that under the old system Ministers who were supporters of the present Opposition used to come to the House, and to their departments, at the tail-end of the day—after they had been spending the best part of the day at their private businesses making money for themselves, they gave a few hours at the close of the day in the interests of the public of Queensland. The departments were run, not by the Ministers, but by their officers in those days.

Mr. FLETCHER: They were well run, at any rate.

Mr. FORDE: The hon. member says that, because they were run in the way that he liked them to be run. I may say that if the people of Gladstone and Port Curtis had been grateful for what their late member did for them in the last five years, the hon. member would not be here to misrepresent them.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FORDE: Anyhow, it will not be long before Port Curtis is represented by a member from this side. Several new departments have been started by the present Government, and they take up a certain amount of time in administration.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Have they started a racing department?

Mr. FORDE: I know that I saw the name "W. H. Barnes" in connection with a two-up school the other day. (Government laughter.) So the hon. gentleman knows more about gambling than I do. (Laughter.)

Mr. KIRWAN: What did he do with his halo then? (Laughter.) Did he have it up his coat? (Laughter.)

Mr. FORDE: The hon. gentleman was not caught. He got away.

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HON. W. H. BARNES: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in saying that I got away from the court? I ask is he in order in connecting my name with that two-up raid? I also ask that the hon. member be made to withdraw that remark.

The SPEAKER: If the hon. member for Rockhampton made his remarks apply to the hon. member for Bulimba, he is distinctly out of order, and I ask him to withdraw them.

Mr. FORDE: I was referring to a member of a two-up school.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You know it is a lie. You know he never was there.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member for Rockhampton referred to the hon. member for Bulimba, he was distinctly out of order, and he must withdraw the remark he made. I would like to know if he referred to the hon. member for Bulimba?

Mr. FORDE: I referred to the man "W. H. Barnes" in a two-up school.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would like to know from the hon. member if he referred to the hon. member for Bulimba or not?

Mr. FORDE: No. I referred to "W. H. Barnes" in the Police Court.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member for Drayton said just now that the hon. member for Rockhampton knew it was a lie. That is unparliamentary, and he must withdraw it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I withdraw it; but he most certainly referred to the hon. member for Bulimba. (Government laughter.)

Mr. FORDE: I was saying that since this Government came into power many new departments have been established which have required the close attention of Ministers. The present Government is desirous of making a success of State enterprises. We have the State Insurance Department, which, I think, stands as a lasting monument to the present Labour Government. Since the establishment of that department the gross rate of premiums on fire insurance has been reduced by 3½ per cent. It has also resulted in increased concessions to the workers of Queensland who are unfortunate enough to meet with accidents. The department have been very careful in their supervision and administration and have been responsible for the accumulation of a profit amounting to more than £200,000. That money is remaining with the people of Queensland and is not going into the pockets of a few wealthy shareholders of insurance companies, who previously lived lives of luxury and ease. That money is remaining with the people of Queensland, and it is due to the Labour Government of this State that such is the case, because the department has had the close supervision of Labour Ministers. The Public Curator's Department was responsible for the appointment of a Public Defender. That makes provision for poor people who might, by accident, find themselves in the law courts of Queensland. The State Trade Office is a very important branch of this Government work. It includes the State butchers' shops, which have given the people of Queensland an opportunity of getting cheap meat.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You are sending inferior meat to the old country.

[Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

Mr. FORDE: We know that the hon. gentleman is opposed to State enterprises, and would abolish them altogether if he got on to the Treasury benches. Included in our State enterprises we have got State cattle stations and State fish shops. (Opposition laughter.) The hon. gentlemen may laugh. We are going to have a State fish shop in Rockhampton in a few weeks' time and the price of fish will be reduced. (Loud Opposition laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Did you read in the court what was said about the State fish shops?

Mr. FORDE: It is a wonder the hon. gentleman did not find himself there.

Mr. HARTLEY: There are plenty of flat-heads about.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: There are plenty of flat-heads on the other side.

Mr. FORDE: Our State enterprises should be properly looked after by one Minister. The present Minister and his predecessors in that position have devoted as much time as possible in looking into all the different details of their department, but they are too far-reaching for a Minister who has got other duties to attend to. One man should give the whole of his time to the State enterprises. Then there is the Main Roads Board. We have passed the Act constituting the Main Roads Board and it will be administered by the Works Department. The Main Roads Board will prove to be a great blessing to the people in the remote parts of the State.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And they will have to pay for it.

Mr. FORDE: I suppose the hon. gentleman would get out of paying for everything if he could. We all have to pay our way. What about the orphan boys?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What about the orphan girls?

Mr. FORDE: This Government have looked after the little orphan children of Queensland much better than the Denham-Barnes Government did. This Government pays to the mothers 10s. per week as against 4s. per week which was paid by the Denham-Barnes Government. We have done more for people in distress than any Government of this State ever did before. I was saying that the Main Roads Board would prove a great boon to this State. Since the last session I had an opportunity of travelling through a great portion of Queensland. I went as far North as Chillagoe and the Einasleigh. I see the hon. member for Burke looking at me. The hon. member is highly thought of up there. Main roads are urgently required in North Queensland. (Hear, hear!) I travelled through the Herbert electorate, which had the good sense to elect the hon. member for Herbert. I found in that electorate that in wet weather the farmers could not possibly travel by vehicle to the nearest station and take their produce.

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member connect his remarks with the Bill before the House.

Mr. FORDE: I am referring to the administration of the Main Roads Board and the careful supervision which will be exercised over the work of that board by the new Minister. It is a new subdepartment,

and it will have to be supervised by a Labour Minister. And this Main Roads

Department is going to be of [7.30 p.m.] great importance to Central Queensland. I have travelled the whole of Central Queensland and know the disabilities under which the people live in the remote parts. I am pleased to say that we have from Central Queensland a very good team who will support the request that will be made for new main roads there. We will go to the new Minister who will have charge of that main roads sub-department, and I know he is going to be sympathetic and give us what we want so far as he is able. I was saying that our Legislative work has more than doubled since the last Officials in Parliament Act was passed, and, consequently, it is necessary, in the interests of Queensland, that we should have a greater number of Ministers in Queensland. The constitution of the Ministries of the Commonwealth and the States at 1st August, 1920, showed that the Commonwealth Government could appoint twelve Ministers—and they are going to appoint more.

The TREASURER: They have appointed another.

Mr. FORDE: They have appointed an extra one, as I am reminded by the Treasurer. New South Wales can have thirteen Ministers, Victoria twelve, Queensland nine, and, as I am reminded by the hon. member for the iron and steel works—(laughter)—Mr. Bowen—Victoria is as large only as the electorate of the hon. member for Gregory. Queensland is much larger than New South Wales, and considerably larger than Victoria.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: It is larger than England, is it not?

Mr. FORDE: No doubt, hon. members opposite will agree with me that it is more difficult to carry on the Government of a very large State than it is to govern a small, compact State like Victoria. I am quite confident that, owing to present Ministers being overworked, they are not able to give the personal attention to matters of State that we Labour members expect from them. We would probably consider the appointment of still another Minister, but that these are such bad times. The times are bad, and the Ministers are prepared to go on being overworked. (Opposition laughter.) But we are prepared to make a special effort to make the times better.

Now, I have a lot to do with the Home Department. I represent a constituency in which there are a good many poor people. I regret to say that, and I hope they are going to be better off some day. In the Home Department are many subdepartments. Its ramifications are far reaching. The present Home Secretary and his predecessor have done a great deal towards meeting the requests I have made to them. The requests have been so numerous, however, that they have not been able to meet them all. I know that they have to look at all these questions from the viewpoint of the whole of Queensland, and not only from the viewpoint of Rockhampton. The Health Department is one that would take up the whole time of one Minister. There is nothing so important as the health of the community. We had a great deal of trouble recently at Rockhampton. Hundreds of people were stricken down with diphtheria. I think that had the

Health Act been closely observed, the outbreak would have been wiped out more quickly, but in the Home Department you have a Minister who has so many sub-departments to attend to that it is impossible for him to devote his whole time to the Health Department. We should have a separate Minister for Health, an Under Secretary and Commissioner for Health thoroughly conversant with health matters. The health of our little children, who are the first to be stricken down by an epidemic, is of paramount importance to us, because they are the makings of the men and women of the future generation of Queensland. I hope, when the additional Minister is appointed, more time will be devoted to the care of the health of the community. Ministers have done a great deal in the past in the face of great difficulties; an opportunity will now be afforded to them of doing more.

Our hospitals, also, require a lot of attention. We would like to have the Home Secretary in Rockhampton, with the hon. member for Fitzroy and myself at the present time, looking into the wants of the hospitals of Rockhampton, that are crying out for attention. They are in a bad way.

Mr. STOFFORD: What about Mount Morgan?

Mr. FORDE: We have in the Rockhampton hospital a considerable number of Mount Morgan patients. It is a base hospital, and takes patients for the whole of Central Queensland, and we hope that the base grant for Rockhampton will be doubled. I mention that fact to show that the Health Department is a most important department, and, although the Home Secretary has been good enough to do something for Rockhampton with regard to that department, we cannot expect him to devote very much of his time to the Health Department or the hospitals of Queensland while he has to look after so many activities.

We know that the prisons take a lot of attention. (Opposition laughter.) I would like to see the Home Secretary spend days going round visiting the hospitals and prisons, the orphanages and asylums of Queensland, and learning something personally of them. I know he has done something, but I would like to see him do more. I would like to see him become au fait with everything that is going on, and not depend on the reports that are submitted to him by people who sometimes become prejudiced and get a man "set," possibly because he does not work favourably for them. (Hear, hear!) I believe there should be more investigation by the Minister.

Our State Children's Department takes a great deal of the time of the Home Secretary. I know that nearly half his time is taken up in interviewing members who call on him regarding the care of State children. It is a most important subdepartment. The expansion of the State orphanages, the establishment of widows' and orphans' funds—all these things would take up a great deal of the time and attention of one man.

Local government in Queensland is a matter of great importance to the State. It, too, comes under the Home Department. It is of more than usually great importance in view of the impending fundamental alteration of the Local Authorities Act, an alteration that will make it possible for

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every man and woman in Queensland to have a vote as to who shall be his or her representative in the local council. This is a most important reform—one to which the Home Secretary has given a great deal of attention. It is one that will mean a clean sweep in many of the councils of Queensland, one that will mean the complete annihilation of the conservative members who, at the last conference, passed motion-adverse to the present Government. All these matters come under the jurisdiction of the Home Secretary, and I know that a great deal of his time is taken up by them, and that he has not the time to devote to the hospitals and State children, to prisons, and public health, and so on.

The Treasury Department is another of great importance, which is very efficiently presided over at the present time by the Treasurer. It has many important sub-departments, including the hydraulic and water supply department. The water supply department is one to which we want the Treasurer to devote much attention, because it concerns Central Queensland vitally, in that we have running through the central portion of our State one of the finest rivers in Australia—the Fitzroy—which we want dammed, and on which we want a water conservation scheme. I know the Treasurer is sympathetic and will do all in his power, in the circumstances in which the Government find themselves, to establish a proper irrigation and water conservation scheme for Central Queensland.

There is also under the Treasury the Marine Department, one of great importance, the sugar-mills, which throughout Queensland are doing great work for the sugar-growers, who were very badly treated by the Tory millers before this Government came into power.

The Works Department controls the Labour Department, the Shops and Factories Department. It is of growing importance in Queensland. We know that it has been responsible for forcing the employers to pay thousands and thousands of pounds to the workers of this State which would have been denied to them if it were not for the intervention of that department.

Another very important subdepartment that comes under the Works Department, and I feel sure will get the sympathetic attention of the Treasurer, is the workers' dwellings branch and the workers' housing scheme. They will be two departments merged into one, which will be of vital importance to the State.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Are you stonewalling the Bill?

Mr. FORDE: The hon. member does not like my getting in some of the truth.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I do not like it at all, I will admit.

Mr. FORDE: He painted things very black this afternoon by misrepresentation, but I am here to give the whole truth. I hope hon. members will allow me to proceed. I was going to say the Workers' Dwellings Department is of great importance to Queensland. The workers' homes scheme is of special importance to Central Queensland, and we look forward with keen interest to its early establishment. We have some beautiful ground there that we would like to see built on, sites on which hundreds and hundreds of houses could be built. We hope the

Treasurer will preside sympathetically over the new housing scheme.

The Minister for Mines has enough to do in his own department, and he is sometimes asked to relieve in other departments. He is doing the best he can to develop our mineral resources in Queensland, but I want to see hundreds and hundreds of men working on the Styx River.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: And you will see hundreds and hundreds of unemployed tents.

Mr. FORDE: I want to see them raising thousands and thousands of tons of the best coal in Australia. I might mention, incidentally, that the Rockhampton Gas Company buys the whole of its coal from the Styx River, because it is good coal. I want the Minister to devote the whole of his time and attention to the development of the mineral resources of Central Queensland.

Mr. BRENNAN: What about the Downs?

Mr. COSTELLO: What about the South?

Mr. FORDE: For about fifty years in Queensland we have had Southern Queensland Governments. This Government is a Central and Northern Government—(laughter)—and has treated the Centre and the North better than any previous Government in the history of Queensland. (Hear, hear!) We do not want to get any unfair advantage over any other portion of the State, but we want to get a fair deal for the Centre and the North.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the question.

Mr. FORDE: Yes; I was going to say that if we had an additional Minister he could do more to look after Central and Northern Queensland than it was looked after by the Tory Governments in the past. We know that the Barnes-Denham Government were a Queen street Government, and I want the Minister who is to be appointed to be sympathetic towards the Centre and the North, to see that those parts that have been neglected in the past and are, consequently, urgently in need of development, will get that close attention to which they are justly entitled.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: What about the Turbot street Government?

Mr. FORDE: Because I believe that before many years are over we will have a Parliament sitting in Rockhampton and Cabinet Ministers there. (Laughter.) I do not want to get on to that aspect of the question any further. I know the departments to-day take a great deal of looking after. The Railway Department is a very trying one, and takes up the whole of the time of the Minister. I am pleased to say he has done his work satisfactorily up to the present; he has done everything he possibly could. I hope this additional Minister will be appointed, and that Ministers will have more time to go into the details of the working of their departments and see that they are being administered sympathetically towards the policy of the Labour party. I know Ministers have had this aim in view in the past, but you cannot expect overworked men to go into the ramifications of every department. Let us hope the new Minister will devote the whole of his time to seeing that the policy of this Government is carried out in the departments, and, after twelve or eighteen months

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have passed, members will agree that it is a great thing, in the interests of Queensland, that the Labour Government appointed an additional Minister. That will have the effect of the more economical and efficient government in this great State of Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): It is regrettable that, in discussing this question, the personal element could not have been avoided. (Hear, hear!) The abuse of different members who have held positions as Cabinet Ministers in previous Administrations, to my mind, is no argument in favour of the present proposition. There are two questions involved in this matter. One is, is the time ripe for such an additional appointment—are the finances of the State in such a position that this House is warranted in approving of the appointment of an additional Minister? The leader of the Government a few evenings ago made an appeal to the members of the Opposition to assist him in carrying out a policy of economy, in view of the critical financial condition of the State. At that time I venture to suggest that he was not *bonâ fide* in that appeal, and after the proposition which has been placed before this Chamber this evening I am convinced of that. The matter of the actual cost of an additional Minister, as has been pointed out by the leader of the Opposition, is not of very considerable moment. It is a question of principle; it is a question as to whether the House is justified, in view of the fact that to-day, to-morrow, and in the days succeeding it will be necessary for the Administration to dispense with the services of a large number of the smaller paid employees of the State—

Mr. HARTLEY: Where did you get that from?

HON. J. G. APPEL: As a matter of fact the Railway Department to-day have given notice to a large number of men that their services are to be dispensed with—it is a question of policy and principle whether, in view of the fact—and it is a fact, apparently—that it is necessary to dispense with the services of a large number of the poorly-paid members of the community who are to-day employed in the public service of the State, the House is justified in making this additional appointment. I am sorry to say that the matter of the expenses of Ministers in connection with their different tours has been referred to from both sides of the House. The leader of the Government suggested that it was unworthy to do so. The Treasurer made the same suggestion.

The TREASURER: I did not say a word.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I heard the interjection. Yet those are the two gentlemen who are continually casting reflections that members on this side of the House who occupied Ministerial positions exceeded the expenses which they, in their Ministerial capacity, have incurred.

The TREASURER: I haven't said a word.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I withdraw the suggestion in regard to the hon. gentleman. It came from the leader of the Government, and I thought I heard the same remarks from the Treasurer. I am of opinion that a Minister, in carrying out his Ministerial functions and visiting different portions of

the State, has a certain dignity to maintain. I have never questioned the expenses of the Minister, so far as his Ministerial duties were concerned. During the whole of the time I occupied a Ministerial position, whenever a question was asked, on the succeeding day or the day after, the whole of the vouchers showing the amount of expenditure in connection with those trips were placed on the table of the House. The House is justified on every occasion in knowing that the amount has been expended. A suggestion was made this afternoon that my expenditure as a Minister justified the appointment which it was proposed to make.

The TREASURER: Oh, no.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Every item was placed on the table of this House, and on every occasion on which I made an official visit an equal number of members sitting on this side of the House—members of the caucus party—were invited and took part in those different visits to different portions of the State.

Mr. MOORE: And were treated the same as members of the Government party.

HON. J. G. APPEL: And were treated in the same way as members of the Government party. The only occasions on which the school children of the Northern portion of the State had the opportunity of enjoying the same excursions as are afforded to the children of the Southern part of the State were when I made those two visits. Unquestionably, as on each occasion the period involved was something like three weeks, it meant a considerable amount of expenditure, but I say it was justified.

The TREASURER: Nobody is quarrelling about your expenditure.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Why does the hon. gentleman suggest that the expenditure that I incurred was an excessive one? I simply mention this fact as evidence that, so far as Ministerial expenditure is concerned, if the Minister considers he is justified in making the expenditure I have no personal objection; but it is his duty—a duty which, I am sorry to say, members sitting on the Treasury benches now have not fulfilled—to afford the House the opportunity of seeing the details of his expenditure.

The TREASURER: You know very well your Government never did that.

HON. J. G. APPEL: On every occasion the details of the expenditure of every Minister, when they were asked for, were laid upon the table of the House.

The TREASURER: Not that it matters that much (snapping his fingers), but they never were.

HON. J. G. APPEL: No farthing of public money ever found its way to my pocket. Every item was expended by the officials of the department, and given in detail and laid upon the table of the House when asked for. Has that been the case in connection with hon. gentlemen who are sitting on the Treasury benches to-day?

The TREASURER: We say we have adopted the same policy as your Government followed.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Although I have never voiced any objection to the legitimate expenditure of a Minister, the fact that members of the present Administration have

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failed to give those details, together with the financial stress which exists in the State to-day, and the fact that an appeal was made by the leader of the Government that the Opposition should assist him in a policy of economy, are very potent reasons why this House should not accept the measure introduced by the Attorney-General which we are debating to-night. Hon. members who have spoken in support of this measure have endeavoured to impress the House with the idea that a Minister practically undertakes in detail every item of work, from that of an office boy to that of Under Secretary. Every member of the Opposition who has held Ministerial rank knows that the detailed work is done by the officials of the department, and that the Under Secretary is practically in the position of general manager of the particular department of which he is the head.

Mr. HARTLEY: The Tory Minister was a rubber stamp.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The Minister only directs the policy of the department. So far as he is concerned, it is merely a question of approving matters of detail outside the question of policy—which, of course, he decides—which have been carried through by the permanent officials of the department. I have yet to learn that the Under Secretary and the different officers who control the different departments of the State to-day have become unable to carry out those functions which they have always carried out so effectively. Listening to hon. members sitting on the other side of the House, one would think that a Minister has to undertake all the duties. That is the position which hon. members are endeavouring to impress upon this House, and through this House upon the electors. It is absolutely incorrect. Every member must know that when he accepts Ministerial duties he practically has to devote the whole of his time—in many instances both night and day—to the work of administering his department. If he thinks, in accepting office, it is simply to be a kind of pleasure he should not accept the position. Immediately the present caucus Administration came into office they increased the number of Ministers to the fullest extent possible, and they do not suggest that at that time there was any addition to the administrative work which they were called upon to carry out.

Mr. HARTLEY: No, they were only going to do it better.

HON. J. G. APPEL: To endeavour to impress upon the electors that the men they have placed in responsible positions in connection with the different enterprises that have been established are incompetent men is to show that they have failed in their duty, or that they are endeavouring to deceive the electors of the State. I have no hesitation in saying that, in view of the officers who are performing duties as permanent heads and officials in the various departments, the number of Ministers is quite equal to the work entailed by their administrative duties. In view of the fact that it is absolutely necessary that economy should be practised, I ask how did that very much abused hon. gentleman, Sir Robert Philp, act in the time of stress, owing to financial conditions of the State?

Mr. BRENNAN: Cut him out.

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HON. J. G. APPEL: He reduced the salaries of his Ministers by £200 per annum.

Mr. BRENNAN: And made £500,000 himself.

HON. J. G. APPEL: He did not come along and suggest that, owing to the additional work entailed on his Ministers, an additional Minister should be appointed. But he acted honestly and reduced the salaries of his Ministers. While these true-blue democrats talk of no reduction in their salaries, unfortunate members of the community are being dismissed, the unemployed are walking about the streets, and little children starving, yet they talk of appointing another member of their party as an additional Minister. In view of the circumstances which exist to-day, when it is proposed practically to confiscate the funds of the members of the community by means of forced loans—

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Ah! Shocking!

HON. J. G. APPEL: When we find deficits such as exist to-day, unemployment, men being dismissed—the smaller men, not the highly-paid officials—is that the time to propose such a measure as this? Is that a proof of the bona fides of members of the Caucus party. I venture to say that it will not appeal to the electors of the State.

Mr. HARTLEY: How do you think the forced loan will appeal to them?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I do not think the forced loan, or the present action of the Government, while dismissing the smaller members of the community, while unemployment is rampant, in appointing an additional Minister at £1,000 a year, will appeal to the electors. And it is no proof of the democracy of the hon. member for Fitzroy. In moving the second reading, the Minister impressed upon the House the necessity for additional Ministers owing to the fact that Ministers were required to give all their attention to the details of their office.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No, I did not say all their attention—some of their attention. There are other things besides details of office.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Oh! I am glad I asked the question. The Minister admits that Ministers are only required—these over-worked Ministers—to give some of their attention to their departments. It is just as well that we know exactly where we stand, and we have it now from the Minister.

The TREASURER: The House meets five days a week.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That shows that, so far as departments are concerned, the Ministers are not over-worked. Possibly the reason they desire an additional Minister is that they may give less of their time to the administration of the details of their departments. In view of that fact, would it be a proper thing for the House, in view of the circumstances existing in the State to-day, to assent to this proposition? I might have felt inclined to, if the Minister had made out that, in spite of giving the whole of their attention to the administration of their departments—which the Minister admits is not a fact—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I admit nothing of the kind.

HON. J. G. APPEL: If he had made out that, in view of this fact, they are unable to cope with the work.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is very unkind of you to twist my remarks.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It is the Minister's own admission, Mr. Speaker. It is not a question of the time entailed in the administration of the department, but I assume that it is apparently the time which is required by them to visit different portions of the States—the Southern—for the purpose of dispensing caucus propaganda.

Mr. HARTLEY: Put it that way if you like, or else advertising the State.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Oh! I see, advertising the State, or enlarging their own minds, I take it. Is that so?

Mr. HARTLEY: Enlarging the minds of the other States.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Now, we have arrived at the basis of the proposition—that it is for the purpose of enabling Ministers to give more attention away from their offices to advertise the States and dispense caucus propaganda. Then, I say, we are absolutely justified in opposing this measure. I suggest, in view of the fact that they are only required to give portion of their time to the administrative details of their office, the contention that the Minister is unable to give the whole time necessary to the administrative details, and he has been unable to effect the cleansing of the rolls which to-day are a standing disgrace, not alone to Queensland, but every State of the Commonwealth.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is untrue!

HON. J. G. APPEL: I should suggest that the Minister give more of his time to the administrative details of his office, and by doing so it would be possible for him to effect these reforms which the hon. member for Rockhampton, in that eloquent speech of his, demands as a necessary corollary to the benefit and uplifting of members of the community, especially Central Queensland. If hon. gentlemen who administer these offices are not prepared to give the whole of their time to the administration of these offices, then they can make room for other members who are prepared to do so.

The TREASURER: Under your Act, when you were Minister, you would not give a vote to people who lived in tents because tents were not residences.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Quite so, and I stand by everything that I did when I occupied the position.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. HARTLEY: You forgot to say that part of the time is taken up coming here to listen to you.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It is very hard to make any impression on a man with as thick a head as the hon. member.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! The hon. member began his speech by deprecating the use of personalities. He is now making personal reflections which are disorderly.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I apologise, Mr. Speaker. Mention has been made of previous Administrations. Apparently the present Administration are not so much in touch with the general electors of the State as previous Administrations were. How many deputations do the present Ministers receive as compared with those received by previous Administrations?

The PREMIER: Not so many, because there are not so many grievances now.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I do not observe it. The deputations have ceased because, as they

state, the present Administration is absolutely out of sympathy with those who desire to see settlement and progress in the State of Queensland. Ministers are, therefore, relieved of that time which would be involved in receiving such deputations. But I quite realise that practically the whole thing has been blown to pieces by the admission of the Minister—that Ministers shall not give the whole of their time and attention to the administration of their departments.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You are imagining things now. You would not make that statement otherwise.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I take it the hon. gentleman, in answering my query, realised what it meant, and that he truthfully replied to the question I asked.

Mr. FORDE: Some Ministers work twelve and fourteen hours a day.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Any admission the Minister makes from the Treasury benches, especially as Minister in charge of the Bill, must command attention and must be accepted, and he can demand its acceptance by members sitting in every portion of the House. But we recognise that on his own statement the work is not as heavy as caucus supporters endeavour to impress upon the Chamber—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You are twisting it again.

Mr. FORDE interjected.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I quite realise that the hon. member for Rockhampton, in the address which he gave, dealt with a lot of matters, the effect of which apparently he did not realise. In saying the present caucus Administration was the only Administration that had acted sympathetically to the poor and sick members of the community, he did not realise the fact that both the late Home Secretary and the first Home Secretary under caucus Administration stated publicly that they would endeavour to follow in the footsteps of myself who had preceded them as Home Secretary.

That is given as a reason why an additional Minister should be appointed. Just because the allowance to mothers was increased from 5s. to 10s., hon. members say that is a reason for the appointment of an additional Minister. Hon. members opposite are always saying that 10s. to-day is only equal to 5s. at the time that that amount was paid to the mothers. Just because they increased the amount to what it was worth when I was Minister, they say an additional Minister should be appointed.

The HOME SECRETARY: There are thousands more children on the State than there were before.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Unfortunately, I realise that, owing to the administration of the present Government, poverty is rampant throughout the length and breadth of the land.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL: I quite realise that it is owing to the actions of the party opposite that poverty is so rife, and that more and more children are coming on the State. I quite realise that, but it is not a reason why we should appoint an additional Minister. I believe I am correct in saying that the relief that will be paid during the current year will amount to

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£90,000. Just to show how the amount has increased, I may mention that in 1916 it was £6,000. This year it will be £90,000. Is that an evidence that this State is being well managed, and that the State is prosperous and being well developed? No. It is an evidence of the ineptitude of the present Administration.

THE HOME SECRETARY: You are not quite fair. No child whose father is living is on the State. You are not truthful.

HON. J. G. APPEL: In what way?

THE HOME SECRETARY: You know that no child on the State has a father unless he is an invalid.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That is because the unfortunate women are unable to gain a livelihood for themselves and their children.

THE SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member not to digress.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That is not a sufficient reason for the appointment of an additional Minister. The arguments adduced to-night, and the admission of the Attorney-General in charge of the Bill, to my mind, are sufficient to damage the Bill, and so far as I am concerned I propose to vote against it. The time is inopportune for appointing another Minister. The financial condition of the State does not warrant it. There is no justification for an extra Minister to administer for the poorer members of the community. It is not right to place an additional salaried Minister on the floor of this House, and I trust the second reading of the Bill will not be accepted.

MR. FLETCHER: On three or four occasions I have heard the Premier remark that he would like to have the assistance of the Opposition in bringing about economy. In one part of the Premier's speech he says—

“In exercising economy, I appeal to both sides of the House to assist the Government.”

The hon. gentleman asked us to assist the Government in bringing about economy; but, in contrast to that, he brings in a Bill of this sort, which is quite incompatible with either reason or economy. There is, in my opinion, absolutely no need for another Minister at the present time. If the Ministerial departments were conducted and organised and carried out with a reasonable amount of ability, I think that eight Ministers, or less than eight Ministers, would be ample. My recollection tells me that practically all the Ministers have at some time or another occupied every portfolio that it is possible for them to occupy. The Treasurer, I am sure, has filled practically every portfolio. It is quite impossible for those hon. gentlemen to go from one department to another in that way and carry out the duties of those departments in a satisfactory manner to the State. I consider that if a Minister spent the whole of his life in a department he would still have something to learn in connection with it. It is quite impossible, in the interests of the State, for Ministers to move about from one department to another. In connection with the meat contracts with the Imperial Government, and for the State butchers' shop, we have had to deal with no less than five Ministers. At one time we had to deal with the Hon. T. J. Ryan, Mr. Hunter (the present Agent-General), the present Premier, the present Treasurer, and the Minister

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for Railways. We would be just getting to some conclusion with one Minister when another Minister would be appointed to deal with the matter, and then he would be replaced by someone else. We never got any continuity of thought between the Ministers. I say without any hesitation that there was too much inexperience and uncertainty about the way they handled those undertakings. The Premier, I am sure, will not mind me mentioning that he made some extraordinary statements to some deputations. I could not believe it possible as coming from him. It was because he was asked to take up the threads where another Minister left off. A Minister should have one position and hold on to it, so that he can learn the job and carry it out with satisfaction to himself and the people of Queensland.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is an argument in favour of our Bill.

MR. FLETCHER: Not at all.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Of course; it is one of the best.

THE TREASURER: We will claim his vote for it.

MR. FLETCHER: Just as a Minister is beginning to learn his department he is taken away from it and put somewhere else. You cannot do any good with a department when you shift the Ministers about in that way. The whole reason for wanting another Minister is the block vote. It was a question of “you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours.” The Minister for Lands was left out in the cold on this occasion. It is unfair to saddle the State with this extra expense in order to satisfy him and his friends; they have no right to appoint another Minister when we find ourselves in the financial position we are in at the present time.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Are you aware that this Bill was passed by the Assembly in the last Parliament?

MR. FLETCHER: Hon. members opposite did not say to the electors before the election that they were going to bring this Bill forward.

THE TREASURER: We passed it last session.

MR. FLETCHER: The Premier never told the people that he was going to introduce this Bill. The people were absolutely camouflaged. He told the people a lot of half-truths, and they were deceived. If it were not for that, I do not think the Government would be occupying the Treasury benches to-day. We have been living in a great boom of prosperity caused by the war. We have had high prices for commodities that have enabled the Government to get a bigger revenue. The war loans distributed throughout the country have made a lot of revenue for the State, and the repatriation money given by the Commonwealth Government, and the great sums of money coming in from the sales of marsupial skins—all of these things were the outcome of the war, and they brought a great amount of prosperity, a fictitious and an ephemeral prosperity. The Premier told the people that the present financial state of the country was due to the war. The Government have been living on the boom and on the high prices brought about by the war, but the Premier camouflaged the situation and misled the people.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What do you suggest?

Mr. FLETCHER: There is a slump in prices coming, and the Government have not made any provision for the coming depression. The Government have run right up to the edge of the precipice, and now they have to call a halt. They did not look ahead soon enough. Now they see the difficulty, and they asked us to assist them by economising. We are not economising when we propose to appoint another Minister. Instead of appointing another Minister, I suggest that we appoint a business man of high reputation, ability, and integrity. Pay him a large salary, if necessary. He should be engaged to reorganise the railways and other departments. That might be done in this way—a census might be taken in connection with the railways. The census could show the ages of the men, whether they are married or single, what they did before they entered the railways, what job they are on, and what job they wish to do and could do. The Commissioner could then take this census, and he could pick out the men that he could dispense with. These men will fill various vocations on the railways. Some will be surveyors, engineers, fitters, labourers, and others. They could be put on at work in other directions, such as irrigation works and things of that kind. When the work was completed, some of the men might take up farms they had helped to create. These men have to be paid on the railways to-day, and I suggest that they be taken out of their present employment and be put on reproductive works. That will not cost the State one penny more than it is costing at the present time.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. gentleman to confine his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am pointing out that it will be far better to appoint a man to reorganise the Railway Department in the way I suggest rather than appoint an additional Minister as provided by this Bill. The men in the Railway Department are dissatisfied and discontented, and the reason they are in that state of mind is because they are not taking any interest in their work. They are looking to get higher wages for less work.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is a reflection on the railway men.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is nothing of the sort; it is because they have not got enough work to do. There are too many men on the job.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FLETCHER: When you have men without experience or ability occupying these positions we cannot hope to have the best results for the State. I intend to vote against the measure, because I think it is absolutely wrong to appoint another Minister while the finances of the State are in their present position. We see great trouble standing out in front of us. I think the Government should withdraw the Bill and show some practical signs of economy. If they do that they can expect, and they will get, help from this side of the House. We will help the Government to carry out economy in any way they like to introduce it.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I wish to say a few words in support of this measure, and I shall be as brief as possible. It does not want any great amount of argument to convince this House that the administration

of the big business firms and companies within the State could not be carried on unless there were men at the head of it who are directors acting in sympathy with and approving of the policy they have to carry out. I can quite understand that the past Government managed to carry along the government of the State with, perhaps, a smaller number of Ministers than we have got. The reason for that is quite apparent to me. The development of the State then was much slower, there were fewer departments to administer, and those departments were administered in the interests of a very small clique in the community, including the pastoralists and big mining companies, and a few of the big mercantile firms.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HARTLEY: It is quite possible under those circumstances that Ministers could previously administer departments which now require nine Ministers, and perhaps ten or more. The history of Queensland shows that the administration of the State was carried on mostly in the interests of the big pastoralists, the big mining companies, the big land speculating companies, and the big mercantile firms, with the result that you have a large over-grown city at one end of the State and very small towns in comparison to the wealth of the district in other parts, and not half the development that the wealth and revenue-producing possibilities of those districts entitle them to. I support this appointment because it will secure greater efficiency. (Hear, hear!) The hon. member for Albert admitted that it was not the concern of Ministers under the old régime to get efficiency; that was a matter for the Under Secretary and his staff. Well, no manager

of any big mining company will [8.30 p.m.] admit that, I am sure that the hon. member for Port Curtis, if he were manager of the Gladstone meat-works, would not accept the mere "say so" of his accountant or his third or fourth engineer without any question at all. He would have to investigate it thoroughly himself from all sides of the question before he would authorise any big departure in the management of these works. That is where past Ministers went wrong, and that is where the Ministers of to-day find the stress and strain of a multiplicity of duties too great for them, because they have honestly and sincerely endeavoured to grasp all the factors that they should take into consideration before they consent to any departure in their administration. I think it quite clear that we could run along, too, if we simply allowed an Under Secretary to put papers before the Minister that he might sign them. I think we could run along with one Minister in that way if we gave him half a dozen rubber stamps—one for the Mines Department, one for the Department of Public Instruction, and one for each of the other departments; but that is all in the favour of the big vested interests. Although, with one or two exceptions—and I will say that the hon. member for Albert was one of the exceptions—that is all that was done by Ministers of past Administrations.

Another factor that makes it necessary to have another Minister is, that we are administering departments to-day that we had never heard of a year or two ago. I wonder that such papers as the "Courier" did not die—I am sure they must have had

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medical attendance for many days with a stethoscope at their literary heart and the administration of oxygen constantly—it must have shocked them when they heard that one State station had been bought. When it was reported that two had been bought, however they managed to keep alive I do not know. Perhaps they did it by means of an antidote which, though it certainly kept them alive, certainly also sent them raving mad in their bitter hostility and miserable meanness towards this Government. They would risk anything to damn this Government. I maintain that the policy of such papers as the "Courier" is the same sort of propaganda that brought about the revolution in Russia; and if we had not a greater freedom and opportunity of legislating in our own interest, they could possibly bring about such a result here. But I think the people are too sane and too thoroughly understand the reason for the existence of the "Courier" to allow their propaganda to affect them. That is one department absolutely unknown to previous Governments, and for which they did not require an additional Minister. There are State coalmines, as has been pointed out by the member for Rockhampton. Previously, in the old "happy-go-lucky let-her-go" style you went out and found your coal. If you were a prospector you worked four or five weeks or a few months and got down on to coal. You had your miner's right and your claim, but when you got down on the coal you could go no further, and then "Mr. Benefactor of the Whole Human Race," the chap that puts money in to help the poor struggling working man, came along. He had a look at it and said, "The coal is no good." And if the miner went away in order to try to get enough money to work the coal, "Mr. Snatch-a-Peg" came along and put in his pegs. He went quietly along to the Under Secretary for Mines and some other gentlemen and said, "That man is not fulfilling condition; I want this, and I do not want a few acres, I want a square mile"; and he got it. Of course, that sort of administration suited the friends of gentlemen opposite, but this Government have said that the treasure below ground in the form of coal, that is wanted for the development of our manufacturing industries, is the property of the people, and we are going to administer it, and work it, and sell it in their interests. We want a man to look out smart and have all the time and staff at his disposal to see that the coalmines are a success.

Mr. BROWN: Are your State coalmines a success; for instance, at Torbanlea?

Mr. HARTLEY: I cannot understand what the hon. member is gibing at, unless it be Warra. Now, if I had the money, I would go on with Warra. We stopped when we had lost £50,000 odd, and when, by the expenditure of another £20,000, we would have got on to the real seam of coal, as proved by the geological report, and it would have been a proposition to win back the money we had already bunkered. Other coalmines promised to be a success, particularly that at the Styx River, where there is a standing order from Rockhampton—to give only one instance of many—at 15s. or 10s. a ton above the price ever offered previously for Queensland coal, if not Australian coal.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. HARTLEY: Yes, I am afraid I got

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outside the orbit of the Standing Orders in rather wishing to bring before the House the necessity for the development of some of their industries, but the reason of it is that, with more Ministers and the departments divided up more evenly over that greater number, greater detailed attention could be given and if matters of importance are to be decided like that there is a greater possibility of a correct and efficient decision being given. The hon. member for Port Curtis, I am quite sure, lost sight of the fact that a Minister of Harbours and Rivers would be a very good departure at the present time.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Why?

Mr. HARTLEY: Why? Well, with 14 miles of the channel in the Brisbane River to look after you have fourteen dredges, and the rest of the harbours of Queensland four.

Mr. GREEN: Why did they not run it like the Townsville Harbour Board, and make a success of it?

Mr. FORDE: How much do they owe the Government?

Mr. GREEN: Not as much as Rockhampton.

Mr. HARTLEY: When the side spar is finished, I will go on. If a Minister for Harbours and Rivers were appointed I venture to say that £500,000 would not have been spent on Townsville to the exclusion of other parts of the coast.

Mr. GREEN: £300,000.

Mr. HARTLEY: The hon. member for Townsville says £300,000, the Home Secretary £1,300,000, and if we go on we'll sink the Treasury far deeper than the boasted depth of Townsville Harbour. No doubt the hon. member for Port Curtis found it inconvenient when he was acting in the interest of the Gladstone Meatworks to have to face so many Ministers. It would have been much easier for him as the representative of the big meat works who had this Government held up on an agreement, trying to bargain them out of another half-penny or penny per pound that the people of Queensland would have to pay, if he had had an Under Secretary to meet and to beat in the interests of his company to the exclusion of the people of Queensland.

Mr. FLETCHER: Price had nothing to do with it.

Mr. HARTLEY: Of course not. You were just mere philanthropists, just as, I suppose, the hon. member acts in the interests of the dear working man and his wife and children when he comes down to fight them in the Arbitration Court, but I am too hard-shelled a working man to put up with that sort of stuff, and it is no use saying to me that the price had nothing to do with it, when we know that the Chief Secretary, the Minister for Railways, and the Minister for Lands were practically held up for six months while the company that the hon. member represented and others with him fought with him in order to extort another three farthings or penny per pound to put on to the cost of meat to the people of Queensland—and that, be it borne in mind, at a time of war.

It has been said that we do not want an additional Minister because the time of prosperity is past, that we have been living on the top of a boom prosperity occasioned by the war, and now that the time is coming

of tightness, and we are going back to the bad old days when the Denham-Barnes gave blue peas and pulse to the inmates of Dunwich and a miserable pittance as an out-of-work allowance. Now he says we do not want it. I am one of those who think that the prosperity of Queensland is only beginning to dawn. (Hear, hear!) What I want to say is that, in spite of the fact that I know that unfortunately to-day it is true that there are a great number of unemployed on the market and that this Government are faced with a serious position in providing work for the men already in positions, I want those men—and I want to speak to them publicly now—to realise that it is the result of a contest between the workers' representatives—the men who stand for a fair deal for the worker and easier and better conditions all round—and the bad old system of the capitalist of grinding the heart and soul out of everything and everybody so long as he can get an extra dollar.

THE HOME SECRETARY: What about the statement of the hon. member for Albert?

MR. HARTLEY: That was something I was sorry to hear from the hon. member for Albert, because in most administrative work he certainly did show a humanitarian spirit, and I think it was merely in the heat of argument and it was certainly fallacious to say that the mothers of the State who have been deprived of the services of their bread-winners should be compelled to work to keep their children. That was not the policy when he was in the Home Department, and I think he rather spoke without thinking how deep he was going. But that certainly is the sentiment that is supported by the old Tory and Conservative régime—that a man has no right to be poor, that if there is no work for him it is his own fault, and he should be allowed to starve. There cannot be work for him when, as I believe, big financial institutions are deliberately trying to put this Government on the rocks by creating a financial shortage.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

MR. HARTLEY: When the hon. member says, as one of the reasons why an extra Minister should not be appointed, that we have passed the final prosperity, I say we are only beginning to realise what Queensland can do in the way of production. We have a record harvest of wheat; we have coal mines opening up and other industries starting everywhere. The only thing that is wanted is money, and, unless we can have proper and sufficient administration in the various departments, when we get that money it cannot be put to the best use. By creating another Minister, by seeing that the departments are thoroughly supervised by a man with the power to say "yes" or "no," I am sure we will attain to a greater degree of efficiency in the management of these departments, which in a very short time will react to the benefit of the State and the people in particular. (Hear, hear!)

MR. CORSER: There is one thing evident in this debate, and that is the lack of argument from the Government benches as to the real reason for introducing this Bill. We give to Ministers all credit in regard to the duties they owe to the State and in the performance of those duties, and we trust we will get the best which is in them. But there has been no argument adduced to show that there is the slightest necessity for increasing expenditure in this direction by

the inclusion of another paid Minister. To my mind, the real reason for the appointment of another Minister is a personal one on behalf of each Minister holding a position to-day. We know they have to pool their "screws," and the inclusion of another paid Minister really means an increase in the salary of the present Ministers. I think no one can deny that. The pooling of their salaries has not been a very pleasant matter to them, and to get out of it and assist them over the troubled times they have recently gone through, they find they can pour a little oil on the troubled waters possibly by appointing another Minister. I have not heard any reason given which would justify another Minister being appointed. We know that in a time of recess one or two Ministers have been able to control all the departments of the State; and they have carried out their duties just as badly, possibly, as all of them would together. We cannot find any instance where the work of the Ministers has been so heavy as to warrant this increased expenditure. Hon. members have talked about the extra duties in the various departments, but not one word has fallen from the Attorney-General in regard to the amount of work placed on the public servant. They seem to claim that all this extra work and burden is falling directly on the Ministers, and they have not taken into consideration the tremendous amount of work which has been placed on the shoulders of the Under Secretaries.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They have had their duties increased.

MR. CORSER: So evident is that fact that we are losing our Under Secretaries to-day. Only at the end of this month we are losing a man from the Lands Department simply because he has not been given a remuneration which he claims in his interest should have come along. If Ministers gave their attention to the reorganisation of their departments and the responsibilities of their departments, in order to see that increased emoluments were given to the heads who were entitled to them on account of extra work, it would be far better and fairer than giving the extra amount to the Cabinet. The Minister in charge of the Bill has referred to quite a lot of State enterprises which attract a great deal of attention and time of the Cabinet or the administrator. We overlook the fact that the State enterprises to-day are controlled by a Commissioner. We appointed that Commissioner to take away the whole of the responsibility which otherwise would fall upon the Minister.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: To collect and spend the money as he likes?

MR. CORSER: He is not collecting too much. If the Government want to take the honour of the spending of it, they are entitled to it. Certainly, there has been plenty of money spent; but as to any extra burden having been placed on the Minister in that regard, I have not been able to find proof of it in the remarks which have fallen from gentlemen on the other side. The Savings Bank, which some years ago was controlled by the Treasury—the Treasurer being absolutely responsible for its administration—has during the last few years fallen into the hands of the Commissioner, who, by Act of Parliament, has been made absolutely responsible for its administration, taking away altogether that important work of administration which under past Governments was controlled by the Treasurer. So that in

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that particular alone we must agree that we are faced with the position of a possible slackening in the amount of work of the present Cabinet compared with other Cabinets. Let us further analyse the position. We know that under past Governments the Agricultural Bank administration was in the hands of the Agricultural Department, and the Minister of that department was responsible for it. To-day we find that the Commissioner of the Savings Bank has in his control that intricate business, and administrators—probably by maladministration—that section which lately came under the Agricultural Department. Government members have not taken into consideration these important branches of the public service which in the past were controlled directly by the Minister and his Under Secretary.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was controlled by a board.

Mr. CORSER: Under a Minister, who was directly responsible. To-day, those two branches are controlled by a gentleman independent altogether of the Parliament and of the Cabinet.

The PREMIER: Not independent of Parliament.

Mr. CORSER: Not independent of Parliament, but independent of the Cabinet. It is the Cabinet's work which we are discussing at the present moment. Not only in the Savings Bank administration and the administration of the Agricultural Bank, but also in the State enterprises, we find that a Commissioner is appointed to control probably one of the best managed sections—that of State insurance. It is under a Commissioner, who is responsible to Parliament and not to the Minister.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is wrong.

Mr. CORSER: The Minister should be able to show that they are really responsible and the Commissioner is not. As a matter of fact, I contend that to-day the Ministerial office of most of the gentlemen who occupy that position is less important than it has been under other Administrations. We find they have controlling the administration in some instances political friends whom they have made private secretaries, or who have positions of great importance, having been placed there by the Minister who is at the head of the department. We find that sub-branches have been created. In our soldier settlement scheme, our war council, and all the various sub-branches of the Lands Department, we have administrators.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Apart from the Minister?

Mr. CORSER: I do not claim they are apart from the Minister, but I do claim the Minister has very little to do with them. I think the Minister will agree with that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Minister wishes you were right.

Mr. CORSER: I do not want to say, for one moment, that anyone could envy the Minister in carrying out the administration of the Lands Department. That department is one of the biggest in the State, and one which has been administered to the credit of the State, as far as its administration went: although the policy of that department during the last few years, in my opinion, has been a pretty rotten one. However, the duty is there, and it has been carried out. My remarks are not directed to that department in particular. When we look at the Agricul-

tural Department, do we see the great schemes of State farms and the sub-branches that took a tremendous amount of the attention of the Minister in charge? He had to visit from Kamerunga right to the Hermitage on the Downs.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They were great schemes—those farms established by your Government.

Mr. CORSER: I am not for a moment going to belittle those State farms. I claim that in the earlier days in the agricultural development of the State they were most important and carried out a duty which reflected to the credit of those who brought them about. But one cannot say we are adding to the duties of the Minister in charge of this department in wiping these things out.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Kamerunga was a great success, but they had to go to China to buy their vegetables.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORSER: I did not know it was established for that purpose.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was.

Mr. CORSER: I do not think it was.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORSER: If the Ministry could show us that the inclusion of another Minister would bring about huge developments in certain schemes which are essential—such as great irrigation works, a determined desire to do something for the eradication of prickly-pear, and the establishment of depôts so that the Government would take upon themselves the responsibilities which should be theirs—we would probably view the position from a different standpoint. They have not done these things. They have not shown us that they intend to go out on any of these great national undertakings and tackle them as their position warrants. They are taking the line of least resistance, and taking their jobs on some statement or another that they are overworked.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They were national keep-akes we got from you.

Mr. CORSER: The Government certainly did not get them from me. They were returned to tackle them. They have not tackled them. If we intended, as in the years 1908 and 1910, to go in for some new and great land settlement scheme to encourage the development of our country and tackle the huge areas of our Crown lands that have been mapped out—in my district alone we have 3,000,000 acres of Crown land awaiting a railway—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You did your best to block those railways.

Mr. CORSER: I did my best to assist the Government to bring them on.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORSER: If these things were brought about, I would contend that an extra Minister might probably be warranted. If a Minister were appointed to open up the Upper Burnett, it would warrant the expenditure. There is sufficient work in that district alone, with its huge settlement possibilities, its huge railway development, that is only awaiting the hand of the Government to bring about irrigation and road schemes in order to provide for 20,000 families.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We say 16,000.

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Mr. CORSER: 15,000 families in the Upper Burnett; and the Central Burnett, on their own suggestion, would bring the number up to 20,000. If you reckon three in a family, you will see what it would mean to the State. During the time when the Government had a sufficient number to carry out these things, we have not had complaints that they had been overworked. They have neglected their duty to the State in this regard. If the Ministry were determined to develop Queensland and tackle these great national undertakings, we would say, probably, it might warrant the additional emoluments necessary for another Minister. We are slackening off in our railway construction policy. There is not the construction work going on, or the attention necessary from a Minister in that regard, that we have had in the past. If the Ministry want to slacken off in their attention in a department, it would be a good thing if they withdrew some of their political control from the Railway Department and let the Commissioner run it from a non-party standpoint. If they want to give time to something else, let them leave more of the administration of the Railway Department in the hands of the Commissioner, who is paid to do the job, and take away the political control that up to the present time has been responsible to a great degree for the trouble we have got into in that department.

Mr. COLLINS: Are you talking from experience? They are all political friends of yours who are in that department.

Mr. CORSER: I do not know that such is the case. I only wish that our political friends were in that department, because, if the Minister were out of it and our political friends were there, I feel perfectly certain that it would be a good thing for

[9 p.m.] the State. The Railway Department lends itself to the slackening of political influence, and I hold that we could find means in that department of relieving the Minister of many duties. The Railway Department in the past has been subjected to maladministration, because the administrative head of the department endeavoured, by his work, to make the railways pay. To-day we have the announcement that the railways are not expected to pay, so that the Minister in charge of the department does not need to give that attention to its administration which was necessary on the part of other Ministers in the past. Now the whole administration of the banking of our one banking institution is going from the State to the Commonwealth; and at the very time that is happening and the Government are preparing to go out of office altogether, they are asking for another Minister. We also find that in the past the Public Service Board consisted of various under secretaries who had to do the business for the Ministers. Ministers had been absolved from those important duties. Under secretaries have simply had to be members of the Public Service Board and give their time and attention to the sittings of that board, receive all complaints from public officers, and deal with the rearrangement of the Federal departments. That work has recently been taken away from them, so that they are able to give more assistance to Ministers in the administration of their several departments. We have also a Public Service Commissioner, who has been appointed to relieve Ministers of all the

trouble of dealing with complaints from public servants. The Government have been relieved of the duties now performed by the Public Service Commissioner, and yet they ask for the appointment of another Minister.

The TREASURER: The Public Service Commissioner administers the Public Service Act.

Mr. CORSER: And in doing that he does all the things I have mentioned.

The TREASURER: The member for Burnett, I believe, interviewed the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. CORSER: I never interviewed the Public Service Commissioner.

The TREASURER: You interviewed him as Under Secretary for Public Instruction.

Mr. CORSER: Yes, and on one occasion he granted my request. I cannot say that the Minister for Education is the worst Minister in the Cabinet. I contend that if Ministers allowed the Commissioner for Railways to carry out his duties, and allowed the Commissioner of Police to carry out the duties imposed upon him by Parliament, Ministers would not be worrying about their own affairs or the affairs of someone else, but would have sufficient time to attend to the administration of their departments.

The TREASURER: He was always at the Home Office in the old days.

Mr. CORSER: I should imagine that he has to fight the Cabinet now. If Ministers want to be relieved of some of their duties, they should allow the Commissioner to administer the affairs of his department, and things would be better done than they are done now. I do not say that the Commissioner should be all-powerful, but I do say that he should be free from political influence and be responsible for the work that he is expected to perform. We have been called upon to exercise economy—the Government have called upon members of the Opposition to assist them in practising economy—and yet we find that almost the first thing they do is to place before this House a proposal to impose an extra burden on the State.

The TREASURER: Do you remember the amount you expected me to spend on a road?

Mr. CORSER: I do not know that I expected the hon. gentleman to expend any amount on a road.

The TREASURER: Yes, £200.

Mr. CORSER: Did you spend it?

The TREASURER: I did.

Mr. CORSER: A previous Minister made available the sum he refers to, and not the Treasurer. Unless we get some good and solid arguments from members of the front bench and those associated with them in favour of passing this Bill, we should not be doing our duty to the people who sent us here if we consented to extra emoluments being paid to members of the front bench.

* Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): No reason has been given to show the necessity for the appointment of a new Minister. The Attorney-General came along to the House with a brief, and we expected to hear good and sound reasons advanced by him to show that another Minister is essential. The Minister ought to come forward and give us the exact reason for the proposal to appoint

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a new Minister. I believe the reason is apparent. A block vote has been necessary to secure the election of Ministers, and in order to secure that block vote it has been necessary to make concessions, one of which is the appointment of a new Minister at £1,000 per annum. I propose to deal with one or two points raised in the speech of our learned friend the Attorney-General. First of all, I wish to refer to the vast area which has to be covered by Ministers in administering the affairs of Queensland. There was an outstanding point in regard to that which reduced any argument he may bring forth. We have a Commonwealth Government which has a Cabinet consisting of twelve Ministers who not only deal with the particular State in which they are established, but with the whole of Australia, and we are only a small part of that Australia. We find in the Parliament that governs the whole of Australia a Postmaster-General who has jurisdiction right throughout the whole of Australia. We next find a Minister of Defence. There is only one Minister of Defence, and what a large thing the control of that department was through the whole war, when they transported a quarter of a million of Australians, equipped them, sent them overseas and dealt with their cases, but there was no necessity to increase the Cabinet by the appointment of additional Ministers.

The TREASURER: As a matter of fact, they appointed an additional Minister, the Minister for Repatriation.

Mr. KERR: There was a Minister for Repatriation, and I should think so; and if the Government could show a similar reason in this case I would not be speaking against the Bill. We have statistics quoted to us showing that certain Acts have been passed entailing extra responsibility—I will not delay the House by quoting the whole of them—whereas no extra work is coming to any member of the Ministry. I shall only take one Act that has been before the House to-day, and that is the Control of Air. I would like to know where are the statistics which are going to form any reasonable proposition to put forward when you look at that one Act. It takes about half a day to put the whole thing through, and thereafter no further work is entailed. We get on a little bit further, and our learned friend the Attorney-General comes into the House with a brief to point out why an extra Minister is necessary. Can you realise that any Attorney-General would stand up here and quote his case and mention the fact that interviews are necessary which occupy a certain amount of time. They certainly do; but I want to refute that point by quoting the House of Commons in England. They have 707 members.

The TREASURER: They have sixty-four Ministers at present.

Mr. KERR: They have a Cabinet consisting of twelve Ministers such as First Lord of the Treasury, Lord President of the Council, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and so on, and so on—(laughter)—and we find that they represent, not only the 707 members of the House of Commons, but over 40,000,000 people. The arguments of the Government cannot hold. If the organisation of the Government was on business lines, there perhaps would be an excuse for the spare time—for they have spare time for pleasure and all the rest of it, because it has been

acknowledged by the Minister in charge of the Bill, and yet they come along and bring these small things in support of a large Bill which has a large principle. I was honest enough to stand up and say that where economy was concerned I was going to support it; but I say this is not economy. I am not looking at it from the point of view of £1,000, because that is nothing to the Government. Three thousand pounds for expenses, luggage to go home—I don't know whether clothes were included—is absolutely nothing. But it is the principle of the thing. The Premier seeks the co-operation and assistance of those in opposition; and many of us have said that, owing to the State of finances, that assistance will be forthcoming; but when they come along and put up such a foolish proposition as this without an argument in its favour, I say the Government are doing it under false pretences, not only to the Opposition, but to the people of Queensland, whose interests we represent; and we realise it and tell them so definitely now. As a matter of fact, there is another argument why we should not have this additional Minister, and it is this: On the largest public work in Queensland, the Railway Department, representing one-third of the whole of the undertakings of the State, we have one Minister, and yet for the other two-thirds of the State they ask us to give an additional Minister to the seven which they already have. That alone, in my opinion, condemns the proposal which the House asks us to consider. All I can say is that, in the face of what has been said and the arguments put forward to the Government, if the Government can sit under it they have a very tough skin, and, further, we on this side speak, not with a minority vote, but we speak with a majority of the people of Queensland behind us.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: How many votes did your party have?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Go your hardest!

Mr. KERR: I am going my hardest on every occasion I get, especially when such spurious legislation as this comes before us.

The TREASURER: You voted with our party last night.

Mr. KERR: Certainly; and when you have something decent I will vote with you again. (Laughter.)

Mr. POLLOCK: I just want to say a few temperate words on this question. I think the remarks which have fallen from members of the Opposition have been mostly intemperate, inasmuch as most of them have made no endeavour whatsoever to make any allowance for the increased expansion of State departments. When one considers the number of departments that were in this State when the Labour party came into office, and since then the expansion and creation of State enterprise, and when you recognise the larger number of departments and sub-departments which have now to be administered, and consider that this House is sitting five days a week instead of three, as formerly, and the amount of time which that takes away from a Minister who should be ordinarily looking after the affairs of his department, you can realise that there is some—not small, but large—justification for a measure of this kind. Firstly, the average Minister who attends to his department properly, and who is not merely a rubber-stamp, as Ministers were prone to be in the

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old Liberal days, and would be to-morrow if again returned to power, leaving practically all the administration to the heads of the various departments—those men if they are not going to be rubber-stamps, cannot do justice to the administration of the department from 9 o'clock in the morning till 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when they must come up to this House to meet in assembly.

It is impossible for any Minister to do justice to his work in that time, and nobody knows that better than hon. members opposite. Yet, in the course of this debate, which should have been conducted on absolutely fair lines, giving ground where it was right and fair to give it, and taking points where it was just to take a point from the Government, they have failed absolutely to view this question from a non-party standpoint. They have failed altogether to recognise that the appointment of another Minister means economy in the broadest sense, because the appointment of another Minister, while it may mean an additional £500 a year—because, after all, it only means tacking on £500 to the ordinary salary received by each member—while it may mean another £500 a year to have a new Minister, the amount of money that can be saved to the State by a Minister giving the whole of his time to this work is going to be considerably more than £500. Members of the Opposition have failed to get beyond the viewpoint of economists who would economise by using blunt lead pencils and watering the ink. They cannot talk in thousands; they can only talk in three-penny bits. Members opposite may be business men, but they are merely business men to the extent of being able to buy something for 1s. and sell it for 1s. 6d., and have not the capacity to formulate a policy for the country. The biggest failures, as a rule, in all the Parliaments of Australia, have been successful business men, while the greatest successes as Administrators have been men who were navvies or miners, and who had no knowledge of ordinary business routine before they became members of Parliament. Whether one likes to recognise that or not, it is perfectly true, and the economy that this party intends going in for is economy by appointing a man to see that economy is administered in the proper way. I know that many hon. members who have spoken on this question have no idea of what they were speaking about. New members who came into this House during the past two or three weeks—men who have never had much to do with Government departments and who have no idea of the duties of Ministers, and very little idea of what the ordinary administration of a Government department means and entails on a Minister's time—have condemned this proposal. The hon. member for Port Curtis was good enough to lecture this House on what the Government ought to be able to do—a man who blew in fresh from the country—and although I admit he was a successful business man, he is a man who, during the elections, was prepared, just in the same way to rush into a question that he did not understand. He was prepared to submit the question to the people—so were all the Opposition for that matter. Every member of the Opposition crawled down on his knees on that question that the "Daily Mail" put to them about salaries. The hon. member for Port Curtis did the same. I have

his reply here and it is worth while placing it on record just to show how certain members will rush in and criticise the Government on matters about which they know nothing at all. In reply to the "Daily Mail's" question as to whether he would increase salaries, the hon. member for Port Curtis said—

"I would vote against an increase of salaries without first referring the matter to the people."

If any other hon. member wants to find out what he said, I can dig it up quite easily. They all crawled on their knees to this churlish editor.

Mr. CORSER: Give my reply.

Mr. POLLOCK: I am giving these particulars to show that new members, not knowing what the duties of a member of Parliament are, not knowing what they would be called upon to do when they became members of Parliament, were prepared to submit to an outside irresponsible authority in the person of the editor of the "Daily Mail." Without knowing the facts of the case they were prepared to say they would not ask for an increase in salaries, and the heaven-born white hope of the "Daily Mail," the hon. member for Port Curtis, would take a referendum costing about £30,000 to decide whether we should expend an extra £500 a year. Those are the men who come along and condemn this proposal without having any idea as to what they are condemning.

Mr. FLETCHER: Will you refer it to the people?

Mr. POLLOCK: Here, again, is the heaven-born financier who wants to know whether I would spend £30,000 in order to ask the people to decide whether we should spend £500 a year. There is no doubt there are some crude statesmen on the other side. The interjection of the hon. member should for ever condemn the editor of the "Daily Mail" as a prophet. Members should consider this proposal on its merits and its demerits. It may have some small demerits, but I say the merits of the question by a long way outweigh its demerits, and I am going to vote for the Bill.

Mr. KING: This is a Bill to amend the Officials in Parliament Act of 1896, which provides for eight Ministers at £1,000 each. The Bill amends that Act by increasing the number from eight to nine. In considering this question we ought to take into consideration the conditions that existed when that Act was passed and the conditions that exist now. It has been argued by my learned leader, the Attorney-General, when pleading his case before the House, that the Acts to be administered have increased from 132 to 268. I venture to say that, if the Attorney-General was pleading his case before the people of Queensland as a jury, he would not in any way satisfy them, as his argument was most unconvincing and most unsatisfactory. He never for a moment proved that there was any necessity for this change in the Act. Members seem to have lost sight of the fact that in 1896, when this Act was passed, we had control of the customs, defence, the post office, quarantine, light-houses, etc.—all very important State instrumentalities, and all of which on the advent of federation were transferred to the Commonwealth. Ministers have had their work considerably lessened by the transfer

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of those large State instrumentalities to the Federal Parliament. We have, of course, less departments to administer now than we had when the 1896 Act was passed; and, as stated, the only argument adduced by the Auditor-General for the appointment of an additional Minister was the fact that there is more legislation than there was in the past. It has been argued, too, that Ministers have been overworked. Looking at the Ministry sitting on the front Treasury benches, would anyone say for one moment that they looked as if they had been overworked? When you look at the magnificence of their retinuity—(laughter)—and the placid way in which they occupy their seats, you do not see the hollow cheek, the sunken eye, the lack of lustre in the eye, or the sagging knee or the bent back. You do not see any signs of that. Although the Government of Queensland, judging by "the writing on the wall," is showing signs of dissolution, you cannot see it when you view each of the worthy Ministers who have been so much overworked. You cannot see that they are showing any signs of early bodily dissolution.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I think you must have been reading a "Pink Pills" advertisement. (Laughter.)

Mr. KING: No; black balls for bilious bachelors. (Laughter.) Although I, for one, hope for that early dissolution as far as the Government is concerned, let us hope that the overwork, the nerve-racking business, and the great mental strain will not bring about their early dissolution so far as their bodily health is concerned. The Ministers have at times been able to take trips overseas.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you object to that?

Mr. KING: No, but I say that if a Minister is overworked, he has not the time to do it. If the Treasurer goes to his old country, the work is carried on during his absence; and if anyone says it is carried on any less badly than before, I say it is carried on just as badly. We had the Minister for Railways, the present Treasurer, going for a trip overseas; and will anyone say that the business was carried on any less badly owing to his absence? No, it was conducted just as badly. The Ministers between them can find time to get through the work. I think the argument of overwork is all moonshine. The fact is that Ministers are being pushed by some of the younger and more ambitious members to create a position.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: If you say that often enough you will believe it is true.

Mr. KING: I believe it is true, and I want the hon. member to believe it is true. No proof has been given that there is any necessity for the Bill. I object to it on the ground that no proof has been put forward of its necessity; also on the score of the greater expense which will be entailed, and also for reasons of economy. We were asked by the Premier to practise rigid economy, and I am going to vote against the Bill.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Too-wong*): I take the same view as the previous speaker. After hearing the remarks of hon. members opposite, it naturally follows that one must approach a subject such as this with a certain amount of diffidence. When the Attorney-General introduced the matter, he did not give any tangible reason, nor have I heard any tangible reason given by any of

the supporters of the Government, for the appointment of this extra Minister. The reasons advanced by some hon. members opposite, particularly the hon. member for Rockhampton, were most ludicrous. We were told that better provision should be made in prisons, and that there was a great amount of poverty in Rockhampton.

Mr. FORDE: I did not say that. I said there were poor people in Rockhampton. There will be poor people while men like you are exploiting them.

Mr. MAXWELL: I interjected while the hon. member was speaking, and said, "You must have a great number there," and the hon. member did not contradict me. He rambled on so much about what the Government had done in connection with State enterprises.

Mr. FORDE: My remarks hurt you.

Mr. MAXWELL: I want to say that Adam Smith stated that the duty of a Government was to govern and not to trade.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is how far back you are in your political economy.

Mr. MAXWELL: The experience I have gained of the way in which hon. members opposite have carried out State enterprises is fully sufficient for me. This Bill not only means the appointment of a Minister, but the creation of a new department, which will entail a considerable amount of expense. My experience of the administration of the present Government does not lead me to believe that it will save the people anything. I need only refer to some of the returns in connection with the trips they have had through the length and breadth of the State. It is evident from the speeches of hon. members to-night that a great amount of poverty exists in Queensland to-day, and it is absolutely essential to restore confidence in the community. To do that, the strictest economy should be practised; but I ask, in all seriousness, if this is the way to practise economy. We are told that it is necessary to have efficiency, and, apparently, there has previously not been efficiency in the departments, when we are told that it is necessary to appoint a Minister to create the efficiency which is so essential. I want to draw the attention of hon. members to a paragraph in the "Telegraph" this evening, which states—

"We have good reason for stating that thirty or more temporary employees in the Railway Department (works branch, Roma Street) have received a week's notice of their services being dispensed with."

There are hon. members who can bear me out that when I say that applications are being made to me to use my best endeavours, as mayor of the city of Brisbane, to secure work for a great number of unemployed, so as to enable them to get a little Christmas joy.

I have been listening for some time to the speeches from the other side about the humane legislation of this Government, and the humane treatment that is going to be given to the widows and orphans of returned soldiers. We know, as a matter of fact, that when a deputation of unemployed waited on the Government asking for assistance, they were given cigars. Again, when the people living in this State are asking for assistance

[Mr. King.]

to enable them to live in a proper condition, they are met with the request of the Government that an additional Minister should be appointed to carry out the work. If the Government can carry on for six months while the Ministers go across the water, they surely can carry on with the Ministers they have at the present time. The Home Secretary has told us of the manner in which the officials of the various departments carry out their work. We have been told to-night that there are no rubber stamps in connection with the working of the department. It is very nice to hear that. There are other members who think differently to that, and who have got confidence in our officials in the way they do their work. An hon. gentleman on the other side pointed out that it was necessary to appoint another Minister to administer the Acts passed by this Parliament. Like myself, members opposite are responsible to the people who elect them, and they should put this question before the people. They are not game to go to the people to-day on this very question.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Would you suggest that we go to the people on this question?

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. member knows that I believe in a reduction of members and a redistribution of seats, and then go to the country. I showed my sincerity the other night in voting in favour of that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You would not be here if it were carried.

Mr. MAXWELL: I will take my chance with any member of the House. If hon. members opposite are sincere in practising economy, they have an opportunity now. Instead of increasing the number of Ministers, they should carry on with their present number and try to get out of the hopeless tangle they have got themselves into. I intend to vote against the Bill.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. members who have spoken on this matter base their views in various directions. To a great extent, a number who have spoken on the Government side have belittled the fact that it is only a matter of £500 or £1,000. Personally, I am very much surprised, indeed, to hear any hon. member get up and belittle any amount which can be saved in an economical manner without causing inefficiency. It is out of little savings and out of little things that the big things in life grow. If the Ministry are inefficient in looking after these lesser economies, as has been proved by the state of the finances in Queensland, I take it that they are not competent to deal with the larger financial matters. With regard to the proposed extra Minister, I would suggest a way that the portfolios could be allotted. In the first place, I would dispense with the present Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. I would make the present Minister for Education Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. We have had four Attorney-Generals in two and a-half years. That is pretty good going. It means turning out one every six months. I would make the present Attorney-General Minister for State Enterprises, and I would give him a few of the departments from the Home Secretary's Department, which is certainly an overloaded department. We could also take something from the Agricultural Department, as that is another overloaded department. Some of these services can be transferred in other

directions. With regard to the position of Minister for Railways, without reflecting on the hon. gentleman who holds the position at the present time, I consider that the sooner that we make the Minister for Railways a rubber stamp the better for Queensland. (Hear, hear!) We do not want a Minister for Railways at all. If we take our railways and notice the manner in which they have been conducted during the last few years, we must come to the conclusion that there has been too much political interference and too much political control in our railways, and that is one of the causes of the financial trouble that the Ministry finds itself in to-day. If we had only a little better management, we would not find ourselves in the position that we find ourselves in to-day. We are told that the Ministers are overworked. Some of them, no doubt, have a good deal to do, but they have been able to carry on so far and to see the necessity for economy. Surely, in the interests of economy, they should go on doing the work for a little while longer until the State rights itself somewhat. There are any amount of people in Brisbane to-day who are practising economy. Unfortunately, there is a large number of unemployed existing in Queensland to-day. These people have not got £1,000 a year, nor yet £100 a year for that matter. They have to practise the most rigid economy in order to live at all.

Mr. BRENNAN: Who gave "Billy" Hughes the £25,000?

Mr. TAYLOR: You will never get £25,000, nor even 25d. (Opposition laughter.) That is about the limit you will ever receive.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. TAYLOR: "Billy" Hughes has nothing to do with the matter. I think it is regrettable that the Premier, after asking us for our assistance, should endeavour to have an additional Minister appointed, especially when we consider the condition of our financial resources to-day. This measure is not at all necessary, and I hope it will be defeated.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*): It seems to me that the Opposition object to this measure because they want to see the legislation put on the statute-book by the present Government badly administered, because they do not want to see another Minister appointed to carry out the work. They know that with an additional Minister it will be properly administered—at any rate, much better than it has been in the past. I would like to draw the attention of the House to the action of some of the people represented by hon. members opposite. On looking through the report of the Director of Labour we see the way that economy is practised by the friends of the hon. members opposite. All cases for prosecution come before the Minister before any action is taken. We find, from the report, that there were 274 prosecutions last year for breaches of the awards. Those were the successful prosecutions. The department only failed in ten prosecutions. The fines and costs against employers amounted to £711 18s. 10d.

We find also in this report mention of a very large amount of money which the employers were "doing" the employees out of. And then they have the audacity to get up in this House and tell you that they have sympathy with the workers and the unemployed. We find that in twelve months the Labour Department have recovered from the

Mr. Dash.]

employers a sum of £15,770 17s. 1d., and that fact in itself should show to the workers the necessity for closer supervision of the different departments, even if the additional Minister were only to look after the Labour Department. I know, as an official of a large union in Queensland, that we have collected some hundreds of pounds for employees who did not go to the Labour Department. We find, when it comes to a question of sympathy, where sympathy lies. We know that Ministers have not the time to give to departments that we would like them to give. Speaking from a knowledge, gained from my late occupation as secretary of a union, of what Ministers have to do, I can say that we have had occasion to bring under the notice of Ministers several cases where legislation passed by this Government has not been carried out in the manner in which Ministers desired it to be carried out, and it was through our bringing them under their notice, with officials of other unions and members of Parliament, that they were able to find out where the weakness lay. I do not want to take up the time of the House unduly, but I want to point out where economy would be made to operate if they had control. We heard the other night that the Opposition were going to help the Government to administer the affairs of the State; they were going to show us how to finance. One speaker told us how he was spending 5s. 6d. to produce 1 lb. of butter, for which he got 1s. 9d. I am quite sure that if the Premier and Ministers spent 1s. 9d. they would get a return of 5s. 6d., instead of spending 5s. 6d. for a return of 1s. 9d. I do not think there is any sound argument against appointing another Minister to administer the affairs of this State.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It seems to me that the discussion has very largely drifted away from the question at issue. The question at issue at the present moment seems to be not so much whether there is to be an additional Minister or not. The question arises, "Is this the way, when the Premier of the State has appealed to the members of the Opposition, and probably through them to the public, and asked that economy should be practised—is this the way in which economy should be practised?" If it is the way, then all I can say is that it is a most extraordinary way. I hold in my hand a copy of the "Queensland Industrial Gazette," which shows very largely, though not altogether, that the position of the worker in Queensland is absolutely bad in many directions. Every man who has to do with the business affairs of Queensland will know that at the present moment one is assailed by people who are seeking work and cannot get it. Am I not right in saying that again and again we have been told from the front Treasury benches that Ministers are the friends of the widows and orphans and of the needy? Yet here we have a movement on the part of the Government, not to economise so far as they themselves are concerned, not to increase the number of portfolios by arranging for the work to be done in an honorary capacity, but of increasing the expenditure on portfolios. Why? I believe that, if the truth were known, it would be found that there was some trouble in the Cabinet, and that in order to get over it this proposal was made.

The TREASURER: You know very well that we passed the Bill last year.

[*Mr. Dash.*]

HON. W. H. BARNES: I know that the Bill was passed here last year, and I also know that "another place" felt that it should go no further. I think the hon. member for Albert made a statement which was perfectly correct—that in a time of crisis the Philp Ministry said, "We are prepared to meet the people by cutting down our salaries," and they cut them down. And in a time of crisis—and is not this a time of crisis?—

Mr. HARTLEY: It is not, but you want to make it one. If you want a crisis, we will put it on to you.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Here is a threat coming from the hon. and learned member for Fitzroy. He says in large letters, "We will put it on."

Mr. RIORDAN: What was Philp's income at that time?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not know; but I know it was what the hon. member's will never be, because he has not got the brains to get it.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HARTLEY: And he has not got the trickery either.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Hon. members opposite seem a little bit excited. I was pointing out that this is not a time for a movement of this description; that any man who had the best interests of the State at heart would realise that it was a time to economise. If it is necessary to have another Minister, let them pool their salaries—it is a very easy thing to do that. We have been told, especially by the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Forde—who has gone all the way from Dan to Beersheba—of what the Government have to do, and of the poor overworked Ministers, especially the Home Secretary. There is no doubt that the Home Secretary had a champion in that hon. gentleman. He showed himself most anxious that his services at least should be retained to Queensland, and I think the Home Secretary should thank him for so successfully pleading his cause. Just let me read from this "Industrial Gazette" of 10th November. We are told, in connection with the Australian Workers' Union, that the prospects are "bad"; that "there is a large number of unemployed and general inactivity."

The TREASURER: Why gloat over it?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am not. I am glad the Hon. the Minister has passed that interjection across the Chamber. I say no man should gloat over it, and this House should lead the way in trying to show to those outside that we are absolutely the friends of the workers—the real and not merely the professed friends of the workers.

I notice it says here, in connection with the painters, "Retrenchment in Public Works Department." This is an official organ of the Government! I want to ask to-night, what are the workers of the State going to think when they find that the Government—presumably the workers' Government—through the Attorney-General, have come along and suggested that there should be another paid Minister? I think the workers will say, "Save us from our presumed friends." Then we are told it is only going to be a matter of £500. Is it? What about all the extra perquisites?

The PREMIER: What are they?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am going on some of those sideights that have been thrown into the business recently.

The PREMIER: What perquisites did you draw?

HON. W. H. BARNES: Let the hon. gentleman table them, and he will find they are very little. I have copies of them, so it is all right. (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: You drew perquisites from two departments.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Let the hon. gentleman table them, if he will. I challenge him to table them.

The PREMIER: Very well, I will table them.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I shall be very glad if the hon. gentleman will do so. Here we are face to face with the Premier, who, during the last week or so, has said, "Help us," and now comes along and says that help must come in the direction of finding another Minister—we are so overworked; find us another Minister to enable us to carry on the arduous duties of this great State." The country, I think, will be the best judge of the situation.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I would like to oppose this before it goes through, for several reasons. At this time, when taxation is at its highest point, and when between Federal and State Governments we are having taken from us in connection with all taxation something like 10s. 6d. in the £1, I think it is about time we made some reduction. Before we go any further, I want to object to any members of this House—if some criminal act is read of in the papers—associating that criminal act with any member of this House of the same name. For instance, I read the other day about a gentleman being sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. His name was "F. Forde." I had no intention of connecting him with the hon. member for Rockhampton.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I say I had no intention whatever of doing so.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I want to object to the practice that hon. members on that side have got into of trying in some way or other to throw a slur upon members on this side of the House.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We talk about Ministers being overworked. We have only to go back a few years to find that Ministers had to deal with the Post Office, the Customs, defence, and other matters, and they did not complain about being overworked. I see no reason whatever, especially after cutting off the Savings Bank and some other things, for going to the expense of another Minister. If we were to appoint a Minister of labour and production with some idea of getting the State out of the bog it is in, with some idea of increasing production and balancing our income with our expenditure, I would say it was a good thing. I have an idea that these things should be pushed, and that it would take a Minister all his time—and his time would be fully occupied—to deal

with extra production, both in the primary and secondary industries; and it would be a very good thing for a Minister to do. If he increased the production and balanced our expenditure with our income, I would say the money had been well spent. But what do we find? There is no improvement in the Home Department. Things have been promised for years and years, but they are in the same position to-day. You have not to go beyond Brisbane to see men allowed to build on unhealthy swamps and other places where no man should be permitted to live. You see sold for residences allotments whose sale should be prohibited. They build on little, tiny pieces of land, with one window jammed up against the other, and there is no place for recreation or anything else for the children. If I had anything to do with it—when a certain number of allotments are cut up for sale—

The HOME SECRETARY: Talk to the Mayor of Brisbane about that.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You want to take the bulk of their powers away from them.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order. I must ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the motion.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Minister's time would be well occupied in doing these things. Instead of that, what do we find? The land grabbers are allowed to grab everything they can. They are allowed to cut their allotments up, jam one window of a cottage up against another, with no recreation grounds or anything else. If I were in a position like that and there was land cut up for settlement, I would compel them to leave an allotment here and there so that there would be recreation grounds for the little children who now have to play in the streets, and very often get run over. We never heard the Home Secretary say a word about that. Surely, those things would not overburden him? The Government have the power to do it, and they never raise their voice in these things.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Mayor of Brisbane is responsible.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If some of these things were given attention I would say, "Let us have another Minister by all means." We have other departments that have been put under the Government. Take the State Produce Agency. How many times have the members of the Government condemned produce agents and those in this House who have been getting 5 per cent. for their sales? How often have they called them profiteers?

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: These are some of the things the new Minister, if he is appointed, certainly will have to see to.

The TREASURER: Now, be honest.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am honest. Is it honest for the State Produce Agency to charge 20 per cent. to the farmers for selling?

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

The TREASURER: You know we return all our profits to our clients.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If a new Minister is to be appointed, let him see to these matters, instead of taking 20 per cent. out of these things.

Mr. Bebbington.]

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in dealing with those matters.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I would vote for a new Minister only on condition that he would see to these things. If the Minister will agree to take 10 per cent. and devote the other 10 per cent to the farmers—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in dealing with those matters. He must obey my call to order.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Well, if I am not in order I will sit down. (Sits.)

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Oh, don't be silly.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (rising and continuing amid laughter): I think I am in order in giving the grounds upon which I would vote for an additional Minister. I will vote for an extra Minister only on the ground that he will take off 10 per cent. of that commission.

The TREASURER: We agree to that.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You agree to that?

The TREASURER: Yes, straight away

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If the Minister would give more time to that work—and if, when we came to election time, he would stop his presiding officers from disturbing farmers in their sleep—he would be doing some good.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Where has that taken place?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I can give the name and place, if necessary.

The HOME SECRETARY: Was that at Glencoe?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, it was not. We have had persons living in Brisbane going into electorates and advising where polling-places should be appointed. Did not the hon. J. S. Collings, a member of the other Chamber, ask for a polling-place to be appointed at Geham? What right had he to go from Brisbane and make such a request?

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must confine his remarks to the motion before the House.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Those are things with regard to which the Minister should make inquiries.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If the Minister will give his time to such matters, he will do some good. I hope that if the Government carry this Bill by their majority, and a new Minister is appointed, he will give his attention to the matters I have mentioned.

Mr. GREEN: I cannot allow the second reading of this Bill to pass without entering my emphatic protest against it. The reasons given by the Minister for introducing the Bill were that the administrative duties of Ministers had greatly increased, and that careful administration was never more necessary than it is at the present time. I hold that the appointment of a new Minister is absolutely unnecessary. You cannot make me believe that the gentlemen who at present occupy the front Treasury bench are not capable of carrying out the administrative duties in the manner in which they should be carried out. Anyone listening to

[Mr. Bebbington.

the Minister or the hon. member for Rockhampton would think that Ministers are getting grey and are on the verge of collapse, but if you look at them as they sit comfortably on the Treasury bench you cannot imagine that they are in that condition. I am quite sure, at any rate, that if those eight gentlemen who hold portfolios are not capable of administering the whole of the affairs, we can find members on the Opposition side of the House who can do the work, and do it to the satisfaction of the people of the State.

The TREASURER: You have not got enough in your party to form a Ministry.

Mr. GREEN: Not only is the appointment of a new Minister unnecessary, but I say it is also unwarranted, especially in view of the present condition of the State finances—the condition of the finances as placed before us by the Premier on the first day of the session, when he said they were in such a state that he must ask the Opposition to assist the Government in practising economy. The Opposition realise that the finances of the State are in a most critical position. One has only to go through the Auditor-General's report to see that plainly indicated, and the Opposition are prepared to unite with the Government to safeguard the finances at the present juncture and safeguard them in the future. If the Ministry realise the present position of the public finances, what must the public outside and the public servants, who are fearing that there may be retrenchment, think of them when they find the Government introducing such a measure as that now before the House? Must they not regard their action as hypocritical? I trust the statements appearing in the Press with regard to retrenchment are not correct. In a great State like Queensland, with its fine possibilities, it should not be necessary to resort to retrenchment. The employees of the State are quite willing, ready, and able to do a fair day's work, and if the affairs of the State are administered in a proper manner there should be ample work for one and all. The condition of the finances of the State show that this proposal is unwarranted. During the last year the Government spent £4,797,864 from Loan Fund, and, besides, they spent £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 more than previously. In the year 1908 the Government spent on account of unemployment the sum of £9,152, and in 1920 that expenditure amounted to £78,889, notwithstanding the fact that the Government spent nearly £5,000,000 from Loan Fund, and about £4,000,000 in excess of their revenue.

The TREASURER: Do you know why that was? Because private employers refused to put on returned soldiers, and the Government had to find work for them.

Mr. GREEN: The population of Queensland has not increased to warrant such a state of affairs, and I say that a private employer who refused to put on returned soldiers previously in his employ is not fit to live in Queensland, and should be put out of the place. I would make the same remark with regard to the Government of Queensland if they do not take back their returned soldier employees.

The TREASURER: We took our own back and about 2,000 besides.

Mr. GREEN: I am glad to hear that. The principle I have followed in this matter is to put all returned soldiers back, and in

every case have given them better positions. In the third place, I contend that the appointment of an additional Minister is unjustifiable. All the arguments we have heard on the other side have not justified this appointment in any respect whatever. We are told that a Bill providing for the appointment of a new Minister was passed by the Assembly before Parliament was dissolved, but if that was so it was kept very quiet during the elections. I venture to say that no Minister, or any of their supporters, mentioned it on any platform.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No, but your side did.

Mr. GREEN: We opposed it right out. Our proposals were to develop North Queensland in a way that has not been done by any Administration up to the present time.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. GREEN: It is unjustifiable, because the Government did not get a mandate from the people of the State to pass this Bill. In fact, the people carried a vote of want of confidence against them.

The TREASURER: We got a bigger vote than your party did.

Mr. GREEN: The division list will prove what the true Opposition is, and that Opposition has a majority of the people behind them. In view of the possible retrenchment in the public service, I hold that this appointment is not justified.

Mr. HARTLEY: What authority have you to state that there is going to be retrenchment?

Mr. GREEN: I hope that retrenchment will not be necessary.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. GREEN: We are told that a new Minister is necessary to administer affairs in connection with our harbours and rivers. If that is so, then it is time that the Government handed over the administration of the harbours and rivers to the local authorities, or harbour boards, even though constituted as they are at the present time, because they are formed of men who have shown business capacity in carrying out the work. Very vague statements have been made in this House in regard to harbours and rivers; and one hon. member, representing a Northern constituency, said that Townsville had received about £2,000,000. The Auditor-General's report shows that Townsville has had £308,492; Rockhampton has had £345,890; Cairns, £170,221; and Brisbane, £634,064.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is not the only expense on the Townsville harbour.

Mr. GREEN: That is what they owe at the present time. I say the Townsville Harbour Board has made such a success of the business that they are able to build their new inner and oversea wharves out of revenue and out of the profits made in carrying out the work.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GREEN: I am replying to the charge which has been made in connection with harbour boards, and I am trying to prove that an additional Minister is not necessary if the various departments are administered in a proper manner. We find that the arrears in Rockhampton amount to £22,198, and in Townsville to £2,386. Under these

circumstances, and feeling that this new appointment is unnecessary, unwarranted, and unjustifiable, I must enter my emphatic protest at the additional expense being incurred at the present time.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 35.

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Mr. Barber | Mr. Kirwan |
| „ Brunan | „ Land |
| „ Bulcock | „ Larcombe |
| „ Collins | „ McCernack |
| „ Courroy | „ Mullan |
| „ Cooper, F. A. | „ Payne |
| „ Cooper, W. | „ Pease |
| „ Coyne | „ Pollock |
| „ Dash | „ Riordan |
| „ Ferricks | „ Ryan |
| „ Fihelly | „ Smith |
| „ Foley | „ Stopford |
| „ Forde | „ Theodore |
| „ Gilday | „ Weir |
| „ Gillies | „ Wellington |
| „ Gledson | „ Wilson |
| „ Hartley | „ Winstanley |
| „ Huxham | |

Tellers: Mr. Bulcock and Mr. Dash.

NOES, 29.

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Mr. Appel | Mr. Kerr |
| „ Barnes, W. H. | „ King |
| „ Bebbington | „ Logan |
| „ Brand | „ Macgregor |
| „ Cattermull | „ Maxwell |
| „ Clayton | „ Moore |
| „ Corser | „ Nott |
| „ Castello | „ Petrie |
| „ Deacon | „ Roberts, J. H. C. |
| „ Edwards | „ Roberts, T. R. |
| „ Elphinstone | „ Swayne |
| „ Fletcher | „ Taylor |
| „ Fry | „ Vowles |
| „ Jones | „ Warren |

Tellers: Mr. Clayton and Mr. Warren.

Resolved in the affirmative.

COMMITTEE.

(Mr. Smith, Mackay, in the chair.)

The three clauses of the Bill were put and passed without discussion or amendment.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move—That the House do now adjourn. The business to-morrow will be the initiation in Committee of the Aerial Navigation Bill and the Local Authorities Bill, to be followed by the debate on the Loan Bill.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I wish to ask the Premier if he has any fresh information he can impart in connection with loan moneys. The other night, when a question was put, the statement was made that there might probably be something further about getting loan money from America.

The PREMIER: In answer to the hon. member, the negotiations have not proceeded to that stage at which a public announcement can be made.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes to 11 o'clock p.m.