

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 1920

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

FRIDAY, 26 NOVEMBER, 1920.

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

QUESTIONS.

DAMP WHEAT.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

“1. Is he aware that a quantity of the present wheat yield is damp, and, therefore, of inferior quality?”

“2. Have the millers refused to accept such wheat for storage?”

“3. Have certain Brisbane merchants refused to dispose of this wheat on behalf of their customers under 9s. per bushel?”

“4. Will he see that such wheat is permitted to be sold immediately at the market rates, about 8s. per bushel, otherwise it will deteriorate to such an extent in a short period as to be valueless?”

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

“1 to 4. As the hon. member is aware, the Wheat Harvesting Bill is expected to become law within a few days; meanwhile, as the terms of the Bill are now known, it is expected that all interested will exercise common sense. I have no power to give permits to deal with the property of the farmers.”

HAMILTON COLD STORES RAILWAY.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. In view of the cold stores and wharves now being erected at the Hamilton, is it the intention of the Railway Department to duplicate the railway line from Eagle Junction to Pinkenba?”

“2. If so, have all the necessary surveys been made with regard to this line, and the connecting up of the railway with the cold stores and wharves?”

“3. Will he furnish particulars to the House as to the progress of this work and when it is likely to be completed?”

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

“1. Not at present.

"2 and 3. The survey for a branch line from Whinstanes to the site of the cold stores has been made, but the work has not yet been commenced."

BUSH NURSING SCHEME.

Mr. FORDE (*Rockhampton*) asked the Home Secretary—

"Will he give consideration to the question of establishing a bush nursing scheme for Queensland, making provision for the appointment of trained nurses to care for sick women and children in the bush centres of the State?"

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

"Such a scheme is under consideration."

RAVAGES OF BANANA BEETLE.

Mr. KING (*Logan*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"Has the Government any intention of establishing a State nursery, with a view to combating the ravages of the banana beetle?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE replied—

"The establishment of such a nursery is under my consideration."

STRIKE AT BABINDA SUGAR MILL.

Mr. CATTERMULL (*Musgrave*) asked the Treasurer—

"1. Is it a fact that the second and third engineers at the Babinda Central Sugar Mill have gone out on strike?"

"2. Is it a fact that the cause of their striking was the refusal of the manager to pay them a wage higher than the award rate, both for the future and retrospectively to June last?"

"3. If not, what is the cause of their action?"

"4. Is the chief engineer at present carrying on alone at the mill, and is there any danger of the mill being closed down by reason of the engineers' action?"

"5. What action does he propose to take in the matter?"

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

"1. Members of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, including the second and third engineers, ceased work at the Babinda Mill on the 19th instant, as a result of a judgment of the Court of Industrial Arbitration, which excluded certain members of the society, such as drillers, turners, etc., from the benefit of an award which operated from the 12th October last.

"2. No.

"3. See reply to No. 1.

"4. The chief engineer is not carrying on alone; the matter was referred to the industrial magistrate, and work was resumed on the 20th instant.

"5. I do not propose to take any further action."

AGENT-GENERAL'S EXPENSES.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*) asked the Chief Secretary—

"1. Will he give the House detailed particulars of the item 'Advances, £923 1s. 10d.,' referred to by the Auditor-General as an item of expense in connection with the appointment of Mr. J. M. Hunter as Agent-General?"

"2. Is it customary to charge to consolidated revenue the cost of travelling bags used by public servants?"

"3. If not, why was this charge sanctioned?"

"4. To whom do the bags in question belong?"

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

"1. This amount is made up wholly of cheques drawn against a letter of credit. The Agent-General will be requested to supply details of the expenditure.

"2. This amount includes no expenditure for bags.

"3. See answer to No. 2.

"4. See answer to No. 2. When bags are purchased by the Government they remain the property of the Government."

ACCIDENTS ON RACECOURSES.

Mr. VOWLES asked the Attorney-General—

"1. Has his attention been directed to a recent fatal accident at Kedron Park Racecourse, in Brisbane?"

"2. How many accidents—(a) fatal, (b) otherwise—have occurred on this racecourse during the past three years?"

"3. Will he cause a report to be made as to the safety of this course for racing?"

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

"1 and 3. These questions should be addressed to the Hon. the Premier.

"2. I would suggest that the hon. member communicate with the secretary of the race club concerned."

OFFICIALS IN PARLIAMENT ACT
AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I beg to move—

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

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I called "Not formal" to this Bill for the purpose of giving hon. members sitting behind the Government another opportunity of considering the position before this Bill passes this Chamber. We see by the papers this morning that the Government have found it necessary to go in for retrenchment in the public service—that large numbers of workmen are being deprived of their means of livelihood. No doubt, that is the result of the financial position, and I do not complain of their doing it if it is necessary; but I do complain that they should deprive men of their means of livelihood and at the same time be generous

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to themselves. Are they going to create another big billet absorbing public money, which is being taken out of the mouths of the wives and children of these workmen? (Hear, hear!) We hear these gentlemen talk in the strain of protectors of the needy, the people who advocate the claims of the widow and orphans, but when they get a chance to put their professions into practical effect they fail. They go in for more expenditure, whilst at the same time they become a party to depriving little children of their food at Christmas time, and refer them to charity—Government charity—in order that they may have the necessaries of life.

Mr. WEIR: Why don't you blame the Philp delegation?

Mr. VOWLES: What is the good of the hon. member introducing a foreign question? Even so, that would be all the more reason why the Government should be economical, if they are short of funds; and the persons whom the Government profess to protect should get the benefit of what public money there is and not persons already in receipt of very good incomes. I do not want to labour this matter. I simply want to give hon. members opposite an opportunity to express their views, because these matters have come to light in the morning papers, and we did not know them yesterday when we discussed the previous stages of the Bill.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I do not want to criticise the Government for effecting a certain amount of economy if they find it necessary, but they should not talk economy one day and then refuse to put it into effect the next day. Economy should apply all round. If there is going to be economy outside, there should be economy inside. There is no occasion for the appointment of another Minister that I can see. In all the speeches we heard from the Government side yesterday, I did not find one single solid reason why a new Minister should be appointed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You are one of the men who advocated it in the last Parliament.

Mr. MOORE: I advocated the appointment of a Minister of Health. That does not mean a new Minister. I think that the Minister of Health should be separate from the Home Department. It only involves a reshuffling of the positions.

The PREMIER: A new Under Secretary and a new staff.

Mr. MOORE: Why a new Under Secretary? This new Minister means a new staff.

The HOME SECRETARY: What other Minister would you put the Health Department under?

Mr. MOORE: I would take it from the Home Department.

The HOME SECRETARY: Where would you put it?

Mr. MOORE: I would not mind. Give it to the man who has least to do—the man who does not look after the details of his office so that other Ministers have to do it. When the position is such that retrenchment is necessary, I say that it is not a fair thing to appoint a new Minister. I am quite prepared to admit that some Ministers, such as the Home Secretary, have more work than a Minister can properly undertake.

[*Mr. Vowles.*

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is going into details, and I do not intend to allow it at this stage.

Mr. MOORE: I do not propose to go into details. I merely intend to support the hon. member for Dalby. If retrenchment is necessary, this is a bad time to appoint a new Minister, and I strongly object to it.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): I appeal to hon. members sitting on the Treasury benches even now to hold their hands. I have not advocated the appointment of an additional Minister, and I am all the more impressed with the belief that it is not a wise thing at the present moment to add another Minister to the strength of the Treasury benches. When I spoke on the second reading of the Bill, I had information that a certain number of Government employees had received notice of dismissal. Since I spoke last night I see that the number of men who have to leave their employment, particularly in the Railway Department, is very large indeed. There are men there who have been employed for years and were engaged in the construction of absolutely necessary rolling-stock—rolling-stock necessary to cope with the traffic on the lines—to replace worn-out stock; and yet, despite those facts, it is proposed that another Minister shall be appointed, with all the attendant cost. I quite admit that the actual increase, so far as salary is concerned, is a mere bagatelle; but it is the principle that is involved at the present time. (Hear, hear!) It is also a fact that not only the salary of the Minister himself is concerned but the establishment of an additional department, and we all know, taking into consideration the cost of other departments, that that will amount to several thousand pounds. If the gentlemen who are administering the Treasury will only view the position, they must surely conclude that, by holding their hands at the present time, the expenditure saved will probably enable them to retain in the service of the State a considerable number of railway employees—old servants upon whom it will come very hard indeed, especially at this period, to lose positions they have held for so many years.

I make this final appeal. It does not matter what our politics may be—whether we are sitting on this or that side of the House. The fact should appeal to every member of this Chamber that, when it is necessary to dispense with the services of old servants who are engaged in absolutely necessary work, this considerable expenditure should not be entered into. Every member who reflects upon the matter, and realises the action that is being taken by the Railway Department, must come to the conclusion that this should certainly be delayed for at least six months, in order to enable the amount that will be necessary to establish this department to be expended in the retention of these old servants of the State who, at this particular time of the year, find it comes very hard upon them and their families to have their services dispensed with.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I rise to move an amendment to the question—to delete the word "now," and at the end of the question to insert "this day six months," so that we might have an opportunity of reviewing the whole position of the State before this Bill is finally dealt with. We know trouble has been met with in all departments of the State. We have instances, even

in to-day's Press, of harsh treatment having been meted out, no doubt against the wishes of the Government. It has been found necessary to retrench in the Railway Department. Since that has been found essential, I do not see why we should provide a greater amount of the Government's purse for the convenience of Ministers of this Parliament. I sincerely hope the House will take into consideration the position we have to face, and see if it is not wise for us to suspend the immediate passing of this Bill through its third reading, in order that the whole position of the State may be revised during the next few months, and we will then have a better opportunity of knowing whether these departments warrant the assistance of a further Minister or whether it is to be the continued policy to retrench—which no section would like to see.

The PREMIER: Do you not regret your action in regard to the delegation?

Mr. CORSER: My action with regard to the delegation has been nil, and I think some of the charges made by the Premier against the delegation are false and unfounded. If the delegation injured the credit of the State, it has not the support of the Country party in that regard.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORSER: We have to face things now, and we do not want to be looking at false issues. The Government have landed us in a certain position, and we should not try to feather the nest of the Cabinet by finding more "perks" for Ministerial offices when so many of the State's employees have to be turned adrift to try and find work for themselves. No doubt, the Government have had to take upon themselves a duty they do not like. They have had to face what was considered to be the best thing. It is unfortunate that bad government and mismanagement have made this necessary. I therefore move the amendment.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I rise to support the amendment. I have listened very attentively to the statement of the case, and I think there can be no two opinions that this is not an opportune time to make this appointment. That is so, not only on account of the expense connected with the appointment of another Minister; we must remember all the attendant expense attached to it.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is now repeating an argument that has been used a dozen times. I do not propose to allow tedious repetition.

Mr. SWAYNE: It seems to me that one or two phases in connection with this question have not hitherto been raised or replied to. I notice that the contention on the other side of the House was largely that the establishment of various State enterprises required the appointment of another Minister. I should like to point out that the people of Queensland have distinctly stated on two occasions within the last few weeks that they do not want those State enterprises. First of all, we had a general election on 9th October, which resulted in a general condemnation of the policy of this Government; and, of course, we know that State enterprises are the most prominent feature in their policy.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! The hon. gentleman is not in order in making a second reading speech.

Mr. SWAYNE: No. But I am urging that the matter should be held over for six months to give us a further opportunity of considering it. I do not think the points I have just raised have been considered by the House. Further, on 30th October there was another expression of opinion in regard to State enterprises. You remember, Sir, that State enterprises largely came into the discussion on this subject and were advanced as a reason for the establishment of this portfolio. Leaving out the question as to the continuance or not of the liquor trade, one thing which was stated by the electors was that they did not want State control. Although the opinions were not so widely separated upon the main point, they were most decided on the point that they did not want State control. Therefore, I think that, instead of appointing another Minister on the plea of increased work arising from State enterprises, it would be falling in with the views recently expressed so strongly by the people of Queensland to withdraw the operations connected with State enterprises, and not incur the expense of a new department largely brought about by their existence. Another point which I think requires further consideration is, whether the work has really increased to such an extent as to demand the appointment of another Minister. I think it was urged that since 1896 there has been a big increase in the work. I think such is not the case. At that time there were three very important departments in the hands of the State Ministry which they have not at present. They were Customs, defence (naval and military matters), and post and telegraphs. Furthermore, Ministers did not then have the labour-saving facilities which they now enjoy. They did not have the extensive use of telephones, and, most certainly, they did not have the motor-cars which Ministers now have. Those two items alone must save Ministers a considerable amount of time and make their work far easier. Altogether, I think anybody who reads the debates will recognise that the case made out has been a very poor one. I quite realise that a further appointment has its attractions to hon. gentlemen on the other side; but if they have six months to think it over, possibly, on the score of duty alone, they will realise that this is not the time to make the appointment.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I would like to support the amendment moved by the hon. member for Burnett. I would like to take this opportunity of saying that in the propaganda put before the country by the Nationalists it was laid down very clearly and distinctly that, as far as the Minister of Labour was concerned, it did not mean an additional Minister or salary.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That was not stated.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: At every meeting I addressed in connection with the campaign, I laid it down very clearly that, as far as the party with which I was associated was concerned, it did not necessitate any increased expenditure; but we recognised that the industrial question was one of the most important in the Commonwealth and the State, and we considered a Minister was required to give special consideration to that part of the service. We have to recognise that this is no new feature of the Government. I think this is the third occasion

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on which an attempt has been made to pass this particular Bill. Without going into any question as to whether there is sufficient work or not, I want to say the time is not opportune for, and the financial position of the State does not warrant, the increased expenditure under this head. It has to be recognised that in every phase of industry to-day—in the Commonwealth and in all parts of the world—men might be able to do certain things if they can produce the capital, but they have to get into line with the money available. Under these conditions, I say Ministers must, on this important occasion, be prepared to make some sacrifices. Reference has been made this afternoon to the unfortunate position in which we find ourselves in connection with the Ipswich workshops. I have several instances of the position as far as unemployment is concerned, but I have one in particular which appeals to me at this moment when this motion is before the House. We have, at Toowoomba, a young fellow who, just prior to the outbreak of war, had qualified for employment in the railways. He enlisted for his country's defence, and on his return made application to the Commissioner for Railways for employment in the position for which he had qualified. He was told that in the meantime he had reached a certain age at which, under the industrial award, they could not afford to employ him and pay the wage prescribed.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: Under these circumstances, we have every justification for urging that the Government might, at this moment, well withhold its hands in the matter of increased expenditure. I do not think there can be any phase which the Ministers can put before us this afternoon which will justify expenditure in this direction. I am not only in favour of the delaying of this matter for six months, but against the introduction of any measure to create an additional Minister.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I support the amendment, for the simple reason that it will give us six months to see if we cannot bring about some better financial position.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER interjected.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: By the way things are going on it will take this Government six years to change. They are carrying out their doctrine of socialism.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am quite aware that we can never improve things if we have not got money to pay the workmen; but we can never get money to pay the men who are being discharged so long as the present Government remain in power. So long as we have this extreme policy pursued, we are going to be in the same position. Not only will we not be able to pay more Ministers, but we shall get nearer the verge of ruin if the Government follow the course they are pursuing. I would like to give the Government six months to repent of their evil ways to see if we cannot bring about a better state of things. (Government laughter.) If the Government would turn from their evil ways and accept the assistance of the Country party, which stands for the increased production of wealth, it would remedy the situation.

The SPEAKER: Order!

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Mr. BEBBINGTON: I want to point out that no provision has been made for finding money for any public servant or any other person in the employ of the Government. It is all paying out money. The Government should direct their attention to the means of producing the wealth with which to pay their employees. So long as they stick to the question of paying out and making no provision for the production of wealth, so long will they be on the verge of bankruptcy. I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment, for the purpose of giving the Government six months to repent and turn from their evil ways, and to bring into operation a policy of production instead of spending money.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): The ominous silence which seems to permeate the Government benches rather reminds me of the whipped child. It is quite obvious that they are not at all happy in the position in which they find themselves at present. They are faced, on the one hand, with the grasping attitude which was displayed yesterday of endeavouring to secure the appointment of a ninth Minister; while, on the other hand, they are using the pruning-knife in their railways—and, possibly, other departments to follow—and turning the employees adrift to seek solace and comfort in any way they like, so long as the Government is not worried. It seems to me that it is not a question as to whether an extra Minister requires to be appointed at this juncture or not; that has nothing to do with it. The main question is this: That retrenchment is evidently the policy of the Government at the present moment. It is not palatable to them, but it is the outcome of their misbehaviour in years gone by—the inevitable result of their financial régime. Now that they are facing the consequences, they are simply allowing the poor employees whom they are supposed to represent to suffer, while they protect themselves to the uttermost farthing in securing to each Minister, so they call it, the full value of their services. What would it be if they went on for another six months following the course they have pursued hitherto? I take it that there are eight salaried Ministers in this House, and they propose to make it nine. The ninth man is already in receipt of a salary of £500 per annum, so that all that is necessary is a further £500. If eight of the Ministers will forego £50 or £60 per annum out of their salaries, they would satisfy the demands of this ninth Minister. All they are asked to forego is about £50 or £60 per annum. If this amendment is carried, and the Bill deferred for six months, it will mean £50 or £60 to them. On the other hand, they would have some satisfaction in knowing that the economy they are preaching—the retrenchment they are practising—was, at any rate, first introduced amongst their own ranks. I am one who looks with a certain amount of trepidation into the future with regard to the expenditure of loan money. Seeing that is the policy on which the Government actually exists, it is obvious that the pruning-knife which has been introduced into the Railway Department is going to be introduced into many other departments. It rather makes one smile, and almost weep, when you think of the numbers of men in their hundreds who were put on to Government employment immediately prior to the election, and now, as soon as it is over, the need of a ninth Minister to get an extra £400 or £500 per

annum is of far more moment to the men occupying the Government benches than the sacking of hundreds of men in the Railway Department. Such is the sincerity of the Government generally. It is also rather entertaining to reflect upon the statements which were made by the Premier and other occupants of the Government benches—that retrenchment was to be the practice of the Nationalists and farmers' forces if they were returned to Parliament. It shows how hopelessly insincere and unreliable these statements were. Let us hope that the poor, deluded working man, who looks for salvation to the gentlemen occupying the Government benches, may now wake up and see that their own self-interest is of vastly greater importance to them than the welfare of the masses of the workers in general.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Part Curtis*): I would like to say a few words before the amendment is put. I think it is an excellent proposition to shelve the Bill for six months, so that the Government can review the position and see if they cannot remodel the departments of the State and frame them on more advanced lines. If they do that, they will find that the eight Ministers we now have are ample. If it is found that nine Ministers are indispensable, then I think they might well pool their salaries, as they have done in the past, seeing the bad financial position the State finds itself in. I think it is most inconsistent of them to bring in a Bill of this nature when the Premier and his supporters are asking for our assistance in the matter of economy. If the question of economy is eliminated altogether, the question of their humanitarian attitude towards the people of the State comes in, and they might still pool their salaries and give the amount that would be represented by an extra Minister to the poor for Christmas. I think it would be an excellent thing to give the Government six months' time to reflect.

Mr. BRENNAN: Did your meat company do that?

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes, they did. (Government laughter.)

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I desire to support the amendment. Why the Bill was brought forward is to any of us quite inexplicable. If it had been brought forward by the so-called Tory party, we should never have heard the end of it from members on the other side. We should have been told that they were out to exploit the people and did not care the toss of a button with regard to the welfare of the workers of the State, and that they were quite regardless of what trouble and sorrow might be brought into homes by retrenchment, which was being practised while providing an additional portfolio for another Minister.

Mr. HARTLEY: Cut it out. It is only £500. Rot!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. TAYLOR: It is all very fine for the hon. member to talk about cutting it out, and saying that it is only £500.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. TAYLOR: Very well. I will confine myself to the matter of the amendment. Personally, as has been stated here this afternoon, we have not had during the whole of the debate one valid reason adduced as to any necessity for an additional Minister. I think the remarks of the hon. member for

Oxley might well be taken to heart by members on the other side, when he suggests that, if the work is so difficult and hard to carry on in a time of financial stress such as we are passing through at the present time, they might very well stick their hands into their own pockets and make up the additional amount required for the proposed new Minister. It is only £500, as the hon. member for Fitzroy said. Well, let them fork it out and show their sincerity and that they are anxious to help their country in this time when money is so scarce. It is evident, from the remarks made by various Ministers, that money is going to continue to be scarce for some time to come, and I do not think this is an opportune time to increase expenditure by providing for another salaried Minister. I desire to support the amendment, and I really hope that the Minister will accept it, and defer this matter for six months. Probably, at the end of six months, he will be very glad that he did so, and will then cut the whole business out altogether.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I object to this Bill going through at the present time, and support the amendment. I could not give a silent vote on this question, especially in view of the fact that the Premier invited the Opposition to assist him to govern the country with economy.

The SPEAKER: Order! I should like to point out to hon. members that the second reading of this Bill was discussed very fully, and that it is almost impossible to use arguments which have not already been stated. Hon. members who have spoken have indulged in a repetition of previous arguments, and I want to point out, particularly to new members, that tedious repetition by an hon. member, of either his own arguments or of those used by other members, is not in order. I hope that hon. members will not indulge in repetition.

Mr. FRY: It is my intention to break new ground, and to point out that, if the leader of the National party advocated the appointment of a new Minister during the election campaign, he did not refer to any proposal like that contained in this Bill.

The SPEAKER: Order! That has been said a dozen times.

Mr. FRY: It may have been, but I think the statement is important. Hon. members opposite do not like these statements, but the people are looking for economy and retrenchment in the Government ranks, and, if we pass this Bill, we shall be opposing the will of the people. I cannot sit still in the House and give a silent vote on the question. I shall support the amendment, because I think the third reading of the Bill should be deferred for six months.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I cannot allow this amendment to go without saying something on it. I intend to support the third reading of the Bill, because I think that if we had had a sharper and better control of the Government departments previously we might not have come to the position we are in to-day. That, of course, does not entirely account for the present condition. I have noticed that hon. members on the other side have appealed to the workers outside in relation to the retrenchment policy, which has been suggested by the newspapers, and I want to assure those hon. members that

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I am thoroughly capable of taking care of the interest which the workers entrusted me to safeguard in this Assembly. I am absolutely opposed to a retrenchment policy, and, if it is persisted in, it will be absolutely necessary for me to go back to my electorate and ask for instructions from my supporters. It is the duty of the Government to see that the reaping of the bitter fruit of the Philp delegation does not fall upon the workers.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HARTLEY: Had the position in relation to loan money been different from what it is at the present time, there would have been no opposition to the payment of this particular Minister or any other Minister.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Oh, yes; I am against it.

Mr. HARTLEY: The hon. member—perhaps, like the Irishman—would always be against anything introduced by this Government. Hon. members opposite can be quite content, and the workers outside can be quite content, that their destinies are safer in the hands of members on this side of the House than they would be in the hands of members of the Opposition.

Mr. VOWLES: I think the thanks of the House are due to the hon. member for Fitzroy for offering his public apology for the position he has taken up in this matter.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must speak to the amendment.

Mr. VOWLES: I am going to show why the third reading of this Bill should be deferred. We are to be asked to deal with a measure which will provide the Government with sufficient loan money, so they tell us. If they are going to get that money, and they tell us that the bulk of the money will be voluntarily subscribed, then there is no reason why we should not defer this Bill until we know what the position is with regard to subscriptions to the loan. I do not think that hon. members opposite feel too comfortable with regard to the position which has arisen. They admit that Queensland has been brought to a certain position, and it has taken them five and a-half years to realise that another Minister should be appointed to enable them to retrieve the previous position of the State.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. VOWLES: It would be very wise, I think, to postpone the third reading of this Bill. I do not know whether the workers in my own electorate, whether they be temporary or permanent hands, are to suffer under retrenchment.

Mr. BRENNAN: You said you could provide for 3,000.

Mr. VOWLES: Where did I say that?

Mr. BRENNAN: At Chinchilla.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not remember making any such statement. Whatever party may be in power, if I do not stand up in my position as leader of the Opposition and point out that, while the Government were retrenching men and taking from them their means of livelihood, they are spending the public money in other directions, I would not be doing my duty to the electors I represent. I support the amendment.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I think it is a fair thing to postpone the appointment of another Minister for a further six months.

[*Mr. Hartley.*

It would not hurt the present members of the Cabinet to continue to do the work they are doing for another six months. We have been told that, in order to provide the salary for an additional Minister, we should only have to increase his present salary from £500 to £1,000.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is now indulging in tedious repetition of arguments which have been used by other hon. members.

Mr. MORGAN: Well, I was not present when other hon. members used that argument, and I think I have a right to deliver my own speech in my own way.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must speak to the amendment.

Mr. MORGAN: I wish to call attention to the fact that on numerous occasions I have asked what was the amount paid for the expenses of Cabinet Ministers for the year ending on the 30th June, 1920. The answer I received, when I first asked the question, was that I should put the question in another way, and it was suggested that if I asked what was the amount paid for the expenses of Cabinet Ministers during the last year the Liberal Government were in power, as well as for the expenses of Ministers who are members of the present Government, I would be given the information. I have asked that question on six different occasions, and I am going to obtain that information. I want to know what each individual Minister has drawn independent of his salary, and I have a right to get that information. The country has a right to know, and the House has a right to know. I am sent here for the purpose of disclosing the whole of the expenditure in connection with public funds. On every occasion the Premier has shelved my question. Six times last session I asked one question, and on each occasion the Minister gave me a false reply.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MORGAN: On the last occasion certain information was made available, but I asked a question a few days ago, and I was told the same as I was told last year.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must keep to the amendment.

Mr. MORGAN: I am claiming that it is owing to the expenses of Ministers that we are objecting to the creation of a new Minister. I am claiming that it is not a matter of salary only. We are objecting to the creation of a new Minister owing to the fact that additional expenditure will be incurred in travelling expenses, and we have a right to know what amount each Minister has received. In fact, had my question been replied to, and we were told the amount of travelling expenses drawn by the Ministers during a particular period, there might not have been the same objection. We are not objecting to this Bill simply because it means a difference of £500 a year; we are objecting principally because it will mean additional travelling expenses, which will probably amount to £2,000 or £3,000 a year. Again I claim Ministers are not justified in passing this Bill. Just fancy great, big, strong men complaining about the work they have to do! It is the "go slow" policy, as everybody knows.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MORGAN: It is ridiculous to say that Ministers want extra help. They have not suffered from a nervous breakdown, so far as we know.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MORGAN: I think the people have a right to know these things. Let us pay for work done. Some hon. members opposite have not got just what they desire, and they want to create a further position, just the same as they created the Public Works Commission. It has been shown that that particular Commission has recommended expenditure amounting to £5,000,000.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. MORGAN: As far as that is concerned, that again is one of the objections we have raised. We are objecting to the appointment of a new Minister owing to the fact that we have a Public Works Commission which is creating expenditure—expenditure which is useless and not warranted. There are men all over Queensland who would be only too pleased to receive the amount of money that is going to be expended on a new Minister. We have school buildings all over Queensland which have been condemned by the department as being unhealthy and not safe for the children to occupy. Schools in my electorate have been condemned, and yet we are going to create a new department of expenditure. Why not spend that money in putting some of the schools in my electorate on a safe foundation and in a healthy condition for the children? Under the Shearers and Sugar Workers Accommodation Acts people would be prosecuted if they herded the shearers in that manner.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member may not deal with those matters on the amendment.

Mr. MORGAN: I am claiming that this matter is relevant.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! If the hon. member will not obey my call to order, I will compel him to discontinue his speech. The hon. member was not in the Chamber when I pointed out that this matter was very fully discussed on the second reading stage of the Bill, and it is almost impossible to say anything that has not already been said. I wish to inform the hon. member that I do not intend to allow tedious repetition.

Mr. MORGAN: It is a case of being gagged, not by the Premier, but by the Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark. Will the hon. member withdraw?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Withdraw! Withdraw!

Mr. MORGAN: I withdraw, but I intend to go on with my speech.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member will go on if I allow him to do so.

Mr. MORGAN: It seems to be a peculiar position to be in.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member was not here in the early part of this debate, and may not know that he is indulging in tedious repetition.

Mr. MORGAN: My electors sent me here to look after their interests, and I must express my views.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will have ample opportunity of expressing his views, and he cannot blame the Speaker if he has been absent from the Chamber.

Mr. MORGAN: If I tell my electors that the reason why I did not express myself in opposition to the appointment of a new Minister was owing to the fact that some other hon. member spoke ahead of me, and repeated certain arguments—

The TREASURER: You were not in the Chamber.

Mr. MORGAN: I was performing certain duties that some Minister of the Crown should have been performing. I was doing my duty to the country.

Mr. POLLOCK: The second reading debate did not take place this afternoon.

Mr. MORGAN: At any rate, I oppose the third reading of this Bill, and I am going to oppose it right through. While we have men walking the streets who have not sufficient money to buy food for their children, we are going to create a new position in order to provide further emoluments and further privileges to one member of the present Government who is already receiving a very fair remuneration at the work he is doing.

Mr. SIZER (*Yundah*): There have been two questions raised during this debate which give us ample justification for the attitude we have taken up. One question was raised by the hon. member for Fitzroy—a very logical objection—when he said that the Government were contemplating retrenchment, or that retrenchment was coming on, and if it continues he would be compelled to go back to his electors—

The SPEAKER: Order! I called the hon. member to order for pursuing that line.

Mr. SIZER: It is a very logical reason why the Bill should be postponed for six months, as that would give members opposite another opportunity of consulting their electors to see whether or not they are favourable to this proposal.

Mr. HARTLEY: I said I was favourable to this proposal, but I was not favourable to retrenchment.

Mr. SIZER: It is rather a peculiar position—almost a paradox—to say you are in favour of retrenchment and at the same time desire to incur further unnecessary expenditure. Several hon. members opposite must be in the same position as that of the hon. member for Fitzroy, and six months' grace would give them ample opportunity to consult their electors and see whether or not they are favourable to the proposal. The other point raised, which should be well considered, was that hon. members on this side of the House have not been able to get information from existing Ministers, and I have never yet heard it said in this Chamber that the questions which have been asked by this side have been improper questions.

Hon. J. H. COYNE: Some of them were so improper that the Speaker had to rule them out.

Mr. SIZER: The Speaker has allowed the questions asked by the hon. member for Murilla on no less than six occasions, and I have sufficient confidence in the Speaker to say that whatever he allows to go through is a legitimate question. We have had no

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information in reply to those questions, and we are not justified in passing a Bill which will create another Minister when present Ministers refuse to give us information. We would be shirking our responsibilities if we allowed this procedure to continue without protest, bearing in mind that we have no guarantee that we are going to get more consideration or that the public is going to get a better service even if the whole of the members on the Government side were created Ministers. Probably there might be some justification for this proposal [4.30 p.m.] if the Government were to show their sincerity by deleting the expenditure on the Public Works Commission.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SIZER: It is quite obvious that the Government cannot carry out the proposals that have been submitted to the Commission, and, therefore, it is useless to examine further proposals. The amount of money which they have expended on the Public Works Commission—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SIZER: Could be deleted. It could, to my mind, be postponed, and the money devoted to paying the extra Minister. The amendment will give the Government time to consider and discuss the question in all its phases, taking into consideration the retrenchment, the difficulty of getting money, and the fact that the money now devoted to a useless Public Works Commission could be saved, and a better proposal could be brought forward.

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

AYES, 35.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Kirwan
„ Brennan	„ Land
„ Bulcock	„ Larcombe
„ Collins	„ McCormack
„ Conroy	„ Mullan
„ Cooper, F. A.	„ Pease
„ Cooper, W.	„ Peterson
„ Coyne	„ Pollock
„ Dash	„ Riordan
„ Ferricks	„ Ryan
„ Fihelly	„ Smith
„ Foley	„ Stopford
„ Forde	„ Theodore
„ Gilday	„ Weir
„ Gilbies	„ Wellington
„ Gledston	„ Winstanley
„ Hartley	
„ Huxham	

Tellers: Mr. Pease and Mr. Riordan.

NOES, 28.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Kerr
„ Bebbington	„ King
„ Brand	„ Maxwell
„ Cattermull	„ Moore
„ Clayton	„ Morgan
„ Corsier	„ Nott
„ Costello	„ Petrie
„ Deacon	„ Roberts, J. H. C.
„ Edwards	„ Roberts, T. R.
„ Elphinstone	„ Sizer
„ Fletcher	„ Swayne
„ Fry	„ Taylor
„ Green	„ Vowles
„ Jones	„ Warren

Tellers: Mr. Bebbington and Mr. Brand.

Resolved in the affirmative.

[*Mr. Sizer.*

Question—That the Bill be now read a third time (*Mr. Mullan's motion*)—put; and the House divided:—

Ayes, 35.

Noes, 28.

Resolved in the affirmative.

The division lists were identical with those in the previous division.

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

CONTROL OF AIR NAVIGATION BILL.

INTRODUCTION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The PREMIER moved—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to refer to the Parliament of the Commonwealth the control of air navigation and for purposes connected therewith.”

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: This is a new phase of legislation. I understand the Commonwealth have passed the Bill, and that the Premiers of the various States have agreed to take the matter into consideration. If I read aright, they have committed the various States to the passing of the measure. I understand the Bill will be uniform in all the States. I have been trying to see the position as it appeared in the discussion in the Federal House. There is one very good phase—that it will not interfere with the rights of the States. The fact that they are going to recognise the principle of preference to returned soldiers is a very good feature. I would like to know if the Bill is to be the same as that introduced into the Federal House, and whether it will be uniform with that introduced in New South Wales?

The PREMIER: Exactly.

Mr. FRY: There are three principal points, and one more or less indifferent, connected with this measure. The first three are the commercial aspect, the defence aspect, and the pleasure aspect; and the fourth is the political aspect. As far as the commercial aspect is concerned, aviation has not developed far enough for us to value the invention to its fullest extent, but we are in hopes that it will minimise the cost of transit and open up avenues which are not known to us now of doing trade with various parts of Australia. The value of aviation for defence has been proved beyond doubt by the recent world war, and there is no doubt that, were Australia to be engaged in a war again, aviation would play a very great part in the direction of defence. The pleasure aspect will depend upon the efficiency of machines, which has been proved by their use in the commercial atmosphere as well as in defence. It appears to me that the commercial and pleasure aspects are linked up with the defence of the country. I think that the Commonwealth Government would be the only Government who could efficiently handle aviation, for there will be drawn from the brains of the citizens of Australia many improvements and inventions to increase the efficiency of machines and make them of general use to the public, and those inventions could not be fostered unless aviation were under the control of a central administration. So it might eventually affect the

whole of Australia. It certainly does not affect individuals at the present time. Being such an important adjunct to our transport, I think this House is doing a wise thing for Australia, and for Queensland in particular, in handing over the administration of the air service to the Federal Government. As for the political aspect, we have had experiments made by the Premiers of New South Wales and Queensland, and, as far as we can see, they were both disastrous. I trust that eventually aviation will be so important as to confer benefits upon the whole of Australia.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am sure we are all very pleased to notice the introduction of this measure. Anyone must feel that the time has come, so far as the State is concerned, when we have to take a very prominent part in all matters connected with aviation. If anyone casts his mind back twenty or thirty years ago to the days when a balloon used to float in the air occasionally by way of exhibition in the large cities of Australia, and then realise the development that has taken place during the last ten years—practically in the last six years—in regard to aeronautics, he must be convinced that, in the future, air is going to play a very important part in the transport of mails and passengers. During the last five or six years we have seen the wonderful part that aeronautics have played in modern warfare. Of course, we all hope that out of the present meeting of the League of Nations war will be practically eliminated in the future; but, notwithstanding that we have that hope, if we wish to eliminate it, we must be prepared with adequate systems of defence in order to enforce the decisions which any League of Nations may come to. So far as this Bill is concerned, we all recognise that it is a matter that must be practically under Federal control. We have to see, as far as we possibly can, that suitable landing places are provided, and that everything possible is done in order that aviation may be advanced and that travelling in the air is made as safe as it can be made. I am sure that on both sides of the House the Bill will receive practically unanimous support.

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*): I feel sure that hon. members of this Assembly will be pleased to see that we have begun to realise the importance of an aerial service. Particularly will this be so in the outlying portions of this great Commonwealth; particularly, too, to the outside portions of this State of Queensland. We all know that in times gone by, owing sometimes to industrial troubles and sometimes to other causes, the outlying parts of the State have been cut off from communication with the South; and it is indeed pleasing to see that aerial transit has come to stay. I have no hesitation in saying that in the future, not only from a national and a protective standpoint, but also from a commercial and a business standpoint, we shall find that aeronautics will play an important part in the development of our territory and in the carrying on of business in this State of Queensland. It is indeed gratifying to know that control is to be handed over to the Commonwealth authorities, because there is no authority that could control aeronautics better. Particularly is that so when we realise that, from the defence point of view, it is absolutely essential that Queensland should be pro-

tected. We know from the experience of the great war that aeronautics will play a very important part in the protection of the coast line, and in the protection of Queensland as a whole, from invasion by a foreign power. It will materially assist our navy in keeping at bay the navy of any hostile power. The aerial service will be, in reality, the eyes of the navy. I am glad that the Commonwealth Government have realised the great importance of this, because I take it that this Bill is introduced as the outcome of a conference between the Premiers of the various States and the Commonwealth authorities. Apparently, the Commonwealth authorities realise the importance of this matter, and want to have control of the air from the defence aspect, as well as from the commercial point of view, whilst at the same time they desire to see that the lives of those who use aerial means of transport are safeguarded. The Government are to be commended for dealing with the question in such a way as this and for realising the urgency of at once handing over full control to the Commonwealth Government. I feel sure that all sections of the House will support the Bill.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I would just like to say a word or two on the great expectations resulting from the development of the aeroplane. There are places in Queensland where people have to drive fully 40 miles to get their mails.

Mr. COSTELLO: Only 40 miles? It is easily seen that you live inside.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Well, that is inside. There are places on the Dawson River, which is close inside, where they have to travel 40 miles for their mails. The general use of the aeroplane, the telephone, and the motor-car will practically annihilate distance. There are great possibilities in connection with the aerial conveyance of the parcels post and mails, and places that are now far remote will be brought within measurable distance of civilisation. I think it is a good thing that the Bill has been brought forward, and I have much pleasure in supporting it.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): This Bill is a very important one, but at this initial stage I do not want to say very much about it. I am not altogether in favour of the control of the air being handed over to the Commonwealth. There is only one point of view which appeals to me as a reason for vesting the control of the air in the Commonwealth—I refer to the question of defence. If that were the only thing I would not hesitate about giving the Commonwealth control; but there are very good reasons why we should look upon the air as ours in exactly the same way as we look upon the land as ours. We propose to carry on industries by means of airships or aeroplanes. We propose to carry passengers as we carry them in our railway trains. That is purely a Queensland matter. You might as well say that you would hand over the control of your main roads on the surface of the earth to the Commonwealth as hand over your main roads in the air to the Commonwealth. In France, during the war, the air was mapped out in exactly the same way as the ground. If an aeroplane was going over to bomb a certain position, there was a route marked for that aeroplane to take. If a tank was going over to bomb a position, the route for

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that tank was defined. Whether from the commercial aspect or the pleasure aspect, I think we should have the whole thing within our own control, and, if necessary, hand over any air routes that we might decide upon to the Commonwealth for defence purposes. I trust that the Government have consulted the Aero Club in Brisbane upon this matter. That certainly should be done, as this is a very important measure.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the resolution, which was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The Bill was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for Monday next.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INTIMATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The HOME SECRETARY, in moving—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Local Authorities Acts, 1902-1917, in certain particulars”—

said: I did not give much information at the introductory stage, because I am of opinion that, if information is given or required by the Opposition, it is most unfair to discuss that information at the initiatory stage. Previous Ministers, including the present leader of the Nationalist party, always refused to give information at that stage. A complaint was made yesterday which I will reply to now. I looked up yesterday the report of the introduction of several measures by the late Treasurer, the hon. member for Bulimba, and on every occasion he simply read the resolution seeking leave to introduce, and then sat down. In Bills like the Industrial Peace Bill and the Co-operative Sugar Works Bill he did not explain the measures at all. At this stage I will give the House, as briefly as possible, the contents of the Bill. Of course, the second reading is the correct stage at which the principles contained in the Bill should be discussed at length.

The proposal is to extend the franchise and to, in effect, adopt the electoral rolls for the purpose of electing representatives to local authorities and shire councils throughout Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The HOME SECRETARY: It is a very important departure, and I do not propose to discuss at this stage the merits or demerits of the case, as I would be out of order; but I shall have something to say on the second reading of the Bill. It is also proposed to elect the mayor and the chairman of the shire council by the vote of the electors within the area. This is a departure also. The mayor, or the chairman, as the case may be, will not be a member of the Council—he will be a member of the Council, really, but he will be elected separately from the aldermen or councillors. It is proposed to have triennial elections. Instead of the present system of electing members each year—one-third of them—it is proposed to have all the elections at one time. All the members of the council

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and the mayor are to be elected on a date to be fixed—the Bill provides when it shall be—and shall hold office during three years.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: The mayor for three years, too?

The HOME SECRETARY: The mayor for three years. Provision is also made—which I will deal with on the second reading—in the case of vacancies.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Does the whole of the council go out?

The HOME SECRETARY: The whole of the council goes out. It is proposed to hold the ordinary elections in March of each year, and the day for the elections will be on a Saturday between the 1st and 21st of the month. The returning officer can fix any Saturday between those days which will be suitable to his local authority. All the elections need not be held on one day. It will be within the province of the different councils to have their elections at different times; but they must be held within the first twenty-one days in March. It is proposed to extend the life of the present councils until July, 1921, so that time will be given to prepare the rolls. We propose to assist the councils in the preparation of rolls. In dealing with the rolls, we propose to close the rolls, say, three months prior to the election. The rolls to be used in the annual election will be rolls up to the 31st December preceding March, when the triennial elections take place.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: The State rolls prepared for each electorate?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes; those rolls will be prepared from the State electoral rolls, but there will be no supplementary rolls. In future, the names on the roll on the 31st December will be the qualified electors for the elections which take place in March of the following year.

Mr. MAXWELL: The electoral roll to be the basis?

The HOME SECRETARY: The rolls will be compiled. I think this information should be given at this stage. I do not want to discuss the merits or demerits of any of these things, because we will have the second reading and Committee stages in which to deal with different questions which will come before us. The local authorities existing to-day will continue to hold office until July, for the purpose of enabling us to complete the rolls, and to have our elections in July, and the rolls will close three months prior to the date of the elections in July, recognising the three months' residential qualification.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Will you alter the age of the elector?

The HOME SECRETARY: No; we work under the Electoral Act. We also propose to adopt the local authorities' conference recommendation in regard to a certificate of competency for a clerk.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Who is to decide the competency of a clerk?

The HOME SECRETARY: The local authority will have power to provide for that matter.

Mr. CATERMULL: Can he sit for any constituency?

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member may raise that question when we go into Committee on the Bill. We also propose in this measure to deal with dilapidated buildings. That is a matter which has caused a good deal of trouble to local authorities, and we propose in this measure to give the local authorities power which many local authorities sought under the old Act but which they found, on consulting their legal advisers, did not exist. A case of this kind occurred in my own electorate, when the local authorities attempted to deal with a part of the town known as "Chinatown," but found they had not the power to do so. We are also providing for the rating of perpetual leases on the same basis as freehold. That is an amendment which is needed and which has been asked for by the local authorities. Leasehold land will be valued on the same basis as freehold land in the vicinity. That provision, I think, will meet the wishes of a good many local authorities. It is also provided that differential rates may be struck by local authorities on land used for the production of food. There is a tendency to extend the boundaries of cities into country lands, and it is considered unfair that such lands should be saddled with a rate which applies to city lands. I am, therefore, proposing an amendment which provides that in the case of land which is particularly used for the production of food the local authority will have power to strike a different rate from the rate levied on other lands in the local authority's area. The power is also given to local authorities to remit rates in respect of land used or occupied by repatriated wounded returned soldiers, by old-age pensioners, and by persons suffering from miner's phthisis, and other diseases mentioned in the Workers' Compensation Act. That power has been asked for by the local authorities.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Will soldiers' widows be included?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Will they be exempt from rates?

The HOME SECRETARY: No, but the local authority will have power to deal with applications for the remission of rates in such cases; and, as I have said, the local authorities have expressed the wish to have that power. There is also in this Bill a proposal to allow local authorities to borrow further sums of money in connection with public works which have been passed by the ratepayers, but which cannot be completed without the expenditure of a larger sum than they were estimated to cost originally. We have found that many local authorities have undertaken public works, and that, owing to the increase in the cost of materials and the increase in the cost of wages and other things over which the local authority has no control, the amount voted by the ratepayers is not sufficient to complete the work. We therefore propose that the local authority in such cases may approach the Home Secretary on the matter, and that, if he is satisfied that circumstances have arisen which have rendered it impossible to carry out the work for the amount of the original estimates, he may allow them to borrow money to complete the work without taking a second poll. There is one other important matter to which I may allude, and that is the provision which repeals the limitation with

regard to the amount of the general rate. Many local authorities have approached me on this matter, and have told me that the limitation of a general rate to 6d. in the £1 is hampering. They say in effect that works which could be carried out for a certain amount four or five years ago now cost double or treble that sum, and we are giving them the power under this Bill to increase the general rate so as to make adequate provision for their needs in that respect.

Mr. MOORE: Are you going to allow the electors to vote on a loan?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, the electors will have the same powers in that respect as ratepayers have under the present Local Authorities Act.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: An elector may vote whether he has paid his rates or not?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, as long as he is an elector he can vote. Hon. members will recognise that, in extending the municipal franchise, it is proposed to remove all the restrictions which at present exist. No person will have more than one vote. The hon. member for Oxley yesterday raised the point that I had given information to the "Standard," because it was a Labour paper, before I gave that information to the House. I want to deny that statement. I notice that the same information appeared in the "Telegraph."

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I always read the "Standard," and that is where I got the information.

The HOME SECRETARY: Well, the hon. member ought to read the "Telegraph," too. I have no desire, and never have had any desire, to treat this House with disrespect. I think the House should be advised first on matters of this kind.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Can you tell us how the information got into the paper?

The HOME SECRETARY: I can only guess, just as I might guess why the hon. member was an alleged candidate for the Speakership. Bills have to go through the hands of the Parliamentary Draftsman, and through the hands of the officers of the department, and while I do not blame them in connection with this matter I would point out that it is very easy for information to leak out. I have given the House very full information with regard to this Bill, and I now move the resolution standing in my name.

Mr. VOWLES: I am sorry that the Home Secretary found it necessary to read us one or two little homilies which were not at all necessary in introducing this Bill. However, I am glad that he has given full information to the House. As the hon. gentleman has said, this is, no doubt, the proper stage at which such information should be given; but we know the hon. gentleman so well that we felt that, if we had not taken advantage of the previous motion when it was before the House yesterday, we might not have got the information at this stage. We take advantage of all opportunities that are presented to us. If we had been assured yesterday that we would get the information at this stage, we should not have prolonged the discussion; but it must be understood that we do not want to give the Government a blank cheque in regard to this or any other Bill. We are

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going to revolutionise the whole system under the Local Authorities Act, both as regards representation and the method of bringing about that representation. The franchise is to be the adult franchise, instead of consisting of interested persons in the area who have to find the money necessary to carry out the conduct of local authorities. It is claimed that a ratepayer of an area is the person who lives in the area; every penny he spends—whether it be for a glass of beer or a pair of trousers—goes to pay the rates, and, consequently, he is a ratepayer. That strikes me always as being very far-fetched. Men whom we speak of as nomads—men whom, unfortunately, we see going through the country to-day by the score, carrying their swag—they have only to be a certain time in a district in order to get on the electoral roll, and under this proposal when they get on the electoral roll they will have the right not only of voting at parliamentary elections but they will have the right to cast a vote in connection with the control of the funds of the local authority. If you take the electoral roll you will find that the strongest objection, and the biggest opportunity for malpractice, is in connection with that very system, owing to the fact that a man going into an electorate for a few weeks can get on to the roll—he may not even qualify—and have a vote in the conduct of elections. The election of mayor independent of the council strikes me as being wrong. If we are going to have what the hon. gentleman is trying to bring about—that is, political feeling in these minor parliaments—then, surely, the persons who are to control them should have a majority of members behind them? Why should that person be elected independently from outside sources? We find in a big area like the Brisbane area—I understand there is going to be an amalgamation here of the local authorities, and that the mayor is going to be a very dignified person—not that the present mayor is not dignified—but he is going to be dignified in this respect: that he is going to receive a very large salary, and, in the future, that position is going to be a professional one. The mayor will not be a man who will strive to get the post to carry out the functions for the benefit of the public and do his duty as a townsman, but a man who will be striving to get it from the fact that he will be able to control the largest number of votes so that he will enjoy all the profits of that office.

The HOME SECRETARY: What is the remuneration of the Mayor of Brisbane to-day?

Mr. VOWLES: He gets an allowance, which he spends, and it does not amount to one-third of what you propose here.

Mr. KIRWAN: He gets £1,000.

Mr. VOWLES: You propose to give a salary of £1,500 outside the allowance.

The HOME SECRETARY: There is nothing in this Bill about a salary at all.

Mr. VOWLES: No, but there is in another measure which has to be read in conjunction with this Bill. I spoke about a consolidation of the Brisbane area.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! That is not the question under discussion, and I would ask the hon. member to deal with the question before the Committee.

[Mr. Vowles.

Mr. VOWLES: I protest that I am in order when I am dealing with the election of mayor.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has been dealing with the question of a greater Brisbane scheme, and I am instructing the hon. member to deal with the question before the Committee.

Mr. VOWLES: I am going to deal now with the Mayor of Brisbane.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot evade my ruling in that way.

Mr. VOWLES: I am talking about the election of mayor, and I am talking about something that we know will apply in the future. It will still be the same mayor of Brisbane. In country towns the electors will have the right to elect a mayor; and the same, probably, will apply to Brisbane, whether it is North Brisbane or a Greater Brisbane.

Mr. FORDE: What is wrong with trusting the people?

Mr. VOWLES: How often have we asked the Government to submit certain questions to a referendum, and they have not been game to trust the people? I am strongly opposed to the principle of the elector, instead of the taxpayer or occupier, getting a vote. I have given, on other occasions, very strong reasons in support of the contention that this is not a good principle. Take, for instance, North Brisbane, where the biggest and most valuable properties in Queensland exist, and where, from the fact that Brisbane is a very big business centre, the owners do not live in those buildings. They live in adjacent suburbs, which constitute some other local authority. These owners have no votes under this scheme for the protection of their property, either in respect of rates or in respect of loan money raised against them. Is that a desirable position?

The HOME SECRETARY: That shows the necessity for an amalgamation of the local authorities.

Mr. VOWLES: I am not allowed to speak about an amalgamation. I am talking about North Brisbane as we find it to-day. A Greater Brisbane scheme may never eventuate. You will find in North Brisbane, as in every other big city, a lot of very undesirable individuals—people who have no stake in the country—people who are practically a drag on the community.

Mr. COLLINS: They have a life stake.

Mr. VOWLES: They have a life stake, but nothing more. We give them a vote as far as a general election is concerned; but why should we give them a vote in connection with local authorities when their vote may be the controlling vote in connection with the taxation of someone else's property?

Mr. COLLINS: You were very anxious for them to fight your battle.

Mr. VOWLES: The people I am referring to do not fight any battles. I am referring to prostitutes, who will have an equal vote under this Bill to the property-owners.

The HOME SECRETARY: Under this Bill the Mayor of Brisbane will be able to get all these people out of his area.

Mr. VOWLES: They have to be somewhere. They have always existed since the

world began, and it is undesirable, for that reason alone, that this Bill should be passed. There are undesirables in every locality, and these people are placed in the same position as the reputable people of the community, and will have a vote in the control of the taxation of these people's property, and, not only that, but have the right to imperil other people's property as far as loans are concerned. I remember on a previous debate asking the Home Secretary of the day, now the Secretary for Public Instruction, if this Bill was not an indication to the working people of Queensland to get their own representatives on the electoral roll, create their own rates in spite of the minimum rate, borrow money on the security of other people's property to carry on whatever work they liked, and he said, "That is right." That will be found in "Hansard." There is no question but that that will be the effect of this legislation; and, therefore, how can we expect this Committee to declare that it is desirable that a Bill should be introduced on those lines? The remarkable thing about it is this: the Home Secretary has done what this Government is constantly doing in introducing legislation. They bring in some desirable amendments, but they tack on to them some undesirable ones, and place us in this position—that we are only able to get the desirable ones by supporting those which are undesirable. I say it is desirable that we should amend the Act in many of the directions which the Home Secretary has indicated. I am strongly of opinion that the perpetual leaseholder, whose property is rented on the freehold basis, should be taxed under the Local Authorities Act on the same basis. He should be taxed on a basis equivalent to a freehold value of

[5.30 p.m.] similar lands in the same locality.

That is the only equitable way to deal with him. Personally, I am glad to see that there is going to be an amendment in that direction. I also admit that it is desirable to give power to local authorities under certain conditions to deal with buildings in an unhygienic condition—ruinous buildings, which do not come strictly under the present law. Other matters, such as the classification of lands and relieving up to 50 per cent. of the land in the suburbs or outer parts of a local authority in a state of development and used for agricultural purposes, are desirable and should give encouragement to the development of agriculture, and on that point alone I shall support them. I think it was openly stated by a previous Minister, however, that the other provision would allow the working men of a local authority to create their own rates of wages, irrespective of the minimum award, and to borrow money on the security of other men's property. In addition, the Government are now going to give them a free hand in rating, because now there is going to be no maximum. It is admitted that 6d. is not sufficient in some cases; but why can we not raise the limit to 7d., or 8d., or even 9d.? Why should we leave unlimited opportunity for the exploitation of the public in this direction?

The Home Secretary told us that the mayors of the existing shires and other local authorities will retire in July next, and that the elections will take place in March, and that the rolls will be prepared on the rolls as at the 31st December previous. I would like to know what provisions have been made for by-elections?

The HOME SECRETARY: If a mayor dies or anything unforeseen happens to him in the first two years, an election will take place. If the vacancy occurs in the first year, his colleagues will elect one of themselves to carry on. In regard to a councillor, if he retires within three or four months prior to the general election, there must be an election; otherwise the electors would be disfranchised.

Mr. MORGAN: On what roll?

The HOME SECRETARY: On a roll prepared. That is the only time the roll will be interfered with prior to the expiration of the three years.

Mr. VOWLES: That is a matter we can deal with at a later date, but I am very, very sorry that the Government insist on tacking on this objectionable amendment. All the others are reasonable, or to a great extent reasonable.

Mr. COLLINS: Property! Property! Property!

Mr. VOWLES: No; it is not a question of property. There may be something in the question of duplication of voting; but no man, I repeat, has a right to cast a vote to attack my property unless I have a vote to protect it.

The HOME SECRETARY: None of the results will happen that you are predicting.

Mr. VOWLES: It is all very well for the hon. member to say that, but they can happen. Suppose a certain section of the community got control of a local authority and went mad, you might say, borrowed money, as they are entitled to do under the Act, on the security of other people's property. The Government could not borrow money, but the local authorities can get it, and afterwards go mad in the expenditure if it. Why should any section of the community be put in a position where they can attack my property, which is part of the security of the loan, whilst I have no voice in what they do, because my residence is outside the area? The principle, to my mind, is absolutely wrong. If a man is entitled to own property, he should have power to protect it.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you not see that all these powers, and greater ones, are now in the hands of the electors? The electors can abolish local authorities if they wish.

Mr. VOWLES: And if they did, we would want about twenty additional Ministers. The electors have too much common sense under the present conditions.

Mr. STOPFORD: Will they not be the same electors and have the same sense when this Bill passes?

Mr. VOWLES: No. If you take certain areas you will see how injustice may be done. In country districts it will not apply so badly, because the owners of the land live there; but you take North Brisbane and other industrial areas, and you will find that injustice may take place, and that the owners who live outside will have no vote.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That accounts for the slums.

Mr. VOWLES: It does not account for the slums.

Mr. MAXWELL: There are no slums in Brisbane.

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Mr. VOWLES: The slums in large cities are sometimes in the best localities. However, that is not the principle I am opposing. The principle I am attacking is that a person will have the right to attack property, but the owner shall not have the right to protect it.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Some of the amendments indicated by the Home Secretary promised to revolutionise local authority government to a great extent. I should like to suggest to the Minister that because any member of the Opposition, when occupying the Treasury benches, failed to give necessary information, it is hardly a fair thing that the whole of the members of the present Opposition should be penalised.

The HOME SECRETARY: You were one of them.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I gave the fullest information on every occasion, realising that by giving the House the fullest information the passage of the measure was expedited.

The HOME SECRETARY: You never said a word on the Liquor Bill.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Certain of the amendments absolutely and completely revolutionise local authority matters, and the one in particular which is to a great extent the crux of the Amending Bill—that is, the extension of the franchise—is totally in opposition to that democratic proposition that there should be no representation without taxation. Adult suffrage in State matters is on quite a different basis, because, although the elector may not be a direct taxpayer, yet he is an indirect taxpayer through the Customs or other avenues of taxation.

The HOME SECRETARY: But you believe in a limited franchise.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I was an advocate of adult suffrage long before the hon. member ever thought of politics—long before he was thought of.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: And has changed his views.

The HOME SECRETARY: You favoured an Upper House elected on a limited franchise.

HON. J. G. APPEL: No.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, you did, in this House. I have a good memory.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That has nothing to do with this question, and I should be called to order if I debated it, and I do not intend to be called to order if I can possibly help it. As pointed out by the leader of the Opposition, the effect of this alteration will be that in many instances the largest ratepayers will have no votes in connection with the properties in respect to which they pay rates. Is it in accord with any democratic policy or principle that people who are paying rates and taxes should be debarred from having votes in connection with the properties or areas for which they pay rates? Is that a policy which can be defended by any man, however rabid or however Tory he may be in his principles? I venture to say that the proposal is of so revolutionary and drastic a character, so opposed to democratic principles, that I am sorry the Minister proposes to submit it for discussion to the House.

Mr. FORDE: The people have been looking forward to it for a long time.

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HON. J. G. APPEL: The people have been looking forward to many things which, unfortunately, under caucus administration, they have failed to obtain.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL: That the voting power should be limited to one vote does not affect the matter very much one way or the other. What I am concerned about is that those persons who are taxed are the persons who should have the management and control of the funds which are raised by that taxation. Do not those who are not taxpayers and have not the franchise receive some benefit by the expenditure of money which is raised from those who own property in the construction of roads, the construction of different sewerage works, and the improvements which are effected under local authority government? Do not those who, at the present time, pay no taxation receive an advantage of practically equal value with those who have to find the funds?

The HOME SECRETARY: Do not they find the funds? Who pays the taxes of Allan and Stark? The people who buy their goods, of course.

HON. J. G. APPEL: If the hon. gentleman is prepared to follow that principle we can go further; but he is not prepared to follow along those lines. If he likes to extend the principle, who is finding the funds for the payment of the administration of the State and of the men who are sitting on the Treasury benches?

The HOME SECRETARY: The working man; the people who produce the real wealth.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Should they not have the power to say who shall administer those funds?

The HOME SECRETARY: They have.

HON. J. G. APPEL: They have not—to-day.

The HOME SECRETARY: Of course they have.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I did not rise for the purpose of engaging in any abstract discussion upon the subject. The proposal that the whole of the members of a local authority shall be elected for three years and shall retire in one body, to my mind, is not a good one. The practice heretofore that each member should be elected for three years, but that a third should retire at the end of every year, was adopted with the object that there might be a continuity of policy in the carrying out of local authority works. From my experience, extending over a period of twenty years as a member of local authorities, I think it is a good principle. The administration of local authorities differs very largely from the administration of State affairs. In local authorities certain works have to be carried out in sections.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Does not that apply to the State?

HON. J. G. APPEL: Unfortunately, it does not, because we find that under present conditions in the State there is an absolute reversal of a previous policy which led to the settlement, development, and prosperity of the State. To my mind, the result of this proposal will be the same. A policy may be outlined by the members of the local authority—one which has received the assent and which is for the benefit of the particular

locality. A completely new body of men may be elected at the end of three years, who may reverse that policy, which has been carefully thought out and partly effected.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Does not that happen to all representative bodies?

HON. J. G. APPEL: More or less. I am simply stating the object of the conditions as they exist at the present time, and the dangers which will ensue if the whole of the members of the local authorities are to retire at the end of three years. With regard to the election of the mayor, of course, that is a question on which there may be divided opinions. I know it is a popular policy in many places that the mayor should be elected outside.

THE HOME SECRETARY: It is in operation.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I know it is a principle which has been accepted in other parts of the Empire. Whether it will be a good one or a bad one remains to be proved. It is a matter which can be discussed without any party feeling. I am quite satisfied that, as far as the altered conditions are concerned, the full provision will be found to have been made regarding the rolls to be used in connection with the election which is to take place at the end of every three years, or in connection with any by-election which may take place. The Minister in charge of the Bill did not specify which of these amendments has been recommended by the local authorities. I take it some of them have been so recommended.

THE HOME SECRETARY: I have found out for sure that they did not recommend the broadening of the franchise. (Laughter.)

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am satisfied about that. In fact, they would have been untrue to the ratepayers who elected them and to their policy of democracy that there should be no representation without taxation had they done so. The proposal to place perpetual leases on the same basis as freehold is one which can well be accepted. Hon. members sitting on the Government benches always have contended that perpetual leases are of greater value than freehold. At present they are, because they are not subject to land taxation. It is only a fair thing that their rateable value should be placed on the same basis as that of freehold. The proposal regarding differential rating is a wise one. We find to-day that in many urban areas some local authorities have already carried out that principle as a matter of policy; they have effected a differential rating, so far as properties in their areas were concerned which were utilised for the purpose of producing food. If there is to be an amendment of the Act, it is as well that it should be made compulsory, because land which is used for that purpose certainly is not of the same value as land which can be used effectively for other purposes.

With reference to slum properties, I only hope the hon. gentleman will make provision by which such properties may become a thing of the past; but I fear that is a hope that will never be realised, because, in many instances, the persons who really suffer the most are the greatest offenders in connection with that particular matter. However, I shall be only too happy to support any legislation that will make it impossible for slum properties to exist, in the interests

of the health of the community—not of the people who occupy those slum properties, because they do not care. In many instances it is through their neglect that diseases are disseminated through the community. The provision giving power to a local authority to segregate persons suffering from certain chronic diseases is a very wise one, and I hope the local authorities will be prepared to accept the amendment which is proposed by the Bill in that direction.

THE HOME SECRETARY: They are agreeable to that.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I do not know which amendments emanate from the local authorities and which do not; but certainly it is very wise that such provision should be made. The further provision with respect to loan works which have been approved of by the ratepayers, and where, after the work has been partly carried out, it has been found that an insufficient amount has been raised by way of loan in the first instance, is a wise one. Many local authorities, from causes over which they have no control, have found that, after 50 per cent. or 75 per cent. of the work has been carried out, the original estimate has had to be exceeded; the works have had to be stopped, and a very lengthy process has been necessary before authority could be obtained for a further loan to complete the work.

THE HOME SECRETARY: I think they all approve of that.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It is a sensible proposition, and one which should appeal to every member of the community, especially those who are interested in local authority matters. Some of the amendments outlined by the Minister are of a highly contentious nature, and I have no doubt that on the second reading a very full discussion will take place upon them. I hope to be in a position to deal with them more in detail at that stage, and to deal conclusively with some hon. members who, apparently, do not appreciate certain democratic principles which have stood as the foundation and the bulwark of democracy.

MR. TAYLOR: There is no doubt, as has been stated by one or two of the previous speakers, that there are some very good clauses in the Bill; but, no doubt, the clause upon which all the fight and all the contention will take place is that which proposes to make the parliamentary franchise the basis for the return of aldermen and councillors for the various shires and towns throughout Queensland. In trying to come to a conclusion in regard to that matter, we should ask ourselves the questions, "What really is a local authority? What are its functions—how are they carried out and how are they applied?" Anyone who has any knowledge of local authority work knows perfectly well that they are simply a huge unpaid department which has to carry out and administer an Act which has been enacted by Parliament. The power of a local authority is exceedingly limited, but it has a very great amount of administrative work to do. In regard to this proposal to extend the local authority franchise to all the electors in a particular area, the position at the present time is that every person of adult age has a share in electing their representatives to Parliament. Those representatives, being elected to Parliament, frame and pass the various Acts under which local authorities

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carry on their functions. That being the case, what necessity is there for this extended franchise which the Home Secretary proposes?

The HOME SECRETARY: What danger is there on those lines?

Mr. TAYLOR: There is a certain amount of danger. Probably it may not be so great as some of us think, but at the same time we do think that the people who have to find the money to carry out the work in a local authority area should be the ones to say how that money shall be expended. As things exist at the present time, if a local authority is not carrying out its functions, if it is not looking after the health of the community, who steps in and tells it that it shall do so?—the Home Department.

The HOME SECRETARY: With what results?

Mr. TAYLOR: I would like to hear from the Home Secretary of any case in which the intervention of the Home Department has not been effective. I have not heard of any of a serious nature.

The HOME SECRETARY: What have I been able to do in connection with Breakfast Creek?

Mr. TAYLOR: The trouble there has been that there are too many local authorities. There are half a dozen local authorities interested, but no one can decide who has any authority at all over the creek, not even the Home Secretary himself. The point really is that persons who have no responsibility for the payment of rates should be allowed to vote in local authority matters. It is all very well to talk about the lodger, the boarder, and the occupier finding the rates.

The HOME SECRETARY: How many people living in a local authority area would allow a thing like a wool scour to be established near to where they live?

Mr. TAYLOR: The Home Secretary has the power to intervene in a case like that.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have not got the power.

Mr. TAYLOR: How did the hon. gentleman prevent a wool scour being erected in Kedron? He knows perfectly well that, as soon as the sanction of the Home Department was asked for the establishment of a wool scour in the Kedron shire, the department turned it down.

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

Mr. TAYLOR (continuing): The injustice of the proposed franchise under the Bill, so my mind, lies in the fact that, although in an indirect way a lodger or boarder contributes to the taxation of a local authority, he carries no responsibility for payment of rates. The individual whose property can be levied on, and who may be sued for rates which may be owing on any particular property, is the person who owns the property, and not the elector who is simply a boarder and not a permanent resident of that area. I think it is unfair to introduce such a franchise in this measure. So far as the introduction of this change of franchise is concerned, it is purely a political reform which has been asked for by certain political bodies in Queensland who wish the parliamentary franchise should be used in local authority work. It must be admitted that local

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authority work in Queensland has been generally carried out in a very satisfactory manner. I think I am right when I say that something over £1,000,000 is due by local authorities in Queensland to the Government. Out of that amount there is only about 1 per cent. in arrears, which reflects the greatest credit upon those who constitute the local authorities. One thing which would be unfair if the proposed change in the franchise is made is the possibility of a local authority being elected not a single member of which may be the owner of property within the area. The proposal is that the local authority shall be able to increase the amount of rates which may be levied from the ratepayers in the area; and if a local authority were elected on which there were no ratepayers at all, the board would have power to levy taxation for which those who levied it would have no responsibility for payment. I think that this proposed change is unnecessary, hard, and unjust, and that, instead of working out in the best interests of local authorities, it will be detrimental, and retard their progress in many directions. I think this proposal should be struck out of the Bill.

There are several other matters which the Minister spoke of. We all agree with regard to dealing with slum areas. There may be differences of opinion with regard to the election of mayor, but I am prepared to approach that question with an open mind. The Minister did not tell us very much as to how he proposed that the selection of a mayor should be carried out, but I suppose the mayor will be nominated by the electors in a similar way to which members of Parliament are nominated at the present time, and that the election will take place on the same day as the election of aldermen and councillors. Whether it is wise to send the whole council out at one time is doubtful. In Windsor, for instance, I suppose that at the present time there are drainage works being carried out by money, which is being advanced by the Government, to the extent of £40,000 or £50,000. If you threw out the aldermen who have special knowledge of that work, and put in a fresh lot of aldermen altogether, you might seriously retard the progress of that work. I think it would be better if half of the council went out every three years, instead of the whole number. However, these are matters which we can discuss more fully in Committee.

Mr. BRENNAN interjected.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Government administer the affairs of the State during the period intervening between one Parliament and another, but if you throw the council out the town clerk has not the same executive authority as the council.

The HOME SECRETARY: The same thing applies to this House.

Mr. TAYLOR: No. The Government administers the affairs of the country until a new Government comes in.

The HOME SECRETARY: So these people will. That is the point where you are wrong. You were talking about continuity of policy.

Mr. TAYLOR: I think continuity of policy is very necessary in local authority work. A local authority is really only an administrative body administering an Act of Parliament which has been voted upon by the electors in the whole of the various areas,

and it has practically no executive power at all. For that reason, I am certainly opposed to the extension of the franchise as proposed in this Bill.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): I regret that I had not the pleasure of listening to the Home Secretary this afternoon.

The HOME SECRETARY: Well, you missed something.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: A treat.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I must express my regret that I missed that treat. The hon. gentleman, I understand, referred to quite a number of matters which he proposes to include in the Bill when it comes before us. I take it that, in connection with local authority affairs, there are some matters about which there will be a very big difference of opinion. I have no doubt that the public generally will regret that the Home Secretary has introduced in this Bill the franchise which he proposes. I am certain that it will not work out in the interests of the electors.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why not give it a trial?

HON. W. H. BARNES: We have been giving too many trials, much to the regret of the country, as the Home Secretary knows.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Some of the trials have not been at all satisfactory, and, unfortunately, the community to-day are suffering as the result of those trials.

The HOME SECRETARY: Leave things alone. That's your policy.

HON. W. H. BARNES: No, we don't want to leave things alone, but we do not want to take a leap in the dark, and that is apparently the position in some directions that the Home Secretary is desirous of adopting.

Let me for a moment deal with a question which I believe was raised by the Home Secretary in connection with the formation of local authorities. I presume that the hon. gentleman had very largely in view the Greater Brisbane scheme. In this Bill there is a proposal that the mayor or chairman of a local authority shall be elected by the electors. That may or may not be a right thing. To some extent I have a very open mind in regard to that proposal. Generally speaking, in most matters experience counts for a very great deal, and, if I have been correctly informed, the proposal made by the hon. gentleman in this connection goes in the direction of making it possible that a man who is quite an outsider, as far as local authority matters are concerned, may be elected as mayor or chairman of a local authority. I think that one of the conditions laid down as to the qualification of a person seeking election as chairman or mayor of a local authority should be that he has had some experience in local authority affairs. Without in any way reflecting upon any person, I would ask would it not be extremely difficult if an individual who had no experience of parliamentary life was to take his seat on the front Government bench? Such an individual would be placed at a disadvantage as compared with other members, no matter how great might be his ability, and I can see that someone who is popular with the people might be elected as

mayor, though he has had no local authority experience.

The HOME SECRETARY: Would the rate-payers be such fools as to elect such a man?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I can only say that, under this Bill, such a result may be possible.

The HOME SECRETARY: Members of your party sought a leader outside Parliament.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is not the question at issue. It cannot be doubted that experience does count in most things. I am informed that the hon. gentleman also made reference to the fact that in future the electoral rolls were to be prepared in the Home Office.

The HOME SECRETARY: I said we will give the local authorities all the help we can in preparing the rolls.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Then I have been incorrectly informed, and I was going to say that compiling the rolls in that way will cost a very great amount.

The HOME SECRETARY: It will not be as much as it is now.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I should like to know how the hon. gentleman makes that out.

The HOME SECRETARY: I will tell you at the proper stage.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is perfectly certain that there are some things left out of this Bill which ought to have been included, and that is one reason why we sought to extend the scope of the Bill. I think the Government ought to tackle the conditions which arise from time to time in various parts of the more congested areas, where people are dumped down not only on 16 perches of land but on even smaller allotments, but no provision is made to deal with that matter in this Bill. Then, getting back to the method of election proposed in this measure, I notice that the present members of city and shire councils are to have their life extended to July, 1921, in order, I suppose, to make it possible to work the elections in with the new order of things. I do not know that that provision is going to work out as the hon. gentleman thinks it will. My view is that by this measure we will create political machines in connection with local authorities which do not exist at the present time.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Ah, ah! and laughter.

Mr. COLLINS: There were not three Labourites at the local authorities' conference.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is rather a reflection on the Labourites, if the statement is correct; but I do not think it is correct. I say that this Bill is going to create political machines on both sides. I notice that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley is in his place to-night, and I ask him if that has not been made plain in connection with the Water and Sewerage Board, where there are political factions representing both sides in politics. I contend that under this Bill we shall create political machinery in connection with our local authorities. At the present time the members of local authorities do not regard themselves as political representatives.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Ah, ah!

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HON. W. H. BARNES: Will hon. members suggest that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley and the hon. member for Toowong regard themselves as being members of different political parties when performing their duties as members of a local authority? Would anyone suggest that the hon. member for Logan and Mr. Brown, who sit on the Coorparoo council, represent opposite political camps in their capacity as members of that council? I do not think so, and it seems to me that the Government are seeking to make political organisations of local authority councils under this Bill. I hope that every member of the House will take an opportunity of analysing to their fullest extent the provisions of the Bill before the measure comes on for its second reading. Speaking for the side of the House that I represent, I may say that we shall earnestly watch and follow every proposal, and that we shall fight every clause which we consider that our duty to the country requires us to fight. When we feel that certain things are being done which are against the best interests of the country, we regard it as our duty—and a duty we will not fail to carry out—to fight it at every stage.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We are bringing this forward in the best interests of the country.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Minister for Public Instruction smiles when he says that. All I can say is that it is apparent that he has been brought under the whip, like other members of the Government. However, we shall have an opportunity later on of going into these matters more fully, and I can assure hon. members that they will be criticised most fully by members on this side.

Mr. FORDE: If the hon. member for Bulimba had been in his place in the House this afternoon, he would know more about this proposed measure than he evidently does know. It is evident from the speeches of hon. members opposite that their chief objection to the proposed measure is that it provides for adult franchise in municipal government. No doubt, such a democratic proposal is nauseating to conservative gentlemen who sit on the other side of the Chamber. We know that such a proposal was endorsed at the three last general elections in Queensland; and had it not been for the obstructive tactics of a conservative Legislative Council on two occasions, the amendment of the Local Authorities Act would have been on the statute-book to-day, and the people of Queensland would exercise the same rights in municipal elections as they enjoy in State and Federal elections.

HON. W. H. BARNES: This is proposed by a minority Government.

Mr. FORDE: The hon. member for Bulimba is the leader of the minority Opposition. Numerically, his party is the weakest with the exception of the Northern Country party, and I see that there is only member of that party here to-night. Hon. members on this side of the House who represent the people of Queensland believe in the broad principle of equal citizenship. We believe one man is as good as another, and that every man in the community should exercise the franchise at municipal elections.

HON. W. H. BARNES: You only believe in one brand being employed.

[Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

Mr. FORDE: I do not quite understand the hon. member for Bulimba, but I know that he only believes in giving one brand of refreshments at the Y.M.C.A. (Laughter.) We on this side stand for adult municipal franchise—for equal rights for all sections of the community, and preference to none.

HON. W. H. BARNES: What was the resolution at the Townsville conference—that only representatives of one organisation should be employed?

Mr. FORDE: I know if the hon. member were in a union he would "scab" on his mates. I maintain that the man who pays the rent pays the rates. The man who buys from a big business firm indirectly pays the rates on those premises, because no doubt the men who run those businesses charge sufficient for their goods to cover the rates. We have heard a lot from hon. members opposite about irresponsible people in the community who will be able to exercise the franchise when this Bill is placed on the statute-book. I would like to point out who those irresponsible and undesirable people are.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Get a looking-glass. (Laughter.)

Mr. FORDE: That is what I would expect from the hon. member who made a failure of the Darra Cement Works and the Fruit-growers' Co-operative Society. I maintain that the honest workman is of more importance to the community than an acre of land. (Hear, hear!)

HON. W. H. BARNES: Not as important as an extra Minister.

Mr. FORDE: We maintain that the honest workman is better than bricks and mortar. We say that the man who owns property in several municipalities has no right to have three votes. The man earning a living in the community and bringing up children who will be our future citizens is more important to our State than the man who owns property in several municipalities. We are told by hon. members opposite that a man who goes into a centre and sets up a business is the man who creates value in that particular centre, and that he is the man who should get all the consideration. I maintain that it is the people who settle around that business who create the value, and they have a right to have a control in the conduct of the local government affairs for that area. In the past they have been denied that right, but we are going to remedy that state of affairs. There have been numerous injustices in the past, but they are gradually being cleared away by this Government. We know the Health Department to-day has great difficulty in getting local authorities to carry out certain reforms in the way of sanitation and public health.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Why don't they do their duty and compel them?

Mr. FORDE: Because of vested interests. Municipal councillors will not do their duty simply because they represent vested interests, and they will not interfere with their friends, but that will all be passed aside when we have councillors elected on an adult franchise. If you look at the work carried out by municipal councils, more particularly by city councils, in Queensland, you will find that very few municipal works have been carried out because in the past there

have been on those councils, owing to the restricted franchise, men who are opposed to municipal control—men who are opposed to State enterprise and the municipal control of public utilities. The men who sit on those municipal councils are men who do not believe in undertaking work which would interfere with what they call private enterprise. I find that in cities like Manchester, Glasgow, and Birmingham they have on the councils men who take a broader outlook and a broader view of things altogether, and they have done considerably more in the way of conducting public utilities than the councils here. In Glasgow the municipality has been prepared to spend large sums of money to provide pure dairy milk for the children. They spent upwards of £150,000 on the establishment of dairy herds alone in Glasgow, so that the little children might not be poisoned by impure milk. We know that in many parts of Queensland to-day, owing to the adulteration of milk, sickness and epidemics are prevalent amongst little children.

Of course, we know that members opposite are not much concerned about things of such vital importance as those which engage the attention of members on this side of the House. Local authorities in Great [7.30 p.m.] Britain have wider powers, I admit, than those of Queensland, and it is the aim of this party to give wider powers to the local authorities of Queensland. Local authorities in Great Britain have power to care for children, for education from the elementary school to the secondary school, to look after art galleries, hotels, fire stations, hospitals, infirmaries, gas and water, and electric lighting, and dairies for the children's milk. In England and Scotland, owing to the wide powers that are given, they look at things from the broad standpoint of doing the best for the people, and they have a more democratic franchise than they have here. They provide for electric light, gas, and other utilities.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Yet they have never had a Labour Government.

Mr. FORDE: They are going to have a Labour Government. It is coming. The municipalities in Great Britain have better services than the municipalities in Queensland in respect to tramways, electric lighting, gas, and so on. We know that, in the past, under certain Orders in Council, the matter of lighting has been left in the hands of monopolies. We on this side are opposed to that. We think all these utilities should be controlled by the people living in the municipality. The opposition that is coming from the other side is only the opposition to every reform measure introduced into this Chamber. Members opposite believe in just hanging on, but we are the Government that establish precedents. We do things, and we do not talk as much as hon. members opposite.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: You do talk.

Mr. FORDE: You couldn't if you tried. The electors now will elect the mayor. That will be a good thing. The hon. member for Toowong, I presume, will never again occupy the mayoral chair if the whole of the people of Greater Brisbane have the say.

Mr. MAXWELL: I could beat you, anyway.

Mr. FORDE: It is a good thing that the elections will be held in March, so that after the 1st July it will be possible for the people

to have Labour councils governing the local bodies of Queensland. (Hear, hear!)

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I thought they were non-political.

Mr. FORDE: We know that any council of which the hon. member is a member is political, and bitterly political. I am glad the Home Department will give the local authorities assistance in preparing the roll, because we want to have the rolls up to date. We want to see that there is no undue delay in preparing them. I am glad, also, to see that provision will be made for a certificate of competency for local authority clerks.

One important matter touched upon by the Home Secretary is the dilapidated buildings to be found in different parts of Queensland, which are not properly looked after by municipalities at the present time. Probably the friends of members opposite own those buildings, and so they do not want them to be interfered with. I am one of those who think that it is the duty of the local governing body to see that there shall be a better system in the future.

Then the local governing bodies will have the power to exempt old-age pensioners, soldiers, and poor widows from rates. (Opposition laughter.) Of course, I know that members opposite have no sympathy with the widow—that all their sympathy is for the big profiteer and the landlord, the men who put the boodle into the fighting funds of their parties. Therefore, it is right that some of the members on this side should voice their opinions in favour of the poor unfortunate widows. (Renewed Opposition laughter.) Hon. members may laugh at those poor people; but every humane person sympathises with them.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. FORDE: It is quite a good provision to make. I think that the repeal of the limitation of the general rate is a good thing, because I know that in Rockhampton the rates have been raised to the maximum allowable under the Act, and an amendment in this direction is urgently needed. I sincerely hope that the Home Secretary will see that the necessary machinery is put into operation, so that there may be an election at the proper time, and that the workers, the producers of Queensland, will have an opportunity of voting for truly democratic representatives, men who stand for the people, the whole of the people, the producers of the community, and not for the landlords and profiteers, who are represented by members opposite.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Are there no landlords on the opposite side of the House?

Mr. FORDE: There are fair-minded men on this side of the House, and I feel sure that the introduction of this measure, to which the people of Queensland have looked forward so long, will stand to the lasting credit of the Home Secretary as having been the Minister to introduce a progressive measure.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is very interesting to find members on that side taking up so much of the time of their own party in this business of "if you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours." The hon. member who has just spoken said that, in a certain city, the local council had reached the maximum of taxation. I believe that there is no restriction on the taxation by councils at the

Mr. Bebbington.]

present time. That restriction has been removed.

Mr. FORDE: Ask the Home Secretary.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member ought to have known that before he started to speak. I would call his attention to an address the present Minister for Public Instruction made to the local authorities. He said he was going to provide them with abundance of funds for building their main roads and filling any other requirements in their areas. That raised them to the tip-top of expectation, wondering where he was going to get the money from, and what amount he was going to give them. When they resumed after lunch the Minister said he was simply going to remove the limitation on their taxation powers and allow them to tax themselves.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Hear, hear! That's it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Compare that with the statement of the last speaker that a certain city council had reached the maximum of taxation.

Mr. FORDE: It was not a Labour council, either.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Then the hon. gentleman dealt with the franchise in England and the works carried out by the municipal councils there. The reason is that they are not Labour councils—they represent the people. The franchise in England to-day is simply residence or occupation. The person who resides in the cottage has the vote. We ought to have had that years ago. Of course, I know that every resident here can get the vote if he wishes to pay the taxes.

Mr. FRY: That is right; if he pays the rates he gets the vote.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: There is nothing to prevent any tenant paying the taxation and deducting the amount and getting the vote. Some time ago a Southern judge made a wonderful discovery. He discovered that the people who bought goods at the stores paid the taxes of that storekeeper. We have some of our politicians on the other side making just as great a discovery. Any person who has any reason must know that a business man must put the amount of his taxes on to the goods he sells. What other means has he of paying them? He has only the one means of making his money, and that is by the goods he turns over.

Mr. FORDE: He charges sufficient to cover the rates.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Certainly he does. I have gone into the matter very carefully, and I find that the cost of living in Queensland has increased exactly in the same ratio as the taxes which have been put on the taxpayer. The Government imposed the taxes; therefore, they have to be added on to the cost of living.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am dealing with this matter of franchise and having a vote and paying the taxes. I say the cost of living increases according as taxation increases—that it has to be put upon the cost of living. (Government interruption.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Had there been no increase of taxation, there would have been very little increase in the cost of living.

[Mr. Bebbington.

The one has kept step by step with the other.

The TREASURER: If there were no taxation the cost of living would be nothing?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You cannot increase taxes without increasing the cost of living.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I point out to the hon. member that this is not a taxation proposal at all. He must deal with the resolution before the Committee.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I say it is a taxation proposal.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I cannot permit the hon. member to argue in that way when called to order. I ask the hon. member to deal with the resolution before the Committee.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I say the increased taxation of the local authorities will increase the cost of living. I certainly would not disagree with your ruling at any time, Mr. Chairman. (Laughter.) There is another thing I want to stress. The Home Secretary has not informed us yet whether all State industries which are run for profit are going to pay taxes under this Bill. I would like the hon. gentleman to inform me on that point.

The HOME SECRETARY: If you sit down I will have the Bill put through and printed, and hand you a copy inside ten minutes.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We feel sure that provision is not in the Bill. Once you admit the principle of taxation of State industries which are competing with private industries, the State industries must go down.

Mr. COLLINS: What rot!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The first thing I would do would be to make them pay the city council and shire council rates, the same as any other private business. That is what I want the Home Secretary to do. Places like the State timber-yard are cutting up our streets. I know one little yard the State uses for their business. The previous taxpayer paid £80 a year. I rang up the city clerk and he gave me the amount. I said to him, "Of course, the Government pays nothing." "Oh, no," he said. "we had to put extra on the other taxpayers."

The HOME SECRETARY: Are you a ratepayer in Brisbane?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am a ratepayer in Queensland, anyhow, and this is going to affect me, because the same thing applies all over Queensland. It applies to Toowoomba, and I am a ratepayer there.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Are you a ratepayer of Cambooya?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes, I am. I have a fair amount of interest in this Bill. What I disagree with most is that you can put a certain number of men on to making a railway, a main road, or anything else through a shire council's area, and those men might control the expenditure of that shire and run them into an expense of thousands of pounds, and immediately put their swags on their backs and clear out. I maintain they should be allowed on only one roll. If you send men up from Brisbane or elsewhere to work on the roads or the railways, they have no right to have a vote in that shire.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They would be on only one roll.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It would be quite a different thing to what it is now.

Mr. FORDE: If you had your way, they would be on no roll.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member must have a very bad mind. People express what is in their own minds. I am sorry to see the hon. member come down so low. (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He seems to have taken a step down somehow. (Renewed laughter.)

Mr. NOTT (*Starling*): There are quite a number of matters in the Bill with which I am perfectly in accord, especially the giving of further power to the local authorities to do away with slums and widening the scope in a number of matters. But there is the matter of the franchise that I think is of the greatest danger to the country. At the present time the local authorities are run by people who are directly interested, especially from the public point of view, in the various shires in which they work. It is only feasible to think they would give every attention to developing those particular shires, in order to make for their progress. If the franchise is widened, as is proposed, a lot of people will be permitted to vote for members of shire councils who will not have the responsibilities which are on the other people. Certainly a number of hon. members have said that the electors pay a number of taxes. I agree that every elector, when he is purchasing the various commodities that he uses, does pay a number of taxes indirectly, but the ratepayers pay all those same taxes, and, in addition, have to pay the rates. I think, therefore, that the interests of the local authorities will be better looked after if the franchise is confined to ratepayers alone. Another objection to the use of the parliamentary roll is that if, as has been stated during the debate, as a result of the extension of the franchise to all parliamentary electors, councillors may be elected who are unsympathetic to the ratepayers, works may be undertaken that will be greatly to the advantage of nomadic electors—men who are not particularly interested in the particular district—and when the work is done those people can move from the district and leave the responsibility for the payment for those works on the shoulders of the ratepayers. There are certain directions in which it is proposed by the Bill to extend the powers of local authorities with which I agree, particularly those affecting the health of the community and the eradication of slums. Fortunately, I come from a little country town where I am quite proud to say we have no slums and no cottages that are not absolutely hygienic and habitable in every way. I am only sorry to think that other electorates are not so fortunate.

The HOME SECRETARY: There are not slum areas in every district.

Mr. NOTT: The sooner local authorities are given power to deal with these matters the better. But slums, in all cases, are not altogether the fault of the local authorities. In many cases they are brought about by the individuals who inhabit them. It is an old saying that a pig is always a pig, quite irrespective of the housing provided for him, and that remark is equally applicable to some people. However, there is no doubt

that the existence of slums is a thing that will be very hard to overcome. I suppose there will always be slums, especially in big centres of population.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not if the local authorities do away with dilapidated buildings.

Mr. NOTT: The hon. member for Rockhampton said that the proposed extension of the franchise will be nauseating to the Liberals. I admit that it will certainly be nauseating to a great many Liberals, and to a great many electors of the State.

Mr. W. COOPER: Do you belong to the Liberal party or to the Farmers' party?

Mr. NOTT: I belong to the Primary Producers' Union. (Laughter.) I am a member of the Country party, and I am quite certain that before very long we shall be the strongest party here, especially as class legislation such as this widening of the franchise will assist materially in increasing our numbers. Later on, I hope that it will place us in possession of the Government benches.

Mr. W. COOPER: Then, why oppose this legislation?

Mr. NOTT: A good deal has been said in regard to Government enterprises, and the hon. member for Drayton wished to know if those enterprises would have to pay rates under this Bill. That is a question every hon. member on this side is anxious to have answered in the affirmative. We think that all such enterprises should be made to pay rates. The hon. member for Rockhampton remarked that the Bill itself is a widening of Government enterprises. The late referendum showed very plainly that a very large majority of the electors of this State were not in favour of State hotels.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the question before the Committee.

Mr. NOTT: I must apologise. I am sure that the proposed alteration of the franchise will not be received favourably by the electors. Personally, I shall have very great pleasure in voting against the Bill, especially because of the proposal to alter the franchise in the manner proposed.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution, and the resolution was agreed to by the House.

FIRST READING.

The Bill was read a first time, and the second reading was made an Order of the Day for Monday next.

WHEAT POOL BILL.

RETURNED FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council returning this Bill without amendment.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move—That the House do now adjourn. The business on Monday will be the second readings of the Commonwealth Powers (Aerial Navigation) Bill and the Local Authorities Act Amendment Bill.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 8 o'clock p.m.

Hon. E. G. Theodore.]