

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

MONDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 1920

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MONDAY, 29 NOVEMBER, 1920.

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

WHEAT POOL BILL.

ASSENT.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor assenting, in the name of His Majesty, to this Bill.

QUESTIONS.

FATAL ACCIDENT, KEDRON PARK RACECOURSE.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*), in the absence of Mr. Vowles, asked the Premier—

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

"1. Yes.

"2. Three persons have met with fatal injuries, and four persons have received injuries which have not proved fatal.

"3. Yes."

SUPERVISION OF INSTRUCTION IN WOOL AND SHEEP.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"If he will table the papers, including the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and the Public Service Commissioner, in connection with the recent appointment of a supervisor of instruction in wool and sheep at the technical college?"

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

"If the honourable member will call at the head office of the Department of Public Instruction he will be afforded an opportunity of perusing the papers."

AMENDMENT OF SUGAR CANE PRICES ACT.

Mr. CATTERMULL (*Musgrave*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"When will the conference between the sugar-cane growers and millers on the proposed amendment of the Sugar Cane Prices Act take place?"

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

"No date has yet been fixed for the conference referred to, but it will probably take place early in the new year."

ORDER ON TRIAL OF SPECIAL ADDING MACHINE.

Mr. KERR (*Zoggers*) asked the Minister in Charge of State Enterprises—

"1. Is it a fact that an official of the State Fisheries Department verbally ordered on trial a special adding machine in May, 1919, for use in adding and dissecting docket?"

"2. Was this machine obtained for the department and installed, and an operator trained?"

"3. Further, did the same official verbally order an electric motor to drive the machine referred to some four months after—viz., in September, 1919?"

"4. Were these verbal orders repudiated and the machine returned to the supplier in January, 1920—that is, after the machine had been in use for approximately eight months?"

"5. Was any payment made in regard to the transaction?"

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

"1. The State Fishery Department accepted the company's offer to place the machine on trial on the understanding that the department was under no obligation to purchase.

"2. The machine was installed, but no operator was trained.

"3. An electric motor was subsequently attached to the machine.

"4. No orders were repudiated, but the company's representative was advised that, as there was no work for the machine, it was not required, and it was returned in January, 1920.

"5. No: as no sale was effected. I might add that the representative of the company was told that if they could establish any claim for payment in connection with the motor it would be met by the department."

TABLING OF RETURNS RESPECTING LEGAL FEES, IMPERIAL MEAT ACCOUNT.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*), in the absence of Mr. Fletcher, asked the Premier—

"When will the return showing particulars of legal fees, as shown in Imperial meat account for last financial year, be laid on the table of the House?"

The PREMIER replied—

"I now lay on the table of the House the return asked for."

AREAS IN NORTH QUEENSLAND WITHDRAWN FROM SELECTION.

Mr. JONES (*Kennedy*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. What areas in North Queensland have been withdrawn from selection and added to the various State stations during the past three financial years?"

"2. In the case of each area so withdrawn, at what rental was it offered to the public when open?"

"3. Does the State Stations Department pay any rental to the Lands Department for these blocks, and is any allowance made in State station books for such rental?"

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

"1. (a) 275,300 acres withdrawn from selection and added to Diamantina Lakes State Station; (b) 19,065 acres withdrawn from selection and added to Buckingham Downs State Station; (c) 46,360 acres withdrawn from selection and added to Dotswood State Station; (d) 156,600 acres which were notified to be open for selection, but were withdrawn before the opening date had accrued and included in Lyndhurst State Station.

"2. (a) Diamantina Lakes, 275,300 acres at $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per acre, total £573 10s. 10d.; (b) Buckingham Downs, 19,065 acres at $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per acre, total £39 14s. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.; (c) Dotswood, 22,265 acres at 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per acre, and 24,095 acres at 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per acre, total £349 12s. 9d.; (d) Lyndhurst, 63,600 acres at $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per acre, 70,400 acres at $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per acre, and 22,000 acres at 1d. per acre, total £444 5s. 4d.

"3. Yes."

APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNOR.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*), without notice, asked the Premier—

"Has his attention been drawn to a paragraph appearing in the 'Brisbane Courier' with reference to the appointment of Sir Matthew Nathan as Governor of Queensland, which paragraph states that the appointment of Sir Matthew Nathan was due to the representations made by the Philp delegation while in London?"

The PREMIER replied—

"The Governor has unreservedly denied the statement attributed to him to the effect that the Philp delegation were responsible for his being sent out.

"It is now obvious that the report was deliberately fabricated either in the 'Courier' office in Brisbane, or by the 'Courier' newsagency in Adelaide. The report published by the 'Daily Mail' subsequently, and purporting to have been telegraphed from Adelaide, was, I suspect, lifted by the 'Mail' from the 'Courier' of the previous day.

"Our opponents are playing pretty low down when, for party purposes, they deliberately cook a report by putting into the mouth of the Governor words that were never used by him and falsely attributing to the Governor statements calculated to cause ostracism between him and his Ministers. I hope, for the sake of clean journalism in this State, the faking of the report did not take place with the connivance of anyone in Brisbane. I suggest to the 'Courier' and 'Daily Mail' that in order to clear the matter up they produce the original telegrams which they published as purporting to have been despatched from Adelaide."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

COMMONWEALTH POWERS (AIR NAVIGATION) BILL.

SECOND READING.

The PREMIER: I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time. I think it

is unnecessary for me to explain the Bill in detail, as we have had a full discussion on the initiatory stage of the measure, and I think it met with unanimous approval. We desire to transfer the necessary power to the Commonwealth in order that they may adequately deal with the question of aerial navigation.

Question put and passed.

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

LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): In moving the second reading of this Bill, I wish to state that it really contains only one vital principle, and I propose largely to deal with that principle. There are a number of amendments proposed in the Bill, but they do not contain any vital principle, and I think they will meet with the general approval of the House. As the real vital principle is the extension of the franchise, I suppose the whole discussion will take place around that principle. I listened to the debate the other evening on this principle, and I went back over "Hansard" from 1894 onwards and read the debates of the Opposition on the proposal to extend the franchise to the whole of the people in connection with the election of members of this House, and it is a remarkable coincidence that almost identical arguments were used from 1894 till 1904 against the extension of the franchise to the whole of the people in connection with State elections. The main contention was, of course, that a person without property had no great interest in the country. It was argued that a person with property in twenty of thirty different electorates was entitled to a vote in every one of those electorates, and to-day we find exactly the same arguments being used in regard to the local authority franchise as were used in 1894 against universal suffrage, and they were used by the people who then represented the party that is now in opposition. The Labour party at that time, of course, were in favour of an extension of the franchise. The Tory party were against an extension of the franchise. They stood for privilege.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Who gave an extension of the franchise?

The HOME SECRETARY: The Morgan Government, supported by a majority of Labour members who were in direct opposition to the people whom the hon. gentleman has stood for in this House. At that time, the hon. gentleman belonged to the party that opposed an extension of the franchise. I do not say the hon. member for Bulimba opposed it personally, but the others did. The hon. gentleman at least knows that he stood in opposition to the Government that introduced adult suffrage.

Hon. W. H. BARNES interjected.

The HOME SECRETARY: I read the hon. member's speech very carefully, and after the election—after he had been well defeated—he admitted that the country was in favour of an extension of the franchise. I just mention this in passing to show that the same reasons are advanced to-day against

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an extension of the local authority franchise as were used against an extension of the franchise in connection with the election of members to the State Parliament and in connection with our Federal Parliament. It is a remarkable thing that exactly the same stand was taken up during those debates—that is, the stand on the principle of no representation without taxation. To-day we find that numbers of persons who opposed the extension of the franchise then also oppose the extension of the franchise now, but nobody would be so bold to-day as to say, "We oppose adult franchise for the election of members of this House."

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Do you allow a vote in your trade unions, in which you only are interested, to the people outside? No.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is quite a different position, as I shall prove as I proceed. I want to say that all the people living in an area known as a local authority have an interest in the welfare and development of that area. It is a recognised fact that every person in that area, whether he be a ratepayer or not, has to live in that area; his life and happiness depend as well upon successful government in the local authority sphere as upon successful government in this sphere, and in my opinion more so. I believe that more power should be given to local authorities. (Hear, hear!) I believe that the local authorities are closer to the people—are able to handle questions that are closer to the people better than this Parliament or the Federal Parliament; and I, for one, would be in favour of granting extended powers to local authorities. The people living in an area, not only the ratepayers, have a direct interest in the government of that area. Take, for instance, a district in Brisbane—the neighbourhood of Kingfisher Creek. The bulk of the people who have to live there have no say in the government of the local authority, had no voice in the abatement of the nuisance which did exist there.

Mr. CORSER: Has Kingfisher Creek brought about this amendment?

The HOME SECRETARY: No, of course it has not.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: And it is settled now.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, and by an authority with a broader franchise than the local authorities.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: And the previous Treasurer was the one that made it possible.

The HOME SECRETARY: The previous Treasurer did not do anything of the kind; it was the Water and Sewerage Board.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: And he gave the money for the drain.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am pleased to know he gave some of his money in that direction. I thought the Government gave it. I say everyone in that area has a direct interest in a matter like that.

Mr. KING: If they live in it.

The HOME SECRETARY: And consequently those people have a right to vote for the election of that local authority. My friend, the hon. member for Logan, will no doubt use the argument that they can secure that right under the present Act. He will argue that the person paying the rates can

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secure that right. But we know what happens in the case of a person living in a rented house. I have had some experience. He is hunted from one district to another. He is most of his time looking for a house; and has little time to qualify as a voter. The concession under the present Act is no concession at all.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Why not make residence the principle of the Bill?

The HOME SECRETARY: Residence is the principle of the Bill, as the hon. member will find as I proceed—not ratepaying, but residence. Another argument used against this extension of the franchise is that the owner of the property has to pay the rates—that the people merely living in the area do not pay the rates. That is a fallacious statement. All the big firms in the city, all businesses, have to get their money from somewhere. They have no royal fund into which they can dip their hands and draw out money to pay rates. They have to make the business pay the rates. To prove that, let me give an incident that happened in my own experience. My landlord raised my rent and gave as the excuse that the rates had gone up. He placed those rates on my shoulders.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Why did you not go to the Fair Rents Court?

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not want to go there. I admitted the justice of his claim. I am just showing that even the owner recognised that I pay the rates, and not he.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You had a vote?

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not. I have the right, as I have said, at a good deal of inconvenience. Take a valuable property in Queen street, such as that belonging to the Queensland National Bank. Does the bank pay the rates on that property, or do its customers pay them? I hold that the customers do.

Mr. MORGAN: Does that not apply to all taxation?

The HOME SECRETARY: Of course, and it defeats the argument adopted by the Opposition.

Mr. MORGAN: Then, the consumer pays all taxation?

The HOME SECRETARY: He does, of course.

Mr. MORGAN: You did not admit that at election time.

The HOME SECRETARY: He may be a producer in some things, but the consumer, the creator of work, and the user of the goods pay all the taxation. I was going to deal with the unearned increment on landed property. Who made the properties in Queen street valuable? Did the owners?

Mr. CORSER: Who invested the money?

The HOME SECRETARY: I am not dealing with the buildings at all. The rating is on the unimproved value of the land. Who created the value of those properties?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: We know who is spoiling the value.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member, as usual, is dodging the issue. The people of Brisbane; and not only they, but

the people who send their goods through Brisbane, have made that property valuable. The added value is the unearned increment, and that unearned increment is taxed in the form of rates by local authorities, and I say that everybody in the community pays some portion of them. The unearned increment has been created by the population. To give an illustration—a man takes up a piece of land outside of Brisbane, 70 or 80 acres. He builds a big factory, a meatworks, and round it grows up a population—a small township. The bigger the works become, the more men work there—and they need not be ratepayers at all—the more valuable becomes his property, and when you give votes to the people who live there, you are only doing justice to them.

Mr. PETRIE: What about the women's vote?

The HOME SECRETARY: I was going to deal with the question of the women's vote. Under the present Act, no woman, as a woman, has a vote. She has a vote if she is a ratepayer. I want to prove that the adult franchise is in existence in an important part of the British dominions. It has worked successfully there for the last ten years, and there is no need for the alarm of the hon. members at what they say will be the results of the extension of the franchise. I am going to deal with

[4 p.m.] the case of New Zealand. In 1919 the Act was amended. The franchise previously was—

“Residential qualification: meaning thereby that he has for at least three months then last past been in occupation as a tenant or sub-tenant” &c.

The amendment in the new Act reads as follows—I am quoting from the New Zealand statutes—

“A residential qualification, meaning thereby either that he has resided for one year in New Zealand, and has resided in the borough or in the ward of a divided borough, during the three months then last past, and is a British subject either by birth or naturalisation in New Zealand.”

Now, that is adult franchise.

Mr. BRAND: That is not one month.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is three months. My Bill provides that the rolls close three months prior to the election. Exactly the same franchise operates in New Zealand as will operate here. In New Zealand it goes further than I am proposing to go. It provides, in the case of a husband and wife, that any qualification possessed by either of them shall be deemed to be possessed by each of them; that when a husband has been three months in the area and his wife only a week, both are entitled to a vote. I want to know what objection hon. members opposite have to women having a vote in local authority affairs? Are they not concerned in local authority matters? Are there not a great many social reforms arising out of local government work where the women are concerned? Take the question of milk supply in Brisbane. I am sorry my friend the Mayor of Brisbane is not here. Is there anything done by the local authorities in Queensland to deal with this problem of milk supply? No action is taken at all. What affects the women in the community, particularly the mothers, more

than the milk supply? In all the States of the Commonwealth the local authorities are dealing with the milk supply.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Why was it taken out of the hands of the local authorities?

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. gentleman knows it was not; they may deal with it now. The inspection of milk is in the hands of the Health Department, because we could get no satisfaction at all out of the local authorities. I want to ask my friends opposite why the women in a community should be refused a vote? There are many questions on which they may differ from their husbands.

Mr. PETRIE interjected.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. gentleman does not recognise the difference between a local authority and a trade union. A local authority is a public body.

Mr. PETRIE: So is a strike a matter of public concern.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not any more than, in the case of a company controlling an industry, the shareholders and directors may close down without reference to anyone.

Mr. MORGAN: It affects the wives.

The HOME SECRETARY: It affects everyone when big industries close down at the direction of directors. Those are private concerns, and there is no method of controlling the affairs of private organisations of labour and capital.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Government works closing down affect everybody, too.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. gentleman wants to drag in something else. He will have ample opportunity for dealing with other subjects. The hon. gentleman well knows he has to oppose the extension of the franchise to women under this Bill. His party have decided so. According to the speeches recently delivered, they are all going to oppose it.

Mr. MORGAN: We will accept the responsibility.

The HOME SECRETARY: Again, dealing with the question of rights of people living in an area, as against the rights of ratepayers, in regard to health matters, I know in Queensland to-day there are half a dozen centres which will not deal with nuisances. The local authority has control of drainage and matters appertaining to health. The reason they do not deal with those polluted areas is that they do not live in those areas; they allow the people who rent their houses to live there. There is no redress for those people unless they can get a lease of the house and become a ratepayer—an advantage very few can get, with the result that in diphtheria and other infectious diseases we find it impossible to move the local authorities. We have the power, I know, to take it out of their hands, clean up the area, and charge it to the local authorities. I hold that that is not a wise power to be exercising on every occasion. I believe the local authority should be responsible to the people. We have exercised the power in extreme circumstances; but it is not wise, because it completely takes out of the hands of the local authority the control of their own affairs. I do not want to do that any more than I can help. I would much sooner give the people in the area the right to deal with the local authority

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on election day. That is the representative way of dealing with an inefficient body. Let the people in that local authority—whether it be Rockhampton, Brisbane, Ithaca, Mackay, or Cairns—deal with their local authority if they do not take proper action in regard to drainage and other matters appertaining to health. I believe, under this extension of the franchise, you will have those issues made real issues at election time. The people who are suffering as the result of defective drainage will remove them in the proper way and place in office as their representatives other people who will carry out the work.

Mr. CORSER: That is right; carry on the work. That is the whole policy of the Bill—spend somebody else's money.

The HOME SECRETARY: There are plenty of opportunities for local authorities to do good work. The hon. gentleman will find that in some other countries there are local authorities who are engaged on greater works than are Governments in Australia; and rightly so. I believe that all utilities within the city of Brisbane, supplying only the people of Brisbane, should be controlled by the people of Brisbane. I have a decided objection to my electorate having to find the wherewithal to finance undertakings for the special benefit of people in Brisbane. I do not think the people in Brisbane want it.

Mr. MORGAN: Is this only a Brisbane Bill?

The HOME SECRETARY: It is not only a Brisbane Bill. I am just dealing with that phase of the situation.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Make Brisbane keep its own hospitals.

The HOME SECRETARY: I would. Under the present arrangements in Brisbane, with nineteen separate local authorities, there is no chance of Brisbane accomplishing anything at all. I was proceeding to say the local authority having adult franchise will be able to deal with very many matters of importance affecting community of interests in their particular areas; for, after all, community of interest is the main foundation of local government. We should have our local authorities divided up in such a way as to embrace within a local authority, as far as possible, a community of interest. In all matters with which the local authority can deal, they should be handed over to the local authorities, and I believe they would be more effectively handled than they are under the centralised system that is developing throughout Australia.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You did not believe that with regard to the Savings Bank.

The HOME SECRETARY: There are some things that should belong to a central authority. The hon. gentleman would have everyone sweeping in front of his own door. I believe that, where there is a community of interests, the local authority should sweep in front of all doors. There are some things that should be put under the control of the Commonwealth. For instance, one State has one company law, and another State has another company law, with the result that companies register in Victoria to get away from the obligations of the Queensland Act.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: They are all seeking to run away from Queensland.

Mr. KIRWAN: Except Barnes and Company. (Laughter.)

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The HOME SECRETARY: Another objection to the principle of the adult franchise is with regard to loans. The Opposition will say that the people whose property is mortgaged should be the only people who should have a vote on a loan proposal. It is a remarkable thing that in New Zealand, where they have had this law in operation since 1910, the local authorities have borrowed fourteen times as much money as the local authorities in Queensland.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: What is the population of New Zealand, compared with that of Queensland?

The HOME SECRETARY: It does not matter what the population is; but the population is over 1,000,000. The indebtedness of local authorities in New Zealand in 1909-1910 was £7,967,000 borrowed in New Zealand, and they had also borrowed £6,970,000 outside of New Zealand. In 1917-1918 they had increased their New Zealand indebtedness to £14,096,000, and they had increased their indebtedness by way of loans floated in England to £8,164,000, or a total of £22,260,000 that the New Zealand local authorities now owe, whereas in Queensland they owe about £1,500,000.

Mr. EDWARDS: But how many applications for loans have been turned down by you?

The HOME SECRETARY: The Home Department does not lend money; it mostly gives it away. Hon. members of this House are always coming to the Home Department with applications for assistance for someone in distress.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The Treasurer is decidedly liberal in the matter of expenses.

The HOME SECRETARY: I think the Treasurer has been very good to local authorities. In Auckland alone they have spent £120,000 on concrete roads. Now, Auckland is not a great deal bigger than Brisbane.

Mr. CORSER: What is the capital value of the land in Auckland?

The HOME SECRETARY: The capital value of the land has nothing at all to do with it. Auckland may be a little more prosperous than Brisbane, but I doubt it.

Mr. CLAYTON: Have they any unemployed there?

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not know; the hon. gentleman might know. Auckland has spent a large amount of money on improvements. It has beautiful parks. It is a beautiful city, well laid out; they are taking steps to widen the streets that were originally narrow, and they are doing very good work in park and road improvements. Now, what is being done in our city of Brisbane under the present restricted franchise? If there was an extension of the franchise, there would be more interest taken in local government matters. In Brisbane, when a local authority election is about to take place, some gentleman goes round, and all the firms sign his nomination paper. It is very seldom that there is an election for an alderman. The same old crowd are returned year after year, and there is no definite policy stated by any local authority in Queensland. I listened to one candidate in East Brisbane last year, and the only statement he had to make was that, if he were returned, he would reduce the rates. He

won easily. (Laughter.) You cannot get good government under that system. I am not one of those who believe that there will be an extraordinary revolution as the result of this extended franchise, but I do believe that the candidates who stand for local authorities will have to show some civic intelligence.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: We do not get good government in Queensland even when you increase the taxation abnormally.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. gentleman may say so, but he is not a Solomon. (Government laughter.) In the majority of local authority elections in Queensland the candidates are unopposed; the old member simply gets his friends to nominate him, and he does not submit any policy at all. The general conception of local authority work throughout Queensland is that it is confined to the making of roads. It is no such thing.

The TREASURER: Roads to their own premises. (Laughter.)

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member for Logan knows that that is quite true.

Mr. CORSER: And clearing prickly-pear.

The HOME SECRETARY: In the hon. gentleman's electorate they also clear some prickly-pear. That should not be the only work of local authorities. A local authority should engage in the beautification of its area as well as in the making of roads. It should also undertake anything that will tend to promote the welfare and happiness of the people. But what do we find in our metropolitan area? Only recently I had a local authority in the electorate of the hon. member for Windsor which actually wanted to give back a park to the man who donated it.

Mr. TAYLOR: Not in my electorate.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: It is in Nundah.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not know exactly where the boundaries of the hon. member's electorate are, but this valuable park is very close to the boundary. An extraordinary valuable piece of land was donated to the local authority by Mr. Marchant, and, because they would have to spend a few pounds to fence it in, they wanted to give it back to Mr. Marchant. I would not allow them to give it back; but that is a fair idea of the methods of local authorities under the present restricted franchise.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That is not so.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have had deputation after deputation from people, some of whom were ratepayers and some of whom were not, asking me to prevent a local authority from doing something it intended to do because it would save a few pounds. The extension of the franchise will block that sort of thing. Now take the country areas. Last year I appointed a good many members, and I have not got a vote in the local authorities. During the last two or three years the Home Secretary has made a good many appointments in local authorities, where no person in the area had sufficient energy to become a candidate for local authority honours, and that has happened not only in shires but in city areas also. I find that in 1915 we appointed five aldermen, and last year forty-five.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: All Labour?

The HOME SECRETARY: Not all Labour. The charge made by the hon. member for Burnett is against my predecessor.

Mr. CORSER: He is gone now.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member knows that quite well, but it is an ineffective and inefficient way of dealing with it. This year I have appointed thirty-four, and I suppose we will get up to sixty. The cause of it is that there is no interest in local authority government. Under adult franchise, men with some idea of civic government will become candidates for local authority honours. They will have policies, and be elected on those policies. It will not be the policy, "I won't reduce the rates." A candidate will have to place before the people in his area or ward some constructive policy for city improvement, and upon that policy he will be elected.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: The man who promises most will get in.

Mr. PETRIE: Where is the money coming from?

The HOME SECRETARY: It is not a question of where the money is coming from.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Do the same conditions appertain to the city as to the country?

The HOME SECRETARY: Not altogether the same. It makes no great difference, anyhow. You have in the country fair-sized towns.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: We have no slums.

The HOME SECRETARY: But you have other things that need attention. You have to make roads.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Yes, and bad ones at that.

The HOME SECRETARY: That has been the only reason for your existence. If the present condition of roads in Queensland is the evidence of local government efficiency in Queensland, then local governments do not exist.

Mr. CORSER: It is without subsidy.

The HOME SECRETARY: You must understand that if you want subsidy you will never have a restricted franchise. You could not get subsidy and have a restricted franchise also. I see nothing extraordinary in the departure. I ask the people of Queensland to give it a fair trial.

Mr. MORGAN: When are you going to explain the Bill? You have not touched on the Bill yet?

The HOME SECRETARY: I will leave it to the House as to whether I have explained the Bill. I did so at the correct time—on the motion for leave to introduce the Bill. I am now discussing the principles of the Bill. The hon. member has read the Bill.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes. We wanted to know what you thought about it.

The HOME SECRETARY: Surely, the hon. member does not want me to explain what he reads in the "Courier." There is no need to explain the Bill. I think the issue can stand before the people. I say we should give it a trial. Any change must be for the better in Queensland at present. In New Zealand it has been in operation for ten years, with remarkable success with regard to health, unification, country roads, and the health of the community with regard to milk supply. The Bill provides for

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triennial elections. I believe triennial elections are a very good thing. I do not think it is wise to have elections every year. Some hon. members opposite said that we wanted a continuity of policy.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The HOME SECRETARY: We are not dealing with international affairs, or even with Federal affairs, but to say there is need for continuity of policy with regard to local authorities is ridiculous.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Why not?

The HOME SECRETARY: Because the functions which a local authority has under its control are very simple. There is no great need for continuity of policy. For instance, if a park is purchased, it is purchased, and that is the end of it. If a road is being made, then the loan is floated for the making of the road, and there is continuity of policy under the local authority government the same as there is under the State. If we pass a railway line there is a continuity of policy. There is a continuity of policy, generally speaking. It does not matter what change of government there is in regard to big affairs, but in little affairs continuity of policy is not necessary at all. At least, the gain is greater than what is lost under the present arrangement. Instead of dislocating matters, and electing one-third of the aldermen every twelve months, it is proposed to elect all of them at one time.

There is a departure with regard to the election of mayor, who is to be elected by the people in the area of the city and in the shire by the people in the electorate. Although this is an innovation for Queensland, it is not new in other places. It has been adopted in almost all the American cities, and it is in force in Adelaide at the present time, and we can give it a trial here. It will at least remove a good deal of the bitterness which takes place over the selection of mayor within the cities. In all cities it is a great thing to become the mayor, and it will be a much greater honour if the people have the selection of their mayor.

There are one or two other things in the Bill of minor importance. One is the dealing with dilapidated buildings. I think that a local authority should have power to deal with dilapidated buildings. (Hear, hear!) I am not saying that the local authority is going to do anything harsh, but it should certainly have power to deal with buildings that are a nuisance and a danger to the community, and we are giving that power under the Bill.

There is also an alteration with regard to rating. Section 71 of the Act has been repealed; the limitation of 6d. is removed; and local authorities will have control of their general rates. Hon. members remarked the other night that it might not be a wise thing to give them full power, but they have a great power now under the loan section of the Act. They may borrow and strike a special rate for loans. It really does not confer any greater power on them than they may have at the present time.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Will you have power to tax State industries?

The HOME SECRETARY: That is not in the Bill, but I believe that State stations should pay and are paying, although not to

[Hon. W. McCormack.

the local authority. They are spending as much money on the actual road work as what they would spend in rates. I know that the manager of Chillagoe is actually paying more in making improvements than what would be paid in rates.

[4.30 p.m.]

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That is unsatisfactory.

The HOME SECRETARY: Well, he is paying it to the local authority, just as he pays the Harbour Board of Cairns an equivalent to the amount he would pay for harbour dues were he working for a private company. It is fair and equitable that State enterprises should pay their share of rates to the local authorities. The matter as to whether we should make the Government pay the same as a private individual raises a different question from the equity of the thing, but, personally, I say that in equity State enterprises should pay the same rates in comparison as are paid by private enterprise.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You should put that in the Bill.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is not provided in the Bill, but I believe the Government are doing that in regard to present State enterprises.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Make it retrospective.

The HOME SECRETARY: I think the Opposition are against retrospectivity. There are a few other matters in the Bill which are formal, and to which I think not much objection will be taken by hon. members. The debate on the Bill will hinge around the extension of the franchise. The same arguments will be used against this proposal as were used against the extension of the parliamentary franchise in 1894, but I might point out that throughout the whole world to-day a change has taken place in the opinions of the people with regard to representative government. There is no doubt that people throughout the whole of the world are not quite satisfied with the present system of government. We may thrust our heads in the grass and say that such dissatisfaction does not exist, but every thinking person must recognise that to-day the bulk of the people are going to have more and more of the privileges that have been enjoyed by the few in the past. In Great Britain the people have actually forced from the Government an extension of the franchise. The first step has been taken to give the people more power in connection with the government of the nation, and it will not be long before the next step will be taken, and that they will be given adult franchise. In Australia we can go a little bit further along the road of democracy and give the people a vote in local affairs. If the local authorities perform their proper functions, they will be as important within their own sphere as this Parliament is, and every adult over twenty-one years of age has a vote in the election of the members of this House. This Parliament can take away from the local authorities the whole of their franchise; it can abolish the local authorities; it has the power of life or death over every member of the community—it has sovereign power, which the local authorities have not—and we grant to everyone of the age of twenty-one years the full franchise for the election of members of the Assembly. When the vote on conscription was taken, it was not proposed to give

only men who were eligible for active service the right to vote. Hon. members on that occasion did not say that only those citizens who were capable of rendering service at the front should have a vote on conscription.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You objected to that.

The HOME SECRETARY: We did not object to the vote being taken, but we defeated the vote on conscription. Everyone, old and young, had a vote on that question, whether they were eligible for military service or not. My friends opposite did not argue on that occasion that the only citizens who were entitled to a vote were those who were capable of service. If every adult was permitted to exercise the franchise on such a matter, then they should be permitted to exercise the franchise in connection with important matters affecting the lives of the people in connection with local authorities. The extension of the franchise will, in my opinion, be a wise thing. It will enable the local authorities to give more attention to local affairs than is given under a centralised system of government. I am a great believer in a community having control of their domestic affairs, and there is only one way in which that can be done, and that is by enabling the people to take part in local authority government. Everyone in the community who has reached adult age should have a right to vote in electing the men who are going to govern the affairs of that community. I believe that the new franchise will be a success, and that it will not revolutionise local authority matters in the way some hon. members seem to think, or that local authorities will seek to obtain all the money they can either borrow, beg, nor steal. But it is a proper thing that a local authority should have the right to do what it considers necessary in the interests of the community. It seems to me that under the present system only a man who can acquire a lot of property is considered to possess sufficient civic intelligence to vote in local authority affairs. Some hon. members may argue in that way, but I would remind them that some of the finest men of the race have never acquired property. (Hear, hear!) They have not the faculty for acquiring property. Some of the leading figures in our University would not make £100 a year outside their profession. Amassing wealth does not show ability to deal with local government. It shows a capacity in a certain direction—capacity to obtain something for a shilling and sell it for three shillings or five shillings. Speaking generally, our leading professional men, doctors, lawyers, statesmen, and thinkers are not money-makers. Under the present system of franchise a burglar, if he gets away with the goods he has stolen and invests in property, is a man who gets three votes in local authority elections. Some men who have not acquired property have civic intelligence and have the welfare of their fellowmen at heart, and yet they have no say in local authority affairs. The great leaders in our army and the great leaders in our navy, are they money-makers? No, but they have the ability for carrying out their particular jobs. As a matter of fact, money-making and the welfare of the rest of the people are not terms that can be used together. The man who makes a large amount of money is not, as a rule, the best man for the community. A community is judged by the happiness of the great bulk of its members, and not by the wealth

of a few men. (Hear, hear!) We know from history that where there is great wealth there is also poverty. I commend the Bill to the House, and I am very proud to have been associated with its introduction, and I am sure my friends opposite, when they get the opportunity, will not be very anxious to repeal it.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CATTERMULL (*Musgrave*): As has been stated by the Home Secretary, the Bill contains two vital points; one is the extension of the franchise, and the other is the granting of increased rating power to local authorities. An extension of the franchise is a very dangerous thing. Had the hon. gentleman said he was going to make a residence qualification of twelve months, I might have been in sympathy with him, but as it is now the Bill is loaded. There is nothing to prevent 300 or 400 men coming into a shire or city to do a certain work getting their names on the roll, and then they can get their representatives on the council, who can bring forward any scheme they like to spend money. They will not have to foot the Bill, but the ratepayers will, and I think that is a very unwise provision. In our sugar districts, and other districts where there are large works, these men could flood the council, and, after all, the ratepayers have to "pay the piper." Under this Bill the taxation for the man on the land will be so great that he will cease to produce altogether. I am very disappointed with the Bill from a local authority point of view, as I thought the Minister was going to give us something further. There should have been a provision in the Bill allowing for the amalgamation of shires, more particularly in the outside areas. I approve of the amalgamation of shires.

The HOME SECRETARY: I will give you a Bill for the amalgamation of shires.

Mr. CATTERMULL: By the amalgamation of shires we would be able to get road-making done at least 25 to 30 per cent. cheaper than it can be done to-day. There is another provision in the Act which requires altering, and that is in regard to the sale of property for overdue rates. I have interviewed the hon. gentleman on this matter, and asked him to do something in this connection, but I find he has not done so. The present system is very cumbersome, as it is necessary to advertise in the local Press and in the "Government Gazette," and you have to go through so much formality that at the end of the time you find there is nothing but a deficit left. A clause should have been inserted in the Bill to provide that if the rates on a piece of property were not paid for seven years the shire council should be allowed to advertise that fact once in the local Press and once in the "Government Gazette," and then sell the property, and the amount received from the property over and above the amount due for rates should be held in trust by the Government for a period of five years, and if the rightful owner did not claim the money during that time then it should pass to consolidated revenue. Then we come to the matter of noxious weeds and prickly-pear. We find that shire councils spend hundreds of pounds in keeping their roads free of noxious weeds and prickly-pear, and we find the private property-owners are doing the same thing; while, on the other hand, the Government are allowing these

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nexious weeds and prickly-pear to grow on Crown lands, which become seed beds for spreading the pests over the areas that have been cleaned. Something should be done in this matter. We have in my district a railway reserve on the Hummocks. The Government have spent some £20 or £30 on this reserve, and to-day, although the area surrounding it is clean and kept clean, there is prickly-pear, Noogoora burr, and lantana growing in great profusion on the reserve, and we are getting the benefit of all the seeds. Then, again, we have the water hyacinth spreading everywhere. The district from which I come has dealt with the water hyacinth, but, unfortunately, the Bundaberg City Council would not clean up their area. We asked the Home Department to force the Bundaberg council to clear the hyacinth but the Home Department would not do its duty, and to-day the birds are carrying the seeds of the water hyacinth and depositing them in clean areas. The Minister, in the course of his remarks, said health was a most important matter, and I quite agree with him, but, unfortunately, the Home Department will not recognise a health committee. We have in Bundaberg a committee formed from two shires in the city, but the department will not recognise that committee. They will not give us authority, and yet, on the other hand, the Minister informs us that health is one of the most important things to be considered. Further, we know that the milk from cattle infested with ticks is not good for human consumption. Very often these cattle are in a state of fever, and yet their milk is taken from them and sold for human consumption. We desire power to deal with this question. We have cleaned our roads up and we have compelled all our ratepayers to clean their cattle, and we have asked the Government to give us control of the Crown lands in our area so far as the running of cattle is concerned so that we could deal with the tick question, but they refused to grant us that power. Apparently, the Government do not wish to help us to get rid of the ticks so that we can improve the health of the people. Another matter that requires consideration is the question of carting timber from Crown lands over roads made by shire councils. This has always been a very vexed question, and I think where timber from Crown lands is carted over roads made by country shire councils that at least 25 per cent. of the value of the timber should be credited to the shire for the purpose of remarking the roads, as there is no doubt this class of traffic destroys the roads. So far nothing has been done in this matter. I would also like to see a clause in the Bill providing for a valuator to make one value for the whole of the local authorities, and that value should be accepted for all purposes. Furthermore, the Government should pay rates on all Government buildings—the same as the owners of private property. Then, again, the Home Department might very well allow shire councillors free railway passes.

Mr. COLLINS: Oh!

Mr. CATTERMULL: I hear some of my friends opposite say "Oh!" If you want progress, men must travel, and if the shire councillors travelled from one centre to another they would see what was being done in other centres, and would bring back improved ideas which would be of benefit to their own locality. At least free passes

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might be allowed in connection with sitting councillors.

Mr. COLLINS: They will be mostly Labour men when this Bill passes.

Mr. CATTERMULL: I do not mind that. I was travelling down in Victoria some few years back, and I brought home some road schemes by which my shire has benefited. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. SMITH: Are you a member of the shire council?

Mr. CATTERMULL: I have been a member for nineteen years.

Mr. SMITH: Too long. (Laughter.)

Mr. CATTERMULL: No. I would very much like the hon. member to contest the seat with me. I believe that I am a representative of a progressive shire, and I certainly think that if the Home Secretary had met the local authorities in this matter we would have obtained some benefit from this measure; as it is, there are only two principles in the Bill—the extension of the franchise and the increased power of rating.

The HOME SECRETARY: The election of mayor.

Mr. CATTERMULL: That and the other provision are mere details. I am rather frightened that the extension of the franchise may be loaded. It is quite possible that two or three hundred men may get on the rolls in a sugar district and put into the council men who have no sympathy whatever with the shire, but who will be there merely to provide work for the unemployed—to see that there is sufficient revenue from rates to do work when mills and other places are closed. That is the danger in the Bill. Had the Minister made the qualification twelve months, I would have given him my support, but I cannot do so at the present time.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): The hon. member who introduced the Bill went into one or two matters very fully. I think it was fairly evident as the hon. member proceeded, and it became more clear whilst the hon. member who last resumed his seat spoke, that it would have been an advantage—even from the Minister's own admission—if the amendment on the initiatory stage had been accepted so as to enable more extensive powers to be included in the Bill. I agree that local authorities have very big responsibilities, which are increasing from day to day, and I think it is very important that they should recognise their added responsibilities and that the Government themselves should also extend to them greater consideration than in the past. The local authorities have really been made little more than a footstool for the Government, and treated with very scant respect from time to time, instead of receiving the consideration which they ought to have received.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are talking of Tory Governments?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am speaking of the present Government. The hon. member made reference to the fact that pretty well always, in the event of a vacancy having to be filled on a local authority, he had not accepted the recommendation which came from outside. I am not in a position to say whether that is so or not, but I do know that since the present Government have been in office, again and again have

local authorities themselves recommended reputable men to take places on the councils where there had not been the ordinary nominations, and they have been repeatedly turned down. I am bound to accept the Minister's statement that he did not do so and invariably followed the recommendation of the local authorities, but everybody knows that what I have just said is correct.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member for Burnett has got one case.

Mr. CONSER: A scandalous case.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not know what he has got. Probably he has got a very good case, but certainly the Government have left the impression on the public outside and the local authorities themselves that some other influences were at work, hindering the work of the local authorities.

The HOME SECRETARY: People who were forbidden to vote.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is very easy to make that excuse. The hon. member has forgotten this afternoon that the people running the local authorities carry fairly big loads. It has been suggested that the Minister himself does not give the local authorities the monetary help which they receive. That is so. The monetary help comes from the Treasury; but as a matter of fact it is not correct to say that, more particularly recently, it has been impossible to get anything like what might be called a reasonable amount from the Government? Might I remind you that it has been said that the requests of one very big local authority—because I suppose the Water Board is a local authority—have been turned down, and that one of the reasons why they are in the position in which they find themselves to-day is because of that treatment. My contention is that the local authorities have not received from the Government the help they ought to have received from time to time when they were seeking to carry out their work in a way satisfactory to the public. I admit, as has been contended from the other side, that the cost of work has gone up very largely, whether work produced directly by wages or any other form of work, and consequently local authorities have suffered very severely.

One of the responsibilities resting upon local authorities is the control of health. I maintain it is a very big question, because, after all, one of the essentials is to see that the health of the community is well looked after, and that the local authority works in conjunction as far as possible with the central authority—the Government. In that particular regard, might I ask the Minister how many cases there have been where in the case of drainage—which is so essential to health, particularly where land is low and population increasing—the work of the local authorities has been frustrated because they have not got the proper help from the Government?

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not know of any.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am able to tell the hon. member again and again of cases. The hon. member referred to New Zealand, where he said that, as a result of adult franchise, the local authorities had expended so many millions borrowed from their own ratepayers. Is there not an important phase of that question at which we should look?

Judging from the hon. member's own statement, may it not be possible for a local authority to borrow without giving due regard to their ability to pay? If so, a very big problem may be facing the Government.

The HOME SECRETARY: They will not do that if they are sensible men.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is where the trouble occurs, and that is why I want to connect the two things, because the man who has to find the money, the man who is responsible for the money, is not the person who is here to-day and away to-morrow. I say that a visitor is not a man who is able to judge rightly in such a matter.

[5 p.m.]

The HOME SECRETARY: He is, in New Zealand.

HON. W. H. BARNES: We are told in that particular regard that £14,000,000 has been spent.

The HOME SECRETARY: Borrowed in New Zealand; and £8,000,000 outside. That is over a number of years.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is perfectly certain that ratepayers have a right at this particular juncture to look round carefully, and find out what this policy is going to be. By way of illustration, what has been the policy of the State Government? Has it not been a policy of absolute recklessness in connection with borrowing? Is it not with a desire to place an instrument in the hands of people who have no responsibility? If so, it is going to be a very great hardship and drawback to the prosperity of Queensland. I was very glad to hear the hon. gentleman say—and look what he could have done if he had made the Bill sufficiently elastic to put in such a provision—that the State should contribute towards the expenses of local authorities; in other words, that they should pay rates to local authorities. Do not let it be forgotten that there has been a tendency on the part of legislation, not to give the local authorities power in certain directions to get more money, but to encroach upon what they are getting.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not say the Government. I said people engaged in profit-making business.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am quite prepared to admit that that is what the hon. gentleman said. He was referring, I suppose, to a business such as the State Produce Agency. Then there is the fish business. Would that be called a profit-making business? I take it, then, that if the Home Secretary had his way a business of that kind would be called upon to contribute to the common fund. I think the hon. gentleman is to be congratulated in that particular regard. I do not know whether I was right in following him, but I thought I heard him say, by way of interjection, that, later on, he was going to bring in a greater scheme, probably a consolidating Act.

The HOME SECRETARY: A comprehensive Local Authorities Act.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Might I suggest that he make a note of that now, so that there will be no doubt about its being put in?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Would you make it apply to Commonwealth property as well?

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HON. W. H. BARNES: My own opinion is that, when Government buildings receive the advantages which they must receive from municipal enterprise, the local authority should, in turn, receive consideration. The hon. gentleman made reference to the fact that local authorities in certain directions were not doing their work properly.

The HOME SECRETARY: They really cannot; I will put it in that way.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I know something about local authorities, and I know they are keenly alive to the necessity for doing their job well and making provision for increased population. All the local authorities are not like those to which the hon. gentleman made reference this afternoon, when he said that one had had presented to it a park, and by reason of the expense had turned it down. He made use of the argument, by inference, at least, that local authorities generally were indifferent to the needs of the people in that particular regard. I say it is not so. Instead of turning down a proposal of that kind, the local authority with which I have been associated has made it a distinct business to buy up lowlying land, for two reasons—(1) to prevent buildings being erected on such land; and (2), to provide parks in those places.

The HOME SECRETARY: That will be in the amending Bill, too.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The local authority with which I am connected has bought up lowlying ground at Stone's Corner and at Stanley Bridge. Why? Because we contend that the duty of a local authority is to see that, as population increases, there are plenty of breathing spaces, and at least that people are prevented from building on land which is unsuitable for residential purposes.

The HOME SECRETARY: These land agents would sell you the bed of the river.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not know whether the hon. gentleman is speaking from experience.

The HOME SECRETARY: I know people who have been unfortunate in that regard.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman is speaking of someone else's experience.

The HOME SECRETARY: I go round with my eyes open. In your district there are some properties round Norman Creek which will be flooded with a rise in the creek.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The aim of that local authority has been to seek to buy up places like that. We have done so again and again in order to protect the public.

The HOME SECRETARY: They are commendable; but all local authorities are not like that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: There are some points on which I would like the hon. gentleman to give me some idea whether my view is right or wrong. I notice one of the principles of the Bill is that, assuming the number of members ordinarily belonging to the council to be twelve, the thirteenth man would be the chairman. As far as I can see, according to the Bill, it is quite possible for that person to be elected right outside the local authority area altogether.

The HOME SECRETARY: How?

HON. W. H. BARNES: It does not specifically state that the chairman is to be elected

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within and from the area concerned. It does state that the members themselves are to be elected from within that area. It seems to me that, if the Bill remains as it is now, it is going to be open for anyone from outside—say, Coorparoo—to be elected as chairman of that shire council.

The HOME SECRETARY: No; I think they should be within the area.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am very glad to hear that. I take it the hon. gentleman will see to it.

The HOME SECRETARY: He must be an elector of the area.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It does not say so. One thing is perfectly certain: He should be an elector of the area. I notice that no sitting member is entitled to be a candidate whilst he is sitting. I regard that as a distinct weakness in the Bill. What should be the qualifications of a chairman? Surely they should be the qualifications of a man who has had some experience! Is it not possible, under the Bill, for someone without any experience to be elected as a chairman—someone outside the local authority area altogether? That would be manifestly unfair. Probably the hon. gentleman will tell me that he will only have one vote. I am quite prepared to admit that, but, if you want to make a success of the Bill, it should provide that the chairman must be one who is in close touch with the district.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Can't you leave it to the common sense of the voters?

HON. W. H. BARNES: No. It is the duty of this House to make provision in this direction and not leave it to the voters to decide. Then, again, the Bill provides that, in the event of the chairman-elect remaining in office, say, for two years, and a vacancy occurs, for the balance of the term the members then sitting will elect the chairman. I do not know whether it was intended to make any provision for filling the vacancy in such a contingency.

The HOME SECRETARY: The council will elect a chairman, and, if he is a member of the council—as he probably will be—provision is made for his election by a vote, the same as at an ordinary election.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Then there is an outcome of a principle in the Bill which strikes me as a weakness. Supposing there are four divisions in an area, and there is a preponderating voting strength in one of those divisions, it would be possible for that division to control the whole district. That is a danger in connection with the election of the chairman. I know I shall be told—and probably rightly—that it depends on the good sense of the electors, who are out to get the very best man.

The HOME SECRETARY: The council can alter the boundaries to suit local conditions.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am afraid that is a very thin argument.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is only a question of a redistribution of seats; that is what you are always advocating.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Yes, and it is something that the hon. gentleman and his party are very slow in carrying out. I notice another provision which seems to be very dangerous. I am not reflecting in any way upon the chairman, whoever he may be,

but to-day the chairman of a local authority is not allowed, off his own bat, to spend as much as £100. I see the Bill proposes that a chairman may spend up to £100 on his own authority.

The HOME SECRETARY: The local authority can take that power away from him if it likes.

HON. W. H. BARNES: There is another principle in the Bill with which I absolutely concur. No Bill should be passed that does not give power to local authorities to deal with houses that are unfit for occupation. It is a duty resting upon the community to see that the conditions in that regard are satisfactory. I would again stress the point that the hon. gentleman should have made provision preventing a number of houses—it may be one or two—being erected on a 16-perch allotment.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: There are many cases where people are huddled together on 16-perch allotments, and that is highly un-satisfactory from a health point of view as well as from the moral point of view.

The HOME SECRETARY: If I had thought there would be no opposition here, I would have put that in the Bill.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is a very thin argument indeed.

The HOME SECRETARY: We moved an amendment to that effect on a Bill when you were in office, and your Government refused to accept it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Will you accept it as an amendment now?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman said that the two main principles of the Bill were the election of the chairman and the adult franchise.

The HOME SECRETARY: They are the most controversial principles in the Bill.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman referred very properly to the danger of packing the roll. I am prepared to admit that there must be a period of three months—

The HOME SECRETARY: That means more than three months.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I admit that it means a little more than three months, but, all the same, there is a great danger in that connection. I hold that those people in a district who have to find the money should have the control of local government matters. The present Act makes provision, not only for the landlord, but also for the tenant to have a vote. To bring in someone who has no interest whatever—someone who has not to carry the burden of financing the works carried out by the local authority—is not fair.

The HOME SECRETARY: They have an interest.

HON. W. H. BARNES: They are not interested. It is not fair that people who have not some pecuniary obligation or responsibility in connection with finding the money should have the same voice as those who have to find the money. I am perfectly certain that the hon. gentleman's assertion is not a sound one, and that the extension of the franchise will involve very greatly increased taxation. I would ask if, behind this Bill, there is not a desire to see that

owners of property and people who are tenants are rated more and more as a result of the increased taxation which will come about from this extension of the franchise. No matter how local authorities are run at the present time, taxation must increase; it cannot be avoided, but this Bill will open the door to still greater taxation.

The HOME SECRETARY: Don't you think a large amount of money is wasted in local authorities now?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not know of any large amount of money being wasted by local authorities. So far as I know, they spend their money a great deal better than the Government spend theirs. My experience of local authorities is that they are very jealous as to how they spend their money. The hon. gentleman argued that there are some functions that can be better performed by local authorities than by a larger authority; and I ask if the people on the spot are not better able to fulfil those functions than someone who comes from outside?

The HOME SECRETARY: I meant that through having so many local authorities they have such a number of clerks, whilst one local authority could do all the work.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That might be so in many cases; but, generally speaking, local authorities are at their wits' end from year's end to year's end to find the money they require. The hon. gentleman was perfectly right when he made use of the argument that, if the policy of a person who stands for a local authority is to reduce taxation, he is going to win. People do not like increased taxation, and they have had so much of it since the Government came into office that they are very anxious to avoid it under this clause. This clause is sufficient to destroy the Bill. It is manifestly unfair, and has no right to be in the Bill at all.

The HOME SECRETARY: Which clause?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The franchise clause. Then with regard to the election of chairman, I think that, under all the circumstances, as already outlined by me, without any guarantee that the man who is standing is a man of experience, it is going to become a positive danger.

The HOME SECRETARY: He has only got one vote.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I admit that, but I can imagine a man being brought from Turbot street.

Mr. COLLINS: What would be wrong with it?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not say what will be wrong with it, but I say that the man who is going to act as chairman should be a man with experience of the work. The hon. gentleman knows that there is many a good man who would not make a good chairman. That is not a reflection on any one; there are many men so constituted that they would not fit the Bill.

The HOME SECRETARY: He will most likely be brought from a well-known local authority.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Yes, and he has to withdraw from the local authority before he can stand, and that is a distinct weakness in the Bill. Whilst I recognise that there are one or two things which are satisfactory in the Bill, the provisions with

regard to the franchise and in connection with the election of chairman are good reasons why members should vote against the Bill.

Mr. DUNSTAN (*Gympie*): I think we may safely assume with regard to this measure that Opposition members will follow the practice they usually adopt in regard to labour reforms and stubbornly oppose this Bill, that when it becomes popular they will accept it; and that finally, they will argue that it was their own original idea. I think we may safely also predict that in three years' time, on the next appeal to the electors, no hon. member opposite will be game to advocate the repeal of this measure, because they will be afraid of the women's vote. The standard of qualification of citizenship in local government affairs set up by hon. members opposite is—first, money and property, rather than manhood and womanhood; and they will in every case say it is logical that a vote in local affairs should be given to a brothel-keeper, for instance, or a profligate who pays the rates, or even an imbecile. They will give him votes in proportion to the money he pays in rates, while at the same time the most noble-living citizen in the community, even the Man of Nazareth himself, "who had not where to lay His head," would have no qualification at all, because by the hon. member for Carnarvon and others he would be regarded as of no account, as it would be said that he did not know how to manage his own affairs and lay up material wealth in the community. The people in the community, many of whom have at present no vote in civic affairs, have a say in the election of members of this Chamber, which enacts the laws which govern local authorities. The illogical part is that those gentlemen who are elected to these local councils at conference after conference assume the right to say to the people in the community that they shall have no vote in local affairs, although the people have elected representatives who alone make it possible for the councils to exist at all. I think that, after all, the basic qualification of citizenship in any community must be manhood and womanhood; and what better influence could there be in civic affairs, as in State affairs, than the inclusion of women in the voting power of the community? If the mere factor of interest in the financial welfare of the community is going to be the only qualification for citizenship, then all the mothers and wives who at present share the burden as much as their rate-paying husbands must for ever, as in the past, be excluded from the right of citizenship in local affairs. I think that every man of the Opposition will agree that women's influence in local affairs will make for progress in the civic responsibilities of our State. I think that, as reasonable and logical people, we shall recognise that the so-called irresponsibles in any community amount to a very small fraction of one per cent., and that small section will be totally discounted by the influence of women if they are given a vote in local government matters. After all this talk about irresponsibles, and the effect they may have in the progress of civic affairs, the influence they may have in regard to the flotation and expenditure of loans, the humour of it is that there are not a few irresponsibles on the local councils to-day, and they are there because they are largely subservient to

the will and wishes of the large ratepayers, whose only idea of civic progress is to keep down the rates. I know that, generally speaking, there are a lot of good men on the council at the present time, but to a large extent they are dominated by the irremovable conservatism of the "go-slows." I am satisfied that if this change in our franchise takes place we will see an impetus given to civic progress such as has never been seen before, and right throughout the State, in the country districts as well as in the cities, we will find citizenship looked upon as an honour to every man and woman, and that it will aid in the progress of our civic affairs and the welfare of our great State. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. CORSER: There is no doubt but that the introduction of this Bill is going to displease the country residents of our State. Unfortunately, the Government have attempted to make political local government, and this Bill sets out with a determined effort to try and introduce into local government a political atmosphere. The Bill is not going to add to the usefulness of local government. The Home Secretary has not explained how he is going to make it possible to compile the rolls for the local authorities. I know of one local authority comprising part of four State electorates. As long as our State rolls are in the awful state in which they are now, it will be very hard for the Minister to give a fair roll under this scheme. But there is one bright spot in the whole thing; that is, that it will make possible a checking and cleaning of rolls which it is impossible to do under our State system without tremendous organisation and expense. We will have a scrutiny in the various local government areas of the dead-heads who are on the rolls, and of the duplications and absences which we have not been able to get up to the present time.

In that respect it may be said [5.30 p.m.] that this provision may prove a blessing in disguise. I must oppose the Bill on principle. There may be some provisions in the Bill that have been asked for by local authority representatives and that will be useful, but no one can say that the provision introducing a universal franchise is going to be useful in connection with local government. The Minister in proposing that provision is trying to uphold the sentiments not of hon. members opposite, but of their dictators. The hon. gentleman tried to show that the extension of the franchise is going to revolutionise local government in Queensland. He pointed out that he is going to give local bodies a tremendous power, and that they are going to become as important as this Parliament. He said they would have control of their own affairs. And so they ought to have. But they cannot control their own destinies with a great part of the revenue which they ought to receive seized by the State. The local authorities have to make roads and carry out other business entrusted to them, but they have been deprived of the full revenue from land taxation within their area. I maintain that we should give local authorities the full revenue derived from land taxation, and not take from them half a million obtained from that source per year. The fact that local authorities had been deprived of that revenue has been one of the things

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which has killed local government in the past.

The HOME SECRETARY: You had it free for years from State taxation, but never took advantage of that fact.

Mr. CORSER: We had it free from State taxation for years, but the Minister himself shows that there is a great lack of interest in such matters. The hon. gentleman stated that a year or two ago he had to appoint three members to local authority councils, that another year he had to appoint five members, and that last year he had to appoint forty-seven members to local authority councils. That shows that interest in local government has gone, because an amount of money has been taken from the local authorities which they ought to have received. The Minister has stated that local governing bodies have not done their duty, and that the condition of the roads in many local authority areas is evidence of that fact. If the hon. gentleman travels over roads in a State motor-car, he may find that they are not what they ought to be, but the hon. gentleman does not know the trouble and difficulties which confront a shire in the back country, where they have to make roads over black soil and bridge creeks. What is the State doing to-day in the direction of assisting local government? What are the Government doing in the settled areas of the State to assist local bodies to improve the present condition of things? There is no evidence that any provision has been made for the Main Roads Bill, which has been established, that will in any way assist local authorities. The Government, in newly settled districts where great tracts of land are available for settlement, survey that land on a map, leave certain parts which they call roads, and then call upon the local authorities to form these roads and make them useful. When the roads have been made useful, land agents and others take intending selectors and show them vacant allotments which have been made available by the local authorities by spending money raised from the taxpayers. The Government should be responsible for making available lands held by the Crown in any district, and should keep those roads clear of noxious weeds, and not leave them to become breeding-grounds for all sorts of pests. But, as a matter of fact, the local authorities have cleared hundreds of miles of road, and have had to pay for the work of eradicating prickly-pear and other noxious weeds. The Minister claims that the great duty—the first duty—of a local authority is to make roads.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not claim that; I said the opposite.

Mr. CORSER: That is the claim made by the hon. gentleman, and I say that in making that claim he does not know the department he is administering. In our district it has cost us more to rid our roads of pear, as demanded by the department, in the last few years than the local authorities have had available afterwards to spend on the roads. The Minister has referred to the New Zealand Local Government Act, and the glorious things that are possible under that Act. I find that the New Zealand statute provides for a subsidy for local government, but the hon. gentleman told us nothing about that provision. The hon. gentleman spoke of one shire in which money was made available for the assistance of the mayor when elected, but he told us nothing

about the general provision for subsidies to local authorities in that Dominion. This Bill really excludes from the opportunity of contesting an election for the position of mayor or chairman the only man who may be qualified for that position.

Mr. SMITH: Anyone can stand.

Mr. CORSER: No; the man best fitted for the job may be excluded from the contest. There may be one man or two men or three men in a district who possess the necessary qualifications for chairman, but they will be debarred by this measure from presiding at the council chamber because they are members of the council. How can the Minister, under those circumstances, claim that he is making provision for the election of the best men to sit at the council chamber? I do not see how he can make any such claim when the senior and most experienced members of the council will be debarred from election to the position of mayor or chairman. The claim has been made by the Government, and by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, that the Opposition are against extending the franchise to women. As far as I am concerned, if it was the ratepayer's wife alone that was offered a vote, there would not be any very great opposition to it. We claim that the wife in the home has as many rights as the husband.

The HOME SECRETARY: You refused it, but you gave the burglar three votes because he has property.

Mr. CORSER: I did not. If the Government are sincere in their desire to do a fair thing by the country, let them adopt the principle of giving the women most concerned a say as to whether there should be an extension of the franchise. Let hon. members be consistent in this matter, and we will certainly be consistent as far as the ratepayer and his wife are concerned. Give the women a say in all strike ballots.

Mr. SMITH: Would you give a woman a say in the management of a business?

Mr. CORSER: Women have a great say in the management of very many businesses. I am prepared to admit that the Local Authorities Act does want revising in very many particulars, but this amendment has not been suggested by the local authorities' representatives who sit in Brisbane—these men who have been insulted for giving the best in them for their country without pay. They get no £500 a year—these men we hear of as being too old to be useful—these men who do not get passes—

Mr. FORDE: You must be looking for votes.

Mr. CORSER: No; I am not standing as Federal member for Capricornia, and I do not know that the hon. member is yet, either.

Mr. COLLINS: Get back to mother earth.

Mr. CORSER: We are right back to it, and that is the money that is necessary. The Minister is broadening the franchise so as to provide more money for the local authorities and relieve the Government by creating assistance bureaux to absorb the unemployed in the cities. That is the real object and reason of the Bill. I am not concerned about the city of Brisbane, nor am I concerned about Kingfisher Creek, but I am concerned about those people living in the back country who are the ratepayers

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and who will have to find the increased revenue. Anyone who looks beyond the city of Brisbane and realises the drought the people in the country have gone through, and the non-production, will realise that under these conditions it is impossible to increase the rates; yet this Government wishes to put in the hands of individuals power to increase the rates without a maximum at all. They can increase the rates and increase the valuation to any amount they like, and vote as much loan money as they like, then put their swags on their back and walk out after getting all they can. That is the reason why the Bill is introduced, and I am making no secret of it.

The HOME SECRETARY interjected.

Mr. CORSER: You will burst them up in less than twenty years, the same as you have burst the State up and burst your party up. To-day's caucus, no doubt, revealed that fact.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORSER: And the sooner you go the sooner the State will have a chance of getting sane finance. In the past, many of our local authorities received large revenues from the huge stations purchased by the Government, but they have been deprived of these moneys, as up to the present they have not received a fair thing from the State enterprises.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is not true.

Mr. CORSER: I am not going to be brushed aside by the Minister's statement of what Chillagoe has done. We know that in all the mining districts each mine has to spend money for its own purpose; and because the mine controlled by the Government does what privately-owned mines have done, it does not say that it has done its duty to the local authorities. Mining companies have to pay their rates in the same way as the primary producer, and we cannot see why the Government should be free in regard to State stations and other State enterprises.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are wrong in that statement.

Mr. CORSER: If I am wrong, the hon. gentleman will probably be able to enlighten me; but I know I am right, and the replies to questions asked in this House are in accordance with my statements. The Minister made a great mouthful about the election of mayor. He told us what a fair thing it was to let everybody have a say as to who should preside in the local councils, but he did not say that if it was a good thing in local government it would also be a good thing in this Assembly. If the argument is good that the mayor should be elected independently of members of the local council, then the same argument can be used in connection with the election of Speaker of this Assembly. I do not think the Government will agree with that suggestion, and I would like the Minister to give us his ideas in that connection. The Minister told us how local councils have deteriorated; and why should not they? In one instance in my district, the Gayndah Municipal Council—

The HOME SECRETARY: That is one instance.

Mr. CORSER: The Gayndah municipality is not the only instance where we have proved what the Government have done. It is one instance—when one Minister was going out of the chair and another Minister going

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in—where we were able to secure and have laid on the table of the House papers showing what goes on with the Minister in the Home Department. A recommendation came from the council table in Gayndah, asking that the ex-mayor should be appointed to a vacancy, but the Government did not accept that nomination. The Minister wrote to their friend, Billy Demaine, and asked them who would be a suitable man—

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Of the proper brand?

Mr. CORSER: That is right. A suitable man to fill the position in their interests. Mr. Demaine made his suggestion.

Mr. COLLINS: Who is Mr. Demaine?

Mr. CORSER: Your boss. The papers were laid on the table here, and when he found out how he received his appointment he threw up his job sooner than take it from a Government that had offered it to him in such a way. It is not my intention to stonewall this Bill, so the Minister did who introduced it, but I am determined to oppose to the best of my ability any injustice to those persons who are responsible for the finding of the money—the settlers in our back districts—I am not referring to the people of Brisbane, they are not my concern in this Bill, and they have their own representatives—because I know that in the country districts, particularly in the one I am representing, the Bill would have the effect of putting power in the hands of irresponsible who might go there from time to time on the chance of seeing "how much money we can drag out of the struggling selector, the primary producer, in order to use it and then peck up and go back to our friends in Brisbane."

Mr. TAYLOR (*Winton*): We have listened this afternoon to a very laborious attempt on the part of the Home Secretary to make the best of a very bad job, and I am sure that, after listening to his long address, we could come to no other conclusion than that he proved practically nothing, so far as the extension of the franchise was concerned. That was the special point upon which he dwelt, among others, and in getting to that point he wandered all round the compass. He professed to have very great friendship to the women's vote. Why has he not done something in other directions so far as extending the franchise to women is concerned? He has done nothing whatever, and yet he tells us that if this Bill is not carried we are practically disfranchising our women altogether.

The HOME SECRETARY: So you are.

Mr. TAYLOR: I say we are not doing anything of the kind, and I venture to add that, if you took a vote of the women in the various electorates, a majority would tell you that they did not want this change—that they were quite satisfied that their husbands and fathers could carry out the work of the local authorities sufficiently well without their bothering about it at all. (Hear, hear!) I look upon women as being in every sense quite the equal of men. It is not out of disrespect of the women that I speak in that way. Hon. members know that. I look upon women with as much respect as any men in this chamber or outside.

The hon. member has not shown this House any necessity for the proposed alteration, nor has he shown where it has worked

effectively or in the interests of any other locality. He mentioned Auckland and Wellington, in New Zealand. Why did he not go the whole way, and tell us all about Auckland? Why did he not tell us that they receive a subsidy from the Government in order to enable them to carry on their work? Is that the way we have a Bill brought before this Chamber—giving us half the facts, or half the truth? Why did he not tell us in regard to the Auckland local authority and the tremendous amount of money that has been borrowed, that quite a number of activities which are carried out here by State or Commonwealth Governments are carried out by these local authorities there, and that it is absolutely necessary that money in large quantities should be found for the purpose. And, then, what was his speech largely? Largely an abuse of what local authorities have done in Queensland. I contend, as a local authority man of a few years in the metropolitan area, that the local authorities, as I know them, are imbued with as high a sense of the responsibility thrust upon them in carrying out the work associated with their areas for the betterment and health of the people as any Labour Government or party that have ever sat in Parliament in Queensland. (Hear, hear!) He says that local authorities have neglected their duties, and talks about Kingfisher Creek, and Doughbor Creek, and other creeks, and then shortly afterwards tells us that when the Government find that the work of the local authorities has been neglected they have the power to carry it out in the best interests of the community, but he, nevertheless, attempts to thrust that power on to the local authorities. The Minister's own department has not sufficient pluck to tackle these problems which they say were and are being neglected by local authorities—he says he did not think it was a wise policy to do it. Did you ever hear from a Minister in charge of such an important department such a confession of abject weakness?

The HOME SECRETARY: You are at my office every day, trying to get prisoners out.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am sorry the Minister is getting personal. I have been in his office trying to get prisoners out of gaol, and the probabilities are that I shall go again to try to get prisoners out if I think I have a good case. With regard to any man or woman in the community who happens to be in St. Helena, I shall certainly go to the Home Secretary and try to get him or her out if I think it right to do so—(Hear, hear!)—and the Minister should be ashamed of himself for his interjection. (Hear, hear!) I have never gone to him, nor will I ever go to him, to get a man out of prison whom I think ought to be there.

Mr. COLLINS: Keep cool! Keep cool!

Mr. TAYLOR: I am cool, but I do not like dirty insinuations like that.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. TAYLOR: I should like to say something with regard to Government buildings and rates. I dare say that the owner of every building that the Government rents at the present time includes in the rent a sufficiency to cover the rates on that property, and yet every building owned by the Government pays no rates whatever. I contend that if the Government buildings, starting with Queen street and running along George street

and William street, had contributed their fair proportion to the maintenance to the city of Brisbane, they would have contributed sufficient to have built the new town hall. (Hear, hear!) But they have not contributed anything at all, and I do not think it is fair to charge local authorities with not having carried out their work as it should have been carried out when we know that, so far as the Government activities are concerned, they do not receive the amount of money they would have received if those activities were carried on by private individuals.

(Sitting suspended between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.)

Mr. TAYLOR, continuing: As evidence of the excellent way in which local authorities have carried out their duties in Queensland, I refer hon. gentlemen to the Auditor-General's statement. It will be seen that out of the total amount of money they have borrowed from the Government to carry out necessary works there is only slightly over 1 per cent. as present in arrears. That is a matter which might be taken notice of by hon. members who are inclined to think that the administrative work of local authorities is lax. It proves they can show equal ability with any other organisation in

[7 p.m.] the whole State. The Home Secretary referred to what he called "unearned increment." Personally, I think that is a misnomer. I think it is an "earned increment" which attaches to those particular properties. (Hear, hear!) In establishing that earned increment the individuals who are responsible for the big and smaller businesses in Queensland have played a very important part.

The HOME SECRETARY: Only their share of it.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Home Secretary also said the individuals who purchase goods in the various establishments are responsible for that unearned increment. No doubt they have assisted in establishing what I call earned increment. They also purchase goods in various other parts of the metropolitan area. I suppose the Queen-street shops do not do 25 per cent. of their business amongst individuals who live in that particular area. If you are going to take that as a basis for the payment of rates, I take it those individuals who purchase in Queen street should have a vote in regard to Queen-street property as well as in the area in which they reside. That would be so if the hon. gentleman's argument were sound. I think it is quite unsound and bears very little importance in connection with this matter. The fact remains that immediately a man or woman goes into a local authority area and becomes possessed of property, he or she accepts the full responsibility for the payment of rates necessary for the maintenance of that particular area. That cannot be denied by anyone. They cannot put the responsibility on to the ledger or the son or daughter of the household. The party who owns the property is responsible for the payment of the rates. There is virtually an unsigned contract between the local authority and property-owner that those rates will be forthcoming when the local authority says they should be paid. It is not now proposed to put a portion of the responsibility on to the elector who is to have a vote. He is not responsible in any shape or form. The Home Secretary said that that person is equally interested in the improvement of the

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area with the man or woman who owns the property. I say he is not. He cannot be, because the more the locality is improved the more valuable that property becomes, and it is to the interest of the ratepayer to see that the area in which he resides should be improved. The Home Secretary also made a statement which I challenge. If I understood him correctly, he said the Mayor of Adelaide was elected by the electors.

The HOME SECRETARY: By the persons on the roll. They have not got adult franchise.

Mr. TAYLOR: That is exactly what we want. The Mayor of Adelaide is not elected by the electors. We have no objection to the mayor being elected by the ratepayers. That would be a good thing.

The HOME SECRETARY: The principle is the same.

Mr. TAYLOR: No, the principle is not the same; it is widely different. The hon. gentleman proposes that the mayor should be elected by the electors.

The HOME SECRETARY: By those who are on the roll.

Mr. TAYLOR: Those whom he intends to put on the roll are to be the electors, and they are people who have no natural responsibility as to payment of rates. Then there is the Home Secretary's statement with regard to the apathy—if you like to call it so—or the want of interest in local authority matters. I do not think his statement is borne out by facts. He told us that last year he put on to the various local authorities throughout the State forty-five councillors. Is that a large number out of a total number of 1,600? He did not state the reasons why he had to do that. There may have been some special reasons why some of the residents in those particular areas did not come forward and offer to stand for these positions. I think he told us that in two years all the aldermen he was asked to put on numbered seven. I do not think that that shows apathy with regard to local authority matters. I have been connected with a local authority for twelve years in February next. There is not now on that local authority a single alderman who was there when I went in. That shows that what has been said about men getting into local authorities and remaining there and retarding progress, so far as that local authority is concerned, is not correct. During that time probably one or two have gone out of the council by death. One or two have been returned unopposed. I have fought two elections during the twelve years I have been there, and I have been returned unopposed on other occasions. There is not that apathy which is stated to be present. If the Home Secretary were in Sydney or Melbourne and heard Brisbane or any local authority area in Queensland being run down as being behind the times, he would maintain it was in as forward a condition as any in the Southern States. He knows perfectly well that local authorities have advanced with the times, and the desire at present is not to remain still or to go back. This is an age of progress. (Hear, hear!) As the Home Secretary said, it is an age of change, and we have to be prepared for change: but we want to make our changes in the right direction. (Hear, hear!) It is quite possible so to change the order of things which exists to-day as to put back the clock twenty, thirty, or forty years, instead of, as we all devoutly wish, putting the clock ahead and

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making progress. There are several other things in the Bill with which we all agree, such as the provision with regard to slum areas. No doubt, it is time that that matter was taken in hand, although, comparing Brisbane and the metropolitan area with most of the cities in the Commonwealth, I think there are fewer slums here than in Southern cities.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have a good example in my own town.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not know that the Government can be complimented in regard to drainage matters so far as we can judge from the operations of a certain local authority during the last few years. Most local authorities, however, have tackled the work in a proper spirit and have done their very best to cope with it. Anyone who is conversant with the metropolitan area knows that the growth of Brisbane and the metropolitan area during the last twenty years has probably been more rapid than it was during the whole previous period of its history. In fact, everyone has been surprised at the remarkable growth which Brisbane and the metropolitan area have made during the last fifteen or twenty years. And we can only go on making improvement as we raise the necessary money. The Government are finding that they have to cut their coat according to their cloth—according to their money. They have practically spent their money in so many useless enterprises that now they are "up against it." They find it impossible even to carry out works that are absolutely necessary in the best interests of the community. Instead of starving the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board, as has been the case during the last few years, they should have pushed the sewerage works of that board ahead for all they were worth.

The TREASURER: We have been giving the board £40,000 a month. Your Government only gave them £20,000 a month.

Mr. TAYLOR: Instead of giving the board £40,000 a month, they should have been giving them £400,000 a month, and the work should have been pushed on to completion. Everyone knows that until connections are made no revenue can be returned from the work; and the sooner those connections are made, the sooner it is going to be a revenue-producing job. It is one of those works that should not have been starved. There are plenty of other works that might have been conveniently set on one side, but that work should certainly have been pushed on.

The TREASURER: It has not been starved.

Mr. TAYLOR: The local authorities have done excellently in the matter of drainage and the cleaning up of their areas. With regard to parks, the Home Secretary referred to one which he said was connected with the electorate of Windsor, but it is not in my electorate at all. What the whole of the facts connected with that matter are, I do not know; but I believe that a very excellent proposal was turned down. Most of the local authorities, however, have realised for some time that they have a duty to perform to their ratepayers and to Queensland, and they are endeavouring honestly, and have been for some considerable time, to meet the situation and to carry out works in the best interests of the people so that their area may be one in which people will be glad to come and live. I do not intend to take up

much more time, but I would just like to say that I was very disappointed at the Home Secretary's remarks with regard to local authorities. There should be complete sympathy between the Home Department and the local authorities. Local government is a huge unpaid department carrying on highly important public work. Good work in this direction has been carried on for very many years, and to expect the outback areas, where there is a sparse population—only a few hundreds as compared with the thousands resident in the city—to make the roads which are necessary to develop and carry on the work of this great State is asking too much from those few individuals.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In some of the outback districts they have better roads than they have in the cities.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am pleased to hear it. At one time a subsidy was granted to the local authorities by the Government. Unfortunately, that is not the case now. The whole of the money has to be found by the ratepayers in the various local authority areas. So far as some of the outside districts are concerned, it will be a calamity if a measure like this goes through, and if persons who have no financial responsibility are allowed a voice in the expenditure of the ratepayers' money. I do not think such people should have any say in the expenditure of the rates, seeing that, once the money has been spent, they can put on their hats and clear out of the district, and all the responsibility for paying for those works will remain with the people who live in the locality.

Mr. SMITH (*MacKay*): I rise with a good deal of pleasure to support the second reading of this Bill. It will be remembered that on two previous occasions practically the same Bill—or at least a Bill containing the vital principle of adult franchise in connection with local authorities—was passed through this House, but, owing to the action of the representatives of vested interests in "another place," that Bill did not become law. No one who analyses the position with regard to local authorities can doubt that the time has now come for a great step forward: that is to say, that our methods of local government require to be reorganised and laid on a somewhat wider basis than has been the case in the past. It has been interesting to follow the speeches of hon. members opposite. Almost every one of them who has spoken on this Bill has condemned the principle of adult suffrage, and has raised many things which they put forward as arguments against that principle. The arguments they have used to-night and on an earlier stage of the Bill are arguments that have been used against progress every time those progressive measures have been brought forward. We heard the hon. member for Windsor arguing against this system. He dealt with the question of women being allowed a vote for local authorities, and said that women would be content to leave the matter in the hands of their parents or their husbands. That is an argument which was used against the extension of the franchise to women at parliamentary elections. So it is with every reform. These people cannot visualise anything being different from what it is to-day. They cannot conceive of any policy which alters the existing state of affairs as being one which they should support.

They are a party who stand for leaving things as they are, and a party who at all times support vested interests. The principles of local government can be easily stated. The matters which affect a given area—such as a city, a town, or a shire—should be dealt with by the people living in the particular area, whereas matters of national importance affecting the interests of the whole State should be dealt with by Parliament.

We know that in every country the responsibilities of Parliament are becoming greater year by year. The activities which Parliament is carrying on have become more diverse and complicated under the existing system of things. In olden times government could be carried on in a somewhat haphazard way. Men could attend to their parliamentary duties at the fag-end of the day; they could look after their business during the day and come along at night time to give some consideration to the affairs of the State. But, owing to Parliament having entered into various enterprises which were formerly looked upon as the domain of private enterprise, the congestion of business in Parliament has become greater and more complex. Anyone who studies the position will see the importance of delegating affairs to local authorities which have not been delegated to them in the past. Arguments have been used with regard to the responsibility of certain individuals. Some members have said that, under this Bill, men and women will be enfranchised who have no responsibility in the community. I contend that there is no basis for that argument. There is no such thing as an irresponsible individual in the community unless he be a lunatic or an imbecile. Every individual has certain responsibilities to the State and to his fellow-men. (Hear, hear!) We find that the progress which has been made in our country can be directly measured by the amount of interest the people themselves have taken in their own affairs. We know that that is the case in Queensland and Australia. In the old days, under a limited franchise, Parliament was controlled by representatives of vested interests, but with the extension of a franchise based upon our common humanity Australia has gone ahead by leaps and bounds, and from that time dates the beneficial social legislation which we have passed. Yet we find men will get up in Parliament—men who are elected on a system of adult suffrage—and say that the extension of the franchise in local government will bring about an undesirable state of affairs. We know that that is not likely to come true, because the extension of responsibility is always a good thing to any individual. While we on this side demand certain things as our right—while we say it is the right of every man and woman to have a vote in Parliament or for every representative body—we say that when we concede those rights they carry with them certain responsibilities to the individual. When men are called upon to assume responsibility, the majority of them rise to the occasion and acquit themselves as men. So it will be in connection with local authority matters. No one can doubt that there is a great need for developing what might be termed "the civic conscience." The principles of citizenship and civic conscience require development in this State, and that can only be done by giving the people directly concerned full

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responsibility in these things, and power to control the conditions under which they live. That has been the case in other countries, and it will be the case here, and there is a great future before local government in this State. I do not intend to in any way reflect on those who now occupy that position. I believe that, according to their lights, they do the best they can. Of course, their lights are somewhat dimmed in many cases, and opportunity will now be given to the people to have a wider selection of men. If individuals who have supported hon. members opposite are the best men to carry on the system of local government, then those men will be elected again. One would imagine, to hear hon. members opposite talk, that we intended to throw all those people out of office and prevent them from being again elected to a local authority. That is not the situation at all. We say that every man and woman should have a right to elect the local authority, and I have no doubt they will make a wise selection. Hon. members opposite, by their arguments, would lead us to assume that people did things for the sake of doing what was wrong, but that is not the case. Where men have been elected to responsible positions in Parliament and elsewhere they endeavoured to honestly carry out their duties. We know that some of the most successful men in the Parliaments of Australia are men who own no land or property; and yet the argument of the Opposition places the ownership of land before manhood itself. We are not claiming this franchise on the basis that the worker or anyone else pays the rates, but on the basis of our common humanity. Who is most affected by good or bad conditions in a city? Is it the wealthy person who owns land or property, and can live elsewhere, or is it the man who rents the property and endeavours to bring up a family in it? I say that the latter person is more affected than the absentee landlord. Every one is interested in the maintenance of good roads, the establishment of public parks, in a proper water supply, and in lighting and other functions which properly belong to a local authority, and it is a recognition of these things which has caused us to argue in favour of this extension of the franchise. There is a great future in front of local authorities, which have not in the past realised to the full their responsibilities and powers. Under the existing Local Authorities Act local bodies are given pretty far-reaching powers, but on very few occasions have the local authorities fully grasped them. I have read the words of Lord Rosebery, the first chairman of the London County Council, who said that he who desired to serve the community can find no better sphere than the municipal sphere. I agree with those words, and the body of which he was chairman at that time has carried out many important activities in the community. The London County Council has been able to do a great deal of good in the London metropolitan area. Yet the men who established those things had to overcome opposition. They were opposed just as we are being opposed to-day. One would think that, with a new Parliament, with many new members, some new ideas would be brought to bear in connection with this question, but we find that there is a paucity of ideas so far as the Opposition is concerned. They are using arguments against this Bill that have been

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used against every extension of power to the people right through the ages. They talk about blue ruin because men and women will be given power in local authority matters. They said the same thing with regard to adult suffrage in Parliament, and with regard to the deportation of the kanaka, and every form of legislation has been opposed on the same ground.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You know that is absolutely untrue.

Mr. SMITH: Hon. members opposite cannot banish from their minds what they consider to be property rights; they place property before mankind. I can imagine the hon. member for Bulimba leading a deputation of property-owners to St. Peter to protest against the proletariat having the same rights and privileges in heaven as the property-owners. (Government laughter.)

The hon. member for Albert says [7.30 p.m.] we are out to get certain things.

That is exactly the position. Hon. members opposite have been dealing with this matter from the point of view of persons who regard it as a question of property and property values. I held that it is simply the activities of the community and the needs of the community that create property values in the city. The hon. member for Toowong can quite realise that the land in the municipality over which he presides has a certain rateable value. Has the hon. member endeavoured to analyse the cause of that value? Does he realise that if the population of the city were to leave the metropolis altogether land values would fall to zero? Every increase in population and every increase in the activities of the community means an increase in the value of those rateable properties. On that ground the franchise proposal in this measure is an equitable proposal. The hon. member for Muirgrave pictured what appeared to be something horrifying to him, and said that under a measure such as this cane-cutters could go into his district, and if they lived there long enough they would have a vote on local authority matters. Would that be a calamity? Are those men not of equal value to the community as any men on the Opposition side of the House? The hon. member is opposed to the idea that cane-cutters, mill hands, or railway navvies should have votes in local government matters. But I would ask him, what would be the value of his property or crop if he had not the labour of individuals to improve his property or garner his crops—if he had no men to cut the cane, to work the mill, or to do the necessary work on his property? What would be the value of his property without that labour? He could not do the work himself. As a matter of fact, that is a somewhat pernicious way of looking upon the necessary workers in the community. Hon. members opposite differentiate between different men in the community. They say that a man owning a quarter of an acre of land is more important than a man who owns nothing.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: That is true.

Mr. SMITH: I say that every worker in the community is of equal value to the community. Those men who are doing the world's work, whether with mental or manual labour, are the men who are of value as citizens of Australia. (Hear, hear!) That is the point of view from which I regard

this question. Then, again, we had the hon. member for Albert saying that he opposed this measure because it is not democratic.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Hear, hear! Quite correct.

Mr. SMITH: The hon. member argues that, because taxation under the present system of local government falls on the owner of land, this Bill is not democratic in its provisions. I shall read for the hon. member's information a definition of what democracy is, and I shall do that because we often hear members on the opposite side of the House proclaim themselves as democrats. They swear allegiance to democracy with their lips, but curse it in their hearts. Routledge's Standard Dictionary defines democracy as—

"A form of government in which supreme power is vested in the people, and the legislative and executive functions are exercised by the people or by persons representing them."

Webster's dictionary defines democracy as—

"Government by the people; a form of government in which the supreme power is retained by the people, and exercised either directly or indirectly through a system of representation and delegated authority periodically renewed."

According to that definition, it must be recognised that the principle underlying the proposal in this measure is essentially democratic. The hon. member for Albert further argued in favour of no representation without taxation.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Hear, hear!

Mr. SMITH: Therefore, to follow his idea to its logical conclusion, he should argue that a man should only be elected to Parliament by men who pay income tax.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Not at all.

Mr. SMITH: The hon. member argued that unless a man paid local authority rates he should not have a say in local government. Therefore, by the same line of reasoning, unless a man pays income tax or land tax he should have no say in the representation of the people in the national Parliament. That is really the view taken by hon. members opposite, though they do not often come forward and express their ideas so candidly or so bluntly as the hon. member for Albert sometimes does; but deep down in their hearts they have the feeling that if they had the opportunity they would get rid of the system of adult suffrage and every form of legislative activity, and place all power in the hands of the land-owning privileged class. I have no objection to anyone owning land so long as he does not arrogate to himself the right to govern everyone else. That is the position I take up in this matter, and that is the position taken up by other members on this side of the House. The hon. member for Bulimba said something about vested interests. I have no doubt he has a greater knowledge of such things than I have or am ever likely to have. The next matter I propose to deal with is the provision with regard to electing mayors or chairmen. That is an idea which has been adopted elsewhere, and it seems to me to be a good one that the chief citizen of a city should be elected by all the citizens of that locality. The proposition is rather an attractive one for me. If I were connected with any local

authority, I should look upon the position of mayor as a very desirable one if the mayor were elected on the franchise proposed in this Bill. The position is one which, under such circumstances, would carry with it a great deal of honour, and the principle is essentially sound. I am sure that the mayor of Brisbane, or the mayor of Townsville, would feel that their position was a better one if they held it by virtue of the suffrages of all the people in the local governing area. At the present time the position of mayor is often got as the result of some intrigue among councillors. Various interests pull one way and other interests pull another way, and the consequence is that the man who can pull the strings the best is the one who gets the position. When the whole of the citizens in a given area elect their mayor or chairman, then the position is a more honourable one, and will be a more useful one to that community, as he will not be identified with any particular clique or interest, but will be free to do useful work in the interests of the whole community. The next matter in this Bill that I shall allude to is in connection with the power of local authorities to deal with property which is uninhabitable or, for other purposes, ought to be condemned. We know that local authorities in the past have had a good deal of trouble in attempting to deal with this question; particularly is that the case where places known as Chinatown exist. We know that local authorities have tried to deal with them in a somewhat half-hearted manner, but they have come up against vested interests or, in other respects, have not had the necessary power.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: They are caucus in electorates.

Mr. SMITH: I do not know to which caucus the hon. member alludes; whether he alludes to his own caucus or to this side. As a matter of fact, we know that the friends of hon. members opposite own many of those properties. The leader of the Opposition condemned this proposal by saying that under a measure of this kind the unfortunates in Albert street or elsewhere will have an equal vote with other people. That seems to him to be a great pity, and a great wrong; but, as a matter of fact, the owners of those places at the present time have votes, and often a large number of votes, and I would give them no consideration in any measure. It is a desirable thing that local authorities should have power to deal with such places effectively, because they are a menace to the health and to the morals of the community.

Another matter in the Bill which is of interest is in connection with loans. The hon. member for Bulimba referred to that this afternoon, and one would imagine from his speech that local authorities would be given the power to float loans at any time they desired. The position with regard to the initiation of loans for local government work is not in any way altered by the Bill. The same principle and the same powers are retained under this measure. The only alteration made is where a certain work has been approved by the people and has been started, and it is found that more money is required to complete it. Under those circumstances the Minister is given power to give the necessary authority to raise the amount required. The hon. member for Windsor referred to certain grants in aid which were made in

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places other than Queensland. It is quite true in those countries where local government has developed to a great extent that grants are made from the national exchequer. Particularly is that the case in Great Britain, but when we consider that these grants in aid are spread over a very large population, it does not work out at very much per head of the population. In addition to that, it must be remembered that the local governments are called upon to fulfil certain functions and carry out certain duties which is not the case in Queensland. In Great Britain, for instance, education is a local authority matter. Public health, the maintenance of hospitals, and the maintenance of a whole host of activities, such as the administration of the poor law, are functions of the local authorities.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And the police.

Mr. SMITH: The police also is a local authority matter. It is unfortunate the hon. member forgot that, as that, no doubt to him, has a very important bearing on the question. If hon. members are going to argue in favour of grants in aid being established in Queensland, it can only be done by imposing further duties on the local authorities. I do not think I need speak any further on this matter. Sufficient for me to say that I have a greater belief in my fellows than hon. members opposite appear to have. I am satisfied that the men and women of Queensland are prepared to do the right thing, and will do the right thing, so far as they know it, at all times. With this extension of the franchise, the men and women of the State will develop higher conceptions of citizenship, there will be developed a higher civic conscience than has been the case in the past, and after this Bill has been in operation for some time those who oppose it will wonder why they did so, and the test of time will show that it is a reform in the right direction.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): I have to compliment the Minister for the very moderate manner in which he introduced the second reading of this important measure. I realise, as any member of this Assembly who has had any experience in local government must realise—personally, I had approximately twenty-four years' active experience as a member of a local authority—I realise that it is necessary, from time to time, that there should be amendments of the legislation on such an important question. I listened with great attention to what has been said, particularly by members sitting on the caucus side of the House.

Mr. COLLINS: The caucus side of the House? The Government side.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The caucus side of the House, or the carcass side, if you like it. Personally, I have endeavoured to make a study of Adam Smith, Ruskin, and Mills, who are regarded as authorities upon the subject of which they have written, and at an earlier period of my life of the Ten Commandments—(laughter)—and I confess, after hearing what has fallen from hon. members opposite, that apparently those writers knew nothing about the subjects upon which they have written. Although to-day they are regarded by all nations as authorities on these particular matters, apparently Queensland is fortunate in having on the other side of the House hon. members who know more than those eminent writers.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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HON. J. G. APPEL: They know more than those eminent writers who are regarded as authorities on the subject by all the nations of the universe. The Home Secretary stated that the most important amendment in connection with this Bill—the vital principle—was the extension of the franchise whereby men, which, in legal language, includes women—(laughter)—who have no interests in the community—nomads; men who have nothing, and have never interested themselves in connection with any matter; who are a drag on the community—are to have an equal vote with others in carrying out local authority matters. Hon. members sitting on the caucus side are very fond of referring to what they call their democratic principles. As I have stated on different occasions on the floor of this House, it has been stated as a principle of democracy that unless there is taxation there should be no representation. The Minister referred to men long since dead and gone, to others who have ceased for years to be members of this House, as having opposed adult suffrage. I venture to say that no member sitting on this side of this House was ever an opponent of adult suffrage.

The PREMIER: Did you not deny a vote to the police on one occasion?

HON. J. G. APPEL: No. I dare say there are occasions when the Premier would have been very glad to see the police far away, let alone to deny them votes. (Laughter). Take the case of the severance of the United States of America from the empire. What was the cause? The people who now occupy what is known as the United States of America were being taxed but they had no representation, and so they rebelled. It is proposed by this measure to reverse that principle and give representation without taxation. Those of us who advocated adult suffrage from the time when we were old enough to advocate any political principle, knew that every person, whoever he was and however infinitesimal his contribution to the taxation of the country might be, must according to all the rules and conditions of democracy have an equal vote in the administration and legislation of the State. That is a principle that cannot be denied, that is a principle which has been universally accepted, but now it is proposed to reverse it, and that members of the community, probably birds of passage, persons who are in no wise interested in the local authority in which they are, shall, without the payment of one fraction of taxation, have an equal vote with those who bear the burden of taxation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION interjected.

HON. J. G. APPEL: No, it is not. The hon. member knows that in every instance there is a measure of taxation in connection with the qualification of the taxpayer and of the voter. It is useless for him to interject that the same principle it is proposed to adopt by this measure exists in Great Britain already.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I did not say that. I say it is not a direct tax.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It may not be, but still in connection with local government that taxation is paid.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Not in the old country.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I do not propose to be led astray into a discussion with the hon. member. It has been objected that because a person in the city of Brisbane—and apparently the city of Brisbane is regarded as being the guide to the whole of the reversal of principle—because persons who are not direct taxpayers purchase certain goods at the retail shops in the city of Brisbane they have paid taxation which is levied directly upon the premises of those retailers. What percentage of the taxpayers are retailers, men who gain their living by retailing goods to persons who are not direct taxpayers coming from other parts of the State? Only a very small proportion. The whole argument is almost too ridiculous to require an answer.

Then a question has been raised in regard to what is called unearned increment. Men who have caused the increase in the value of the land, men who originally purchased the land, who in many instances deprived themselves of comforts for the purpose of improving that land, and have effected the improvements which cause to gather round them what one might term the crows of the community, men who have made the settlement and development of the country possible by their energy, and have enabled a large number of men to gain their living—which they never could have done otherwise—these men who have entered into strange places where there was no settlement, where there was no development, and by the expenditure of capital and energy, and the devotion of their time have caused settlements to rise and enabled other men without that enterprise or energy like crows to come and pick up the crumbs—are not these men entitled to anything so far as the value of the improvements on those properties are concerned? Why, it is only the crows who deny it! The men who have lived always without doing anything for the settlement and development of the State, the men who have never had enterprise—these are the men who deny the right and the justice and the equity of those who have the enterprise and the energy and the thrift to develop this State to receive some reward for what they have done. (Laughter.) That is a principle that has been accepted since the time the world

[3 p.m.] began, and the hon. members who are laughing are the men who are enjoying it to-day. They may regard this from the cynical point of view, but I regard it as a very serious matter indeed. I quite realise that anything I may say in this House will have absolutely no effect upon the result; that with the numbers in this Assembly, and by the overthrow of our Constitution the subservient majority which the Government will have in the Legislative Council, this Bill will become law.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL: By means of practically a revolution, the overthrow of our Constitution, they have effected their object. They call themselves democrats! All I can say is, we can only regard it as a tragedy on democracy. (Laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: Didn't you claim to be a socialist on one occasion?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am still. If it were proposed that subsidy should be given by the Government to local authorities to assist them in their work of development,

I would be quite prepared to support the proposition that the general elector should have a voice in the affairs of the local authority; because, by his contribution, directly or indirectly, to the revenue of the State he would be a contributor to the funds of the local authority. From time to time, when I was approached upon this subject, and local authorities requested that I should advocate for and provide them with a subsidy to assist them, I indicated to them that if the State gave any contribution to local authorities the franchise would have to be enlarged. I say the same thing to-day. If the State, represented by the present Administration, is prepared to assist local authorities in the work which they are carrying out, I am quite prepared to accede to the proposition that the franchise should be enlarged, and the general elector residing in the particular electorate should have a say in connection with the administration of the local authority. But that is not the proposition. I do not propose, in connection with this matter, to suggest the reason why hon. gentlemen sitting on the Treasury benches, and their caucus supporters, have been directed to insist upon the passage of this measure. But we all know the reason. We know what the effect of the broadening of the franchise in connection with the city of Sydney has been. The franchise there is not enlarged as it is proposed to be here. We know that to-day the affairs of the great city of Sydney are controlled by the executive of the Labour party—

Mr. COLLINS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL: That the mayor is elected, not by the aldermen of the city of Sydney, but by the Labour caucus outside; and we know what the result in civic administration has been. The hon. member for Mackay talked about the civic conscience having to be developed. Apparently, it has been developed in Sydney, and what is known as "graft" in the council of the city of Sydney is a scandal in municipal government in the Commonwealth. We know the "wild cat" schemes they have entered upon in connection with the purchase of worthless coalmines; and we know, as sensible men, what the reason is—that "graft" is at the back of it. Do we want to see a similar state of things in the city of Brisbane?

The PREMIER: Are you charging the Sydney City Council with graft?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I do not charge anything. (Loud laughter.) I am not one who indulges in personalities. (Renewed laughter.) I am making allegations which are perfectly true, as far as Sydney is concerned. I hope such allegations will never be made against members of the Brisbane council.

Mr. WILSON interjected.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. member for Fortitude Valley, when I brought up the matter in connection with the Water Supply and Sewerage Board on the debate on Supply in 1917, of what the board were doing, denied what I said, and stated that if I made the statements outside, I would be prosecuted for slander. And they are proved to be correct!

Mr. WILSON: I asked you were you charging the city council here with graft?

HON. J. G. APPEL: No, I am not. But I venture to say that if this measure is passed, it will not be long before they will

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be guilty of it. (Laughter.) I have no hesitation in saying that. Unfortunately, it does not matter how equitable a principle may be, there is always something, when it is not faithfully and truly carried out, which may cause men to say they object to it. It is not the fault of the policy, it is not the fault of democracy, that these things happen. It lies, unfortunately, with the men who betray the policy which they have been elected to support. That is the whole position, and I have no hesitation in saying that if this degradation takes place, municipal affairs will not be carried out in the same free and honest manner as they are to-day. It has been suggested by different speakers that local authorities in Queensland have not done their duty as far as their ratepayers and the public were concerned. When we observe other cities which are older than we are, with a larger population, and observe the number of improvements for the benefit of the public—such as the parks—which exist, and when we inquire into the matter, we find they have had the assistance of the Government of the State. What assistance has the city of Brisbane had from the State as far as the public parks are concerned?

MR. MAXWELL: They took them from them.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That is correct. They even proposed, in connection with that little reserve which is occupied by the old Normal school, to close the school and build fish shops and other shops, and deprive the citizens of Brisbane, and the people of Queensland, of that little breathing space. And they talk through their representatives, and accuse the city council of not having done their duty, and say that it has, therefore, become necessary for Parliament to enlarge the franchise! I have no interest at the present time in the city of Brisbane, but I would compliment the city council on the fact that, despite the difficulties under which they have laboured, they have purchased and have improved and rendered fit for the use of the public some of the most beautiful parks that can be found in any city of the Commonwealth. (Hear, hear!) We have only to look at the fine park in New Farm, and at that beautiful little park at the mouth of Breakfast Creek—both of them a credit to the city of Brisbane. The city council have been able to provide those parks despite the fact that they have received no assistance and no encouragement from the Government. But, because they have not effected more, why should that be a reason for enlarging the franchise to enable the loafer and the bird of passage to control the municipal affairs of the city of Brisbane and of all other local authorities? I repeat that it is a tragedy in local government, and I regret that an attempt is being made to subvert that principle of democracy which requires that every man who desires representation should bear a portion of the taxation in connection with the administration upon which he desires to have a vote.

I have referred to the fact that the Government not only have rendered no assistance to the local authority, but they have even deprived the local authorities of the City of Brisbane of a portion of the small reserves which they possessed. For local partisan purposes, they have practically confiscated a portion of the Wickham-terrace Park, which is commonly known as "Jacob's

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Ladder." Yet they come here and, in support of this proposition, assert that the local authorities have not done their duty, and that it is necessary that the franchise should be enlarged so that local authorities may be spurred on to do that which they have not done in the past.

So far as the question of triennial elections is concerned, I can only say that I do not favour it. In my opinion there should be a continuity of policy. The Minister endeavoured to combat that by asking why a continuity of policy should not still be carried out? Well, we know as a matter of experience that, when the whole of the members of any body are up for election at the same time, there may be a change in public opinion, either wise or unwise, by which a majority of entirely new members may be elected, with the result that the policy which has been previously planned may not be carried out. I speak, of course, from the standpoint of one who has had experience in local authority work. All of us who have had such experience are aware that a local authority in what one may term an underdeveloped locality—and they are all more or less underdeveloped—has to plan out a policy of drainage or other works which is to be carried out in sections; and the object of providing that only one-third of the members shall retire annually was that that continuity of policy might be carried out. However, it is a matter for the House to consider, and I only voice my criticism because I have had experience and know why the present policy was adopted.

So far as the change in the actual voting power is concerned, it is neither here nor there. The fact that a few ratepayers are entitled to three votes has never affected any election. Hon. members opposite may sneer at that statement, but I speak from experience, and I do not think that any member on this side will make any formal protest against the adoption of the principle of one vote one value in connection with local authorities so long as the policy is continued that the voter must be a ratepayer. The Minister endeavoured to draw a red herring over the issue by suggesting that members sitting on the Opposition side of the House object to voting power being given to the womanhood of the State. The hon. gentleman knows very well that hon. members on this side owe too much to the women electors of this State to countenance even the suggestion of such a thing—(Hear, hear!)—and I was sorry that the hon. gentleman suggested it.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Why didn't you give them a vote?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I advocated it long before the hon. gentleman knew anything about politics or public life.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Why didn't you give it to them?

HON. J. G. APPEL: We did give it to them. The caucus Government never gave it to them.

THE HOME SECRETARY: You didn't.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

HON. J. G. APPEL: I realise that it is very difficult in such a matter to avoid being drawn off the track when the Minister makes a suggestion which has absolutely no found-

station in fact, and which he knows has no foundation in fact. (Laughter.)

The HOME SECRETARY: You were Home Secretary, and yet you never altered the franchise.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Every female ratepayer has a vote. Of course, they cannot have a vote unless they pay rates. The hon. gentleman has spoken on the subject of loans. We all know how local authorities have been handicapped since the present Administration has been in power. They have approached the Treasurer from time to time for loans for drainage, and the loans have been practically refused, or they have only been granted a very small amount which has caused them to have to recast the whole of their drainage scheme. The result is that the local authorities have been unable to carry on many of these works which would have been for the good health of the community. It was not because the Government had not the money in hand, but they were expending it on wild-cat enterprises, and they neglected those works which would have protected the health of the people. Hon. members opposite have no care for the health of the ratepayers, and so long as they can command the nomination of the ratepayers the electors may starve, as they are doing to-day, and the health of the community may suffer. We on this side are desirous of seeing that those who are interested in local authorities should be encouraged, and receive assistance from the Government. There is a sinister object in this proposition, and it will not be for the benefit of the ratepayers of the State. In many instances, men who are ratepayers will not even be entitled to a vote in connection with rateable property, because, owing to the congestion of city centres, they live in another electorate. The franchise is not alone to be extended to those who are not ratepayers, but men who are ratepayers will be actually deprived of a vote in connection with the property for which they pay rates. I hope that every hon. member on this side will do all he can to oppose the measure, and place the matter plainly before the taxpayers in connection with local authorities, and I have no doubt that the condemnation which will fall upon the caucus party at the next election will relegate them to this side of the House for many years, which will be for the benefit of the State.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I congratulate the Home Secretary on the introduction of this amending Bill. We, who belong to the Labour party, have been waiting for fully a generation to see this big reform brought about. We realise that great work can be done by the local authorities under this broadened franchise. We know that from time to time we have an unemployed problem to deal with, and this will be one of the methods whereby that unemployed problem can be dealt with.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Oh! Oh! You are giving the show away.

Mr. COLLINS: I am giving nothing away. This measure would have been on the statute-book long ago, but for the obstruction of another branch of the Legislature, but that obstruction has been removed. Do hon. members imagine that local government exists to cart a load of stones and tip it in a hole in front of some alderman's residence? Do they not know that we owe our Local Government Act to a large extent to the late Sir

Samuel Griffith, a man who helped to teach me long ago, when I was a young man, by advising me in his University Extension lectures to read those social science series of works which are in our Parliamentary Library, dealing with local government and many other matters. And yet hon. members opposite laugh when I say that local authorities will have power to deal with the unexplored problem? Could anyone expect these conservative bodies—because, after all, they are very conservative bodies—right through Queensland to do that now? Everyone knows they are organising centres for Toryism. How many Labour men are there on the local authorities in Queensland? I am prepared to say that there are not twenty in the whole State. We are considered fit to sit on this side and govern Queensland, but, under the restricted franchise in local government, we are not supposed to be fit to govern in local authority matters.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: Why not?

Mr. COLLINS: Anyone would think that the hon. member who made that silly interjection was living in the middle ages. (Laughter.) We realise that we are living in a different world, in which our young men are going to take possession and govern—not on the lines of our forefathers, but on modern and up-to-date lines. (Hear, hear!)

The principle of this measure is to extend the franchise to all persons, outside lunatic asylums, over the age of twenty-one. If it is a good thing to give every man and woman a vote for the Federal Parliament, and to have a broad franchise for the State Parliament, how much more should we not give the broad franchise to our lesser parliaments—our local authorities? I am quite willing to admit that good work can be done by local authorities in Queensland, but it can only be accomplished by broadening the franchise. I was astonished at the remarks of the hon. member for Albert, in referring to the nomads not being allowed to have a vote. If there had been no nomads who had humped their swags and gone into the centre of the Commonwealth prospecting we would not have had our goldfields discovered. Many a man has gone out prospecting with his food and his pick and shovel on his back. Maybe, through the turn of the wheel of fortune he has not accumulated wealth, but he has done a great deal towards opening up the Commonwealth. (Hear, hear!) When the great war was on, did those who are now opposing the extension of the franchise to a great number of our population ask every one who went up for enlistment, "Are you a ratepayer?" "How much property

[8.30 p.m.] do you own; because if you are not a ratepayer you cannot go to defend the empire?" Oh, no! They were not asked any such questions. They were not told that they could not go to the front and fight for the defence of the Empire unless they were ratepayers. Will anyone say that the great mass of men who went from England to the war to fight for the Empire were ratepayers? Will anyone say that a majority of the 50,000 men who went to the front from Queensland were ratepayers?

Mr. COSTELLO and OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Yes! Yes!

Mr. COLLINS: No. The hon. member for Carnarvon is not in charge of a regiment now. He is only a private amongst many other privates, and he ought to realise

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that fact. The questions I have referred to were not asked of the men who went to defend the Empire. But now the very men who fought for the Empire would be denied a vote by hon. members opposite in connection with the government of local authorities. Let that fact be known to those men. The hon. member for Carnarvon, judging by his interjections, is going to vote against this proposal to extend the franchise—he is going to stop the men who went to defend the Empire from having a vote in municipal government. That is the attitude of the conservative element on that side of the House, because members opposite are conservative. They do not recognise that we are living in a changed world. Anyone would think that we were living right away back in the time of Henry VIII. I am astonished at the young men on that side of the House not supporting this measure. We had a definition of democracy from the hon. member for Albert. According to the views of that hon. member, Judas Iscariot, who was in possession of thirty pieces of silver after he betrayed the Nazarene would be able to purchase a corner allotment and have a vote, while the Nazarene was put on the cross. According to their ideas, no man has brains unless he owns property. Why, some of the very greatest thinkers the world has known did not own any property. We may be able to produce an Edison in Queensland as time rolls on, but he would not be given a vote unless he owned property. A man who possesses a faculty which will be of use to mankind, should not be denied the opportunity to exercise that faculty. But members opposite would prevent such a man from having a say in the government of the city of Brisbane or the town of Bowen. My friends opposite should read about some of the world's greatest thinkers, and if they do they will find they did not always worry about owning property. What they worried about was the development of human progress and advancing the interests of mankind. The hon. member for Albert made reference to unearned increment. That term was greatly used at the time of Sir Samuel Griffith in connection with the Dutton Land Act. In fact, the idea in regard to taxation by local authorities on the unimproved values emanated from the Hon. W. Stephens, who now occupies a seat in the Upper House. It was at that time that taxation was imposed on the unimproved value of land in regard to local authorities. The hon. member for Albert, as I say, made reference to unearned increment, the increment which he argued was earned by the people who are in the position of employers, and he said the crows then gathered round. I understand that the crows are carrion birds—birds of prey. But there is another bird which is greater than a crow, it is called a vulture, and it is so big and powerful that it is able to swallow the crow. When I hear hon. members in this House referring to a section of the community as crows or carrion birds, I begin to ask myself, "Am I in Parliament, or where am I?" The hon. member quoted Ruskin on this subject. I also will quote Ruskin for his information. Ruskin somewhere says that "Low thoughts can only emanate from low minds," and I say that quotation is applicable to hon. members who refer to a certain section of the community as nomads or crows. The hon. member also referred to certain

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people as loafers or birds of passage. Does the hon. member refer to those persons who have through force of circumstances to travel from place to place in order to get a livelihood? If he does, how he gets into Parliament is a mystery to me! Considering the insults that he hurls at the heads of the workers and the way he talks about democracy, I cannot understand how he has managed to secure his election as a member of this House. Under the present Local Authorities Act, a man can have three votes. Is that democracy?

The HOME SECRETARY: Three in every shire.

Mr. COLLINS: Three in every shire in which he owns property. And that is called "democracy!" In the face of such facts it is not surprising that a well-known writer says, "Oh democracy, I shout for you." I shout for democracy too, if that is democracy. Hon. members should not imagine for one moment in discussing a question of this nature that Brisbane is Queensland. Useful work can be done by the local authorities in the country. I am not one of those who imagine for one moment that any danger is going to happen to democracy in general by the broadening of the franchise. I am one of those men who used to stand at the street corners and advocate one adult one vote in connection with Parliamentary elections. We who advocated that principle were young men in those days, and we thought that when we had got one adult one vote we should sweep Queensland and the Commonwealth, and that there would be no Tories in Parliament. But that dream has not been realised.

Mr. ELPENSTONE: A good many of your dreams have not been realised.

Mr. COLLINS: A good many of our dreams have been realised, and have been placed on the statute-book. The hon. member for Oxley is very young in politics, though he may be old in years, but he has not seen any of the planks he has advocated placed on the statute-book. I have lived to see many of the reforms that I advocated in my youth placed upon the statute-book. This is one of the reforms we advocated in our youth, and this is one of the reforms that we are now going to see placed on the statute-book. It is quite true that we have waited long to see this brought about, but it has come at last, and no thanks to our friends opposite. They always put me in mind of a granite mountain. We know that the wearing away of a granite mountain is a very slow process, and the wearing away of those old fossilised ideas which they represent takes as long as it takes nature to wear away a granite mountain. But still they are wearing away, and although it may have taken years to bring about this reform, it has come at last. The Home Secretary ought to feel proud that he has introduced one of the most far-reaching reforms ever introduced into Queensland. It will give an opportunity to our young men to develop—and, God knows, they want plenty of opportunity—it will give them an opportunity to take part in the government of local authorities, because if they have not sufficient powers under this Bill, later on we can amend the Bill, and give them greater powers still to enable them to take part in the development of Queensland. I am pleased to think that this measure is going to have an easy passage, not only through this House,

but through the other Chamber. I am pleased to think that we have lived to see the day when this measure of reform will be placed on the statute-book, as it will give the people in the different local centres the right to govern themselves as they think fit.

At 8.45 p.m.,

Mr. POLLOCK relieved the Speaker in the chair.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): The hon. member who has just resumed his seat has, no doubt, let the cat out of the bag, when he told us that one of the principal reasons for this Bill was to settle the unemployed question. Evidently the Government have failed in that direction, and miserably failed, and now they are looking to the local authorities to get them out of the mire. I listened very attentively to the Home Secretary when he endeavoured to explain this Bill.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not attempt to explain this Bill; I was dealing with the principle.

Mr. MORGAN: It was your duty to explain the Bill. At any rate, I listened very attentively, and I was very much disappointed with the explanation. The Minister used as an illustration New Zealand, but he did not take this House fully into his confidence when dealing with that dominion.

The HOME SECRETARY: I only referred to the franchise.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. member did not tell us that, in respect of loans and the increase of rates, those who had a residence qualification only were not allowed to vote.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are wrong.

Mr. MORGAN: I am right. I have the Act here. The hon. member also did not tell us that in New Zealand a councillor is eligible to be elected chairman or mayor, and that is not so under this Bill.

The HOME SECRETARY: I only used New Zealand as an illustration in regard to the franchise.

Mr. MORGAN: We claim, naturally, that the qualification of a councillor should be sufficient to enable him to stand for the position of chairman or mayor. The Government, by this Bill, are taking away from us the very best people we have for the position.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is a matter of policy.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes, and evidently it is the policy of the Government to prevent these people occupying the position of mayor or chairman, as the case may be. I would also like to enter a protest against broadening the franchise, as proposed under this measure. During the construction of a railway in a country centre, there are usually several hundred men employed, and it would be quite possible for those men to seize the whole council. They could take possession of the local authority, and if they so desired it, they could establish baths, picture shows, and anything else for their own pleasure during the time they were in the district, and after the railway was completed, and the taxation was increased to such an extent that property had ceased to have any value, these people could go to some other part of the State altogether, and the burden would fall on those who endeavoured to

make a home in the locality. The whole thing will tend to depreciate the value of property, and that is one of the most fatal things in Queensland at the present time. Those who come from other parts of Australia recognise that property in Queensland has depreciated in value from 50 to 100 per cent. during the last five years.

Mr. BRENNAN: Quite wrong.

Mr. MORGAN: I am not going to say that there are not isolated cases where land may have gone up in value, but, taking Queensland as a whole, all property, whether it is landed property or other property, has depreciated in value up to 100 per cent. I know land on the Downs that can be bought for one-half the value placed on it in 1914. Look at Cecil Plains! Cecil Plains was bought for £2 an acre, and that estate could have been sold some years ago at £4 an acre—100 per cent. more than was paid for it by the Government. Throughout the whole of Queensland, with the exception of isolated spots, land to-day is not worth anything like what it was.

The HOME SECRETARY: Is that the reason why the Land Court raised the rents?

Mr. MORGAN: We know the reason why the Land Court increased the rents.

The HOME SECRETARY: What was the reason?

Mr. MORGAN: They increased the rents because the Government wanted more revenue. The hon. member in charge of this Bill stated that the increased rates would be paid by the people—by the masses.

The HOME SECRETARY: By the people as a whole.

Mr. MORGAN: To-day, when it suits the Home Secretary, he tells us that it is the people who pay all taxation, and yet only a few weeks ago, when we pointed out to the people that taxation had risen from £1 8s. 2d. to £4 18s. 9d. per head of population, we were told by the Premier and those who stumped the country on behalf of the Labour party that it was not the people who paid the taxation. We know it is the masses; we know it is the people, and just so will the increased taxation that the Government have placed on the people also fall on the masses—on the people of the State in general. The hon. member referred in his speech to the milk supply of Brisbane. It is extraordinary that the Minister or the Government took upon themselves to supply the people of Brisbane and other large centres of population with cheap meat and did not take it upon themselves to enter the milk industry. It may be more important than meat. Why have the Government thrust it on the shoulders of the local authorities?

The HOME SECRETARY: They have them in New Zealand.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Or hospitals.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes. The Government nationalised the Brisbane hospital.

The HOME SECRETARY: It came on us whether we liked it or not. You know that is not true.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. member knows that the Brisbane Hospital is a charge on every man, woman, and child in Queensland to-day. Why, then, should every other not

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be nationalised? We people in the country are compelled to contribute not only to our own hospitals to keep them up to date—and we do it willingly—but also towards the upkeep of the Brisbane Hospital.

The HOME SECRETARY: The people pay two-thirds of the whole lot, anyway.

Mr. MORGAN: The people in the city get all the plums, and the people in the bush get only a stone. We had a definition of democracy from the hon. member for Mackay to-night. Is it democracy for the Government to occupy the Treasury benches when they have a minority? The hon. member knows that he is occupying the Treasury benches under false pretences, and that this Bill is being placed before us under false pretences. It is one of the chief planks of the Labour party's platform that the people shall have an opportunity, if they so desire, to have a referendum on the question.

The HOME SECRETARY: We are satisfied.

Mr. MORGAN: We know that the Government are perfectly satisfied so long as they are on the Treasury benches. It would take wild horses to drag the hon. member from the Treasury benches and its emoluments.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DASH: They would be wild horses that would put you across here.

Mr. MORGAN: They very nearly did, and had the rolls been in a good condition—had the ghosts not risen and the dead not recorded their votes, we would have had a majority and been in possession of the Government benches. At any rate, it is only a matter of time—perhaps a few short years—because I do not anticipate that the Government are likely to resign, although, if they had any sense of decency they would not occupy the Treasury benches for one moment longer than was necessary to get Supply. There are only two courses for the Government to pursue—the honest course and the dishonest course. The honest course is to resign and admit that they cannot carry on the government of the country and give the people the opportunity to say whether they shall continue.

Mr. PEASE: More expense.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. member does not study expense when it is a matter of appointing a new Minister. When it is a question of going to the country and perhaps losing his own seat it is another matter. The hon. member is not a sport and will not take the risk.

The HOME SECRETARY: He increased his majority tenfold.

Mr. MORGAN: The Government were sure of winning fifty-two seats this time, and yet they came back with a bare majority of four. The people voted against this Bill and the policy of the Government, and notwithstanding that they are endeavouring to force their programme on the electors who have already voted against them. I understood that democracy meant one principle in particular—that is, majority rule. We find to-day that we are having forced upon us planks of the Labour party's platform—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

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Mr. MORGAN: We are having forced upon us planks of the platform which the people have turned down.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Order! I hope the hon. member is going to obey my call to order. I ask him to deal with the Bill before the House.

Mr. MORGAN: I would like to see the Government have an opportunity of withdrawing this Bill altogether and submitting it to the people before it becomes law. They have a right to be consulted. Liquor reform was important enough for the Government to spend £20,000 on a referendum on it, and this, in my opinion, is more important still—it is more important that the people's opinion should be obtained before a Bill of this kind is placed on the statute-book. Under the Bill the local authorities will be able to rate just as they desire. There is some protection at present, but this Bill is going to leave unprotected those persons who have worked hard and have been thrifty and place power in the hands of those who have wasted their money and their bread. It shows no consideration to those who have saved a frugal provision for their old age so that they may live in comfort without taking advantage of the old-age pension, and the people who have spent their money, wasted it, perhaps, in many directions, who have lived on the fat of the land while their money lasted, are going to have the opportunity of dividing between them the savings and the accumulations of those who have lived this life of thrift and endeavoured to make Queensland a more prosperous State than it is.

We heard a good deal about the nomad. I have nothing to say against a man who travels from place to place looking for work. But I certainly think some consideration should be shown to a man who goes into a country, settles down, makes [3 p.m.] two blades of grass grow where one grew before, and who in every way has made the country more prosperous. It cannot be denied that those people who are responsible for our exports, who are responsible for our being able to pay the interest on our loans, and who provide the security for our loans, are of more importance to us. Yet we place them on exactly the same footing as those other people.

The HOME SECRETARY: Were not you a nomad at one period?

Mr. MORGAN: When a nomad becomes a property-owner, when he shows that he has a stake in the country, he becomes a voter. Let the nomad or any other individual show he is qualified to become a voter and our present franchise will cover him. There is no necessity to accumulate wealth. All you have to do is to occupy a house and you are entitled to a vote.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: You can get a vote without occupying a house, by getting a piece of land.

Mr. MORGAN: Exactly, you have only to pay the rent on a piece of land. A great number of wives in this State have a vote because they are interested in the property. Many husbands who own property put some of it in the names of their wives, with a view to the wife having a vote. I

intend to oppose this motion. I do not wish to apologise for the attitude I take up. So far as my electorate is concerned, 90 per cent. of those who voted for the Labour candidate are not in favour of this Bill. At least 90 per cent. of the Labourites are on the municipal roll and every one of those who are entitled to a vote is against this particular Bill, as I am.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): I desire to make a few brief comments on this Bill before it goes to a vote. I have listened with a good deal of interest to the debate, and the majority of so-called arguments which have been put forward I have been listening to as long as I can remember. They were the same arguments, used in much the same way and in the same words, as were used in connection with the Parliamentary franchise. As evidence of that, I would like to quote one or two speeches which appeared in "Hansard" volume lxxi., 1894. This was when the question of adult suffrage was being discussed and the parliamentary franchise was being dealt with, in much the same manner as the local authorities franchise is being discussed now. The Colonial Secretary at that time (Mr. Tozer), discussing this question, said—

"I should like to see the whole colony equally represented. But we are in a transition stage; and until we get more people in our vast territory it would be a dangerous experiment to go away from what experience has shown us—namely, that the test of a man's ability and capacity to acquire and to keep that which he has is the property he possesses."

He might have added the good old rule—the simple plan—"He who has the power should get, and he should keep who can." It is quite evident the political predecessors of hon. gentlemen who sit opposite set them an example they are still following, and provided them with arguments which they are still repeating; they are ingrained ideas, evidently, that the only test which has to be applied to a man or woman is that they must have acquired property. It is, as Tennyson said, "Property, property, property, that is what the horse's legs say to me." Evidently no application can be made to a man for the qualification of the franchise but that of having acquired either land or property in some shape or form. He goes on to say—

"I never look at it as an allotment vote. It is a token that by a man's wisdom in the past he has been able to acquire and keep and lay by something, which shows that he is a good and industrious member of society."

He was not only an opponent of adult suffrage, but he was an advocate of one man having as many votes as he had allotments in the various electorates of the State. If he owned an allotment in the whole of the seventy-two electorates at that time, this individual was arguing that he had a right to a vote in every electorate in the State if he could get into those electorates and record his votes; and in a great number of instances he got into quite a number of electorates and recorded his plural votes. He goes on—

"No doubt when greater wisdom follows the spread of education the logical result will follow, that property will

not count and that everyone will have a vote."

We contend that the education and the enlightenment which have followed have brought about a time when not only should a man have a vote for the election of members of Parliament, but he should have a vote also for the election of municipal bodies. Another individual speaking on the second reading of the Elections Act Amendment Bill (Mr. Barlow, Minister for Lands) said—

"I am not speaking in a controversial spirit, but with a desire to elicit the truth. I say that every motion proposed here, every message recommending a Bill, shows that we, and we alone, are the keepers of the public purse; yet from the House which deals with the finances, the influence of property is to be eliminated. If one could come here from another planet and be told that the influence of property was studiously excluded from the House which has the sole power of taxation, he would regard it as most absurd. If this manhood suffrage—this vote to a man because he is a man—is to be given, why not give it to men with different coloured skins? We are told that the simple fact of a man being a human being is sufficient to entitle him to vote, whether he is worthy or unworthy, clever or stupid. If we admit that, why not give a vote to a boy twenty years of age? Why is the colony divided into electoral districts?"

As a matter of fact, we have evidently progressed since that time, because votes have been given to boys less than twenty years of age, for the parliamentary franchise at any rate. He proceeds—

"To conserve local interests, to facilitate the identification of voters, and to bring about the equalisation of representation. If local interests are to be conserved, why should a man with an immense interest in an electorate have no voice in regulating the affairs of that district simply because he does not happen to live there? Why should he be outvoted by any man who happens to have lived in the district six months? I am not saying that any man should be without a vote; I believe it would be a good thing if we could get every man on the roll. But why should not the property interest in the property-taxing House have some representation?"

We have advanced a good deal since that time, but evidently not far enough. It goes to show that the same arguments which were used thirty, forty, and fifty years ago are still being used; in a different connection, but none the less it shows that the idea which prevailed then still prevails in the minds of gentlemen who sit opposite. Here is a quotation from a speech of Mr. Dickson, who was the Secretary for Railways—

"I take it that a man with a large establishment in Brisbane or any other electorate—a man with a family residing in another electorate—is a valued citizen, and has a perfect right to claim a voice in the representation of those electorates where he has interests. His presence and industry are large factors in encouraging the prosperity of the districts with which he is connected, and in that light alone—you may call it a thrift vote if you

like—he has a right to be recognised in the progress he has individually made and the progress he has imparted to those districts.”

Then, a member of our party, Mr. Dunsford, said—

“He may be a gambler or a retired burglar.

“The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is a very extreme view. I am placing it in a matter-of-fact light.”

Then, the Secretary for Public Instruction said—

“I want every elector to give me some evidence of his bona fides as a citizen. If a man comes over the border and stays for six months, or stays three months in one colony and three months in another, and that is considered sufficient evidence of bona fide residence—

“Mr. Hoolan: He deserves a vote whether walking or sitting.

“The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is not a question of deserts. A man who has not any vote or property may be an infinitely better man than the richest Croesus that ever lived. But it is not a question of moral worth, but one of common sense.”

We find to-night that it is not a question of moral worth; it is not a question of manhood or womanhood, but a question of property. If a man is not a property-owner or is not a ratepayer, then the argument of hon. members opposite is that he has no right to a vote in this particular connection. Our contention is that he has just as much right to vote in local authority affairs as we argued in those days that he had a right to have a vote for a member of Parliament.

In the next place, just as the fears that were expressed in bygone days about people having the parliamentary franchise have evidently not come to pass, so I am inclined to think that the fears which have been expressed by hon. members opposite about the revolution which is likely to take place if the franchise is given to all adults are entirely unfounded, and the probabilities are that the hopes and expectations of some people who take the opposite view will not be realised either. I certainly think that some changes and some influences for the better will take place; but I am very doubtful whether any startling reformation will take place even when the franchise is granted to all adults in a particular local authority area.

A good deal has been said as to whether all adults should have the vote or not. The argument has been used over and over again that they should not have a vote in connection with local government, for the simple reason that they are not ratepayers. Yet it has been practically admitted this afternoon by hon. members sitting opposite that rates are not paid by the owners of property in nine cases out of ten, but by the people who occupy those properties, and that every adult in the community contributes either directly or indirectly to the upkeep of the community, and as a consequence has a perfect right to have a say as to how the community shall be governed, and how the laws shall be administered.

A good deal has been said in reference to the unearned increment which accrues to

[*Mr. Winstanley.*

land; and the hon. member for Albert and the hon. member for Windsor both made very laboured attempts to try and prove that the value that accrued to land was the result, not of the industry and the work of the population of the State, but as a result of certain individuals who came first into the country and took up land, and began to make use of it. If that were the fact, there might be something to say for it; but it is an absolute fact which cannot be disproved, and which certainly cannot be overthrown, that there is a value which accrues to land entirely apart from the improvement of it—the unimproved value that accrues to land which has not a ha'porth of improvements made upon it, or any labour bestowed upon it. What gives value to land in a place like Brisbane is not the individual who came to Brisbane in the early days and either started a factory or shop, or even began to cultivate the land. If Brisbane had remained an agricultural community, it certainly would have been of very little worth at the present time; but the 180,000 people who are crowded within the radius of Brisbane have given Brisbane land the value it has at the present time; and, if those people disappeared, the value of the land would disappear with them. We do not need to draw on our imagination at all for cases of that description. There is more than one town in Queensland where that has been the case—where a large number of people have congregated and worked for years in the particular locality and then left it. I know some such places where vacant allotments—some of them not freeholds, but only residence areas—a very slender title in the estimation of some people—have been worth £200 and £300 for a ¼-acre when the population was there. Now that the population has gone the same allotments could be got by merely paying the rates due on them, without paying any price whatever for the land. The simple explanation is that the population has disappeared. The hon. member for Albert spoke of birds of passage, and some other members of nomads, referring to the men who did the work—the men who have not been fortunate enough to get a job all the year round in one particular place, which is impossible in a place like Queensland, for the simple reason that our seasonal occupations make it necessary for these men to work six months in one place, three months in another, and perhaps one month in another. Yet hon. gentlemen opposite say that these nomads have no rights and no privileges so far as the municipal franchise is concerned. My contention is, that if these individuals were to leave the State altogether, the State would be so much the poorer. Whatever name you give them, these are the men who do the work of the State, and they certainly have an interest in it, and a right to have some say in this particular connection. Under existing conditions it is a well-known fact that men not only are deprived of a vote, but other people have got three votes, and some of them more—it just depends on the value of their property. The hon. member for Albert said that he did not think that the triple votes which are held by people in some localities make one iota of difference in the result of elections. I beg to differ from that statement. I know an instance where double and triple votes, amounting to 125, were practically in the hands of one individual, and he recorded those votes just as he chose,

and the consequence was that whoever he wanted to see in the council was put there. By interjection this afternoon, the hon. member for Bulimba asked, "Couldn't the tenant get the vote if he wanted it?" He certainly could if he went before the owner of the property and paid the rates, and then deducted the rates from his rent. But I have known instances where a tenant has been keen on getting a vote, and where he has found, perhaps, four or five weeks' rent and paid the rates, but before the election came round for him to have an opportunity of recording a vote, he was out of the house altogether.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Alter the law to give the resident a vote.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: If you altered the law every day in the week, there are individuals belonging to the same political category as the hon. member who would find means of getting through or round that law. When we sat in opposition and wanted to alter the law, the hon. member for Albert, who was then in charge of the Local Authorities Bill, point blank refused to accept our amendments. I moved an amendment myself in 1912, when sitting on the opposite side, to provide for what has been included in this Bill, but hon. members opposite would not then listen to it.

At 9.20 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (continuing): Later on, I moved an amendment to secure household suffrage, under which a householder, whether he owned the house or not, would get a vote, but it was defeated on division. Some point was raised about land being cut up into 18 or 15 perch allotments, and we moved an amendment to prevent it, but the then Home Secretary, the present member for Albert, distinctly said that the amendment could not be inserted into the Local Authorities Bill, and that the subject must be dealt with under a subdivision of land Bill. The amendments suggested by hon. members opposite, and the arguments they have used, have been urged by us before when their own Government was in power, and our desires were refused every time.

A good deal has been said to the effect that people in municipalities would be able to leave the district and evade their responsibilities; but there are instances of that kind on record in connection with people with fairly large businesses, which make it profitable for them to be on the local authorities and control them for their own benefit—for instance, to get the water supplied to them for their mines, mills, and other industries at a less price than it costs to produce it. These people, when it has served their purpose to do so, have shut up their mines and carted their machinery and assets away, leaving what is sometimes termed "the nomad"—and the man who has had his home there—to discharge the responsibilities, and the Government has had to come to the relief of some localities. For that reason, I think that not only the man who pays the rates, but the individual who lives in the community, has the right to have a say as to who shall govern the municipality. If this Bill does nothing else, it will increase interest in civic life and responsibility. The idea seems to be prevalent in the minds of hon. members

opposite that the only thing people want to do when they get the franchise is to borrow money and spend it, and then go away and shirk their responsibility; but people will not get out of their responsibility by shifting from one place to another. I do not believe, however, that they will do anything of the kind, but that they will elect people on the board who are interested in the wellbeing of the municipality, and not people who are simply there for their own interest and that of their friends. I know some people who are on the boards simply because they get business thereby, in spite of the law against contractors getting contracts from the local authorities, or against traders supplying goods, when they are members of the board. I believe that the increased civic responsibility which will be brought about, and the greater interest of people in the place in which they live, will make for the betterment of the community.

It has been pointed out that local authority work is not merely to make roads, although the bulk of the money is spent in that direction, but that the health of the people should be looked after, and everyone is concerned in regard to that matter. It is well known that local authorities have been lax and negligent in regard to health matters.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: All local authorities?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I am not saying all local authorities, but a great many of them have. The bulk of the local authorities do not display the interest which they should do. The candidate who says he is not going to increase the rates, and will save expense to the ratepayers, is the man who will get elected. I know some local authorities which for years and years have only struck a general rate of 3d. in the £1, and where there are hundreds of miles of roads, anyone knows how little can be done with a small rate like that. If the people could not afford to pay the rates there might be some excuse for it, but the majority of the people are squatters, and are well able to pay the rates. It has also been said that the elimination of the maximum rating power will be a dangerous principle; but local authorities, like other people, have found their way out of that difficulty. When the general rate was 3d. in the £1, they struck loan and health rates, so that the maximum for the general rate was a farce. It should have been wiped out long ago, for the simple reason that there has been a low valuation. In some municipalities they could not get enough from the rates to meet the necessary expenditure from a 3d. or a 6d. rate, so I do not think much harm is going to accrue from the alteration of the maximum rating power. One desirable improvement which will be made will be that the health of the people will be better looked after than it is now. We will not find what are nothing more nor less than fever-breeding beds, which the Government department has previously had to deal with. Something has been said with reference to open spaces, and it is essential in Queensland that no town should be so closely built upon that there are no breathing spaces for the people. But in some of the suburbs of Brisbane land has been sold by Liberal Governments in days gone by to such an extent that local authorities, and, in some instances, private individuals, have had to collect subscriptions to buy back land from

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private owners for breathing spaces, and conditions like that are nothing less than a public scandal. People wanted to get all the land and keep it till it increased in value, and then to practically levy blackmail on the rest of the community by selling the land at a greatly increased price. There are not nearly enough reserves in Brisbane at the present time. Something has also been said about control being exercised as to where people were allowed to build. There are houses within 3 miles of where we are to-night which are not a foot above high-water mark or spring tide. They are close to a tidal creek where the stench in summer time is abominable, and the land after a shower of rain or high tide is just like a sponge. By and by some of the people will find themselves in a very bad condition; but they will say that the result is due to a visitation of God, instead of their own neglect in not keeping on higher ground.

[9.30 p.m.]

If the local authorities have not power now to deal with that matter, I hope that when the Consolidation Bill is brought in, power will be given them to control such matters.

Many members opposite think that subsidies ought to be paid to local authorities, and it is a well-known fact that subsidies used to be paid to them, but they were distributed in such a way that people who needed the money most got the least. The result was that a Liberal Government came to the conclusion that the subsidy principle was a bad principle, and decided that the people of each locality should raise the money they required themselves. The money local authorities got from subsidies was anything but well spent in many instances. I do not think the subsidy principle which was then established is a good principle.

There is another point in connection with the Bill which has not been touched upon by previous speakers, and that is the power which local authorities will have under this measure to remit the rates of old-age pensioners. At the present time, in some places there are old-age pensioners who own their own homes, but find it a difficult task to save enough money from their pensions to pay the municipal sanitary and water rates. The plea of local authorities in such cases has always been that they have not the power to remit the rates on such properties. Under this Bill they will have that power. It may not be necessary that the rates should be remitted in every case, but in cases where old-age pensioners cannot afford to pay that money, it will be a boon to them to be relieved of the liability. When an old-age pensioner owning property has passed away, the local authority will be careful to see that anyone else who takes possession of the property will pay the rates, unless they have been remitted. I quite admit that councils in some cases have done good work. At any rate, they have done their best under existing conditions, but if they are given more power they will do more and better work. I certainly think that the sanitary system in force in a place like Brisbane, with a population of 180,000, is nothing less than a public scandal. A city of such importance should have a very different sanitary system from that which is now in force, and I imagine that the reason there has not been a change made

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in that system is that the ratepayers have not interested or concerned themselves in the matter. As a result of that want of interest, the city has drifted into a condition under which they have not the necessary conveniences of civilised life.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Is that matter not under the control of the Water and Sewerage Board?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: No.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: They have to do with the sanitary service.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: They may have to do that now, but the present system is a legacy from the municipality.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: They are seeking now to put it right.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: If the Government of which the hon. member for Bulimba was a member had undertaken to do the work, and had done it, the probabilities are that things might have been very different from what they are at the present time. The present sanitary system is certainly not a credit to a big city like Brisbane, and the municipal council might have done much better in this respect.

With regard to the proposed alteration in the system of electing mayors or chairmen of local authorities, I know that in a very large number of instances, though the mayor is supposed to be elected at the first meeting after the election of aldermen takes place, as a matter of fact, in many instances a caucus meeting is held before the first meeting of the council takes place, and the man who is the best underground engineer and can do the most intriguing gets elected as mayor. That is not a good thing for the people. I think it should be left to the people themselves to elect a mayor—the man they believe will fill the position most creditably. There are any number of men appointed as mayors who do not display very much ability in that position, and I think that if the adult electors had the opportunity of choosing the person who was to occupy that position, in nine cases out of ten they would elect a man who would be a credit to the position and a credit to the people themselves. For the reasons I have given, I welcome this Bill. It is a Bill which has been advocated by this party for twenty years, and I believe that nothing but good will follow in its train. With the operation of such a measure, the people will develop a sense of their civic responsibilities, and an interest in local government. A better sense of responsibility for our civic life is needed throughout Queensland, and this Bill will enable people to realise that they are responsible for the conditions which exist in their towns and cities. For that reason, I certainly think that this amending Bill will make things better and brighter, make life more worth living, and bring about more civilising influences in the community.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*): I have much pleasure indeed in opposing this measure, as submitted to the House. I do so because I intend to oppose any measure which has for its object the increasing of taxation of the man on the land. The Home Secretary was very moderate in his language and moderate in his reasons which he gave for the introduction of this measure. The whole of his argument was

directed to the franchise. In my opinion, there is some other object behind this measure other than the giving a vote, in local government matters, to the whole of the people of the State, and I can quote no better authority for what I am saying than the writings of that great Napoleon of the Labour party, the Hon. W. Demaine. That gentleman, in condoling with his party on the fact that they had not secured a victory, although they had a majority in the House, pointed out that they had 14,000 votes less than the people opposed to Labour. Mr Demaine stated, now that they had the opportunity, they could rectify this matter and make themselves secure on the next occasion, and for that purpose he advised the Government to put through an amending Local Authority Bill, so that the next local government elections could be held on the adult franchise, and this would hit the Primary Producers' Union where it lives. I believe that this Bill is an attempt to hit the primary producer hard. The hon. member for Bowen said that the Bill would enable local authorities to tax the people and provide work for the unemployed. In other words, the Bill is before the House for the purpose of securing the seats of hon. members opposite. They have not shown in any of their arguments one instance of where the workers of Queensland have asked for this Bill to be passed. The whole of their arguments have been directed against the past policy in regard to the health of the community, but I say the object of this Bill is to ensure their seats at the next election. So far as the local authorities are concerned, the Government cannot show where those people have not endeavoured to do the right thing to provide work for the unemployed, or to see that the health of the community is what it should be. They have done well in that regard, and the Government cannot charge them with neglect of their duty. The shires in my electorate have spent thousands of pounds to ensure that the health of the people is of the best; and, while hon. members opposite may be able to lay a charge of neglect of duty against some of the city local authorities, I do not think they can honestly lay that charge against country local authorities. The Bill is going to affect the people in the country more than anyone else, and in affecting the country it is going to affect the whole State. In the cane harvesting season you have hundreds of men coming into sugar localities, and these men, no matter what hon. members opposite may say, do not take any interest in local government matters. They come into the districts for the purpose of harvesting cane only.

Mr. GLEDSON: You ask them to come.

Mr. BRAND: We may ask them to come, but more often they come "on their own."

The HOME SECRETARY: How would you get your cane harvested if they did not come?

Mr. BRAND: I say that they come, but they do not take any interest in local authority matters.

The TREASURER: Then the country is perfectly safe.

Mr. BRAND: We are perfectly safe in not giving them a vote; but, if you give them a vote, they will become the dominant factor during certain months of the year.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do they stay there after the sugar season is over?

Mr. BRAND: No.

The HOME SECRETARY: Then how could they vote?

Mr. BRAND: During any election in the sugar season they would have the dominant vote.

The HOME SECRETARY: If they come back every year to cut your cane, they have some interest in the district.

Mr. BRAND: They do not come back every year. They come into the district to take out what they can get. They make no bones about that. As far as the casual cane-cutter is concerned, he will tell you that he is only there to get what he can during the sugar season and then get away.

The HOME SECRETARY: He goes there every year.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member for Musgrave has pointed out that, with the exception of the adult franchise and increased powers in rating, there is nothing in the Bill granting the local authorities any power that is going to be of any benefit to them, and the hon. member for Musgrave is a man who has spent a considerable amount of his time in local authority matters.

The HOME SECRETARY: He has a very fine little local authority.

Mr. BRAND: He has got that.

The HOME SECRETARY: He has got all the good land in the district.

Mr. BRAND: And he has the best country roads in Queensland, too. He is a man that the Government should take heed of in respect to some of his amendments—amendments that he regards as necessary for the better carrying out of local government. The hon. gentleman has stated that there is not much interest taken in local authorities, and that he, as Home Secretary, has had to nominate members to local authorities—to shire councils and city councils—and I would like to tell him that the apathy in local government matters in the country is due to the fact that the people have been so heavily taxed by the present Government that they have to look after their own private concerns in order to make a living, and they have no time at all for other matters.

Mr. COLLINS: How are they heavily taxed?

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member knows as well as I do that this Government placed a large amount of taxation on the primary producer.

Mr. COLLINS: Name one tax.

Mr. BRAND: The land tax is one, and increased income tax is another. Any measure that has for its object the heavier taxation of land will undoubtedly retard production. If our people once realise that they are going to have a preferential mortgage placed on their land—and the Minister evidently intends it, because he has provided that the rating may go up to any extent—then they will be faced with the position that production will have to be retarded. That means the reduction of the production of the whole country, and the Treasurer is going to feel the effect of it. I think that the measure should fix a limit to the rating powers of local authorities, similar to what they have at present.

The HOME SECRETARY: What do you suggest?

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Mr. BRAND: Well, it is 6d. now.

The HOME SECRETARY: How can I raise the maximum when you get round it by lowering the valuation?

Mr. BRAND: The Minister allows them to go up to any amount under this Bill. We are not allowed to go beyond 6d. as a general rate, but the local authorities can put on more than 6d. by special rates. It is better to make sure that you are not going to retard production by allowing anyone or any body of irresponsibles to tax the land beyond what it can pay. We can only stand a certain amount of taxation if you want us to produce, and the Government will find that the farmers are going to take fine care that people who have not the interests of the community at heart are not going to place a preferential mortgage on their crops; they can do this by lessening production—by not employing so many men—with the result that the Government will find that there will be more men on the unemployed market and less production, which are both bad for the State.

Then, most of our Government offices are not paying rates. I say that it is unjust that the private property-owners of Queensland should be asked to make roads and all other conveniences for a Government that will not pay taxes. We have an example of it more particularly in Brisbane, where large properties owned by the Government are not paying anything in rates. Yet the city council have to provide roads, channelling, footpaths, and so on all round them at the expense of the ratepayers. (Hear, hear!) Where the Government pay a subsidy to the local authorities I can understand that it may be right, but where there is no such subsidy I say that the Government have a duty to pay rates.

The TREASURER: What do you want?

Mr. BRAND: We want a subsidy to recoup us for the losses in rates. There are State stations in Queensland which are not paying rates. In one locality the loss of rates in that way, I am told, has practically killed one local authority.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They get the full amount by way of gratuity.

Mr. BRAND: I think they should pay rates. The Government, if they are entering into business, should pay rates the same as any private individual, and not expect private people in the locality to make roads for them. (Hear, hear!)

I hope that this measure will not go through in its entirety, but that the Minister will, in Committee, accept amendments which we hope will make the measure more workable and relieve the tension on the people in the country so that they may not need to retard production.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*): Some amendments that have been brought in in this measure, more particularly those recommended by the local authorities, are, no doubt, very good, and will be of very great assistance to the local authorities, because they have been suggested by practical men, but there are a multitude of reasons why we should object most strongly to the innovations of the Government, more particularly the alteration in the franchise and the proposal for the election of mayor. It is with those two points rather than with the

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details of the Bill that I propose to deal. They are of a revolutionary character, and should have been put to the people by referendum or at election time; I feel sure that if that had been done they would have been defeated by 100,000 votes. The other provisions of the Bill are of infinitesimal importance compared with these two, but before I go on to them I want to refer to the expense that is entailed in the alteration of the rolls.

The HOME SECRETARY: It will be no greater than having an annual election.

Mr. FLETCHER: We are preaching economy, and it is a wrong thing to bring the alteration in now. Then, what is to become of the ratepayers who are living outside the areas concerned? In Port Curtis we have people on the rolls who are living away, in the North and elsewhere. Will they have votes in Port Curtis?

The HOME SECRETARY: No.

Mr. FLETCHER: Then they will be eliminated. Anyhow, I hope the rolls will be cleaner than they were at the time of the last general State election. (Hear, hear!) The Home Secretary made use of arguments that were both irrelevant and unsound. I could not possibly go through all the arguments he used. One of them, for instance, was that the general of an army was not a producer of wealth. Of course not. His work is to study tactics and strategy.

The HOME SECRETARY: I said that he would not get a vote if that was his only qualification.

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. member pointed out that everybody did not make money; and he gave that as an instance. The hon. member also said that an election for this House and for a local authority were one and the same thing in principle. But they are totally different. The nomad, the bird of passage, will have a vote under this Bill, but he will have no stake in the district at all. But even that is not the point. The point is that in some shires, towns, or cities you will have no opposition at all. If there happen to be seven members on a council, they may be all Labour men—no opposition at all. In Parliament we always

have the Opposition, because one [10 p.m.] district counteracts another. You may have a Labour member for Fortitude Valley and a Liberal member for Toowong. But in the country each little shire council has to work on its own. You may have a body of men who may be most estimable citizens, yet they have not had any experience in dealing with finances and handling affairs. It is absolutely wrong to put them in charge of the affairs of a district. They cannot get the best results.

The same arguments apply in connection with the election of mayor. You may have a man who is very popular, but has had absolutely no experience; he is elected because of his popularity. There are men who will have a vote who are not ratepayers; they will not be concerned in the thing, and you are not going to get the best results. The British Empire has developed from barbarism, slavery, and serfdom, and gradually has come down throughout the ages to the present state of democracy. The socialist party have been dominant only for the last six years, yet they claim that they are responsible for all the advantages we enjoy to-day. If I were

to ask hon. members what were the most democratic, useful, and beneficial measures on the statute-book to-day they would probably say that they were general compulsory education, universal suffrage, workers' dwellings, old-age pensions, Agricultural Bank, Shops and Factories Act, State Children Act, and the Dental Act. All those measures were introduced by Liberal Governments. They cannot point to any one Act introduced by this Government which is anything like as good as those. They have amended certain Acts in certain particulars, but that was obligatory. They may have increased the allowances to certain people on account of the increase in the cost of living. It was their duty to do that; but they have not introduced anything fresh of any material benefit to the people. Had they done anything which was of any use, had they made a financial success of their business, had they any achievements to point to, we could have understood it. They have been absolute failures in everything they have undertaken. Now they are bringing in this measure, which is going to have the most disastrous results imaginable. The British Empire, of which Queensland is a part, has been built up on the most solid foundation. We have the law courts, hospitals, ambulances, etc., and local authorities. The local authorities are built up on the soundest lines. I have often thought how well arranged everything was, how they dovetailed in, what a fine legislation we got out of them. We have the best men you can find in the different shires coming forward and voluntarily giving the best that is in them for the development of those districts. We are going to cast them all adrift, for no reason except that the Government want to bring in this measure to help along socialism. I know what socialism means; it is no good to the community at all. (Government laughter.) We must either advance or go back. The Liberal Governments have given universal suffrage and compulsory education. Those are two of the most democratic measures we have to-day. We are on our trial; we are either going to go right on or we are going to go down. If we continue to act in the way this Government are acting we are going to go down. This alteration in the franchise is going to have exactly the same result as State enterprise—the breaking down of individual effort. Increased taxation to make up the deficits, compulsory loans, day labour, all these things work for the same end. They bring uncertainty, instability, insecurity, stagnation of trade, and unemployment. I have no hesitation in saying that this is a most retrograde movement. It is nonsensical, because I cannot see the benefits to be gained. The people are not going to get better results. If they were, I would not oppose it. It will be inimical to the workers themselves who own property. There are workers in my district who would not stand for it if it went to a referendum; it would go decidedly against the Government. The new men appointed may go into it whole-heartedly, in an attempt to do the best they can; but if they have not the ability, you cannot expect them to do it, and it is going to have very dire results on the community. It is a most short-sighted policy, because people will stop building houses, and you will have the rents going up. It is no encouragement to property-owners to build, and the banks will not be so ready to advance money. If you have a sound body of men administering the affairs of a local authority,

they have some chance of getting money when they go to a bank, but if you have a body of men who have not had any business training or experience in finance, or in handling affairs, how are they going to get the money? I hold no brief for the wealthy landowners. I say that the extreme wealthy man, the selfish man who does not recognise his responsibilities, and does not know how to treat his employees, is as bad for the community as the extremist on the other side. We want the unselfish man who recognises his obligations to the community. The trend of such legislation as this will be to drive us down into the depths. I view the introduction of this measure with great seriousness. Nero, in the olden days, fiddled while Rome burned. This Government is fiddling while the affairs of this State are being dragged down to destruction. The hour is pregnant with possibilities. We have been living in a boom period, and are now facing the aftermath. There are grave difficulties ahead. In the face of those difficulties, the Government bring in a measure of this sort, which must have further bad effects on the community. There is a storm brewing, and we have made no provision for it. While the going was good, and times were propitious, we should have prepared for the evil days that were ahead; but this Government have drifted like a derelict on the ocean, and now propose to bring about further depression by the introduction of a measure of this sort. At any time it would be suicidal, but bringing it in in the face of what we have to experience is nothing but pure murder.

Mr. W. COOPER (*Rosewood*): I think I heard one member on the other side refer to a Napoleon of this side in the person of Mr. Demaine. I am under the impression we have another Napoleon over there in the hon. member for Port Curtis. It appears to me that the great arguments have centred round the franchise in this Bill. I claim to have had a certain amount of local authority experience, and I have often wondered what came over the whole community when they committed to a few landholders in any municipality, or any shire council area, the right to dominate the whole of the interests of that particular area, and not give those men who were responsible for the production of this great State an opportunity of having a vote upon the question as to what conditions they should be permitted to live under. When I was living in Forest Hill I had no vote for the shire council, and I contracted typhoid fever and was five months in hospital and had to keep my wife and family all that time. That was the result of the neglect and dilatory methods adopted by the shire council in not combating the typhoid germs. The cases from that district were the most severe in the Ipswich Hospital at that time.

Mr. FRX: What were the conditions that existed?

Mr. W. COOPER: The conditions were defective drainage and an absolute neglect of the duties that were imposed on the shire council. I also happened to be a member of a municipal council for some considerable time. In that council I represented the workers in the place, not because they put me there, but because the men who happened to be fortunate enough to have a vote considered that I had just as much common sense as any other man whether I was a property-owner or not. I was the only representative

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of the working men in that town. The roads were deplorable. The children had to take their boots off and walk to school up to their knees in water, because there were men on the council who had four, five, or six votes whilst the men in the workers' part of the town only had one vote. That was how those men were able to place disabilities upon those who were the workers in the place, and but for whose presence the town would have gone down. We have heard very much about the franchise not giving the security that the parliamentary franchise gives. Yet these men have to live under these conditions; consequently they should have a voice in the making of the municipal laws and in determining the conditions under which they have to live. If not, they might as well be put into a paddock and told that they are slaves. That is all they are—wage slaves. We find in local authority elections that the men who have all the say are the men who have five or six votes. They can return anyone they like. My experience has been that the men who have been returned have always endeavoured to get a road made to their own back doors. (Laughter.)

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Did you do that?

Mr. W. COOPER: I did, as soon as I possibly could. (Laughter.) That is exactly what the hon. member would have done, and that is the kind of thing that will continue so long as the present condition of things exists. If a man in a town has four or five children he only has one vote, and those children have to live under the conditions that are made for them by the shire council. Again, we have in towns and shires public servants who are sent to those towns and shires and are compelled to live under the conditions that exist there without having any voice in the local authority elections.

Mr. CORSER: Aren't they occupiers?

Mr. W. COOPER: Many of them are not. Take a shifting population such as railway officials, who are compelled to live in a boarding-house. They have no control over the local authorities, although they may have to live alongside a fever bed, as I had to do when at Forest Hill. I am quite satisfied that there is not an hon. member on the other side of the House who would oppose this Bill if it were not for the adult franchise proposal contained in it. I feel that we are now on the eve of progress and not of stagnation. If we can once get this measure through, we shall get a different class of men on the municipal and shire councils, and we shall get the whole of the people in the various districts to take an interest in local government matters, and we shall have better conditions prevailing generally.

Mr. MOORE: I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—That the House do now adjourn. The business to-morrow will be the continuation of the second reading debate on the Local Authorities Acts Amendment Bill.

Question put and passed.

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

[*Mr. W. Cooper.*]