

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 1920

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 30 NOVEMBER, 1920.

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

QUESTIONS.

PRICE FIXING OF PRIMARY PRODUCTS.

Mr. LOGAN (*Lockyer*) asked the Chief Secretary—

“1. What primary products have been dealt with by the Price Fixing Commissioner to date?

“2. Which of the primary products has the Commissioner—(a) increased prices, (b) decreased prices?

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

“1. Primary—Coal, onions, potatoes. Primary, secondary—Arrowroot, bacon and hams, butter, cheese, flour, jam, can-

densed milk, meat, sugar, syrup, treacle, and timber.

"2. (a) Butter, cheese, condensed milk (increases authorised by Commissioner); (b) meat, timber."

APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNOR.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*) asked the Chief Secretary—

"Will he ascertain if Sir Matthew Nathan, as reported in to-day's (30th November) Brisbane Press, said at Adelaide yesterday that the Philp delegation was responsible for his being sent to Queensland as Governor?"

The PREMIER replied—

"I have received a telegram from His Excellency denying the report."

RAILWAY PASSES FOR ELECTION CANDIDATES.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Attorney-General—

"If any of the candidates contesting seats, either at by-elections or the general elections this year in the Government interest, were supplied with railway passes or any travelling facilities not enjoyed by the general public?"

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

"A number of candidates belonging to Government and Opposition parties, including the hon. member asking the question, enjoyed free railway passes while contesting their seats because of the fact that they were 'sitting members.'"

EXPENDITURE OF UNION FUNDS.

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

"Will he take steps in future to protect unionists generally in regard to the expenditure of their money by union officials, and will he assure that in future no money is sent out of the State by unions until Queensland workers are fully provided for?"

The PREMIER replied—

"This question seems to refer to the assistance given by the Queensland unions to the needy at Broken Hill, and, if so, I must inform the hon. member that no Government would attempt to check the charitable instincts of any body of men."

The SPEAKER: I instructed the Clerk to expunge portion of the hon. member for Toombul's question. I remind the hon. member that the purpose of a question is to obtain information, and not to supply it to the House. I would point out that questions addressed to Ministers should relate to the public affairs with which they are officially connected, to proceedings pending in Parliament, or to any matter of administration for which the Minister is responsible. The hon. member's question did not comply with that procedure.

RECOMMENDATIONS RE "FOSTER AGREEMENT."

Mr. SWAYNE asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"Will opportunity be afforded to make any recommendations that may come from the joint meeting that is to be convened of representatives of the United Cane Growers' Association and Australian Sugar Producers' Association in

connection with what is termed the 'Foster agreement,' or any other form of contracting outside the provisions of the Regulation of Cane Prices Act, or other necessary amendments of the Act, before the crushing season of 1921"?

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

"It is difficult to understand from the wording of the question what information the hon. gentleman desires. From his speeches in this House in the past, it is by no means clear whether he favoured 'contracting out' of the provisions of the Sugar Cane Prices Act, or otherwise. The hon. member is well aware that the Foster agreement has been declared invalid by the High Court on an appeal instituted by this Government at its own expense, as the terms of the Federal sugar agreement prevented legislative action by this Government to secure this result. It is therefore obvious that the hon. gentleman's interest in this matter is somewhat belated, and that the welfare of the sugar-growers is always safe in the hands of this Government."

STATE TEACHERS OVER SIXTY-FIVE YEARS OF AGE.

Mr. KING (*Logan*) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"How many teachers over the age of sixty-five years, who are contributing to the Superannuation Fund, have recently received notice from the department dispensing with their services"?

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

"One teacher, who is over the age of sixty-five years, and who is a contributor to the Superannuation Fund, has, in terms of section 49 of the Public Service Act of 1896, been retired from the Public Service as from the 31st December, 1920."

POLICE UNIFORMS.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*) asked the Home Secretary—

"1. From what sources has cloth for police uniforms been purchased during the past eighteen months, and at what price per yard?"

"2. Has any of the material purchased for uniforms within this period been resold; if so, at what price or prices per yard?"

"3. Who were the purchasers of such material"?

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

"1 to 3. Inquiries will be made."

RAILWAY ENGINES IN RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

Mr. WALKER asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. How many railway engines were owned by the department on 30th June last?"

"2. How many of these were obsolete?"

"3. How many engines were—(a) under repair; (b) retired from service; (c) brought into commission during the year ended 30th June, 1920?"

"4. How many engines were owned by the department on 30th June, 1915"?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1 to 4. The information is being obtained, and will be furnished as soon as possible."

PRISONERS RELEASED DURING 1919-1920.

Mr. CORSER asked the Home Secretary—

"Will he lay on the table of the House a return, without the names of the individuals, showing the number of prisoners prematurely released during 1919-1920, together with the crimes for which they were sentenced, and the reasons for special remissions granted?"

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

"No. Particulars may be secured at the Home Department."

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*) asked the Premier, without notice—

"Has he seen the 'Adelaide Herald' and the 'Adelaide Advertiser,' Tory Press, in which the statement alleged to be made by our new Governor is reported?"

The PREMIER replied—

"I have not seen the papers referred to by the hon. member; but I would like to peruse them if he will let me see them." (Opposition laughter.)

LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): We have had this Bill before us several times, and the objectionable is still the main feature.

Mr. SMITH: Objectionable to whom?

Mr. MOORE: The local authorities and the majority of the people of Queensland. The people have expressed their dislike to this clause, which is only a party fad. It is said that it has been put on the platform by the people of Queensland, but it has only been put on the platform of the Labour party by a section of the people. We do not think it is fair or just; we object to it, and we are going to fight it all the way through. We think the occupier is the person who should be entitled to a vote. The Home Secretary said that, although he lived in the town, he had not got a vote himself. I say that that is his own fault. He is entitled to a vote if he likes to have it, and it is merely lack of interest on his part if he does not take the opportunity of securing the vote. If he wants to have it, he can get it; but he would rather come into this Chamber saying he has not got a vote, and pretend that he has no opportunity of getting one; but we know that that is not so. We know that this is only a sort of mule-like obstinacy on the part of the Government. I can understand that there is a coalition on the other side of the House which is not beneficial for the people of Queensland. We had the Premier going round during the elections making revolutionary and stupid speeches, and he thinks he has to act up to the statement that he made on that occasion. This coalition reminds me of the mule which has no respect for ancestry and no hope of descent. I think it is very unfair that this clause should be put in the forefront. The Local Authorities'

Association, on every occasion it has interviewed the Home Secretary, has objected to it in every possible way, and I do not think it is going to be for the benefit of the people if it is put in the Bill. There is nothing to show that there will be any benefit. In New South Wales, where they have got an extension of the franchise not as drastic as what is proposed here, there is nothing to prove that the council is working better than it was before.

The HOME SECRETARY: Are you acquainted with the conditions there?

Mr. MOORE: I have read what is going on, and I have read of the expenditure of £75,000 for a coalmine which is not worth £5,000. Is the management of Sydney better to-day than it was before the franchise was extended.

The HOME SECRETARY: Much better.

Mr. MOORE: I do not think it is.

The HOME SECRETARY: Some of the streets have been improved.

Mr. MOORE: If you want to see how the streets have been improved, you have only to go to Melbourne, where they have the same franchise as we have in Brisbane.

The HOME SECRETARY: They started off with good streets.

Mr. MOORE: They started off with men who were imbued with a public spirit and a desire to make the place habitable and fit to live in. I am satisfied that if we go in for this proposed extension of the franchise, we shall have party politics brought into municipal government in Queensland. Directly you bring party politics into municipal government, you get public interests neglected and study class interests instead.

Mr. WIER: It is the end of your mob.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member for Ithaca said it was going to alter 75 per cent. of the representation of the local authorities in Queensland. What benefit is it going to be? Is it seriously stated that a man who has been unsuccessful in his own business, who is not thrifty, and who has never become an occupier although he lives in the district, is still going to be qualified, and has such a fine sense of civic conscience that he is going to manage public affairs when he cannot manage his own affairs? The thing is absurd. We know perfectly well that it does not take much for a man to become an occupier. He only wants to have sufficient interest in the district in which he lives to rent a house in it, and then he can have a vote if he likes.

Mr. FORDE: In some instances there are six occupiers to the one house, and only one vote.

Mr. MOORE: I do not see anything wrong in that at all.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why is it we have adult suffrage in national affairs, if it is not a good thing?

Mr. MOORE: The people working for local authorities are doing a special work for the benefit of the people in the district, and it is not a national matter at all. They are carrying out work in the district they represent to the satisfaction of the people. You are going to take away the limitation in regard to rates, because you say they do not spend enough rates. I would like the Home Secretary to recognise that there were

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about £466,000 levied in Queensland last year, and at the end of the year there were £162,000 in arrears, showing that the people were not able to pay. The Government have stepped into the domain of the local authorities, and have so curtailed their taxation rights that they are not in a position to do what they ought to do. If you are going to bring in adult suffrage, the Government should also grant a subsidy. No one can convince me that it is a reasonable thing for an ordinary elector to have a vote on a loan proposal which is going to put a mortgage on other people's property, and then be able to walk out and leave the man with property to foot the bill.

The HOME SECRETARY: It beats me why you allow the ordinary citizen to walk on your roads.

Mr. MOORE: The local authorities make roads for the benefit of the people of Queensland. There are main roads built through shires that are of very little use to the rate-payers. The local authorities recognise that the public have a right to use those roads, but they do not recognise that the public have a right to vote on questions like that.

The HOME SECRETARY: It admits it.

Mr. MOORE: It does not admit it at all.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why not have a toll put on those roads so that people who do not pay rates will have to pay a toll?

Mr. MOORE: We have not asked for a toll at all. We are only asking that the people who are liable for the rates shall be the ones who shall vote on the question, and not the ordinary outsider, who comes in for seasonal-work. I do not think in the small shires inside it is going to make much difference, because in the settled areas the population is much larger than the number who come in for seasonal occupations; but in the city of Brisbane men have their business in the city and live outside, and they are going to be outvoted on every occasion. In the large areas out West, it means that the unions are going to dominate the local authorities in any way they like, because they can vote as they like.

The HOME SECRETARY: Wait and see the result.

Mr. MOORE: It is all very fine to say, "Wait and see the result." We have warned this Government on several occasions as to what was likely to happen, and we have seen the results. We see the deplorable conditions we have got into.

The HOME SECRETARY: Where are they?

Mr. MOORE: Hon. members sitting on the front bench ask, "Where are the deplorable conditions?"

The HOME SECRETARY: They are in your minds.

Mr. MOORE: They are not in our minds; they are in the public mind. The public mind throughout the State is exercised very much over the position Queensland has got into. Speaking as a local authority representative, and one who is a member of the Local Authorities' Association, I say we have the right to—

Mr. SMITH interjected.

Mr. MOORE: I hope I am. If it means justice and fair play, I hope that is typical of local authorities. Up to the present time the local authorities have endeavoured to

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carry out their work to the best of their ability. They have not had the money to enable them to do all they might have done, but they have done the best they could under the circumstances. If the Home Secretary could show us one single instance where the extension of the franchise has been of any decided benefit to the people living in the areas, we would have something to guide us, but as far as I can see there is nothing. The New Zealand Act has been quoted pretty freely, but the New Zealand Act does not go as far as this Bill. The New Zealand Act does not give the ordinary elector a vote on a loan proposal. It is not a reasonable thing that that power should be given to the ordinary electors. Because the Labour party have a majority at the present time, there is no reason why they should give their supporters a power which they might use unwisely, and very possibly will use unwisely, because they know perfectly well it is not going to affect their own pockets; it is going to affect the pockets of the people who own land.

Mr. SMITH: That is the argument used against every extension of the franchise.

Mr. MOORE: It is a very good argument, too.

Mr. SMITH: If you had your way, we would still be in a state of serfdom.

Mr. MOORE: We are not in a state of serfdom as far as local authorities are concerned. The local authority representatives throughout Queensland are not elected on political principles at all; and in New South Wales, where they have an extension of the franchise, what do we find? Pledged candidates of the caucus have been elected to the councils; they have to carry out what they are told, and we see scandals going on there.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you think an extension of the franchise would make any difference?

Mr. MOORE: Of course, I do. Are members opposite allowed to vote on public matters as they like? No. Of course, they have to vote in class interests, and that is what we object to being brought into local authorities.

The HOME SECRETARY: What are class interests? The people with property—that is one class.

Mr. MOORE: Not necessarily. I say we legislate for all classes.

The HOME SECRETARY: The present system is purely a class system—that is, the property class has all the say.

Mr. MOORE: No one local authority in Queensland to-day has legislated for one class. They have legislated in favour of all sections of the community, and they have men of all political opinions on the councils. It is not a question of whether a man is a Labour man or whether he is not; but directly you extend the franchise you bring party politics into it.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about the election of mayor?

Mr. MOORE: There is going to be emoluments attached to the position of mayor, and you will have a block vote. You may have someone getting into a council who has no interest in the district whatever. Just an ordinary elector may be elected mayor, and he will be there for three years, and he will

be able to do a great deal of harm in three years. It may be on the block vote of an organisation that he gets elected.

The HOME SECRETARY: Any man may get in on the block vote now. The present mayor of Brisbane is also president of the Employers' Association.

Mr. MOORE: If he is president of the Employers' Association, it shows he has plenty of ability; it shows that he is a good man to undertake the business of the city, and he is elected by the ratepayers. Because the hon. gentleman happens to be vice-president of the Australian Workers' Union, it does not say that he is elected to the head of the Department of Home Affairs on that account. The position of mayor of Brisbane has nothing to do with the presidency of the Employers' Association. His own council elected him to look after their affairs because they considered he was a fit and proper person to be mayor.

Mr. CORSER: It is just the same as Parliament electing their Speaker.

Mr. MOORE: Just the same. The electors do not elect the Speaker. It is done by Parliament because we say we are better qualified to elect our Speaker.

The HOME SECRETARY: You often say it is done by caucus.

Mr. MOORE: So it is.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is the caucus of the majority in the city council who elect the mayor.

Mr. MOORE: I do not know anything about that.

The HOME SECRETARY: Were you not the leader of the dominant party in your council when you were elected chairman?

Mr. MOORE: The only reason why I was made chairman in my council was because nobody else cared to take it. (Laughter.) I was it to be clearly understood that, so far as local authorities are concerned, there are no politics at all. The members of local authorities are the most public-spirited men we have in Queensland, because they work for the benefit of the community as a whole, and they have no axe to grind. I heard one hon. member say that every councillor had a road built to his own back door. If that is so, he must have been a very poor sort of councillor, because that is not my experience at all.

The HOME SECRETARY: When you had the power, why did you not abolish plural voting?

Mr. WEIR: Do you believe in plural voting?

Mr. MOORE: I do believe in plural voting as far as local authorities are concerned. I do not object to one man one vote when it comes to occupiers, but I do not see any objection to plural voting as far as local authorities are concerned.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you think that if a man has property in ten different shires that he should have thirty votes?

Mr. MOORE: Why should he not have a say in the spending of his own money? He has to contribute towards the maintenance of the roads in the different localities.

The HOME SECRETARY: I want to know where you stand on the matter.

Mr. MOORE: I do not make any secret of it. If a man has property in different

areas he should have a vote in each one, because he has just as much interest in those areas as the people living there.

Mr. SMITH: You would deprive the people who live in the area of a vote.

Mr. MOORE: If a man living in the area is an occupier he should have a vote, but if he does not live there, why should he have a vote? It is not like the State Government, which has power to tax everybody. We have only the land to tax. The liability is on the land, and whether a man leaves or not the liability is still there. I cannot see any justification for an alteration in the franchise.

The HOME SECRETARY: I quite agree that the man who wants thirty votes cannot see any justification for any alteration.

Mr. MOORE: The way I look at it is that a man is entitled to have a say as to how his money is expended in different areas. If you went to New South Wales I consider you would have just as much [4 p.m.] right to say how your money was to be spent here. Why should you not have a say in the expenditure of your money when it is helping to develop the country? It is the enterprise of the individual which makes the land valuable, and he should be entitled to a say.

I would like to draw attention to some points in this Bill, because I cannot see the force of them. The postal ballot is going to be taken away as far as all local government is concerned. That is going to be a great expense.

The HOME SECRETARY: No, it is not. That is one of the reasons why it is there. At the Committee stage of this Bill I will give you an idea of what it costs under the postal system.

Mr. MOORE: What will be the cost of providing for polling booths, presiding officers, etc.? What is the advantage? There is no suggestion of "crook" voting in local authority government. Is it because a fear of the adult franchise that this provision is put in? If a man is entitled to a vote, why should he not post it instead of having to ride to the polling-booth—a long distance, very often. In a comparatively small shire such as mine it will require about thirty-five polling-booths, and that means presiding officers and other expenses.

The HOME SECRETARY: It will not mean as much expense as a postal ballot.

Mr. MOORE: There will have to be more polling-booths than for a State election.

The HOME SECRETARY: The cost in Queensland of the last shire elections was £15,000.

Mr. MOORE: What was the cost for the State election?

The HOME SECRETARY: About the same.

Mr. MOORE: It stands to reason it must cost more. Why not have the postal ballot in the big areas outside? The thing is an absurdity. It may be more difficult for a man to record his vote.

The HOME SECRETARY: Of course, you say that a man who leaves the district has a right to vote.

Mr. MOORE: They do not have postal votes in the city to-day; they have ballots in the towns and cities. It is only in the country they have postal voting.

The HOME SECRETARY: You want the people who left the district to have a vote by post.

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Mr. MOORE: Of course, if their money is going to be expended in that district. I only want to make it convenient for people to record their vote.

The HOME SECRETARY: This certainly makes the residential qualifications more secure.

Mr. MOORE: You will bring some of them long distances, and there is no advantage practically. It is very expensive.

The HOME SECRETARY: If I brought that in, and a man who was working on railway construction in the electorate before Christmas, but who shifted out of it, voted by post, you would be the first one to complain.

Mr. MOORE: I suppose if an election were held, a special train would be run for them the same as on the occasion of a parliamentary election?

The HOME SECRETARY: You will find it is some protection.

Mr. MOORE: I do not think the protection will compensate for the disadvantage.

Then there is the compilation of the rolls, which is going to cause an enormous amount of work. In my small shire I have portions of five electorates. There is no earthly way of telling from the roll whether a person lives in the shire or not. The roll does not say in what portion he lives; it only gives the districts, and they are divided in all sorts of ways, and there is no way of telling whether a person lives in the Rosalie or Crow's Nest shire or elsewhere. It is going to be a very difficult thing, and the shire clerk, who has a great deal of work to do at present, will not be able to carry it out.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is not so difficult as you imagine.

Mr. MOORE: It is fairly difficult to compile a roll now.

The HOME SECRETARY: In the country districts most of the people settled there have the franchise. They are on the rate-book.

Mr. MOORE: But that is only the ratepayers. What about the other people? They are not on it.

The HOME SECRETARY: The other people are in the town.

Mr. MOORE: All the people in the country are not ratepayers. If it is going to affect 75 per cent. of the local authorities in Queensland, it shows there must be a great number—

The HOME SECRETARY: What are you basing your argument on?

Mr. MOORE: I am basing my argument on what the hon. member for Ithaca said. The roll is going to be a very difficult thing to compile. It is going to entail an enormous lot of office work, and it practically means an electoral office in every shire.

The HOME SECRETARY: It will only have to be compiled once in every three years.

Mr. MOORE: But the clerk cannot be expected to do it. If there is an extraordinary election it has to be compiled, and the clerk cannot do all this extra work. Every time there is a vote for a loan it will be necessary. Polls are always being taken. I cannot see that it is going to be as simple as the Minister says.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not say it is simple, but it is not impossible.

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Mr. MOORE: I do not say it is impossible. We can compel every elector to come and register his name, which seems to be the simplest way.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is going to be the same as when the last redistribution of seats took place.

Mr. MOORE: The police went around on that occasion. If the police are going round to take the names, you are not going to get them from the rolls; it is going to be done from the Electoral Department, and if that is the way it is going to be done I have no objection.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is provided in the Bill, which says "from the existing roll."

Mr. MOORE: Well, that does not mean the police are going to get the name of every man in the area. I do not think the Minister quite knows what the position is going to be with regard to the boundaries of these shires. Even the parishes are not contiguous with the electoral boundaries. What I am upset about is the amount of work which is going to be placed on the clerk. The clerks are the over-worked body of men in these councils.

Mr. SMITH: As a matter of fact, the clerk is generally the brains of the council.

Mr. MOORE: That may be the case up North.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

The HOME SECRETARY: How many clerks represented local authorities at the last conference?

Mr. MOORE: Roughly, about thirty or forty.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: That is a nice reflection on the council.

Mr. MOORE: It is not a reflection on the council, because the clerk is a permanent officer. There is nothing in this Bill to say that business enterprises of the State are to be rated. It has often been asked for, and the late Premier recognised that it was only reasonable, and yet it has been left out. Many councils are getting less rates on account of these State businesses being exempt, and yet they have to carry on.

Mr. SMITH: Look at clause 16.

Mr. MOORE: Clause 16 was recommended and asked for by the Local Authorities' Conference. It was recognised that in cases of hardship, where people were in unfortunate circumstances, that they could not pay. I suppose the Government will now go round and claim credit for having put in something asked for by the local authorities. The alteration of the amount of rating, and the taking away of the limitation provided in the old Act is a very serious thing. By removing the maximum rate which can be imposed by local authority, it will mean that you are going to have an altered position entirely. There is no occasion to remove the maximum at all. If we do not fix the maximum rate which can be imposed by a local authority, it will mean that we will have all sorts of extravagances. We have seen what has happened in some councils already, even where the maximum rate has been fixed. That maximum rate provided in the Act has been a safeguard for many ratepayers in Queensland, and there is no need for removing it now. There should be some maximum put in the Bill, otherwise we will have a class of

people getting into the council who do not care what they expend, or what extravagances they go in for, because the liability will always be on the other fellow. I notice that the Minister has repealed the provision under which local authorities can meet jointly to carry out joint work. I do not know what is the reason for repealing the clause relating to joint local authorities. Where local authorities and shires adjoin one another, there is always certain to be some joint work to be done, and we should leave that provision in the Act.

Mr. SMITH: This Bill does not do away with a joint board at all.

Mr. MOORE: Clause 21 of this Bill says that section 341 of the principal Act should be repealed. That relates to the joint work of local authorities. In the past, when any joint work was to be undertaken, a specification had to be prepared, showing what was the estimated expenditure and revenue, and this was published so that the people would have an opportunity of voting on it to see if they approved of it or not. Now, we have a clause here repealing that provision altogether, and I do not know why that has been done.

Mr. SMITH: Joint boards are not repealed where they are necessary.

Mr. MOORE: I say they are necessary. I notice there is a provision here stating that electors can apply for a tramway area by petition. I think that only ratepayers should be allowed the right to have a vote as to whether they want a tramway or not. The ratepayers living in the locality will be liable for any loss on any tramway, and they only should have the right to vote on it or not. Under the Bill as it is at present, a local authority can construct a tramway without the ratepayers having a chance of saying whether it is wanted or not.

The HOME SECRETARY: The landowner is the person who will gain by the establishment of a tramway service.

Mr. MOORE: Or the landowner might lose if a tramway is established.

The HOME SECRETARY: You do not insinuate that a tramway might depreciate a man's land?

Mr. MOORE: Yes, I do. I have known cases where the construction of a railway depreciated the value of land.

The HOME SECRETARY: Where was that?

Mr. MOORE: All over the Downs.

The HOME SECRETARY: I defy you to give one instance where the land depreciated in value after a railway was built.

Mr. MOORE: I will give you an instance. The whole of the Gowrie estate depreciated in value after the construction of the Kingsthorpe to Haden railway. It was a guaranteed line, and it meant an excessive liability to the landowners in that area. The liability was four times greater than the amount of rates that the landowners paid to the shire council, so it was only natural that the land would depreciate in value. The construction of a tramway might have the same effect. I consider that when people invest their money in land, they should have the right to say whether they want a tramway or not. I have never found any people living in a

district voting against a tramway if there is a chance of it becoming a paying proposition. They are all in favour of it. That is why I say that the people concerned should have the right to vote on the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed him under the Standing Orders.

Mr. FORDE (*Rockhampton*): It is a pity that hon. members opposite cannot offer some constructive criticisms on such a measure as this. I remember reading the remarks of an old thinker who said that the great drawbacks to progress came from men who lacked imagination. After listening to the speeches of hon. members opposite, I can see that they have no imagination, and they have no consideration for the great majority of the people of Queensland, the people who will have a vote under this Bill, and who were previously denied the right to have a say in local government affairs. I was surprised to hear the remarks which fell from the deputy leader of the Opposition. He showed by his speech that he was quite as conservative as the hon. member for Bulimba, the leader of the Nationalist party.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He speaks from experience.

Mr. FORDE: I suppose that conservatism is innate in him, just as it is in the hon. member for Drayton, and he cannot help himself. We hear a lot from hon. members opposite, particularly from the hon. member for Aubigny, about the probability of the unions dominating the local authorities. Well, if the majority of the people in the local authority areas are members of unions, why should they be denied the right of having representation on and controlling the municipal councils? (Hear, hear!) If the unionists control the majority of the votes in the local authority area, what is wrong with their having a majority of the representatives on the council? It is a most conservative view for hon. members opposite to take up, that just because men belong to a union they should be denied the right of having representation on a council.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Who took that view? Stick to the truth.

Mr. FORDE: We know the fear you have of unionism. We know that you would not have a unionist in the country if you could avoid it.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FORDE: To-day we have a good deal of objection from hon. members opposite to the proposal for electing a mayor by the ratepayers. When hon. members do that it shows that they fear the people voicing their opinions on such a question. At any rate, if we had a number of unionists returned to the various local authorities, it would do away with a lot of the humbug that goes on around the council chamber at present. Hon. members opposite fear that if the Labour people have a vote on the question of the election of mayor that a Labour man might get the position. Last night the hon. member for Albert deplored the fact that the Lord Mayor of Sydney was a Labour man. Why should not the Labour party have an opportunity of getting their representatives into those positions if the majority of the people are of that opinion. If a majority of

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the people of Sydney decide in favour of the Labour lord mayor, what is wrong with that?

Mr. MAXWELL: What about his profiteering?

Mr. FORDE: You know all about profiteering. You know how to buy for 6d. and sell for 1s. I am pleased that the local authorities will have an opportunity of exempting from rates the old-age pensioners, returned soldiers, and widows in poor circumstances. That is a very good thing. That was recommended to the local authorities conference for consideration by the Mount Morgan Council. It is something that we might expect to come from such a democratic town as Mount Morgan. Mount Morgan is a town which sends to this Chamber one of our finest democrats, in the person of Mr. Stopford. The action of that council is a reflex of the opinions of the people of Mount Morgan, and we could only expect that such a proposal would come from there. I am pleased to know that the Home Secretary has seen fit to include that provision in the Bill now before us.

Mr. KING: It was supported by a democratic conference.

Mr. FORDE: We know that the conference elected on the present franchise is not a democratic one. We know that the majority of the members on that body are representative of property-owners. There may be one vote in every house, but it very often happens that more people live in that house who are over twenty-one years of age, and under the present Act they have no vote for local elections. This Bill will remove that anomaly. The men and women in the community who are earning an honest living, and bringing up families who will be the future generations of Queensland, have a right to vote on local authority affairs. The hon. member for Aubigny stands for a man having a vote in the municipality just because he owns property. To carry that to its logical conclusion, if a man had a piece of property in twenty different municipalities, he could exercise twenty votes. In fact, he might exercise sixty votes, as in some cases one man has three votes.

Mr. MAXWELL: Why not?

Mr. FORDE: I can understand the hon. member for Toowong saying that, because he believes that property should rule Queensland and that the will of the people should not be recognised at all. We on this side say that the amount of money or property that a man possesses is no criterion as to his worth in the community. Some of the greatest writers, thinkers, and university professors in the world have been practically penniless.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Some of them do not pay taxes.

Mr. FORDE: The hon. gentleman would not pay any tax if he could get out of it. He would like to get everything for nothing. I understand that he got relief from land tax. I was saying that some of the greatest professors, thinkers, and writers in the world have been men who have no property whatever, although they are men who have devoted their lives and sacrificed themselves in the interests of their country. If we followed up the suggestions of hon. members opposite, we would find that these great men

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would be denied the right of exercising a vote as to who should be their representatives in a local governing area. It was stated by the hon. member for Aubigny that the occupiers of houses have votes. Certainly, in some houses, one person has a vote; but I know houses in my electorate where there are six or seven persons over twenty-one years of age, and only one of that number has the right to vote at municipal elections. They are allowed to vote in connection with Federal and State elections, yet they have no right to exercise the franchise at a local authority election. They can exercise the franchise for matters of greater concern, yet they cannot vote for a representative for the local council. These people are respectable citizens, and they are entitled to a vote in connection with municipal elections. There are many men holding advanced democratic views who are denied a seat on our local governing bodies to-day, because of our restricted franchise, and through which thousands and thousands of progressive people in Queensland are deprived of a vote for representatives of municipalities or shire councils. The hon. member for Aubigny deplores the fact that the postal vote should be cut out of this Act. Personally, I am not at all sorry for that, because postal votes are used by some smart people and by the political unions of hon. members opposite for their own ends. In some cases they may use the postal vote honestly, but it is open to abuse, and it should be cut out. The hon. member for Aubigny had a lot to say about the great work involved in the preparation of the rolls. I am not unmindful of that fact, but I know that the Home Secretary and the Home Department are sympathetic towards local authorities, and they will give them whatever assistance that can be reasonably expected to alleviate to some extent the increased work that will devolve upon local authorities in Queensland. We have heard some unkind remarks passed by hon. members opposite regarding the shire councils of Queensland. I maintain that, in [4.30 p.m.] many local governing areas, at the present time the shire clerks run the councils. They are the men that one must go to for any authentic information with regard to the affairs of the council.

Mr. GLEDSON: And the men are poorly paid.

Mr. FORDE: As my friend says, they are the men who are poorly paid.

Mr. KING: And the local authorities are trying to meet them as well as they can.

Mr. FORDE: It has taken them a long time to wake up to the fact that they require a substantial increase in their emoluments. The Liberal Government were a long time trying to meet the public servants and railway servants, but the present Government passed that Arbitration Act which enabled them to get substantial recognition. The Liberal Government were a long time in trying to meet the workers generally in every sphere of life, and it was not till the present Government came into power that anything was done in a substantial way to benefit the conditions of the masses of the workers of Queensland. (Hear, hear!) The shire clerks and town clerks in Queensland are overworked and underpaid at the present time. They are the brains of the local governing bodies.

Mr. GLEDSON: They opposed their right to approach the Arbitration Court.

Mr. FORDE: It was not until the Labour Government came into power that the Arbitration Courts were established.

Mr. BEEBINGTON: You are wrong.

Mr. FORDE: I am right. It was the Industrial Peace Act which led to industrial unrest, and to enable the workers to get to the court the present Act was passed, establishing the present court, which is the finest piece of arbitration machinery in the world. The greatest objection to this measure offered by hon. members opposite is the adult franchise; around this centres their chief opposition to the measure. Hon. members opposite, including the hon. member for Albert, scathingly referred to the workers as nomads. He asked why these loafers should come along and elect representatives who would increase the rates, and then get out of the place.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You know that it is most unlikely that hon. members here would refer to people as loafers, as you state.

Mr. FORDE: The hon. member for Albert did; but the majority of hon. members opposite have not the moral courage to say what they think of those people; but we know that, in their own minds, they designate them as loafers, wasters, and nomads.

Mr. BEEBINGTON: You have no regard for truth.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FORDE: The difference between hon. members opposite and hon. members on this side is that we believe in trusting the people of Queensland. We have no objection to giving a vote to the people to decide who their representatives should be on local government bodies. We believe that one man is as good as another, and we do not make any reflection on a man because he is forced to hump his swag, if necessary. In many cases, these men are as good as many hon. members who sit in this Chamber, but, through economic pressure, they are forced on the unemployed market. Another objection of hon. members opposite to this Bill is that it is going to give the women of Queensland a vote. At the present time the only women who exercise the franchise in our local government elections are those who own property. We believe in giving a vote to all women over twenty-one. Why should the women of Queensland not exercise a vote in our municipal elections the same as in State and Federal elections? We know that hon. members opposite from time immemorial have been opposed to women getting the vote. It was the predecessor of the hon. member for Toowoong who in this House, in 1904, moved an amendment to an Electoral Bill in this Chamber, which, if carried, would have resulted in the women of Queensland being denied a vote for many years.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: That is not correct.

Mr. FORDE: The effect of the amendment, if carried, would have been that the women of Queensland would not have a vote to-day. We always stood for women having a vote in our municipal as well as State elections. The women of Queensland cannot exercise a vote at municipal elections, because the property is not in the name of the wife. The husband gets his name on the roll, but the wife, who has to make cuds meet, is denied a vote.

Mr. GLEDSON: The woman who has to do the nursing in cases of sickness.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The cupboards are empty through your machinations.

Mr. FORDE: We know that property-owners like the hon. member for Bulimba—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must proceed with his speech, and not reply to interjections.

Mr. FORDE: I shall endeavour to do so, but the interjections are coming so frequently that one is called upon to reply. We believe that the whole of the women of Queensland should exercise the franchise in our municipal elections. Hon. members opposite think that because a man creates a business in a centre he creates the wealth in that centre. We maintain that a man who buys goods at that shop indirectly pays the rates. We believe that every man should be equal at the ballot-box.

Mr. GLEDSON: Do not forget the women. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. FORDE: Yes, every woman too. The hon. member for Albert scathingly referred to the franchise in operation in Sydney, because it is more democratic than the municipal franchise in Queensland to-day; but, before very long, I believe that the municipal franchise in all the local governing areas in Australia will be brought up to the advanced stage that this Bill provides for. I submit that very few public utilities are controlled by the local governing bodies in Queensland. That is because in a great majority of cases the representatives on those local governing bodies represent vested interests, and are opposed to municipal control; they are opposed to State enterprise of any kind. I would like to see the local governing bodies in Queensland working on the same lines as those in England and Scotland. In Glasgow, the municipality is prepared to spend large sums of money in order to provide dairy milk for the children of the community. They spent upwards of £150,000 on the establishment of dairy herds alone, so that little children may not be poisoned with the impure milk that we frequently find sold to the people of Queensland to-day. Local authorities in Great Britain take government work more seriously than do the local authorities in Queensland. They control education from the elementary school to the university. They control public health, art galleries, hotels, tramways, fire stations, hospitals, infirmaries, gas and water, and dairies. I hope that we shall find in Queensland before very long that our local governing bodies will assume their proper responsibility. When we get more democrats in our councils, more progressive work will be done.

Mr. GLEDSON: It won't take twenty-five years to build a town hall.

Mr. FORDE: No. When we find the representatives of vested interests and conservatism, the representatives of the continuance of the present state of lethargy, in our local government work cast into oblivion and replaced by the representatives of democracy, we will enter on a new era in local government work in Queensland. In every municipality in Queensland there are allotments of land held for speculative purposes. It would be a good thing if the Home Secretary would give local government bodies

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specific power to fix a higher rate for such allotments that are not being used than is fixed for land which is being used for a purpose profitable to the community. I find that a great many people buy allotments in cities and country towns and they have no intention whatever to use that land for building purposes. They acquire the land with the idea of keeping it for ten or fifteen years, and then selling it and making a pile out of it. I submit that the people who own that land ought to pay a pretty high rate to the local council, and a higher rate than is charged for improved land.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: What did you get for those allotments of yours?

Mr. FORDE: Any allotments I hold are under perpetual lease. I believe in perpetual lease myself. I feel sure that any I may dispose of will be disposed of more conscientiously, and in the interests of the poorer people. (Opposition laughter.) If I had the money the hon. member for Bulimba has, I might build a home for poor children, or something like that. (Renewed Opposition laughter.) Honourable members opposite may sneer. We know they have no sympathy for the poor children. I think there should be a very heavy tax placed on allotments which are held for speculative purposes, so as to force the owners to dispose of them, and enable the progressive people of the community to utilise them for suitable dwellings. I am glad to observe that power is given in the Bill for a council to differentiate between lands on which dwellings are erected, and land which is being utilised for agricultural purposes. I think that is a good thing. In the Greater Rockhampton area we have some land which is used for agricultural purposes, and it would not be fair that that land should be subject to the high rates that land in the main portion of the city has to bear. I do not wish to keep hon. members any longer, but I am deeply sorry to find such evidence of conservatism emanating from hon. members opposite. I can quite understand the hon. member for Bulimba, but other hon. members told us that they repudiated the National party, because that old party was too conservative. They told us that they were more democratic and advanced, but we have the spectacle to-day of the hon. member for Aubigny saying that he stood for a man having thirty votes in municipal elections. We know that any man who voices sentiments such as those is quite as conservative as the hon. member for Bulimba, who is looked upon as the arch-advocate of conservatism in this Chamber. I hope this measure will pass through the House without any delay, and will be placed on the statute-book, and that it will result in our having elected on the local governing bodies of Queensland a greater number of people having democratic views—aye, having advanced Labour views—than ever set on those local government bodies previously in the history of this State of Queensland.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dohy*): The hon. member who has just sat down, and who is rapidly becoming the champion of ladies in this House, says it is the intention of the Government to give women the benefit of the franchise, which previous Governments had denied them. Surely he has a sufficient knowledge of the Local Government Act to know that if a woman is the owner or occupier of land she has exactly the same right in voting at local authority elections as any

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man has. When another measure was going through this House a little while ago—I think it was one of our taxation Acts during the session before last—the claim was made that property was put in the name of the wife for the purpose of evading taxation. If the property is in her name she will be the person who will have the right to vote. The extension of the franchise is the main feature of this measure, and I for one am going to oppose it. To my mind, the arguments advanced by the hon. member for Aubigny are sound. If we are going to introduce that principle of representation without taxation in one place, and taxation without representation in another, then we are coming to a very bad state of affairs. I quite agree with the hon. member for Aubigny that, if a man has property in two distinct local authorities, he should have a vote in each, because it is not a continuity of one policy you have going on all the time. You have different works and different principles being applied at different times, and the man whose property is being taxed, and whose property at the death is responsible for the encumbrance, should have a say in the protection of his property as well as the ordinary ratepayer. I quite agree, in spite of what the Home Secretary says, that if we have to adopt the State roll for the purpose of local authority elections, that it is going to create a tremendous amount of labour in the first place, and it is going to create a tremendous amount of expense. I cannot imagine the hon. gentleman to be serious when he says that the cost will not be anything like the cost of running an election at the present time. In a big area such as I represent, I know, from a local government point of view, that a number of presiding officers have to be appointed.

The HOME SECRETARY: It cost the shires, during the last three years, £16,000.

Mr. VOWLES: In the last three years they had three elections. That is over £5,000 a year. With an extension of the franchise it will cost as much as an ordinary election. We do not know what the last election cost, but we know that the election before the last cost over £20,000, and the people are not prepared to be saddled with the additional expenses which the carrying out of these elections will occur. After all is said and done, the property has to pay for it.

The HOME SECRETARY: They will do their work locally.

Mr. VOWLES: How can they do it locally? It is going to cost a tremendous amount of money, and I say, when we are dealing with other people's money, we should be careful, and we should spend it as judiciously as possible. In regard to the election of mayor by ballot, it seems to me a remarkable thing that the mayor must be altogether outside the members of the council; that he has to be elected by popular ballot. I could not help thinking, when listening to the remarks of the Home Secretary, of some of the arguments that cropped up a little while back when we were discussing another measure, known as "The Loafers' Paradise Bill." I think this is about the fourth occasion on which I have had the pleasure of debating this Bill. When discussing the Local Authority Act Amendments Bill in 1915, as reported on page 2602 of "Hansard," I said—

"Thus, the straight office is given to

these people—"Get your representatives. Create your own labour, and the property-owners cannot object. They live out of the area, and they have no say. You have the voting power." I ask the hon. member in charge of the Bill if that is not true, quite true?

"Hon. J. Huxham: Quite true.

"Mr. VOWLES: 'Create your own employment, create your wages, and get your representatives on the board, and do as you like—that is what they call socialism.'"

Later on the Home Secretary said, "I do not deny it." I said, "You cannot. And he then said, "I do not want to." In another Bill before this Chamber some time ago, it was sought to impose a principle on the people whereby local authorities would be compelled to absorb the surplus unemployed. It appears to me that the idea is this, more particularly when you are going to give the class of elector who, it is held, will get on these local authorities, the right to vote on a loan where other people's property is pledged—the principle is this, as stated by the Home Secretary then—"Borrow money and create employment irrespective of the minimum wage; absorb unemployed; be good to your friend. It does not matter to you; as you are not a property-owner, you can leave the locality when that locality is overburdened." We find, in cases like that, we do not get full value for the money expended—"When it is overburdened and carrying heavy loans, you can always move to some more congenial district and start your little game again." There are one or two things which I would like the Home Secretary to give a little bit of attention to. I must say that there are many things in this Bill which are very desirable, and I am glad to see that at last the Home Department is taking some notice of the representations of the Local Authorities' Conference. I want to state here too, that it is a wrong thing to say that the individuals or gentlemen who are sent down as representatives of the local authorities to these conferences are conservative in their ideas. They are not. I know in the council I belong to it is an honour which goes round. We have Labour men on that council, and these men have an opportunity of attending that conference. I have in my mind one gentleman who is a very strong advocate of the present Government and its platform, and yet that man voted against this principle. The Home Secretary was out of the Chamber when the hon. member for Aubigny spoke about the omission of the clause in reference to joint works. I would like to find out what is the intention in regard to the repeal of that section regarding joint works. There are some joint works, more particularly bridge construction, where two shires abut, where the principle of joint boards must be retained, but it appears the Government are taking that out of the Act altogether. I would also like the Home Secretary to consider section 214A of the 1913 Act. I would like to know what the object of recognising a ratepayer in that section is. Throughout the whole of the latter portion of the Bill we are told there are certain consequential amendments, but if the hon. gentleman will look at page 10 of the Bill he will find that it specially preserves "such of the petitioners as are ratepayers" under one

particular principle, and that principle deals with benefited areas. It is in the case of where a request for a work has been made and the work not created, and a petition goes to the Home Secretary asking for the work to be done. In that case, the Bill specially preserves the entity of the ratepayer, although in other instances the clause refers to "electors."

The HOME SECRETARY: That must be a typographical error.

Mr. VOWLES: I would like to know what is behind it. I propose to oppose the alteration of the franchise, and when we get into Committee I also propose to oppose the principle of the voters electing the chairman, and to ask that the principle that the council itself shall appoint its own chairman be retained.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): I would like to say, at the outset, that in connection with local government work in Queensland there are 172 local authorities. Associated with the Local Authorities' Association of Queensland there are 166, and it is something new to me to hear the language that has been used during this discussion as to the qualifications and the ability that is possessed by local authority members. It has been my privilege on various occasions to listen, not only to the present Home Secretary, but also to the late Home Secretary, Hon. J. Huxham, and on every occasion that they have had the privilege of addressing the conference of local authority representatives they have congratulated those representatives upon the excellent work they were doing for the State and the assistance they were giving to the Government, and I can scarcely understand the reason for the changed attitude adopted in the introduction of a Bill such

as this. I want to point out [5 p.m.] that an association of such importance has unanimously passed a resolution protesting against the adult franchise. That is quite sufficient to warrant me opposing such a measure as this. I object to the adult franchise, and I also object to any law by which a man whose property is placed practically in the power of a section of the community has no vote at all. His property is held as a guarantee for the loans and overdrafts in the various local authorities with which he is associated, and I object to this property being practically confiscated by a section of the community. The property is good enough to be held as a bond for the money which the local authorities want to borrow, but when it comes to the voting power of the property he has no say at all. We on this side are twitted with being representatives of vested interests. I am in this sort of a pleasurable position: that it has not been my experience, in a period extending over about fourteen years of almost continuous connection with local government work, of having the same experience that hon. gentlemen on the other side have had. I refer more particularly to a speech made by the hon. member for Rosewood in connection with the election of chairmen or mayors of the various local authorities. I think it can be borne out by others who have had the same experience that never have I been on any occasion associated with a caucus for the election of a president or chairman of a shire council or mayor of a city.

The PREMIER: But you were present at the meeting that sent the delegation home.

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Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. gentleman has his answer to that, because he has admitted that it had nothing to do with what he went home for. We are not discussing the delegation to-day. Surely an hon. member with the intelligence of the Premier knows that. We are discussing an amendment of the Local Authorities Act just now, and it is quite sufficient to discuss one thing at a time. I believe a great amount of castigation was given to the Brisbane City Council by the Home Secretary.

The HOME SECRETARY: No, it wasn't; you read my speech. Now, be fair; where did you read it?

Mr. MAXWELL: I read it in the paper, but I must naturally accept the hon. member's assurance.

The HOME SECRETARY: I will give you the proof copy if you like, and you will see that the assertions are totally untrue.

Mr. MAXWELL: I have to accept the statement that has been made by the hon. gentleman; but having heard the arguments, or rather the abuse, which has been hurled at the representatives of local authorities from the other side, one can scarcely understand the reason they are taking up their present attitude. It only goes to show that they are not conversant with the Act under which the local authorities are working. There are only certain functions which the local authorities can perform under the Act at present. The Brisbane City Council has tried its best to remove a number of the dilapidated buildings, and I might add that in this respect the Government themselves are sinners. Perhaps I should not say "dilapidated" but I can honestly say "buildings that do not comply with the by-laws of the Brisbane City Council." But because they are the Government they can do no wrong so far as local authorities are concerned. I need only refer hon. gentlemen to a number of buildings which are a disgrace to any ordinary suburb, let alone a city. I refer to the buildings erected above the Central Railway Station. We have before us at the present time a number of buildings in the Brisbane City Council that are a long way better than those which have been condemned, and the owners have received notice that the buildings must be pulled down. And that is not the only case in which the Government are the sinners. I think members of the Government should set the example to local authorities and not abuse and criticise them for doing what they only have power to do—that is to carry out the work of the Local Authorities Act. Hon. members know full well that the local authorities to-day only have power up to a certain extent to condemn certain buildings; they also know that in the Brisbane City Council certain buildings have been condemned; but owing to certain arrangements having been made by which they were cleaned up and white-washed and complied with the Health Department's regulations, we could not order the buildings to be pulled down. The work of local government is a very serious thing as far as our local government men are concerned, and you must bear in mind, as pointed out by the hon. member for Aubigny, that the very moment you introduce a measure such as this you are going to introduce into the local authority work a system that has never obtained before, and that is ordinary politics, which, I contend, is not in the best

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interests of local government. I cannot understand the position that is being taken up against the property-holders. A man puts the whole of his work, we will say, into the East Ward, which I am supposed to represent in the city of Brisbane—

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Are you only supposed to represent it?

Mr. MAXWELL: I am supposed to represent it, but the Mayor of Brisbane at the present time represents the whole city, and not one ward. I want to point out the injustice likely to accrue in a Bill such as this. He may have the whole of his business interests in this ward, and because he lives in the Hamilton town area he has no vote in the city. He may only have a residential or an occupier's qualification; and when I speak about an occupier's qualification, I want to say that no injustice is being done to the occupier to-day because, under the Local Authorities Act, hon. members know that if the occupier pays the rent within thirty days he can claim his vote, and that is done in a great many instances.

The HOME SECRETARY: What if his house is sold?

Mr. MAXWELL: I am not going to bother my head about the Home Secretary. He will have his opportunity when replying, and I am serious about this, which the hon. gentlemen is not. I also want to point out the injustice that is being done by the Government not paying rates for property in the city areas, and the amount of money due to the local authorities for keeping the roads and footpaths around their buildings in order. I contend that if it is a fair thing for the business man to contribute towards the upkeep of roads, and footpaths, and drainage, it is a fair deal for the Government to do the same. And I believe that the by-laws of the Brisbane City Council are already being broken by certain drainage being turned into the Brisbane River which we as members of the Brisbane City Council would prosecute people for doing. As I said before, if it is a fair deal for the ordinary ratepayer to have to pay for the upkeep of the roads and footpaths around his buildings, it is a fair deal for the Government to do the same. I just want to point out to hon. members the amount of money local authorities lose through not being able to collect rates on Government properties. The Bill introduced by Sir Thomas McIlwraith, when the late Hon. Charles Buzacott was in charge of that department, provided for subsidies to local authorities, and the subsidies paid under that measure were practically looked upon as rates paid by the Government for the upkeep of the roads around Government buildings. I did not believe in knocking off the subsidies to local authorities, but the Government, having abandoned the principle of subsidies, should at least pay rates to local authorities equivalent to the amount of the subsidies previously granted. The following figures, showing the value of Government and other lands in South Brisbane in respect of which no rates are paid, are interesting. It is estimated that the value of Government lands in that municipality is about £76,250. The value of schools £13,650, the value of municipal land and parks £155,000, the value of churches £9,200, the value of Water and Sewerage Board

properties £1,700, the value of the cricket ground £9,000, and the value of the Mater Hospital £4,050; the total values being, roughly, about £2,700,000. Taking the rate at 10d. in the £1, these properties represent over £11,000 in respect of which rates are not collectable. The total rateable value of lands occupied by the various State Government departments within the Brisbane city area is £341,880, which, if rateable, would produce at the present city rating an annual revenue of £8,547. Including State enterprises such as State mills, State cannery, and State butcheries, which have a rateable value of £13,000, the rates from Government properties, if rateable, would produce £375,000 per annum. With regard to properties occupied by State enterprises, I contend that they should be rateable, because these State enterprises are entering into competition with business men who have to pay rates. The State butcher's shop and the State fishery are entering into competition with men engaged in those lines of business, and the least the Government can do is to contribute towards the rates in exactly the same way as other business people are doing. If the Government properties were rateable, the Government would have to contribute £325,000 per annum to local authorities. In the £8,547 which I have stated would be due to the Brisbane City Council for rates from the Government I have not taken into account schools, recreation reserves, Domain, or railway stations and yards, nor are Commonwealth premises included. That is a matter in respect to which the Bill should be amended. With reference to the provision for the election of mayor by the ratepayers, I object to that provision.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why?

Mr. MAXWELL: I will tell the hon. gentleman why. The reason is that you may get a popular man elected to that position who will be absolutely unfitted for his work. There are gentlemen in this Chamber who have been associated with local authorities, and they know that there are occasions in which a person elected as mayor is not thoroughly fitted to look after the interests of the town or city council. As to the statement that mayors have been mere rubber stamps for town clerks in local authorities, I think the Home Secretary knows that there are a number of business men connected with local authorities in the North who cannot afford time to attend to local authorities conferences. That is the reason why clerks are sent down to the conferences, where they gain a great amount of knowledge. It cannot be said that any clerk possesses the whole of the knowledge obtainable in respect to local authorities, and it must be admitted that the object in sending clerks to the local authority conferences is that they may rub shoulders with other men who may know a little more about local authority work than those clerks know individually. No one has a greater regard than I have for the work done by shire councils, and I am not going to allow the Home Secretary to say that I and my colleagues in the city council, or the members of councils in towns or shires, are rubber stamps for town clerks. It would be a retrograde step to adopt the system proposed in this Bill under which the mayor and all the aldermen of a local authority would be elected at one time. Especially do

I object to that provision which enacts that the mayor can only be a candidate for the position of mayor, and not for the position of alderman. Under such circumstances it may happen that the citizens would lose the services of a man who would be a very excellent alderman. A man may be an excellent alderman, and not fitted for the position of mayor, and *vice versa*. Irrespective of his desire to establish adult franchise in local authorities, I believe that the Home Secretary desires to place local authorities in a good and sound position, but I say that under this proposal regarding the election of the mayor and aldermen, the local authorities will not be placed in a good and sound position. Under such a system there will be no continuity of policy pursued by the aldermen and the mayor. There will be nothing to prevent the whole seven, twelve, or fourteen aldermen constituting a council being put out at the same time when the elections take place. If that were to happen, the incoming aldermen would become rubber stamps for the clerk of the town or shire or city council, as the case may be. For that reason, I suggest to the Minister that he should consider the desirability of allowing half of the members of the councils to retire every year, as is the case under the present Act.

The HOME SECRETARY: Look at the cost.

Mr. MAXWELL: When we are building up a constitution such as that proposed in this Bill, the cost should not count in the matter, especially as local authority men do their work for nothing. It cannot be said that the provision I am now dealing with will benefit the community. There are a great many things that the local authorities would like to do, if they had the necessary power. With reference to slum areas, I say that no slum areas exist in Brisbane today. There may be certain cottages which are not tenable or habitable, and there is no body more sincere in their desire to remove or pull down such buildings than are the city council. But they have not the power to do that—they cannot say to the owner, "You must pull that building down," nor can they say to the Minister for Works, "You must pull that building down, because it does not comply with the city by-laws."

Mr. COLLINS: Do away with the 16-perch allotments.

Mr. MAXWELL: I would like to do away with them. I do not believe in small areas. I will go further and say that where it is possible, before the plans were approved which any man submitted for the subdivision of land, provision should be made for a number of blocks as playgrounds for children instead of their having to play in the gutters and streets. A great number of our local authorities believe in that, but the hon. gentleman knows full well that we have not the power to enforce it.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Brisbane City Council is the only body which is doing anything in regard to parks.

Mr. MAXWELL: I thank the hon. gentleman for that remark. I might tell him that the city council has had to pay for the greatest number of their parks. They are second to none in regard to parks. We realise that the health of the community is the first consideration. The Home Secretary is the head of the Health Department, and I challenge him to point out where the wishes

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of the Health Department have not been carried out. If the Brisbane City Council or any other council has not done its duty it is not the fault of the council, but it is the fault of the Minister for not seeing that the council did its duty.

The HOME SECRETARY interjected.

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. gentleman had a taste of Breakfast Creek a little while ago and has not got over it. I would not have dodged the question in the way the hon. gentleman did if I had had my way.

The HOME SECRETARY: You know that is pure bunkum.

Mr. MAXWELL: I know it is the truth, and I know the hon. gentleman knows it. At a deputation in connection with that matter the hon. gentleman said to me, "You do not care whether this building is pulled down or not. You do not care if the people who have invested their money in this have to push away." I said, "I have yet to learn it is one of the functions of a Labour Minister to barrack for vested interests when the health of the community is at stake." I will tell the hon. gentleman what the Brisbane City Council offered to do. We told the ratepayers round the area, "Get your case up and the Brisbane City Council will be behind you and will go to the court." (Hear, hear!) What more could we do? The Commissioner for Public Health knows full well that he has certain powers which have not been given to the city council or to other local authorities. Not only that, but the police have certain things under their control. Look at our streets to-day. They have been ruined through the pulling up of the roads by the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board, by the gas company, the electric light company, and the post and telegraph officials, and we can do nothing. Yet we are told by representatives of the various electorates in the State that the local authorities are neglecting their work, and doing it well. I need only refer to the character that was given to local authorities by the present Home Secretary at the opening of the conference the other day, and by the late Home Secretary.

The HOME SECRETARY: We help to keep one of the best parks you have in the city.

Mr. MAXWELL: The council is spending all the money they can. I represent the whole of the local authorities throughout the length and breadth of Queensland, as their president, and I want to say that it is most unbecoming for members in the Legislative Assembly to use the language some of them have been using in connection with a body of men who have been doing good work voluntarily, under very awkward circumstances, under an Act which does not give them sufficient control. They may have done a lot of things which do not meet with the wishes of hon. members on the other side. I want to tell hon. members that they, too, have done things that local authorities do not like. They pay no attention to resolutions that are passed by local authorities. I do not know of many local authorities who have closed one of the principal thoroughfares of a city to put a building on it. I think that is one of the most diabolical outrages ever perpetrated on a city council or on the citizens themselves. The hon. gentle-

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man may laugh, but it may boomerang on to the Government again.

The HOME SECRETARY: I was not laughing at you.

Mr. MAXWELL: It is a standing disgrace to these representatives of democracy, as they call themselves. We are looked upon as the representatives of vested interests.

The HOME SECRETARY: What street are you referring to?

Mr. MAXWELL: Edward street; Jacob's Ladder, where the Trades Hall is. Not only in connection with the non-contribution of funds to our roads, footpaths, and parks are the Government sinners. What about the noxious weeds and the prickly-pear? I was associated with the work of local government in Toombul Shire when there was a deputation to the then Treasurer—Mr. Hawthorn. There was an area infected with noxious weeds. It was alive with water hyacinth and other noxious weeds. Mr. Petrie was on that deputation. When we spoke about this land being cleared, the Minister said, "The Government have decided to hand that reserve over to the control of the local authority." I say in all sincerity that if it is a fair and just thing to compel our ratepayers to keep their areas clean of noxious weeds, it is fair for the Government to do the same, because it is from the weeds and pear and other things on Government areas that the seed is carried and sown somewhere else. A more sincere body of men than local authority men it has never been my lot to be associated with, and I am sorry to hear what some hon. gentlemen have said regarding the experience they have had in connection with the work of local government. It only means, as far as I can see, that they evidently have got into bad company. As I have said on other occasions, because you have one bad man belonging to a section of the community you cannot condemn the whole lot. If it is a good example for the Imperial Government to subsidise the Imperial control of Westminster, surely it is a fair deal for the Queensland Government to follow in their footsteps and to pay rates on the various properties they control! It is their action in regard to such properties which is retarding local authorities in their progress towards health and towards advancing in every way. All the Government do is criticise the work of local authorities and abuse men who, in my opinion, have done better work than the Government are doing at the present time. The Commonwealth Bank also have granted this money, and surely, when they recognise their obligations to the local authority, it is the least our democratic friends on the other side could do! The Government will be ill-advised if they persist with this measure. I realise full well that they are carrying out a part of their policy. But before they take the country to destruction, let them weigh carefully the experience which local government people have had and are giving them in this Chamber. Put a body of irresponsibles in charge of your local government work [5.30 p.m.] without any limit to their rating powers, and see what the result will be. I cannot understand the inconsistency of the Government in this matter. They are prepared to say, "You, as an elector, own nothing; you, on the other hand, as a property-owner, shall put your

property into pawn or pledge it as security for loans or overdrafts, while the other fellow, the collector, may make whatever charge he likes upon it." I want to show the possible result—the ruination that may be created. When a man thinks of buying a property, he first of all desires to find out what the local valuation of that property is, and generally, if he has his head screwed on the right way, he goes to the local authority and finds out what their valuation is. Secondly, he finds out what the rates are. Then he begins to weigh the pros and cons of the case. He begins to agitate his mind with such questions as, "How much power have they to go further with the rates?" And he thinks, "They have unlimited power; they can go as far as they like."

Mr. BRENNAN: What are they in Melbourne?

Mr. MAXWELL: Go to Melbourne and find out.

Mr. BRENNAN: Half-a-crown.

Mr. MAXWELL: Yes, but the hon. member forgets that it is on a different basis there. In any case, I am not dealing with that aspect of the case. I am dealing with the condition of affairs that is likely to occur in the event of unlimited powers of rating being given to local authorities. The buyer I have referred to, if he is a man with any business acumen at all, will say, "Well, these men have power to rate me right out of the property. They can put on this land whatever they like in rates, and not only that—they can also increase the valuation to any extent they like." And the hon. member knows that the local authority valuation is the one that is also adopted by the Water and Sewerage Board, and the State and Federal Taxation offices. And property-owners—I do want to impress on hon. members the necessity for taking a serious view of this aspect of the question—have not only got to pay increased rates levied on them by local authorities on increased valuations, but they are also hit up in another way, and last of all we get down to bedrock, and the bedrock of the matter is that it is one of the objects of the party opposite to corner all the property they can get from the man who owns it (Hear, hear!) There is no doubt that is their great objective, and this is a way in which they intend to accomplish it. It will be a sorry day for the work of local government if such a measure as this is placed on the statute-book of Queensland. I venture to say that the Home Secretary, who has been associated with the Home Department for some time, knows full well, notwithstanding all the arguments adduced by hon. members opposite, that there is truth in what I say. I desire to warn the Government to watch where they are going, because they are not only going to bring the property-owners to destruction, but are also going to lead the State there by tinkering in such a manner with the work of local government.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): We have just heard a speech from the hon. member for Toowong, who has had some experience in local authority work, and should know something about local authority matters. There are one or two main features in the Bill, which is an amendment of previous Acts, with which most of us have had something

to do. We all know that the local authorities at the present time have certain duties to perform, certain functions of office, and I believe that they carry out those functions to the best of their ability. I am acquainted with quite a number of local authority men, and I know that they are men who devote a large amount of their spare time, and time sometimes that is not spare, to the interests of the ratepayers and the people concerned in local government work. We are quite aware of that, and all honour to men who will do that class of work, and help to bring about a betterment of local authority affairs in their State.

One of the things that they have to deal with—and one which concerns not only ratepayers, but all residents in every local authority, whether it be shire or town or city—is the health of the people. Local authorities have a big say in that matter. In fact, we find to-day that they are taxed to the extent of a great amount of money to pay for dealing with diseases of an epidemic character that arise in their areas, and at the present time they are really hard put to it to know just how they are going to meet these expenses. This Bill proposes to give local authorities power to deal, not only with health matters, but other matters that properly belong amongst their functions. I am one of those who believe that the local authorities should have greater power, and greater control over the needs and utilities of the people than they have. They should control, not only health and roads and ferries, but also the transport in and around their areas, a tramway system for instance, and lighting and power schemes, and also—as they do to some extent at present—the amusements which they provide in their cities. We do not find them going in for some of these things at all at the present time, and I say that they should control them alone, to a large extent.

We find that this Bill has certain good provisions in it. One which has not been touched upon by many members opposite is the provision with reference to local authority clerks. We find that some of them have not been carrying on in a way that has been in the interests of the ratepayers and the people generally, and the consequence has been that some of those shires have got into a state out of which it is difficult to get them. The Bill provides that there shall be certificated clerks, who shall pass an examination, and be responsible for the carrying out of their duties in a fuller way than they are at present. Shire clerks to-day are not receiving the salaries that they should receive for the work they are doing. Who is responsible for that? Not Labour men, because there are very few Labour men in councils at all. Wherever there have been Labour men in the councils they have taken care to see that their clerks receive salaries commensurate with the work they are doing, but in the majority of cases shire clerks are not paid anything like what they should be.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: They are under an award, are they not?

Mr. GLEDSON: No, because the local authorities refused to allow them to go to the Court.

Mr. KING: Certainly not; that is not true.

Mr. GLEDSON: That is a fact. They were refused admission to the Court, and

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the local authorities refused them the right to go there.

Mr. KING: They are helping them to get to the Court as much as they can.

Mr. GLEDSON: That does not alter the fact. Permission to go to the Court has been refused to them, and not only that, but the councils have also refused to meet them in order to try to arrange their salaries with them.

Mr. KING: That is not true.

Mr. GLEDSON: It is one of the things, not only in connection with their salaries, but in connection with their hours of duty that should be remedied. These men are back at night working all hours, particularly when they are getting out rate notices, and the councils, in many instances, refuse to give these men assistance in getting out their rate notices. They work day and night, although they get no overtime from the council. They are practically slaves to the councils.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Nothing of the kind. There are no slaves. They get more salary than the farmer is getting pay.

Mr. GLEDSON: If some of these men get more salaries than the farmers get pay, then the farmers must not get much.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is quite correct.

Mr. GLEDSON: The hon. member for Drayton represents the farmers, and he should assist the farmers to get a greater salary than they are getting at the present time.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I do assist them, but we have to keep you in cheap food.

Mr. GLEDSON: I do not want cheap food at the expense of any one. If the farmers are not getting a fair deal now that they are represented by the hon. member for Drayton and other members on that side, the only advice I can give them is to put in Labour men to represent them, and they will get a fair deal.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They are in now, and that is what is doing it.

Mr. KIRWAN: You never got 9s. a bushel under an anti-Labour Government.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No thanks to you.

Mr. GLEDSON: Another question raised by hon. members opposite is the question of adult franchise. Hon. members opposite object to that, and think that only rate-payers should be allowed to vote. One would think that the adoption of the adult franchise would mean a great change in local authority representation, and that the whole of the local authorities would be represented by Labour men. What is the position? The position is that in very many districts there will be no alteration at all, and there will be very little alterations in the rolls, with the exception that the wife will get a vote in addition to the husband in many districts. The residents who are ratepayers will have a vote under this Bill, just the same as they had before, so that it will make very little difference in the representation to what it is at the present time. I cannot see why the introduction of the adult franchise is going to make any difference, so far as a great number of the districts are concerned. In some instances, where men and women have not got the right to vote, they will now

be allowed to vote. Hon. members opposite want the property-owners to retain the voting-power they have at present. The hon. member for Toowong wants a man to have thirty or forty votes, while others may have none at all. Members on the Government side claim that it ought to be one vote one value, and that there ought to be democratic representation on the council. It is quite possible under the old system for one man to have thirty or forty votes.

Mr. DRAYTON: That is not correct; he cannot have that many votes.

Mr. GLEDSON: It is perfectly correct if he owns property in different local authority areas.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Why not say 100 votes?

Mr. GLEDSON: It is possible for a man to have 100 votes under the present law in Queensland.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Would he not be liable for 100 payments for rates?

Mr. GLEDSON: He would only be liable to pay according to the rateable value of his land, the same as any other individual is liable to pay.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Do you know any man who has thirty or forty votes?

Mr. PEASE: I know a man who controls sixty votes.

Mr. GLEDSON: I know several people who have three votes in each division or ward. I am not going to take up further time with these matters. Members on the Opposition side have not given us any reasons for opposing this measure, beyond saying that the man with the property should have the vote. I am pleased to support the Bill, and hope that it will not be long before it is put into operation. We will then give the people of the State the right to have a say in the selection of local authority representatives, and in that way they will have some say in the health, lighting, drainage, sanitary system, and other matters in connection with our local authorities in the interests of the needs of the people.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I must confess to a feeling of extreme disappointment that the Home Secretary has come down to the House with a meagre Bill such as he has put before us this evening. The local authorities throughout Queensland were led to believe that they were going to get a full measure of local government amendments, and that it was to be a consolidated Act. Instead of that, we have got a short Bill containing a plank of the Labour platform, together with one or two recommendations which have come from the local authorities. No doubt, these amendments were included merely to sugar-coat the pill which the Home Secretary and the Government expect the Opposition to swallow. I would just like to refer to an address which the Home Secretary gave at the Local Authorities' Conference last July. He said, amongst other things, in dealing with new legislation—

"During the coming session, a new Local Governing Amending Bill, an Amending Health Bill, and a Greater Brisbane Bill are to be introduced into Parliament. I have already briefly outlined the Greater Brisbane proposals. The amending Bills contain provisions giving effect to many of the resolutions passed by the conference, and I expect that further provisions will be included"

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as a result of the work of this conference. The main features of the Local Government Bill are the adult franchise, triennial elections, election of mayor, a provision declaring the mayor or chairman to be the chief executive officer of the local authority, and defining his powers; provisions requiring the certification of local government clerks and engineers, and the compulsory employment of certificated officers subject to conditions; provisions providing for inquiries in connection with the dismissal of officers; valuation of perpetual leaseholds on unimproved basis; differential rating of farm lands in cities and towns; a provision to enable the local authority to compel, under penalty, an adjoining owner to keep his boundary lines free of noxious weeds when his neighbour has kept his land clear, and some town planning provisions, including much greater powers to deal with roads, subdivisions, zoning (defining residence, trading areas, etc.), and building lines."

He then made some reference to a new Health Bill. As I say, I was extremely disappointed that he has not given effect to the resolutions of the Local Authorities' Conference which have been passed year after year since 1913, and submitted to him, and which the local authorities throughout Queensland were led to believe were going to be given effect to. I can only style this Bill as being nothing more or less than an abortion. It is no Bill at all. This Bill is absolutely of no use to the local authorities; it is only brought in with the specific object of giving effect to a plank of the Labour platform—that is, adult suffrage. That is the main provision of the Bill.

Mr. STOPFORD: What is wrong with the Bill?

Mr. KING: What is wrong with it? It does not in any way satisfy the people who are asking for an amendment of the Local Authorities Act. This Bill is only brought in to satisfy a certain section of the community, and that is the section that is supporting members on the other side of the House. I am happy to say that up to the present local government in Queensland has been absolutely free from politics. We try to keep politics out of local government altogether.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: You what?

Mr. KING: We try to keep politics out of local government. The men who are attending to local government work in Queensland at the present time are men who have the best interests of the community at heart—men who are carrying out a voluntary duty ungrudgingly, and in the best interests of the whole of the people of Queensland. I take local government very seriously. When I say that I have been a member of a local authority for twenty-five years, I know that my friends on the other side will say, "Too long." But let me say that I represent a ward in a shire in Brisbane in which most of my supporters are Labour men—men who profess political Labour principles.

Mr. STOPFORD: Then why should you be afraid of this franchise?

Mr. KING: I am not afraid of it. For twenty-five years I have been the representa-

tive of that ward, and they have returned me every time without a contest.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Then the Labour men cannot take much interest.

Mr. KING: They take such a lot of interest that they know they can trust me, and they know that I will do my best, quite irrespective of party politics. The hon. member for Ipswich made some very inaccurate statements about the clerks, which I cannot allow to go unchallenged. The hon. member was either very ignorant or else he was wilfully misleading the House. I am not going to accuse the hon. member of wilful misrepresentation, but prefer to think he was ignorant, and I will tell the House the facts concerning the clerks. The clerks banded together for the purpose of bettering their conditions. The executive of the Local Authorities Association met the clerks and said to them, "You get together and formulate your scheme and we will meet you." The clerks got together, and their executive came to the executive of the Local Authorities Association, and discussed matters with them. As a result of that discussion, the terms were embodied in an agreement which met with the mutual support of the clerks and the executive of the Local Authorities Association. As a result of that mutual agreement, a letter was sent by the executive of the Local Authorities Association to every local authority throughout Queensland belonging to the association, submitting a draft of the agreement and a recommendation from the association to authorise the executive to execute that agreement on behalf of the members of the Local Authorities Association. The clerks were perfectly satisfied with that, and all they had to do then was to register as a union, and then the association could take notice of the union. I suppose 70 per cent. of the local authorities have replied to the association accepting that agreement unconditionally, and authorising the executive to sign it on their behalf. The clerks were to go to the Arbitration Court to get registration as a union. They have been to the Arbitration Court, but, owing to some technical defect in their rules, the court refused registration, and advised the clerks to amend their rules and then go back to the court, when registration would be given effect to. The clerks have accordingly held a meeting, and, so far as I know, they have amended their rules, and within the next week or so, they are going back to the court to ask for registration, after which the agreement will be given effect to.

Mr. GLEDSON: "After which"; it has been going on for eighteen months.

Mr. KING: The executive of the association has authority to execute the agreement as soon as the clerks are registered as a union. They cannot do any more than that. And let me say that the salaries of the clerks under that agreement are made retrospective to the 1st of January of this year. I venture to say that that explanation ought to satisfy the hon. member for Ipswich that the local authorities are doing their best to meet the clerks so far as their salaries are concerned.

Mr. GLEDSON: They refuse to pay them.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No! No!

Mr. KING: They do not refuse to pay. Although the agreement has not yet been

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ratified, many local authorities are now paying the salaries which are to be paid under the agreement.

As I said in opening, I take local government seriously. It is one of the great branches of government in the State of Queensland. First of all, we have Government of the Commonwealth, exercising its functions within the limits of its Constitution. Then we have the Government of the State exercising certain functions which have not been taken over by the Commonwealth. And then we have local government as a third branch, exercising certain functions, powers, and obligations delegated to it by the State Government. As Mr. Chuter said in a very informative and well written paper on local administration, which he read at the local authorities' conference the year before last—"There is no doubt that local government opens up a wide field for constructive statesmanship." So it does. Anyone studying the history of local government and its development, will find it a very interesting study indeed. But, when Parliament delegated certain of its powers and duties to local government, there is no doubt it was intended by Parliament that it should give a full measure of self government to those who are administering the local government Acts. Unfortunately, the powers and freedom given by those Acts are becoming more and more hampered every day. No one will assert for a moment that local authorities have ever had real power or real freedom so far as their financial arrangements are concerned. What we want in local government, and what we require above all things, is more power and more freedom. We want to free local government as much as possible from central control. Local authorities are hampered beyond all reason in carrying out their duties by central control. In connection with central control, I would just like to quote a few words written by Mr. Garlick, the Under Secretary for Local Government in New South Wales, from his report in 1918. Mr. Garlick is known to some of us, and those who know him have a very high opinion of his ability and his energy as a local government man. This is what he says in that report—

"The principle object we desire to achieve by our local government system is first and foremost the development of free and self-reliant communities in the States. For this purpose, I say here, that local organisations should be as free from central control as possible."

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

Mr. KING, continuing: Some hon. members opposite seem to think that local authorities have unlimited powers.

Mr. SMITH: I argued for an extension of powers.

Mr. KING: But a good deal of blame has been put upon local authorities because they have not exercised powers which they do not possess. I say that our powers are limited, and those powers have been interfered with by the hampering effect of financial arrangements and interference by the central authority. The powers of local government are found principally in the Local Government Acts, 1902-17, the Health Acts, the Local Works Loan Act, and the Public Works Land Resumption Act. Under section 60 of the principal Act they have

the control, maintenance, management, and construction of roads, ferries, bridges, culverts, etc.; and under section 62 of the Act they are given very extensive powers in the way of acquiring lands and buildings for certain purposes. But the exercise of these powers is not compulsory; they are merely discretionary; and when the local authority exercises its statutory powers, the exercise of such power carries with it certain responsibility. There is no power to compel a local authority to make a road; but if it does so, it must see that the road is made properly and is kept in such a state of repair that no accidents are likely to happen, and that no claim for damages is made against the local authority on the ground of misfeasance. If they do not make the road they are simply liable to non-feasance, which carries practically no penalty. Then, if they want to make a pound they have certain duties cast upon them. They have to see that the pound is kept free from disease, and certain duties are imposed upon the poundkeeper. Then, in the case of places of public resort they have to carry responsibility. They must see that places of public resort are safe and free for people to go to without running the risk of accident. If they widen a road they have to provide a temporary road while doing so. All these statutory powers which are conferred upon local authorities carry with them increasing responsibilities. But the local authorities are not afraid of their responsibilities. The one that I am connected with is not afraid of its responsibilities, and carries them every time, and it does the very best it possibly can under the conditions in which it finds itself when it is exercising those powers. We will for a moment just consider what power the local authority has so far as its taxation proposals are concerned. We know that a local authority has to depend on its rates to carry on—that is the staple revenue of a local authority—and to get those rates it is provided by the Act that the local authority can tax on the unimproved value of the land. When the hon. member for Toowoong was speaking in connection with rating, the hon. member for Toowoomba asked him what was the general rate, and the hon. member for Toowoong replied that the maximum rate was 6d. Then the hon. member for Toowoomba, in order to show his great knowledge of these things, said, "Why don't you tax up to half-a-crown, the same as they do in Melbourne?"

Mr. GLEDSON: He did not say that. He said that they taxed up to half-a-crown in Melbourne.

Mr. KING: That is so. He said the rate in Melbourne was half-a-crown. I would like to point out that the basis of valuation in Queensland and the basis of valuation in Victoria are not at all identical; they are totally dissimilar. We know that in Victoria the valuation is based on the annual capital value of the land.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Rateable value.

Mr. KING: It is altogether different. We have to depend for our revenue on what we can raise on taxation of the unimproved value of the land. In connection with the tax we receive from the land, we are very much hampered by the legislation which has been brought in by the Commonwealth and State Governments. Both Governments levy a land tax, which materially interferes with

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the right of the local authorities to tax. The hon. member for Albert, when he was Home Secretary, on several occasions received deputations in connection with adult franchise, and he told those deputations that if they had the adult franchise it would mean the imposition of a land tax.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: And a subsidy.

Mr. KING: And also a subsidy. I do not like the idea of the endowment; but I do say this: that the butting in—no doubt, altogether within their power—by the Commonwealth and State Governments has materially hampered the local authorities in carrying out their functions. I say now, and I have always contended, that the taxation of the land was the sole domain of the local authority. In New South Wales the land tax was practically abolished in favour of the local authorities.

The HOME SECRETARY: A great pity.

Mr. KING: I do not think so. It was given out by the late Government that this land tax would not be introduced, and local authorities were led to believe that it would not be introduced. It almost amounted to a breach of faith by the present Government when they introduced the land tax. They had no right to do it, in view of the fact that local government was being carried on and the only means of taxation that they had was against the land. That means of revenue was very much interfered with through the action of the State Government.

Mr. COLLINS: That is not so. You have a free hand up to £300.

Mr. KING: What is the good of that?

Hon. J. G. APPEL: And this Administration imposed further responsibilities on the local authorities.

Mr. KING: Of course, they did. By virtue of the Health Act greater duties were imposed on the local authorities. Chapman, on local government, says—

“The staple financial food of local government must always be the rates.”

In this connection I would like to refer to a few figures in connection with endowments. From the inception of local government up till 1902, when the endowment and grants for roads and bridges practically ceased, the State Government had paid to local authorities by way of endowment over £3,000,000, and by way of aid for roads and bridges £1,311,637. For the period of 1860 to 1895 the Government's contributions to local authorities amounted to 6 per cent. of the consolidated revenue. For the five years, 1889 to 1899, the average was 8 per cent., and for the five-year period ending 1894-5 the average was 3.5 per cent., and from then on the percentage decreased. The State land tax at present is equal to about 6 per cent. of the consolidated revenue. As hon. members on the other side contend that everybody contributes to the consolidated revenue, and as local authorities have been hampered by the inroads of the State and Federal Governments in connection with the land tax, the proceeds of which go into consolidated revenue, the Government should either give a substantial endowment or hand the function of land taxation over to the local authorities. There are practically four main principles in the Bill, to which I shall shortly refer. The most important, of course, is the adult suffrage, then triennial elections,

the election of mayor, and the unlimited rating powers. Adult suffrage has been turned down by the people on two occasions.

Mr. COLLINS: That is not so.

Mr. KING: It was turned down at the last general election. I might say that during my election campaign I emphasised the point that, with the return of the present Government, we could look forward to a speedy amendment of the Local Authorities Act, and that adult franchise would be the chief point in that amending Bill; and I venture to say that nearly every member of the House mentioned that fact when he was before the electors. The result was that this Government is occupying the Treasury benches with a minority of the people behind them. They have a minority of something approximating 20,000 votes, to say nothing of the 60,000 ghosts which the hon. member for Oxley has referred to on more than one occasion. Yet they call themselves a democratic Government.

Mr. BRENNAN: Why don't you go to the elections tribunal?

Mr. KING: Why do I want to go to the elections tribunal? Do hon. members on the other side pretend for a moment that they represent a majority of the people of Queensland? I say they don't, and they cannot. That is one occasion on which the question was put before the people and it was turned down. The other occasion on which it was turned down by the people was when the Government took a referendum on the abolition of the Upper House. We know very well that this Local Authorities Bill has been before the House on two previous occasions. On the last occasion it passed this House and went to the Council, where the second reading was postponed for six months. That question was brought prominently before the electors during the referendum, and it would not be out of place if I mentioned here the reasons the Upper House gave for turning that Local Authorities Acts Amendment Bill down. They were—

“1. That the Bill would open the door to gross injustice being inflicted on all persons having a permanent residence or interest in any district, inasmuch as all owners and occupiers would be liable to having heavy loans and perpetual taxation imposed on them by reckless nomad voters who could themselves escape from all liability.

“2. The local authority franchise is essentially different from the parliamentary franchise, in area, interest, and responsibility; and representation should go with taxation and not otherwise.

“3. The representatives of the people on city, town, and shire councils have not asked for the Bill, nor does the community or any appreciable part of the community desire it.”

Those are the reasons submitted by the Upper House as to why the Bill should be rejected, and those reasons were submitted to the people of Queensland on the referendum, and the people of Queensland in no uncertain term endorsed the action of the Upper House in what they did. I have shown that, so far as the people are concerned, they will not have anything to do with this Bill; and I would like now, for a moment, to refer to what the local authorities think. In his opening address at the nine-

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teenth annual conference of the Local Authorities Association, held in Brisbane in August, 1915, the Home Secretary—Hon. J. Huxham—dealing with the question of the franchise, said—

“This is a most important matter. It is no secret that one of the foremost planks of the Labour platform is that relating to the extension of the franchise. The question was put prominently before the electors in the policy speech delivered by the Premier. Parliament creates the local authority and delegates some of the powers of the central government. It is proposed to extend these powers, with a view to increasing, as we think, the range of usefulness of the local authorities and of bringing the affairs of local government more and more into the daily life of the community.”

They say, “it is proposed to extend these powers.” It contains nothing beyond a proposition, and there has been no extension of powers. Even in the Bill before us now there is practically no extension of the “proposed” powers. In his address at the same meeting the president said—

“Some councils think the time is opportune for the extension of the municipal franchise to all owners and occupiers of rateable land, whether they have paid their rates or not; other councils opine that occupiers should be enfranchised as well as owners when the rates have been paid by the owners. That there is a desire for an equitable change in the municipal franchise is evident, and it behoves the delegates to face the inevitable calmly and deliberately, and set an intelligent seal upon the question as a guide to our legislators.”

Then, later on, when the question came up on a motion dealing with the franchise, Alderman F. S. Burstow, Toowoomba—a friend of the hon. member for Toowoomba—said—

“Take a boarding-house, say, with sixteen boarders. Any of them would have a vote, always provided they have been six months resident in the community. The important question to bear in mind is that we will be giving into the hands of people without any interest in the community the balance of power. Such people may go away at any moment, but the effect of their vote will remain, and will remain on the property-holders who ultimately will have to bear the burden.”

Another speaker, Alderman N. D. MacLeod, said—

“Mr. Huxham practically had said, ‘the franchise is to be extended for the benefit of the man with a swag on his back.’ He had supported the Labour party in the past, and he now said if the new Government went on making laws of this kind the men who helped them into power would bring their votes against them later on.”

And the same alderman moved—

“That this conference strongly protests against the extension of the franchise as foreshadowed in the Assistant Home Secretary’s address.”

In the following year, 1916, this resolution was passed—

“That this conference, representative of local government in Queensland, whilst

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entering an earnest and emphatic protest against the intention of the Government to amend the franchise so that every adult, whether he be owner, occupier, or resident, whether he pays rates directly or indirectly, shall have a voice in the election of local government representatives, recommend that all persons in actual occupation should be granted the franchise.”

I wish to show that the local authorities throughout Queensland are fully impressed with the importance of this proposal, and are fully determined that, if they can possibly help it, it is not going to be carried. At the conference held in August, 1917, the following resolution was passed:—

“That this conference of delegates, representing the cities, towns, and shires of Queensland, hereby emphatically reaffirms its determination to strongly oppose the introduction of adult franchise in the Local Authorities Act.”

Then, again, at the conference in 1918, this resolution was passed—

“That this conference, representing the cities, towns, and shires of Queensland, hereby emphatically reaffirms its determination to strongly oppose the introduction of adult franchise in the Local Authorities Act.”

In 1919, as the local authorities were under the impression that the referendum had been decided in favour of the retention of the Upper House, they did not pass any resolution at all, but in July of this year, this resolution was passed—

“That the conference hereby emphatically reaffirms its determination to strongly oppose the introduction of adult franchise in the Local Authorities Act.”

I might say that all these resolutions were practically unanimous. Regarding the resolution passed in July of this year, there was only one dissentient. Let me say that these local authorities’ delegates who come down to Brisbane are men who are not absolutely devoid of common sense. Of course, they do not claim to have all the brains of the community, as is claimed by our friends on the other side; but they do claim to have ordinary common intelligence, and they further claim that they are carrying on a duty for the benefit of the State of Queensland, and are doing a work which is in the interests of the community they represent, and doing it to the best of their ability with the powers they have at their command.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed him by the Standing Orders.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Dromer*): I trust that the few words I am going to say will not be considered to be the “rift within the hute” so far as some of the views held by some hon. members sitting on this side of the House are concerned. I want to say that, while a member of this party might give adherence to the platform, he is not going to see eye to eye with every little tittle which some members of this side of the House might be prepared to say. (Hear, hear!)

I have had some little knowledge of local authority work, not as a councillor, but for years I sat at the Press table of many local

authorities, and I make bold to say that the claim made by members of the Opposition in this case, that there are no politics in local government, is an absolutely correct and just claim, and I think it is due that I should say that. I wanted to get "Noah Webster" to help me in this, so I went to the library, and asked him what was the meaning of the word "politics," and he said, "The science and art of government." And I want to say that for the three or four years I sat at the Press table of municipal bodies I saw nothing in the nature of science or art of government, so far as municipal bodies are concerned. (Hear, hears, and Government laughter.) And in the contention of the Opposition that up to the present there has been no politics in municipal government, so far as I am concerned, they are particularly correct; but, as far as I can see, what the Opposition is afraid of is that the Labour party might, by their methods, introduce politics into the municipal government of the State, and we do desire to have something in the nature of the science and art of government so far as municipal politics are concerned. So closely as the Commonwealth Government concerns the individual in the matter of defence and so forth, and so closely as the State Government concerns the individual in the matter of his rights and privileges, municipal government lives with him in his very home. He has more interest in municipal government than in either State or Commonwealth Government. If the gentlemen on the other side want me to say anything about the introduction of partyism into municipal politics, I am ready to oblige them. I want to remind hon. gentlemen on the other side, particularly the new members, that the Hon. the Attorney-General, some sessions ago in this House, read a little pamphlet concerning the doings of a political party. This was one of

[7.30 p.m.] the things which was said in connection with that party. They said they were going to form a federation with a certain object. One of the objects of the federation was—

"To procure the necessary amount to acquire this land, associations as bodies, and their members individually, are asked to take up £10 debentures; the property after purchase to be vested in trustees elected by the shareholders on the per capita basis. When it is come to be considered that affiliated with the Queensland Employers' Federation there are bodies representing 4,927 employers; with the Brisbane Traders' Association 500 to 600, without taking into consideration the membership of the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce, Queensland Chamber of Manufacturers, and unaffiliated organisations, there should not be any difficulty in issue of the requisite 260 debentures."

That is a quotation from page 223 of "Hansard," volume cxxii. Here is another quotation from page 251 of the same volume, in which it is stated that one of the objects of the federation was the—

"(2) Supporting, assisting, or rendering aid to candidates or intending candidates in parliamentary, municipal, and other elections."

Therefore, when it comes to charging anybody with the introduction of partyism into

municipal affairs, I say that I know of nobody who has done more to introduce partyism into municipal politics than the people who sit on the other side of this Chamber. I shall read something else in furtherance of my remarks on this point. At the Local Authorities Conference, at the instigation of Alderman Clark, of Sandgate, it was resolved—

"That this conference of delegates from practically the whole of the local authorities of Queensland has received with feelings of intense relief the announcement of the appointment of an Imperial Governor of Queensland."

I wonder if there was any partyism in that resolution—if there was anything in that resolution in the nature of party politics. I venture to say that that resolution was inspired by the party, and used for party purposes.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: That was loyalty; it had nothing to do with party.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: It was loyalty to the federation, and if this loyalty to the federation was not loyalty to the party, then I do not know what it was. During the whole course of this debate I was astonished to hear the remarks which fell from members who have recently come into this Chamber, and have taken their seats on the other side of the House. I think the most remarkable statement made was that made by the hon. member for Port Curtis, who said that if this Bill was passed it would amount to murder. I wonder what is the hon. member's definition of murder. I wonder if the hon. member realised the meaning of what he was saying. A friend of mine, who was not born in this country, once made the remark that, "If you want to see where you are going, you want to look behind you." What he meant by that statement was that we should judge the future by the past, and his meaning might have been put in these words—

"Truth comes to us from the past, as gold is washed down from the mountain, in minute and precious particles, and intermingled with infinite alloy, the debris of centuries."

I want hon. members on the other side who show such a disregard of history, and such ignorance of the facts of history, to direct their attention to this point. Is it murder to give the franchise to people that we call the "under dogs," but who members on the other side call "dirty dogs"? We frequently hear such expression of contempt uttered by hon. members opposite, and we frequently hear them spurn the workers, and sneer at them when they desire to rise above the common level, just as their ancestors did in the days of ancient Rome. When Galerius rose to be Emperor they sneered, "He was a swineherd"; and of Diocletian they said, "He was a slave." They sneered at the lowly origin of the great Augustus; and although they erected a statue to that master of the world during his lifetime, they placed beside it a marble tablet saying, "His grandfather was a merchant, and his father a weaver"! I would remind hon. members that great civilisations were built by those people who in the days of ancient Rome were called "swineherds" and

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"slaves." Have hon. members opposite ever read of the wonderful wisdom of Solomon, and of his wonderful temple?

Mr. MAXWELL: What do you know about it?

Mr. F. A. COOPER: I want to tell the hon. member for Toowong that the temple of Solomon was built by the trade unionists of Tyre—(loud laughter)—and if the hon. member for Toowong had allowed the trade unionists to do what they might have done, the Brisbane Town Hall would have been built long ago. (Hear, hear!) They built their own temple—the Trades Hall—and I believe they are building a second temple—a temple of liberty—somewhere near Jacob's ladder.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and opposition laughter.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: I am giving you information about things which you know nothing about, but which you ought to know something about.

Mr. KING: Come to the present day.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: I am coming to the present day. I should like to remind the hon. member who asked me to come to the present day, that there was a golden age in England, and that that golden age was built up by the guilds of England, the tradesmen of England, and the workers of England. The golden age of England only died when the people who owned and possessed property came and wrested the power from those people, sweated and murdered children—kept children working in factories from fourteen to eighteen hours a day. Those are the people who did the murders in the past. The people who have lifted this Empire out of that slough of despond have been the workers, and the workers only. If the hon. member wants to deny that, let him deny it, but I say it is a fact. If he has read the history of the world, he must know that the under dog has borne the burden, and carried on the struggle towards freedom. If it had not been for those men, hon. members opposite would to-day be ruled by the iron hand of despotism.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: You are being ruled by it.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Not altogether by the iron hand of despotism. I am being ruled, to a certain extent, by the pump-handle of municipalism. I honestly believe that the hon. member for Toowong has in him the germ of better things. I am glad to know he has come amongst a set of men who will help him out of the darkness in which he has been groping for so long. (Laughter.) I want to say that to-day we are not out of the wood. The conditions to-day are not nearly what they might be.

Mr. G. P. BARNES interjected.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: I am glad to know that the hon. member is thinking. It is high time he did. (Laughter.) The hon. member for Warwick ought to know that there are possibilities in this thing that ought to appeal to him. If any hon. member of this Chamber ought to know it is the hon. member for Warwick, that the rights that he calls the rights of property have been denounced all through the ages. I want to remind him

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of what St. Clement said. The hon. member is asking now for a vote for property instead of a vote for humanity. St. Clement said: "Iniquity alone has created private property." I want to remind him of what St. Basil said: "The rich man is a thief." The hon. member for Warwick is standing to-day for three votes for the rich man. I want to remind him of what St. Chrysostom said. He said: "The rich are robbers." The hon. member for Warwick to-day is standing for the robbers and for three votes in municipal government. St. Jerome said: "Opulence is always the product of theft committed." I wonder does the hon. member want any more? I can refer him to the Lord of all the saints when He said: "It is as easy for a camel to go through the eye of a needle as it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven." (Loud laughter.)

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I thought it was a homily you were delivering.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Probably the hon. gentleman could do with a homily. If he can, it is not for me to deny it to him. In any way I can help him I can assure him I will do so. I have been drawn from my argument, but I did want to say that we are by no means out of the wood, so far as freedom is concerned, to-day. If we have the right to say what the defence of Australia shall be and how the defence of Australia shall be conducted; if we have the right to say how our own land shall be protected, we have the right to say how our home shall be protected. These people on the other side talk about the nomad and the wanderer. You would think that the whole of the workers of the world were made up of a shiftless, shifting class. As a matter of fact, 89 per cent. of the workers are pegged down to one spot and dare not shift. Wherever their work is, there they must reside. They have not the opportunity of drawing their income from one part of the community and living in another. They have not the opportunity of having all their interest in North Queensland and living in Southport. They have to stay where their work is. Is it likely that men who have to stay where their work is are going to make their local government a thing to be abhorred, and a thing to their detriment? I cannot understand why there is any objection whatever to the adult franchise, so far as the municipality is concerned. Had anything great been done by municipalities under the old system, I could understand young men on the other side standing for this sort of thing. I need not go too far from this city to take you to a state of affairs in connection with the health of the community that would shock you: the hospital crowded to the doors and the verandas, little children suffering from throat complaints that they ought never to suffer from if there were decent drainage and decent health conditions. I could take you to the city council, and when the health inspector's report was being read you would see the aldermen nodding and nodding, and conversing, paying no attention to the business whatever. But I could show, after that was passed, aldermen rising in their places and asking for a few loads of gravel "agin me own deer." (Laughter.) Some of the streets around the homes of some of the aldermen in the city not too far from here are as boulevards, and the sidewalks are as

bowling-greens. It is an astonishing thing to me that in this argument the Opposition have not been able to produce one illustration of where their government has been good and decent. Notwithstanding what has been said on this side of the House, I want to say that in the general run of things municipal government in Queensland is an absolute disgrace, wasteful in the extreme, a great part of the rates being spent on things that are not essential, the roads and the requirements in regard to the health of the people being entirely neglected. Everlastingly their one consideration has been the rates, the rates, the rates; the protection of property; and the individual can "go hang." If we had no argument whatever in favour of an adult franchise, that would be sufficient in itself. But I say we have this argument, and it cannot be refuted, that the workers have to live in the cities and in the towns, and it is to their interest to see that that government is administered in the very best possible way. It is absolutely to their interest to have good municipal government. It is more to their interest to have good municipal government than it is to have good State or good Commonwealth government, because they live right in the very heart of the city. It is not theirs to go away to the mountains and to the seaside to get away from the oppressive conditions. If anybody can tell me that some of the conditions round about the city are ideal, that they are all they ought to be, of course, they are welcome to it. What I say is that, with the money that is levied in the matter of rates, many of the towns and cities of this country could be made much more habitable and better than they are. I honestly believe it is high time the people who live in the cities and towns—the people who do the work, who provide the wealth of the city and of the town and country—should have a voice in the government of the country. I have to commend the Home Secretary for the very excellent measure he has introduced. I notice the hon. member for Logan was concerned because it did not cover everything the local authorities' conference asked for.

Mr. KING: Everything he promised.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: I want to remind the hon. member that, as "one swallow does not make a summer," so one session does not make a Parliament. We will have plenty of opportunities in the sessions that are to come to make the Local Authorities Act better than it is.

Mr. KING: We have been waiting a long time.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: I know you have been. You have waited thirty or forty years under old Governments. You waited and were played on, passed on, pushed this way and that. Now you have a Government which is giving you what you want—and more than you want, as a matter of fact—and you do not seem to be satisfied. (Laughter.) I wonder why that is. I earnestly beseech the young members of this Assembly to study ancient history a little bit, to study the history of the middle ages, to study the history of the immediate past, and then they will understand why this side of the House exists. This side of the House does not exist out of pure spite; it does not exist just because it exists; but it exists because in the past there has been an organised attempt

by the classes to keep down the masses; and it has been proved right throughout the whole of history, right throughout our civilisation, that it has always been the masses that have made the better living of the community. They have always been for the higher and the better life. As it has been in the past in connection with the particular government of the State, so it will be with the municipal government—that by giving the whole of the people an interest in the government, that government will be broader and better and wiser. The only way in which we can attain that, in my opinion, is by giving the adult franchise in municipal elections, and I, therefore, have very much pleasure in supporting this Bill. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): As one who has considerable knowledge of local government, I do not desire to give a silent vote in connection with this Bill. I regret the Government are bringing in this drastic measure as far as the franchise is concerned. The Local Authorities Act requires amendment in many ways, but with regard to the franchise I think the Government are taking a very drastic step. And it will be a step that the people of Queensland will not approve, with the result that they will return this party to occupy the benches over there in the near future. As I listened to the Minister in introducing this Bill, I thought that it would be much more beneficial to Queensland if he were discussing the unemployment that exists. We have seen the Government trying to placate the unemployed by handing them a cigar, and to-day we have the Home Secretary trying to placate them by handing them a vote. This is a drastic measure, and I do not think it is going to work for the benefit of Queensland. I know that it is not the wish of the men on the front Treasury benches to introduce it; that it is the extreme element that is forcing them to bring it forward, just as they were forced to introduce the amendment in the Wheat Pool Bill. (Government laughter and dissent.) I say I am right. The Government have a very small majority, and these extremists can hold a pistol to the Government's head and say, "You introduce this, or we will cross over." (Renewed Government laughter.)

The concern of the Home Secretary in his second reading speech seemed to be the cities. He discussed them pretty well throughout, but he did not consider the land in the country as worth consideration. I say that the people of Queensland do not want this franchise. The ratepayers throughout Queensland have sent men to local authorities' conferences, and they have on almost every occasion voted against adult franchise in local government. I have been sent down to many of them, and I remember that on one occasion only one man was in favour of it, and that man was the present Minister for Agriculture. Those 300 delegates were opposed to it, and I think we should be guided by the views of those picked men with experience of local government matters. The Government are making a vast mistake when they ignore those men and introduce this measure, as I said before, against the wish of the majority of the people of Queensland. I venture to say that if a referendum were taken on this question, the people of Queensland would vote against it—(hear, hear!)—because the people know

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that the giving of adult franchise in local government is going to mean more taxation. And on whom is it going to fall? On the man on the land. The man in the city has an opportunity of passing on taxation, but the man on the land is not in that position. The Government fix the price of what the man on the land produces and tax him at the same time, and he is also called upon to pay the taxation of the man in the city, because he can pass it on. If this Bill is passed, the Government do something detrimental to the men in the country. It is going to mean that rates will be increased. So far as the shire councils are concerned, I do not think there will be very much difference in the representation of them; at any rate, in Southern Queensland. I say that men who have the same politics as myself will continue to represent the people on the councils, and perhaps the only good thing in connection with this measure is that it is going to send the Primary Producers' Union together more than ever. (Hear, hear! and laughter.) It is going to compel the farmers to take an interest in local government, as they have done in State Government, with the result that you see on these benches. That is one thing it is going to do, and if you want to keep the primary producers together—well, introduce more drastic legislation, and you will see that it will have the effect of our crossing over to the other side of the House and bringing the Government over here. (Hear, hear! and laughter.)

This measure is going to mean increased taxation, and increased taxation is going to mean less production. If a man goes to buy a piece of land, naturally he makes inquiries as to what the rates are, and when he finds what the rates are, with the prospect of their being much heavier, he turns round and decides that he will not go into that shire. I know that in my own shire, where we have to pay rates for a bridge, the effect is seen in that way, and you are going to have less production, which means a higher cost of living.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How could you get your produce to market without a bridge?

Mr. CLAYTON: I am not opposed to paying for the bridge. We have to pay for the bridge, and I much prefer to pay by means of a rate than under the old toll system. I am not opposed to the removal of the maximum limit of rating, because I say that the time is coming when, in some parts of a shire or a municipality, it will be necessary to increase the rates—it may be in the interests of the people in that part of the shire or municipality—and because, although I am not in favour of imposing heavy taxation on land from which we are producing, I am, nevertheless, in favour of amending the Act so that you can impose heavy taxation on men who are holding land for speculative purposes. (Hear, hear!) I will give you instances of men who are holding land for speculative purposes. Some time ago, when the Government were looking for a place on which to erect a State iron and steel works, some people thought they would be placed at Urangan, which is in the Burrum Shire. I am a member of that shire council, and at the next meeting, after there was a likelihood of those works being established at Urangan—

Mr. BRENNAN: What about the Susan?

[Mr. Clayton.

Mr. CLAYTON: It is a pity you did not fall into the Susan and stay there. (Laughter.) At the next meeting a list of alterations in the rate book for the transfer of properties went through, and amongst them was a transfer "From So-and-so to D. Weir." (Opposition laughter.) That went through all right, although I interjected at the time, "Will he convert it into leasehold or is he going to prefer freehold?" The next transfer was on "From So-and-so to D. T. Bear-on." (Laughter.) And the next one was "From So-and-so to Mr. Whitford." (Renewed laughter.) There we have the land speculators. (Disorder.) I come nearer home, and on the front Treasury bench we find the Minister for Agriculture with 640 acres at Beerburum.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the Bill. At present his remarks have no bearing on the Bill.

Mr. CLAYTON: My remarks indirectly have a bearing on the Bill, because they relate to an amendment of the Local Authorities Act. This amending Bill states that we can rate perpetual leases differently to what

we did before. I think that the [2 p.m.] Act should be amended in connection with the sale of properties on which rates are owing. We have an instance in the Burrum shire, where just recently we had a large number of properties on which there were arrears of rates sold, and the result was that we had to pay more for advertising the sale than the sale itself realised. It cost us £85 to advertise the sale, and we did not get that much for the land. We should be allowed to sell the land to cover arrears of rates without advertising at all.

Mr. BRENNAN: Then one of the aldermen will buy it all.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: One of the aldermen will buy it on the quiet.

Mr. CLAYTON: While we are dealing with local authority matters, we should do something in connection with the flying fox board. Last year the Burrum Shire Council paid £350 for the destruction of flying foxes, but it will make no difference whatever to the number of flying foxes that still exist this year.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You can have a special board.

Mr. CLAYTON: Yes, I know; but it is hard on the man on the land to have to contribute towards the cost of a special flying fox board for the destruction of flying foxes. The provisions relating to flying foxes are absolutely no good at present. Then, in regard to noxious weeds, the Burrum council have spent a great deal of money in the eradication of noxious weeds. Certain other owners who have noxious weeds on their land are also compelled to clear them, but then we have a Government reserve adjoining covered with noxious weeds, and not one penny is spent to clear those noxious weeds. The Act should be amended there to make provision for the clearing of Government reserves. Then something should be done in connection with the prickly-pear pest, which is spreading at the rate of 1,000,000 acres per annum, and it will cost £250,000 to check it. I think the Government should step in and do something to eradicate the pear. In connection with the amalgamation of shires, I think the

Government are making a serious mistake when they do not listen to the advice given to them by the men who have practical experience in connection with the amalgamation or reduction of shires. At the present time the Burrum Shire Council costs half of our income to administer. If the Government altered the boundaries and made them about half the size there would be more efficient administration. Previously the Burrum Shire was five shires administered by thirty-six men, and now we have only twelve men to administer it. I hope the Government will withdraw the Bill and hold it over until further information has been obtained from local authorities on the matter.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): We have hon. members opposite speaking in favour of this Bill when they do not pay rates themselves. The Home Secretary spoke about Sydney as an object lesson in the management of cities, just because they have a Labour council there and a Labour lord mayor.

The HOME SECRETARY: Can you quote from "Hansard" any part of my speech where I mentioned Sydney?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It was mentioned by members on the other side. (Laughter.) I have a report here to show how things are managed in Sydney. The Sydney council is elected in the same way as the Minister proposes in this Bill. We know that the Sydney council and the Lord Mayor of Sydney are dominated by the Trades Hall. I will quote from "Smith's Weekly" to show the way they manage things in Sydney—

"That there exists in Sydney and the immediate suburbs a Chinese community that Australia could well do without is admitted, if for no other reason than that of public health.

"*Vice-infested areas.*

"Experience has shown that wherever Chinese congregate the slum flourishes. Their presence brings in its trail prostitution, sly-grog shops, and opium dens.

"Vice appears inseparable from these localities. Within the city proper, and in some cases less than a stone's throw from the tramline, there exist streets that are veritable plague spots of vice and immorality given over almost entirely to Chinese. In some of these hovels, whole families live underground in dark, damp, and loathsome cellars. Tucked away in out-of-the-way corners, and surrounded by a maze of tortuous little alleyways are dilapidated old houses with low ceilings, steep, 2 feet staircases and Fox-like apartments, into which the sunlight rarely, if ever, penetrates. Chinese inhabit them and pay high rents for them. White women visit them for immoral purposes. Opium smokers foregather therein.

"*White landlords.*

"And in nearly every instance, the landlord is a white man!

"Worse than this, the Sydney City Council draws the most revenue from these places!"

Mr. STOFORD: The owners of these places want to control the council.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They are controlled by the Trades Hall in Sydney, elected under the same franchise that the Home Secretary proposes to introduce into Queensland. The

Home Secretary put forward the ideal conditions which would be adopted in Queensland as the result of this Bill, but we will find that the mayor will be elected by the Labour unions. We know that at the present time the Labour policy is a foreign policy. It is a policy that is dictated to Queensland and to Australia by foreigners. I can quote what Mr. Garden, of New South Wales, says about the Labour policy in Sydney and Melbourne. We know that what is done in Sydney and Melbourne by the Labour party is also brought to Queensland. We know that the Ministers and Premiers in Queensland, especially those sitting on the front bench opposite, have always admitted that the Labour policy in Australia, both Federal and State, must be the same. This is what Mr. Garden says—

"The Labour policy is the cream of thought of men like Debs, de Leon, and Trautman."

Are not these foreign names? The whole of the Labour policy is dictated by foreigners. We have the Marx policy adopted by members opposite. Hon. members opposite are disciples of Marx. If you want to get the result of the doctrines of Marx you have only got to look at Russia to-day. There is nothing British about their policy; it is all foreign. I maintain that Australians have proved themselves practically the best men in the world, and yet they allow their policy to be dictated to them by foreigners. It is about time there was a big change in the Labour party.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must connect his remarks with the Bill.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The franchise that is proposed in the Bill is a plank in the Labour platform, and I contend that it is about time that we had a change in the Labour policy and in this particular plank, because it is going to injure the working people more than anyone else. I am sure that I am right in saying that a majority of the voters in the city of Brisbane are workers, and a very big percentage of those workers own their own properties.

The HOME SECRETARY: Especially in Queen street.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member for Bowen gave the show away when he said the Bill was wanted to find employment for the unemployed. The policy of the party opposite is to find employment for unemployed around Brisbane merely to keep them here as voters; and it is that policy that has put the party opposite in the financial position they are in to-day. In carrying out that policy they have absolutely disregarded all economic laws. They have never thought of a man producing the wealth that he receives as wages. They have simply kept the people here as voting machines, and now they are finding that it does not pay. I will give one instance of that. If a school teacher belongs to a labour union, he gets a certain amount of money extra.

Mr. KERWAN: No he does not; he gets the award rate.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He is not paid for his brains or for the work he does.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. Bebbington.]

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He is paid a certain amount extra if he belongs to a union. If he is not a unionist, he is not paid that rate by the Treasurer's orders.

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. gentleman connect his remarks with the question before the House.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Under this Bill it will be possible to find employment for men on unproductive works, and thereby land the whole of the local authorities in bankruptcy, because they will have to employ men really for voting machines and not to do useful and reproductive work. I want to show how the present Government have robbed and starved the local authorities before proposing to hand them over under the present Bill. Some years ago I went down to Melbourne and enquired into the Main Roads Board down there. When I came back I went to the then Home Secretary, the hon member for Albert, and asked him if he would give us a Main Roads Board Bill. He said, "I will provide that you are willing to agree to a land tax to find the money."

Mr. HARTLEY: Is that how you were able to buy your motor-car?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I may tell the hon. member that I bought my motor-car out of money that I earned, but it will be a very long time before he will be able to buy one out of the money that he earns. The Home Secretary continued, "As a Government we believe in only having one taxing authority for land, and that is the shire councils. The shire councils should take all the taxes from the land and use them as they think best in the interests of the people. If we put on a land tax, we shall simply hand it back to the shire councils, or to a Main Roads Board, or whatever you like to call it." Now, what has happened since the present Government came into power? Last year they took £578,000 from the people in land tax.

The TREASURER: They did not. The land tax last year did not amount to half a million.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I have taken the figures from the Auditor-General's report, but perhaps it was his report for last year, as the report for the present year came out very late. In any case I am correct when I say that the highest amount collected in any one year in land tax was £578,000. The Government have robbed and starved the people on the land to that amount in one year. Then they have taken another £1,000,000 in rent from Crown lands, and not one penny of that have they returned to the land. The waste of the Government in Queensland is enormous. If the local authorities wasted money at the same rate as the Government, the whole State would have been bankrupt long ago.

The TREASURER: The cities contribute nearly all the land tax.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I admit that, at the request of the Farmers' Party, the Treasurer last year agreed to allow the farmers to deduct the amount they pay in land tax when sending in their income tax returns. That was a concession we got last year, and that accounts to some extent for the reduction in the land tax.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: No; they make the farmers pay the land tax.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I now come to the Main Roads Board.

[Mr. Bebbington.]

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in referring to the Main Roads Board.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is connected with local government, and probably the operations of the Bill will interfere a good deal with local government. The only members who opposed the Main Roads Board Bill were myself and one or two other members of this party. We realised the burden that it was going to place upon the people. When that measure was going through the House, the Secretary for Agriculture assured us that all the money that was expended by the board would assist the farmers to get their produce to market. Now, what do we find?

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will not be in order to pursuing the subject of the Main Roads Board any further.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I will not pursue the subject any further; but I was endeavouring to show that every local government measure that the Government have brought forward, ostensibly to benefit the farmer, has imposed a tax on him, and has really been for the benefit of other people at the expense of the man on the land. The Home Secretary dwelt particularly on one phase in the Bill. He said it would enable the local authorities to provide a milk supply for the citizens. That is most important. There is no doubt that thousands of children die every year through lack of good milk.

The HOME SECRETARY: Are you sure it is not millions?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: In the world generally, yes. We know that in all the large cities there is a big death rate of children, because they cannot get sufficient nourishment of the right sort. About three years ago I asked the then Secretary for Agriculture to give some assistance to the co-operative companies in introducing the dry milk system, which would have dealt with the milk supplies of cities. If that encouragement had been given, the whole of the cities would have been able to get first-class milk, which I maintain would have been a very great advantage to the people in the cities. A deputation of country members waited on the Secretary for Agriculture only a few months ago, asking him to make further inquiries into the matter, but no steps have been taken to assist in that direction. Neither the present nor the past Minister has given us any encouragement whatever.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: They are not in sympathy with it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, they are not in sympathy with it, and it is only lip service. I also think that the State enterprises should pay rates. If they paid rates and taxes the same as private industries do, they would be wiped out. That is the policy of the Country party, and when they get over on the Government benches—which will not be very long—they will put it into effect. We do not ask the Government to do anything which we would not do ourselves. We are going to put every one of the State industries on a business footing. They will have to pay rates and taxes, just as a private citizen does. If they can compete with private industry and pay anything to the State, let them exist. We want them to do exactly the same as we do.

The TREASURER: We are doing it. The State Insurance Department is doing it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If private citizens who are engaged in local industry did what the State Government does, they would be in gaol. (Opposition laughter.) Those are the facts. The Government is above the law. There was a case where the State Sawmills insured a man after he was dead, and then claimed the policy money. (Laughter.) These are the things which we are going to abolish. We want the State enterprises to be put on a business footing. Will the Government put their industries on a business footing?

The TREASURER: They are.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, they are not. They do not pay rates to the local authorities.

The TREASURER: Yes, they do.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Which?

The TREASURER: Each one.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We have no evidence that any of the State industries pay taxes to the local authorities. I do not like to say it, but I cannot take the Minister's word for that, because the Home Secretary gives us to understand that they do not do it.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not do anything of the kind. I said I agreed that they should pay.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: But you would not agree to make them pay.

The TREASURER: It is in the Insurance Act. There is a clause there dealing with it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Does your State sawmill pay rates and taxes to the city council?

The TREASURER: Yes.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Good on them. (Loud laughter.) Another thing I wish to say is that the legislation of the present Government has practically ruined shire councils and city councils, for this reason. You cannot give up contracting. The Government's legislation has made contract work impossible. If you give up contract work, and you have a man there who wants to take you down, he can live on the job, and you have to pay him at least the Arbitration Court wages for the time he is living on the job practically doing nothing. Some of the jobs which are being done under day labour by the Government would almost give you the impression that the men were going to live on the job. If the hon. gentleman wants a case, I will tell him of one in the electorate of the hon. member for Albert. The school at Coolangatta is a real by-word amongst the people, who have come to think that the men on the job have gone down to live at the seaside. Our shire councils and city councils cannot give up the contract work, because they are liable to pay at least the Arbitration Court wages; but here is a lot of Government work going on, in connection with which I am certain we do not get the value of what we pay.

Mr. POLLOCK: What has this got to do with the Bill?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It has everything to do with the Bill; and, more than that, it has got to do with the hon. member's political existence, because he will not be able to carry on much longer. (Laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I maintain that this Bill should deal with 16-perch allotments, and with buildings on swampy land. The Government should have given power to local authorities to prevent that evil, and should have included it in the Bill. I made sure that it was to be included in the Bill. You have only to go to Mayne Junction to find houses which are built not a foot above sea-level on the creek, where in any kind of flood the ground will be flooded at almost any high tide.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is not the Labour party that is cutting up that land and selling it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Labour party is agreeing to it, and you are a party to it if you agree to it. There are many things I would like to deal with, but we will discuss the Bill in detail when we get into Committee. The Home Secretary commented upon the borrowing powers in New Zealand, where they are practically under the same conditions as are proposed in the Bill. That shows that there will be reckless borrowing and expenditure, which will be putting a burden upon young people who are growing up, which should not be placed upon them.

Mr. WILSON (*Fortitude Valley*): I rise to say a few words in support of this Bill, by which it is proposed to amend the Local Authorities Act. As one who has some experience in connection with local government, I can say that this question has been in the forefront of the Labour platform for upwards of twenty or twenty-five years. Our opponents have always totally opposed this principle whenever it has come before them.

There has been a good deal of [8.50 p.m.] extravagant language used by our opponents in connection with this amendment of the Local Authorities Act. I have no intention of indulging in any personalities, but there are a few remarks that have been made by our opponents that want replying to. I am of the opinion that the Local Authorities' Association, which has been referred to so frequently during this debate, is purely a political association, and I have evidence of that fact. I have attended several of the local authority functions when the representatives came down here in conference to discuss matters in connection with local government, and I have had the pleasure of sitting amongst the delegates when the late Home Secretary, Mr. Huxham, addressed them on more than one occasion, and directly he touched on the question of the broadening of the franchise you could see by the talk amongst the delegates that the association was absolutely a political association. The city council, which has been mentioned on one or two occasions by the hon. member for Toowong, thought fit at one time to secede from the Local Authorities' Association. They passed a motion to that effect in the city council, but some time later that motion was rescinded. I supported the motion to secede from the Local Authorities' Association, as I could see no benefit was received from it by the city council in any shape or form. We had our own legal adviser, and got no advice from the association. At all events, no advice that was any good to the city of Brisbane. While this matter was under discussion in the council, an officer of the Local Authorities' Association charged those who were in favour of secession from the association with not advancing any arguments. Speaking to me, he said, "You

Mr. Wilson.]

yourself went up for the presidency and got defeated, but I will say that 80 per cent. or 90 per cent. of the local authority delegates are of the Liberal way of persuasion, and it is on account of your strong Labour views that you were defeated." That was stated by the treasurer of the Local Authorities' Association, and I think he is treasurer at the present time. In reply to him, I said, "We do not require to advance any argument for secession from the Local Authorities' Association, as the treasurer has advanced a good enough argument." At a picnic given to the delegates of the Local Authorities' Association—I think it was at Cleveland—by the hon. member for Albert, when he was Home Secretary, the hon. member read either a telegram or letter from Mr. Denham, the then Premier, expressing regret at not being able to attend the function, but he gave them a hearty invitation to attend a People's Political League meeting that night, at which he was to preside. That was quite sufficient to let me know that it was a political association, and if there is any colour of a political association about it, it really defeats the very object for which it was formed. There have been a good many arguments used with regard to rating. The general rate at the present time in the city of Brisbane is 6d. in the £1. Of course, they have power to strike a special rate, but I have always contended that it has been bad administration in the past that has brought about the state of affairs that exists to-day, because, when they had power to strike a higher rate, the rate was 1½d. to 2½d., and they floated loans to carry out the work instead of raising a revenue commensurate with their needs. There has been a good deal said in connection with the franchise. That seems to be the bone of contention in regard to this Bill, and I take this opportunity of congratulating the Home Secretary on the very able way in which he moved the second reading of this Bill. He made out a very good case as to why the franchise should be broadened, and we on this side are of the opinion that it should be broadened. My chief reason for that is that it would ensure a greater interest being taken in local government. We have not had much interest in local government for some considerable time past, and I feel sure that if the franchise is broadened there will be a greater interest taken in local government in every shape and form. My friends opposite seem to regard a man who has no property as being really without brains. They say the election of chairman by the electors would be wrong altogether, but when the Minister asked leave to introduce the Bill several members on that side of the House said they had nothing to complain of in connection with the election of mayor. Since then, I suppose, they have had a meeting, and they have changed their tune in regard to the election of mayor. I think it is a broad democratic principle that will give us a chance of getting a decent class of men in the chair. I am not going to reflect on the present mayor of Brisbane, but I do say that under the present system, even if the council meetings were held at night time, there would not be a much better class of representatives in connection with local government. People engaged in business pursuits cannot really afford to go into local government, because it takes up too much of their time. If you read the list of the attendances of aldermen to the city council

throughout the year, you will find that the work takes up a good deal of their time, when you take into consideration the various committee meetings they must attend, and it is only a man who has idle time on his hands and the means who can afford to go in for it. Very rarely you see a big business man or a property-holder go into the council. So long as he can get some other man to stand and do as he is told, that will suit, and we know of the influence brought forward by vested interests in connection with the city of Brisbane. While I admit that the Local Authorities' Association does a lot of good work, and that local governing bodies do a lot of good work, I am of opinion that better work still could be done if the franchise were broadened. I would like to inform the House that the city council has not increased the rates, or made any new valuations since the commencement of the war. During the last five years we have kept the rates pretty well the same, and the valuations the same. Under the Local Authorities Act we have the right to make a fresh valuation every three years, and to show the influence of outside bodies, I would point out that the property-owners' association knew that a new valuation was to be made, and they waited on the mayor and aldermen of the city of Brisbane and entered a protest against any new valuation being made. They asked the council to leave the valuation as low as possible. They said they were not afraid of the council increasing the rates: they would be prepared to agree to the city council increasing the rates, but not the valuation. I know perfectly well that the property-owners' association really were frightened of the land tax. That is why they did not want the land valuation to go up. When the Land Valuation Bill was under discussion a few years ago I read a list of the valuations that were imposed by the city council, and what the properties were fetching under the hammer, and there was a very big discrepancy indeed between the two. I am of opinion that the broadening of the franchise will fill a long-felt want. It is absolutely necessary, and I cannot see why the Opposition should be in any way timid of it. I do not believe that they are timid of it, because a man has to reside three months in a district before he can exercise his vote, and there will be no change in the country shires at all. As far as the big centres are concerned, there will be very little change, that is, if you are going to take the last State election as a guide. Take Toowong and Oxley, for instance. Do you think there will be any difference? My contention is that by broadening the franchise you are creating a deeper interest in local government, for, after all, people are more closely connected with local government than they are with Parliament, as it is more in touch with their homes.

There was some very extravagant language used by one or two hon. members. The hon. member for Albert referred to the workers as "loafers," and all that sort of thing, which was absolutely uncalled for. We know they do this now because they are opposing the Bill. If it were before the parliamentary election, what would they call them? They would call them "Jolly good fellows" or "The poor unemployed." The principal reason why this measure should be introduced is that the adult franchise is recognised—all over Australia at all events—in connection with members of the

[Mr. Wilson.

Commonwealth and State Parliaments. In a democratic State like Queensland, why should it not be the only way to elect local government members? Take, on the one hand, the number of persons of both sexes domiciled within the city in residential quarters and boarding establishments who are daily occupied in commercial, industrial, and banking pursuits. Why should they not have a vote? I do not see any reason why they should be denied a voice in the election of a representative. Then take the people who have lived in the one house, in many cases for twenty, twenty-five, and thirty years. They have paid sufficient rent during that time. I would venture to say, to more than buy the property they are living in. Why should they be denied a vote?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: They are not denied a vote.

Mr. WILSON: I know just as much about that portion of the business as the hon. member who interjects. I will run that out a little bit further. The hon. member for Toowoong said many of them go to the city council and claim the votes.

Mr. MAXWELL: I said they can do it.

Mr. WILSON: I know they can do it according to the Act. If a man is an occupier he can claim a vote, provided he goes to the council and pays the rates within the discount period. Even if the landlord himself has paid the rates previously, the tenant can come forward and claim to have his name inserted on the roll and get the landlord's money returned to him. The tenant can step it out of the rent. But how many of them do it? I will just tell you the reason why the occupier would not attempt to do it. We know it is a difficult matter for a person who has been living in one house for years to find another suitable place. A person is living in a house where he is perfectly satisfied with the surroundings and conditions, and does not want to move. Perhaps it is close to his business, or something of that sort.

Mr. MOORE: If he is perfectly satisfied with the surroundings and conditions, the council must be doing all right.

Mr. WILSON: I do not wish to be drawn off the track, because I understand the matter thoroughly. For argument sake, we will say you have three votes for one particular ward. You are living in one house yourself. You have tenants in one house two. If each of the two tenants demand a vote in his name, they are taking two of the votes away from you. Therefore, the owner of that property and the tenants come to cross-purposes. If the tenant goes and demands his right according to the Act, he is doing the landlord out of his vote. If you have a 16-perch allotment you have one vote. If you have unimproved value to the extent of £500 you have two votes, and up to the extent of £1,000 you have three votes in that particular ward. I can tell you if a person had £1,000 worth of unimproved property in the city he would have twenty-one votes—that is, three for each ward. Is that a fair thing? I do not think it is. I say if the occupier claims a vote according to the Act, he will fall out with the landlord in nine cases out of ten, because he is reducing the landlord's power of voting. He is put out of the house by the landlord for daring to pay the rates in his name, although we know perfectly well that the tenant is carrying the burden all

the time—the man to whom you absolutely refuse to give a vote.

Take the voters' roll for the city of Brisbane and see how many absentees and others there are who can never have a vote.

Mr. MAXWELL: Well, they are doing no harm?

Mr. WILSON: I am only showing you that the broadening of the franchise will create greater interest throughout the State. At the present time, we know that numbers of men and women do not interest themselves because they have no vote. If everyone over the age of twenty-one had a vote, you would have the candidates who were standing for municipal honours going round probably with their canvassers, which would create some interest in it. After all, there is no man who can live on the pay he is going to get as a member of a municipal body, because he gets no pay. The arguments advanced are all moonshine; but they must be consistent because they have opposed every measure of reform introduced by this party in this House.

I was referring to the voters' roll and the number of absentees and others who can never have a vote. Examine the number of individual voters, for argument sake, on the rolls and compare it with the population. The percentage is absolutely ridiculous. In the Merthyr Ward, which I represent, there is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 900 votes, but there are not 900 voters, because a lot of them have two and three votes. Yet, there is a population of about 6,000. They are all interested in the surroundings from a health point of view, and in every shape and form. Why should they be denied a vote?

Listening to all the talk we have heard from members opposite about nomads and loafers, one would think that people would come from one electorate to another in order to get votes and secure election as members of a local authority, though we know that they do not get one sixpence for the work they do on a local authority. These people appear on the voters' roll for several years in many cases, and do not take any interest in local government, and that is what our friends opposite term local government. Why, the whole thing is a farce. As a matter of fact, take the number of people in the cities who pay income tax and are doubtless estimable citizens and who have not got a vote for municipal government. They do not care about owning a house. People have different ideas with regard to their investments. Some people invest in the Stock Exchange or in limited liability companies, or in other ways, and why should they be denied the right of a vote in municipal affairs simply because they do not believe in property? Many persons do not believe in putting their money into property. We used to hear a lot about those people when the proposal for the acquisition of the tramways was being discussed, and it was pointed out that, although they lived within the city boundaries, they had no vote. If you analyse the list of individual debenture-holders in the city council—men who have a first claim on the rates for the interest on their money, I ask, how many votes they have in the election of members of the local authority? They hardly have any votes. The subscribers to previous loans were not limited to ratepayers only, and yet there was no talk about having no representation without taxation. If the

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borrowing powers of local authorities are to be broadened, I see no reason why the Opposition should oppose every adult having a vote, because it is quite certain that those adults will endeavour to safeguard their interests. The broadening of the franchise would do away with many of the unfair methods which are adopted in the election of aldermen and members of shire councils. I have been in the city council for about fifteen years, and I know perfectly well that it is a very difficult matter to get anyone to come out and stand for municipal honours. I think the hon. member for Toowong will bear me out in that remark. It is a very difficult matter to get anyone to come out for election, because it is well known that aldermen get nothing for their work except abuse. Certain people earn their livelihood by endeavouring to induce men to come out and contest seats in the local government bodies. Those people will tell a prospective candidate that there are a lot of ratepayers who wish him to come out; and if that man is foolish enough to listen to them, he will find that they have been inspired by some members of the council. Seven members of the city council retire every year, but I never saw seven elections take place at any one time. It is a very difficult matter to get more than one contest. On one occasion I was opposed, and I found on that occasion that my brother aldermen used to meet at night in order to try to induce a man to stand against me. That man was Mr. Welsby, and he was man enough to tell me of what was going on in the presence of the hon. member for Buranda, Minister for Public Instruction. I discovered that the men who used to meet every night in order to get me out of the council were chiefly contractors, who I had been fighting in favour of the day labour scheme. The hon. member for Musgrave was the first speaker in this debate, and he stated that if the time for the introduction of the Bill was made a little bit longer—say, about twelve months—he would support the Bill. He supplied an argument why we should vote for the franchise proposed in this measure as against the franchise existing at the present time. The hon. member for Bulimba had something to say on behalf of tenants who were against an increase in the rates, because he knew very well that any man who was opposed to an increase in rates had a good chance of being elected as a member of a local authority. By broadening the franchise we will increase the interest of the people in local government, and the people will elect men who will worthily represent them. I was sorry to hear the hon. member for Port Curtis, who came down here with great hopes, wind up his remarks by saying that if this Bill were passed it would be nothing but murder.

Mr. FLETCHER: I did not say that.

Mr. WILSON: I understood the hon. member to make that statement.

Mr. FLETCHER: If you read what I said you will alter your opinion.

Mr. WILSON: I heard what the hon. member said, and reading his remark will not alter my opinion. The hon. member for Albert referred to the people as loafers and crows, and all sorts of things. The hon. member for Burnett said that the Government introduced this Bill because they hoped to make some political capital out of it. There is no political capital to be made out of the Bill, because it is a measure

which has been standing for a long time on our platform. The hon. member for Toowong, in the course of his speech, spoke about dilapidated buildings which are to be found in the city, and I agree to a certain extent with his remarks. If the council are to beautify the city, we should have power to demolish the class of buildings to which the hon. member referred.

I have drawn attention repeatedly in the city council to the fact that, right in the heart of the city, running parallel with Queen street, between Albert and Edward streets, the old tin places on the left-hand side of Elizabeth street are absolutely a standing disgrace. There are many buildings

[9 p.m.] in the city we would like condemned very much, as we think they are unfit for habitation. Unfortunately, the Commissioner for Public Health or some of his officers have paid a visit to many premises, and as long as they are given a coat of kalsomine to patch them up so that he can say they are tenable, the council have no power to demolish them. I am pleased to know we have power under this Bill to do so. I am going to say a few words, with which I have no doubt the hon. member for Toowong will not agree, in connection with this Government's treatment of local authorities. I have said it in the council repeatedly, and that hon. gentleman heard me, and it has not been denied. I have said that this Government have treated the city council better than any preceding Government. Now, with regard to parks, I wish to state that the preceding Government resumed about 8 acres of Wickham Park at the back of Roma street railway station. A kiosk has been erected on that part and ornamental trees planted. The valuation came to something in the neighbourhood of £16,000. The Denham Government would not grant us a solitary penny; they would not admit any liability at all. That resumption took place a long while ago. We approached this Government, and they have promised us something. In settlement of our claim, I mention this only to show that the present Government are prepared to meet the city council in a fairer and better spirit than the previous Government.

Mr. MAXWELL: If you call £2,000 fair, I do not.

Mr. WILSON: We got nothing from the Denham Government. They denied all claim. I am not going to throw bouquets, as the hon. member for Toowong has done, at the city council. I think if the franchise was broadened we would have a better system of representation, we would get men with broader views, and possibly might make better progress than we are making. The hon. member for Toowong will recollect a deputation some time ago which waited on the Treasurer, who was then Minister for Railways, with a view to improving the city. I think the present Treasurer gave him to understand he would assist in every way possible by running Adelaide street through to North Quay, which was a very good scheme to relieve the congestion at the corner of Queen street coming over the bridge. Unfortunately, there was a piece of property owned by Mr. Tritton—and it would really mean the resumption of his property. When the matter was brought before the council, there was a unanimous vote that we should resume it. But later on, when Mr. Tritton got to work on a few aldermen, they got sufficient to rescind that motion.

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Mr. MAXWELL: Because Tritton offered as much property as we wanted for road purposes for nothing.

Mr. WILSON: Tritton offered a strip of land commencing from 2 feet wide up to 5 feet. Is not that correct?

Mr. MAXWELL: Yes, without any expense to the city council.

Mr. WILSON: What were we giving him? We were giving him a full frontage to a main street 2 chains wide—one of the main streets in the city. Look at the enhanced value of his property. Why should he have that? Why should not the city council have it because of the expense that they were incurring? I knew when I mentioned this that I would be at cross-purposes with the hon. member. I could name any number of instances where a change in the city council would be of great advantage to the community, but I do not want to do so. A great deal has been said about New Zealand and other places. We know the franchise is broader in Sydney than it is here. They have the boarders' franchise there. I feel convinced that if the members of the Opposition were only prepared to give this a trial, in three years' time they would say it was a good thing. I am of the opinion that it would create a good deal of interest—more than we have at present—throughout the State, if the franchise was broader. I cannot see where they have anything to be frightened of. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*): It is rather regrettable that such an important measure as this should be supported by so much abuse, and so much aspersion against the characters of those who have faithfully administered the Local Authorities Act, as far as the power was invested in them of so doing, during many years past. I have no hesitation in saying that those men who have carried out local authority work year in and year out have done a great service to this community, sacrificing their time in order to serve the community faithfully and well. Yet insults have been hurled at them from the Government benches right from the commencement of the debate. I am not taking any credit to myself in making these remarks, because I have not been attached to local authority work for a long period, thus differing from a number of members sitting upon the Opposition benches; but since I have been connected with it I have realised in a slight degree the amount of work that has been put in by aldermen and shire councillors in order to serve the community and safeguard its health as far as they possibly could under the restricted conditions under which they were working. It appears to me that any Bill which requires abuse to support it must be a rotten measure indeed. Whilst we have been looking forward to this measure for a long time and with great hopes, to me it is, to a large extent, a great disappointment. They tell us we have received wide powers. I fail to see it. Many of the wide powers we have received are more than counterbalanced by other wide powers which have been put into this Bill and which will destroy those powers which have been given to local authorities. There are many clauses we would have liked to see inserted in this Bill. For instance, in tropical climates we would like to have power to restrict the area on which residences could be built. Whilst in these zones that might not be so essential, in tropical climates it is

absolutely necessary that plenty of open air spaces should be given to inhabitants in order that healthy conditions might prevail. I would also like to see the council have power to control the installation of septic tanks. We might be told that we have such a power. My contention is that, in the days to come, particularly in tropical climates, many of the septic tanks which are being installed at the present time will be a danger to the health of the community. They will be the means of spreading typhoid germs and menace in a severe way the health of the community. We have no power by which we can deal with these.

Now, some charges were levelled by the Home Secretary and others against those who have been administering local government affairs—first of all, that a majority of the councils have no definite policy. I challenge that statement. I say that most councils are working on a definite policy; but that definite policy has been, to a large extent, hindered by the restrictions which have been placed upon them—not only restrictions in regard to increasing the general rate and the financing of that policy, but also restrictions of power to deal with certain nuisances. I have only to look at the various cities to find confirmation of my statement. I have seen a bold policy enunciated by the city of Rockhampton for tramways, electric lighting, and improvements right throughout that great city, but they have been hampered in carrying out this policy. Until just recently they have not had the power to borrow money in the open market and finance the policy they would like to carry out. We have the same with Toowoomba and Brisbane. I maintain that the city I represent has a broad and strong and a democratic policy. We have endeavoured to install electric lighting, and we are going to succeed—electric lighting as a municipal measure run for the benefit of the citizens. (Hear, hear!) We would do likewise with the tramways, but we have been hampered, because we have not had permission to go outside the Treasury to finance such undertakings. So I contend that the local authorities have a definite policy, but the restrictions in the old Local Authorities Acts regarding borrowing and increasing the rates have prevented their going on with that policy.

We have been told also that the administration of local authorities is absolutely disgraceful—that there is no civic ability whatever. I, again, without any hesitation whatever, say that that also is absolutely untrue. If you study the local authorities and their administration during the last five years, such must call forth the respect and esteem of everyone who realises that they have been working under difficult circumstances. We know that the cost of everything has increased tremendously; yet local authorities have had no opportunity of increasing their rates. They have been expected to carry on with the same limit of 6d. in the £1; they have continued their work, and I venture to say that there are few local authorities in Queensland that are in an insolvent position. I venture to say that the majority of them are in a far better position than the Government, with all the increased taxation which they have had from the people during the past five years. (Hear, hear!) And yet local authorities are accused of not having

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any administrative policy or financial ability! They have carried out their business on sound financial lines, and they are in a sound position to-day, because they have had at their head men who have had ability, men who have had some financial standing, and who could control the affairs of a local authority as they should be controlled.

We have also been told the local authorities have been represented by incompetents. I venture to say that that also is not a fair criticism in any respect whatever. I do not say that all the ability is on this side of the House; I do not say that all the ability is on the employing side; I do not say that all the ability is on the side of those who own property. There is just as much on the other side, but I think it only fair that credit should be given to those who have striven in a just, and honourable, and fair way to carry out the duties of local government during the trying period of the last five years, and for many years previous to that. (Hear, hear!) Let us look at some of the hindrances with which they have to contend. I pointed just now to the installation of septic tanks. The local authority which I represent disallowed a certain design. An application came to the Commissioner of Health down here, and the Government went over the head of the local authority, and insisted that that tank should be installed. Do you expect us to control the health of the community when we are over-ruled and over-ridden in that way? We are told that proper sewerage systems are not in existence. Well, we have not the power to borrow to install decent sewerage and drainage schemes. I would point in this connection to the remarks of the hon. member for Mackay, when the Bill was introduced in 1915. He commented very strongly on the drainage of some of the localities round Brisbane. In fact, it appears that Brisbane and the local authorities surrounding it have been brought into very severe condemnation, and that condemnation has been made to embrace the whole community. We from the country object to that. The hon. member for Mackay said—

“Within the municipality of Windsor, for example, one of the metropolitan districts, we find the drainage from the houses, bathrooms, and kitchens running into the street and lying there to be a fertile breeding source of disease to be disseminated amongst the people. We have heard hon. members opposite talking about the representation of the people who own the property. What about the people who live in those places?”

Those remarks are quite correct, but I would point out that the hon. member was in 1917 supporting a Government which altered the definition of a sewer to include a water table, so that every householder and everyone else could run out his sewerage material into the gutter that passed the door, and allow it to remain there, as the hon. member for Mackay said, “A fertile breeding source of disease to be disseminated amongst the people.” All water tables were made sewers, and so the terrible state of affairs pointed out by the hon. member for Mackay was practically sanctioned and upheld by the present Government.

The Home Secretary said that the city of Brisbane was the only one that had moved in the way of establishing parks.

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The HOME SECRETARY: I did not. Read my speech. That is most unfair.

Mr. GREEN: I do not want to be unfair. It was in an interjection that the hon. member made the remark.

The HOME SECRETARY: I said that in the metropolitan area the city council was the council that was doing most to provide parks.

Mr. GREEN: Then, I misunderstood the hon. member. I quite agree with the Home Secretary that the Northern and other constituencies are helping to maintain one of the most beautiful parks in Brisbane, and, as the Home Secretary objected, I also strongly object, and I hope that when the Estimates are being considered I shall receive the support of the hon. member in seeing that a larger grant goes to the outside districts to assist those who have helped to establish parks, and make them healthier playgrounds for the children. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. KIRWAN: What about Rockhampton?

Mr. GREEN: Rockhampton and Townsville, too. I hope the hon. member for Rockhampton will help me in that matter when the time comes. One hon. member spoke about the noxious weeds. I know cases where councils clear the roads of weeds, and where the adjoining landowners have to clear their lands also, but the Government reserves are not cleared at all. The result is that the seeds from the noxious weeds on the Government reserves are scattered all over the place and spring up again. The Government does not realise its responsibilities in that matter, and cannot be forced to realise them the same as the owner of an allotment.

The HOME SECRETARY: Vested interests in Townsville prevented you from carrying out a very fine work in Townsville. I refer to the bridge.

Mr. GREEN: I admit that. I fought that, and I am prepared to fight it again, because I felt that such opposition was against the interests of the community; and I am against anything that is against the interests and welfare of the community.

The HOME SECRETARY: The people of the whole of Townsville were behind you, but the man with three votes defeated you.

Mr. GREEN: Members on this side are charged with not having a policy, but there are quite a number of schemes that we can inaugurate in the northern part of the State, and we can see that they are carried out successfully. I may say that in the North we wanted to go in for municipal enterprise. We wanted to erect a few shops on a vacant piece of land situated in the centre of the town of Townsville, but because of a technicality under which the land was given to the council for a certain purpose, the Government would not allow us to erect the shops. The Government talk about encouraging municipal enterprise, but here was a case where we could have taken advantage of a vacant and unattractive allotment at Townsville and make it attractive to the community as well as a source of revenue, but we were not allowed to do so. There are many provisions in this Bill which commend themselves to a majority of members of this House. I am pleased to see that there is a competency clause providing for efficiency in clerks of local authorities. That is absolutely essential. When city councils and local authorities become business concerns, we want business clerks to

carry out the work on business lines. I am pleased that under this Bill local authorities will have power to deal with dilapidated buildings and will be able to order the removal of slums. Thank God the slums in Queensland are not very bad. In a young country like this we should not have any slums at all. It is a good thing that the council will have power to deal with them. I am glad that the Home Secretary has adopted the suggestion of the Local Authorities' Association regarding an extension of the power to forgo rates on property owned by returned soldiers, incapacitated widows, and men suffering from industrial diseases, where such persons can justly claim to be alleviated.

Mr. PETERSON: Would you also exempt the old age pensioners?

Mr. GREEN: Yes, they are included. Members on the Government side have not got a monopoly of humane feelings. They have not got a monopoly regarding consideration extended to the working men of this community. I give place to no man on the Government benches at all as regards having humane feelings towards my fellow-men. I am just as willing to do all I can for my fellow-men and to see that they get fair and just treatment as the hon. member for Rockhampton and the hon. member for Bremer. Some hon. members think that all the humane feeling is on the Government side of the House.

Mr. FORDE: A great proportion of it is.

Mr. GREEN: Members on this side have the same sympathy and the same feelings towards their fellow-men as you have. Although the local authorities are receiving greater powers under this Bill, there should be a clause permitting local authorities to borrow from the Commonwealth Bank. I am satisfied that some local authorities would receive better treatment from a financial institution owing to their financial position than they would from any Administration. At present, owing to the influence and wire-pulling of local authorities nearer to the seat of Government, they get better treatment than those situated at a distance. One of the great points in dispute in this Bill is in connection with the franchise. I say here that I favour an extension of the franchise to a certain extent. I am in favour of the occupier having a vote, and I am in favour of doing away with the three votes. But I say unequivocally that I would sooner have the present system than the system proposed by the Government in this Bill. During my election I took up that stand, and I spoke strongly against the extension of the franchise as far as making it an adult franchise for local authority elections. I believe that the people gave me hundreds of votes because of the stand I took up on that matter.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What about Mr. Hives?

Mr. GREEN: I understand Mr. Hives was the candidate for the Cairns electorate, and he advocated universal suffrage. That was not in our platform. We did not deny him the right of exercising his own individual opinion and his own conscience. We did not bind him down by any party or caucus decision to advocate any policy outside of our policy contrary to his own beliefs. Mr. Hives may have advocated the universal franchise, but he lost his seat. I did not advocate it, and I won my seat. To have

a universal franchise is representation without taxation, and I am absolutely opposed to that. Members opposite believe that because a man has a property in a municipality on which he pays rates, and resides in another municipality, that he should be deprived of the vote on the property where he does not reside. That is absolutely taxation without representation. I am opposed to it, because it is going to increase the

burden of taxation, and I say [9.30 p.m.] without question, that increasing the burden of taxation in every case falls upon the workers. It is the worker who suffers, and it is the producer who pays. Whilst we may agree that the man who has a business property in the centre of the city gets the additional taxation from his tenant, the worker who owns his own home cannot escape the burden. He is going to pay the increased rates, and he is going to be taxed by men who pay no taxation whatever, but who will exercise the franchise under this universal franchise provision. Further that that, the triennial elections under the universal franchise mean greatly increased cost in the carrying out of the elections. I venture to say that no triennial election will be carried out in this State under this provision for less than £25,000. I believe the Home Secretary stated that in three years at the present time we pay £17,000. That is an increase of £8,000 divided among the local authorities which the general taxpayer will have to pay, so that it means additional taxation to him. I am also opposed to universal franchise, because, notwithstanding what hon. members on the Government benches may say, it is going to introduce party politics in its worst form into municipal elections.

Mr. COLLINS: You introduced them in Townsville when you ran on the party ticket.

Mr. GREEN: I did not. I absolutely refused to come out on a party ticket. I venture to say that this proposal will introduce party politics with all its intrigue, with all its underground engineering, and with all its dictation from outside sources. I have no hesitation in saying that party Government as administered in Australia at the present time is the greatest curse that we have in the community; and if hon. gentlemen opposite were honest, they would back me up in that opinion. Of the other provisions in the Bill, the one which appeals to me as most important is that which deals with the election of the mayor by the ratepayers. I am opposed to that also. (Government laughter.)

Mr. PETERSON: It will do away with the present intriguing that goes on in connection with the election of mayor.

Mr. GREEN: I defy anyone to accuse me of intriguing in connection with the matter, and I believe that, if I were to stand as a candidate for the mayoralty for the city of Townsville, including Mundingburra, under this provision, I would have as good a chance of winning the election as anyone else. But I am opposed to this proposal for reasons that I think are sensible reasons. A man might be elected because he is a good sort of a chap, but he might not have the least ability to carry out the duties of the office. The popular man would win in practically every case, and, if the community is fitted to elect its aldermen and has sufficient confidence in them, surely those

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aldermen have brains enough to elect the man who is to preside over them and govern their destinies for three years. The proposal does not pay much of a compliment to the ability of the aldermen. Further than that, a man might be elected who is absolutely out of touch in his opinions and his beliefs with the other ten or eleven aldermen who are elected; and I defy any mayor to carry out his duties faithfully, conscientiously, and with ability if he has not got the practical sympathy and the practical help of the aldermen. Moreover, it may place us in the same position as that in which the people of America find themselves. President Wilson was elected by a large majority of the people of the United States of America, but he did not get the support of the people whom he was practically ruling over in Congress; and, when the great measure that had for its object the preservation of the liberties of the nations and of peace—the measure that had for its object the prevention of wars in the future—the League of Nations—was adopted by President Wilson, it was practically thrown overboard by Congress because the President had not the sympathy of the majority of the members of that body. The same thing is likely to happen if mayors are elected who are not in sympathy with their fellow aldermen. I wonder if hon. members opposite would suggest that the Speaker should be elected in this manner. I wonder if the Premier would risk being elected by the electors of this State, and run the chance of having behind him the party at present sitting on these benches. (Laughter.) With regard to the amendment of section 71—which removes the limitation of the general rate which previously existed, viz., 6d. in the £1—I believe that the limitation should be removed to a certain extent, but there should be some safeguard provided.

The HOME SECRETARY: You know they get round that now by imposing special rates.

Mr. GREEN: I think the maximum might be increased to 1s. in the £1 for a start, or to some reasonable sum, but some limitation should be retained so that extravagant men who have no responsibility and who pay no rates would not be able to run amok in connection with the administration of the finances of a local authority. That is all I have to say in connection with the measure beyond again remarking that I regret that universal franchise is proposed in this Bill. We know that it will be carried. We know that all the advice we give—and it is good advice—and that all our suggestions will fall on deaf ears; still it is only right that we should enter our emphatic protest and say that we believe that it is not for the welfare of the community as a whole that the franchise should be altered in the way proposed.

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*): The only point I wish to deal with is the question of the present franchise. I am going to speak about the municipal franchise, and I am going to give facts. It is all very well to get up in this Chamber and make bald statements with regard to the franchise on which this Assembly is elected; but I notice that no one on the other side who has said anything about the franchise has supported his statements with facts; they have all just made bald statements. The Home Secretary, in his able second reading speech, showed that he is conversant with the question of the franchise. As member for Cairns, he

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has been written to on numerous occasions in regard to the scandal that exists so far as dummy voters are concerned in the municipal franchise of Cairns.

The HOME SECRETARY: The mayor of Brisbane knows all about it too.

Mr. MAXWELL: No, he doesn't. That was in your electorate.

At twenty minutes to 10 o'clock,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. PEASE: This Bill is to correct the anomalies which exist at present. The position which was disclosed in Cairns shows that there were agents who controlled no less than fifty votes. The system adopted was that these agents paid rates in a lump sum. They handed a list of names to the town clerk, and told him to give three votes each to those nominees, who were the employees of various agents. In one case, we find the husband received votes for house property, and the wife was down also for votes for house property some miles apart, and neither the husband nor the wife lived in either of these houses. I have here the official report which was presented to the council in connection with this matter, and I will read a few extracts from it—

"Ratebook.—This has been irregularly kept. According to section 224 of the Act it should be signed by three members of the council. It is not signed by any one. Section 225 reads: 'No amendment of the ratebook shall be valid until the same is initialled by the chairman, with the date of such alteration or amendment.' Numberless amendments are made in the ratebook without any being initialled by the chairman or dated. These alterations are illegal; and it is assumed that as the voters' roll is made up with these alterations, the voters' roll is an incorrect one. Are the electives void in consequence? is an interesting question."

Then, again—

"Voters' Roll.—I compared the list of arrears of rates with your last voters' roll. For the first eleven pages I found the names of twenty-two voters which should not apparently have been there. Amongst these are the names of an alderman and a member of the harbour board.

"If these proportions be carried through the whole roll, then the number of improper voters in this respect becomes fifty, carrying probably sixty votes."

Then, in the final summing up, Mr. Hodel, who investigated the matter on behalf of the council, made this recommendation—

"I recommend a thorough examination of your ratebook, with the removal therefrom of all names not rightly there, and the prompt preparation thereafter of a correct voters' roll."

Acting on that suggestion, the Cairns Town Council, on Tuesday, 13th September, 1916, held a special meeting, with the mayor in the chair, to amend the ratebook. At that meeting 495 votes on the existing roll were dealt with, and no less than 108 were found to be irregularly there and were removed by order of the council. We have heard a lot about occupiers getting votes, and all that sort of thing.

The HOME SECRETARY: They were all political supporters of hon. members opposite.

Mr. PEASE: There is no ghost here. That is the position which was disclosed because a few people got into the council who had other than capitalistic views. This system existed for years. It was a dumming system. It was brought up repeatedly at meetings, and it was only when a section of aldermen who really represented the rate-payers got on the council that they were able to get the investigation made. Everyone knows that Mr. Hodel is not a Labour man. He has a brother in the Upper House. Mr. Hodel made an exhaustive inquiry into the whole matter, and out of 495 votes which were examined, 108 were found to be capitalistic nominees, and illegally on the roll. One man was an alderman, and a member of another council. These people arrogated the right to do things in connection with which the people had to pay the piper, and they had no right to be there. That is one of the most disgraceful examples of roll-stuffing that has ever been quoted in this Assembly. We have been told to-night that any occupier of a house can demand a vote. I have another instance. The editor of the Labour paper in Cairns did demand his vote. He paid his rates in time, and got his vote, with the result that within a month he was turned out of the house where he had lived for years. Hon. members opposite who talk with their tongue in their cheek about every occupier getting a vote know what I say is true. They know that roll-stuffing is going on, and that the only way to stop it is by this Bill.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Are you stuffing the electoral roll?

Mr. PEASE: No, we are not stuffing it. The hon. member has given me an opportunity of saying what I want to particularly say with regard to roll-stuffing in the Herbert. Does every Opposition member who has talked about this ghost business not realise that he is attacking the gentleman in charge of the Electoral Office and every police magistrate, and clerk of petty sessions, and other officials, who have signed their name to these rolls?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No.

Mr. PEASE: I have in my hands the supplementary rolls for Herbert, certified as correct by the police magistrate at Innisfail. Would any hon. member opposite say that the police magistrate would certify to these rolls as being correct when he did not know that they are correct.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: He does not know. He has no evidence that they are correct.

Mr. PEASE: Here are the supplementary rolls for Herbert used at the last election. One was issued on the 10th August. Before the elections which were held on 9th October, 476 names were erased from this supplementary roll of the 10th August. I have also the supplementary roll issued on 13th September, and before the elections were held, and 439 more names were struck off that roll. I can assure hon. members opposite that the Northern Country Party are well served in this respect. They have an office in Townsville with an officer who was not only there at election time but is engaged at present. He goes right through from Townsville to the Herbert, and his whole work is to see that no names are on the roll that are not properly there, and I can assure hon. members opposite that he does his work very well. On these two supplementary rolls

there are nearly 1,000 names taken off. I do not want to delay the House, but I felt that I had to say something in connection with this matter, because from the information I have given, it will be seen that the officials are doing their duty in a proper and capable manner. The Home Secretary, I know, has been pestered ever since he has been a member of this Chamber in connection with the doing away of slum areas. I know when I was a member of the Town Council of Cairns we were everlastingly asking the Home Secretary and the then Speaker to assist the people of Cairns to destroy that pest spot known as Chinatown. I have in my hand an opinion given by Mr. Stumm in regard to the destruction of Chinatown in which he said—

"But none of these expressions is, in my opinion, sufficiently wide to empower the Cairns Town Council to require the total destruction of any house or structure."

I compliment the Home Secretary for having accomplished something in this Bill which has been occupying the minds of the people of Cairns and the people of North Queensland for a number of years, that is the giving of town councils and other authorities power to destroy these pest spots. I have lived in Cairns something like twenty years, and I know very well that for any inattention shown by the people elected to the local authorities it is the housewives, the children, and the people who live there who have to pay the penalty. As the hon. member for Rosewood said, he suffered from typhoid fever, and if an epidemic broke out in North Queensland, it is these pest spots that would spread the disease and cause widespread loss of life. Once you started to do anything to clean up these places, you struck against vested interests, and the fact that the Home Secretary has been able at last to introduce in this Bill something which will give to the people the right to say who is going to control these pest spots, is one of the benefits of having a Labour Government in power.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): Thousands of words have been spoken on this side of the House in protest of this measure. They have emanated from men of vast experience, and for that reason alone, if for no other reason, the Government—shall I say the caucus—should take notice of what has been said. We find that the main features of this Bill are compulsory adult franchise together with unlimited power of rating. The Home Secretary and other members of his party, in advancing arguments in relation to this Bill, got to the absolute apex of socialism. They said all land belonged to the community, and they further went on to say that all land should revert back to the community. I have gone to the trouble of having a look at "Webster," as those on the Government benches have quoted "Webster" before to-day, and I would like this House to take into consideration where these socialistic principles are going to lead the community. "Webster's" interpretation of the word "commune," shortly, is this—

"The typical society of a primitive class, tribe, or the like; a social organisation in which the life of an individual is almost blended in that of the community, or in which the relationship of the individual has something of the intimacy of family life. In such societies

Mr. Kerr]

natural resources, as land or hunting privileges, are held in common, or subject to periodic apportionment.

"THE COMMUNE OF PARIS.

"The Government established in Paris (1792-94), by the usurpation of supreme power on the part of representatives chosen by the communes. Its period is known as the 'Reign of Terror.'

"The insurrectionary government, modelled on communalistic principles which, after the retirement of the German troops took possession of Paris.

"It was suppressed after a stubborn resistance accompanied by many outrages against life and property."

I say that this Bill can be interpreted similarly to the interpretation of "commune" by "Webster." We also find that the Home Secretary accused property-owners of being burglars.

THE HOME SECRETARY: No; read what I said.

Mr. KERR: He also said they had been rewarded by getting plural votes. I represent in the metropolitan area of Brisbane a class of people who are not socialists; a class of people who have their own little homes, and who are prepared to pay their rates, and do so. They also exercise their votes without compulsion, and they are the people who have been referred to as burglars. I would like to ask what these people think of the accusations that have been levelled at them.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Absolutely untrue.

Mr. KERR: I firmly believe that the occupier should have a vote in municipal elections. I also go further, and say that plural voting should not be in existence. I also say that a person living in a certain area, with another place in Brisbane for which he pays rates, should be entitled to two votes, one where he owns the house where he lives, and one in the locality where he pays rates. There is a discrimination in that respect between socialism and democracy, and you get more democracy on this side of the House than you do on the other side. On the Government side you get extreme socialism, as against democracy. It is not a fair proposition to permit people who may be termed nomads—I refer to the people who are borders—to have a vote in municipal elections. There is no taxation so far as these people are concerned. Any loan floated reacts on the man who owns land in the city, and it reacts on the consumer. They say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, and should, by any means, the socialists get into power in the shire councils, they will follow the example of the present Government, and splash money around as fast and as hard as they possibly can. We may also see that they will find the necessary money to erect a monument to the spend-thrift Government we have in power to-day.

There is every possibility that politics will creep into municipal councils under the proposals contained in this Bill. The people of Australia are educated in politics to a greater extent than any nation [10 p.m.] of the world, and they see through any camouflage by which the Government have endeavoured to conceal their intentions in introducing this Bill. I agree with the proposal that women should be given votes, because women are a great

[Mr. Kerr,

power in Australia and throughout the world and take a great interest in politics. I honestly believe that if we give them voting power, they will use that power in the right direction at the right time. There are some things which are not provided for in this measure, and those things affect the man who by thrift has acquired his own home. It often happens that when a large estate is being cut up for sale, the surveyor of that land provides a short lane through that land. The shire council may object to the lane because, in their opinion, it ought to be widened into a road. The owner of the land then deletes that lane from the plan, and the lane is converted into an easement for the dumping of rubbish on a particular spot. In many instances the shire council object to a road being placed at a certain place, because it would be under water after heavy rain, and it would require heavy expenditure on the part of the council to drain that roadway. The Government then send out an inspector, and he reports that the proposed road would be in a suitable place. The people concerned have no redress against such action at the present time, and I hold that means of redress should be provided. Reference has been made by some members to health matters, and I should like to remind hon. members, when an epidemic of influenza occurred in Brisbane some time ago, the Health Department was absolutely unable to meet the exigencies of the occasion, and the shire councils were called upon to deal with the situation. The shire councils absolutely rose to the occasion, and yet to-day we have hon. members on the opposite side of the House saying that local authorities are incompetent, though the members of those local authorities give their time year in and year out to the work of their respective councils. I hope the time will soon come when the people will wake up to what is being done by our socialistic Government. They have already quoted Lenin as an authority, and they do not hesitate to say that all land should belong to the community and should revert to the community. We might as well accept the conditions which exist in Russia, for we have started in the way they did. I do not agree with the proposal of the Government with regard to the election of mayor, because under the system they propose we shall lose good men from the municipal or shire councils. As the Home Secretary said, it is a great honour for a man to become the mayor of a municipality; but under the proposal of the Bill there will probably be two or three men going for the position of mayor. Only one can get the position, and the community will lose the service of the other two men, who might have rendered good service on the council. Moreover, the person who is elected as mayor may be an absolute stranger to the procedure in connection with local government business, and it will be human nature for the men who are his colleagues to refrain from assisting him in the performance of his duties, with the result that his duties will not be carried out satisfactorily. With the provision giving local authorities power to remit the rates of disabled returned soldiers, widows, and such like people I entirely agree. One member of the caucus stated that ratepayers had an opportunity of voting in the referendum on conscription. Personally, I am extremely sorry that the voting on conscription was not confined to men who were eligible for military service. During 1917, in the middle

of the war, when most patriotic working men were away at the war, some foreign advocates at the Trades Hall were engaged in propaganda against conscription. I should like to see the council of the Trades Hall consist of the same element of unionists, because I am a believer in unionism.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KERR: I am sorry they have led me on, Mr. Speaker. (Laughter.) I am glad to see a clause inserted in regard to dilapidated buildings. I think it is an excellent one. In regard to this, one thing is apparent, and that is the condition of the residences on the various railway lines. In some localities these Government residences are an absolute disgrace and an eyesore. I am quite sure that one of the first things which will be done by the shire councils is to cut these right out, and it will be an additional expense on the Government to provide these men with a decent home. I hope members will take into consideration the experience of those on this side of the House—who should be over on that side of the House—who have had years of experience. Before sitting down, I do take exception to the manner in which the shire councillors have been referred to by the Home Secretary.

The HOME SECRETARY: Where? Read it out.

Mr. KERR: I think it would have been an excellent thing if, before all these hundreds of shire councillors are put out of office in July, the Home Secretary had, in a manly way, said, "I want to publicly thank these men who have done so much for this State of Queensland."

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. DASH (*Mundraburra*): I want to confine my remarks chiefly to the franchise. A good deal has been said by hon. members opposite as to what is likely to happen if the workers who have to travel around the State have a vote in regard to who are to be the representatives on the local authority. We know they are not in favour, and we were, of extending the franchise to all workers in the community. Now they say they are prepared to give every householder a vote, and every owner of an allotment of land or a cottage. They were not prepared to do that under the existing franchise, because if your rates are not paid at a certain time you are disfranchised. Hon. members opposite, when the electoral franchise for the State was under discussion, made it almost impossible for men who work on railway construction to have a vote. They fixed the place of residence in such a way that men who worked on railway construction could not get on the roll; because, they said, a tent was not a place of abode; and hundreds of railway workers were disfranchised on that account. We hear a good deal regarding what the councillors have done in the past. I can speak from experience in regard to Townsville. Only quite recently has any effort been made to try and do something for that city. The aldermen in the past have neglected Townsville to such an extent that it will take hundreds—probably thousands—of pounds before you can make it anything like it ought to be. It was not until the old aldermen—men who had been elected year in and year out—were opposed vigorously, when the Greater City of Townsville was brought into operation—that they thought of development. We know it has only been since the Labour candidates put forward a policy whereby the city could be

improved, parks could be made, and the city could be lit up by electric light, that any move has been made to bring about reform. A good deal of "You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" has gone on in the past. When men got in, it was not long before roads were made to their premises, enhancing the value of their property. A good deal has been said about politics being brought into the matter. I am going to tell what happened when the first election took place in the Greater City of Townsville. When nominations closed there was the right number of Labour candidates nominated, while on the other side there were three or four too many. So the Northern National Political Council called a meeting of those who were not carrying the endorsement of Labour, to consider the position, and they were successful in inducing some of those candidates to withdraw. One man stood out and said he would not have anything to do with either party, and he ran as an independent. When the elections were over the Northern National Political Council's representatives were elected. When the question came up of the election of mayor we discovered that that council had first of all had a meeting and selected a mayor. When the council meeting took place he was nominated, seconded, and elected mayor without any further discussion. In the North a great cry was made with regard to the Labour party placing names on the roll during the by-election for the Herbert. The Labour party were accused of bringing men from other electorates into the Herbert for the purpose of returning the Labour candidate. The Northern National Political Council had a number of organisers in the Herbert electorate at that particular time and some time previously, and everything went well from their point of view until they dispensed with one of their organisers. Soon after he was dispensed with the late organiser (Mr. McFadden), to get even with the Northern National Political Council—which at the last election went under the name of the Northern Country party—wrote this letter to the editor of the Cairns "Daily Times," which was published on 23rd September, 1925—

"Sir.—After the last Herbert by-election when Mr. P. Pease won that seat on the unlucky (for the Tories) 13th of a certain month, a gross misstatement appeared in their mouthpiece, the 'Post,' emanating from the organising secretary of the N.P.U. This gentleman stated that hundreds of navvies had been brought from Millaa Millaa to the Herbert electorate, at the instigation of the Labour Government, with the object of helping the Labour vote. Perhaps Mr. Bradley had to find some excuse for his signal failure, and also to vent his spleen for his pecuniary loss, but, however, that may be, the fact remains that this statement was grossly unfair and absolutely untrue.

"I arrived at Innisfail on Monday, 12th January, and the first thing I did was to instruct a friend who was in a position to obtain evidence, to ascertain if there was any undue or unusual migration of workers from another electorate to the Herbert. He was continuously in with me up to the date of the closing of the rolls, and we found that only four men from Millaa Millaa came to the Herbert who had their names added to the rolls.

"Now, as to the 731 names added to the roll during the course of the contest, it may be very interesting information to Mr. Bradley to know that during my stay in the Herbert from 12th January to the closing of the rolls, I enrolled 113 electors myself; as there were three National organisers at work, it may be easily presumed that they did as much, which would account for more than half of the 731 names, about which Mr. Bradley wails so loudly. But the loss of that £100 in the event of a win must have stung, and most all curs whine when they get stung.—Yours, etc..

"M. McMAHON,

"Late Organiser, N.N.P.U."

That is the statement of one of their own late organisers in connection with the roll-stuffing that we hear so much about. The Northern National Political Union have a very big staff, and they are very active in regard to rolls. The hon. member for Bremer read out what has been done by their organisers, and something as to their objects, and as to the Employers' Federation. Now, here is a circular prepared for the purpose of frightening people who are workers, and who travel from one electorate to another, from keeping their names on the roll—

"P.O. Box No. 259.

"Telephone No. 68.

"H. G. BRADLEY, Organising Secretary.

"NORTHERN NATIONAL POLITICAL UNION.

"Head Office: Townsville.

[*Our objective: To elect members to Parliament who will legislate for the increased development and production of the State, and thus benefit all classes.*]

"Dear Sir or Madam,—I beg to advise you that whilst your name appears on the Federal roll as living at the present time at General Hospital, Hughenden, the State electorate for Townsville still retains your name as being resident at Nestle Hospital, Townsville.

"This is obviously contradictory, and as you are now resident in the Gregory electorate, it is necessary that you complete an application for enrolment for the electorate for which you are now resident. For this purpose I enclose you the necessary form filled in as far as possible, and ask that you will fill in answer to question No. 5, sign same, and have your signature witnessed by an elector. On completion, please return to Box 259, Townsville, when same will be immediately lodged on your behalf."

You will note that Box 259 is the box of the Northern National Political Union, and they ask the elector, immediately his claim is filled in, to return it to their box at Townsville. And this is where they get in the sting to try to frighten them into doing so—

"Failing immediate attention to this matter, an objection to your name appearing on Townsville roll will be lodged, and, in conclusion, I have to advise that your neglect to attend to the matter leaves you liable to a penalty.

"Yours faithfully,

"H. G. BRADLEY,

"Organising Secretary."

I am also reminded by the hon. member for Mackay that they also sign as "Rolls clerk." With that circular was also sent

[*Mr. Dash.*

along a claim, kindly filled in. That ought to be clear proof to anybody in this State of Queensland as to where the roll-stuffing comes from. The Labour party have been accused for some considerable time of putting on the roll names of men who are not in Queensland, and yet we have that statement from one of the organisers of the other side, sent specially into an electorate to put names on the roll, although immediately they do not win the election, they start accusing the Labour party of transferring men from one electorate to another! The organiser points out that only four men were transferred from Millaa Millaa to Herbert. Railway workers do not stop in one place for all time, and if they did leave Millaa Millaa and seek employment in Herbert, they were quite justified in doing so.

A great deal has been said to the effect that if the workers get the vote they will upset a great deal of the work of the local authorities. If the workers do get the vote, they are sensible enough to know whom they place in charge of local authorities, and it would be a sorry thing indeed if we could not get amongst the workers men who could run the local authorities equally as well as in the past. In Townsville the Northern National Political Union candidates came out with a policy which they said they were going to carry out. They have had in the city the slabs for the purpose of erecting public conveniences for the last three years and more, but they have not been erected yet. In most towns we find very few conveniences where people, especially women with little children, may go. They have to go into refreshment rooms and spend money if they want to sit down for half an hour or so, or go into shops and purchase something. I am very pleased that quite recently the aldermen of the city of Townsville have been adopting some of the planks of the Labour candidates, when they stood for municipal honours. They have beautified the beach to a certain extent. The beach at Townsville is equal to any other beach in the Commonwealth, but for years no attempt was made to beautify it, or to turn it into a place of recreation. I am pleased also that the Bill gives power to local authorities to order the pulling down of old buildings, and improve portions of cities in that way. In Townsville the people who own the places that are really slums are the people with money, yet they go round and extract rents for their shanties. I would like to see the councils have greater powers than they have got at the present time. There [10.30 p.m.] are numbers of Chinamen in business in the large cities, and at present the councils have not got the power to prevent Chinamen or Asiatics from opening up businesses. In future we hope they will have that power. We know that if a Chinamen offers 5s. or 10s. a week more for a shop than a white man, there are some landlords who will give it to the Chinaman for the sake of the larger rent. That brings the Chinamen into competition with the white workers, and keeps a large number of people out of employment.

Mr. WEIR (*Maryborough*): 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.

The House adjourned at half-past 10 o'clock p.m.