

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

MONDAY, 6 DECEMBER 1920

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

MONDAY, 6 DECEMBER, 1920.

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

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT ON CENTRAL SUGAR-MILLS.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received from the Auditor-General his report on the accounts of the central sugar-mills under Government control, and self-controlled mills indebted to the Treasury, for the year ended 30th June, 1920.

Ordered to be printed.

QUESTIONS.

FREE RAILWAY PASSES FOR PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES.

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

"1. If Mr. Pease, when contesting the Herbert by-election before he became a member of Parliament, was in possession of a free railway pass?"

"2. Were any of the other candidates, not at the time being members of Parliament, who contested parliamentary elections during this year in the interests of the Government party, given railway passes or any other privilege not possessed by the general public?"

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

- "1. No.
- "2. No."

STATE FISHERY ENTERPRISE.

Mr. FRY (*Kuripa*) asked the Minister in Charge of State Enterprises—

"1. What amount of capital is invested in the State fishery enterprise?"

"2. What is the total cost of management and upkeep of the whole industry to date?"

"3. What is the total revenue received from the industry to date, exclusive of amounts allotted to it from other branches of State enterprises, or otherwise?"

"4. What amount of capital is invested in (a) the fish market, shop, and wharf at the south side of Victoria Bridge; (b) Wynnum receiving and cold storage depot; (c) State branch fish shops, to include all other buildings and shops erected within the State; (d) machinery and other equipment necessary for carrying on the industry; (e) the cost of the State trawler to date, including nets and all other equipment used in connection with trawling?"

"5. Is it the intention of the Government to withdraw the State trawler from commission with a view to disposing of her, and thus saving further losses to the State in this venture?"

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

"1 to 3, and 4 (a) to (d). The compilation of this information is now nearing finalisation, and will be furnished in the annual report of the Commissioner to be presented to Parliament this week; (e) £44,823 Os. 5d. net.

"5. The trawler will be laid up. I would remind the hon. member that there was no way of ascertaining the suitability or otherwise of our grounds only by the use of a trawler."

STATE TRAWLER.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*), in the absence of Mr. Walker, asked the Minister in Charge of State Enterprises—

"1. What quantity of fish was caught by the State trawler during the three months ended 31st October last?"

"2. How much of the fish caught was—(a) sold to the public; (b) destroyed?"

"3. What was the gross return from sales of fish caught by the trawler during the period mentioned in (1)?"

"4. What was the total cost of running the trawler during the period, inclusive of wages, salaries, overtime, repairs, and all incidental expenses?"

The TREASURER replied—

"1. 15,910 lb.

"2. (a) 15,670 lb. sold to State fish market; (b) 240 lb.

"3. £412 17s. 10d.

"4. £1,216 15s. 3d. net. There is no association between the State fish market and the trawler, as the operations of the trawler have been confined to exploratory work."

RACING CLUB INQUIRIES.

Mr. FORDE (*Rockhampton*) asked the Attorney-General—

"1. Is he aware of the fact that certain racing clubs in Queensland, including the Queensland Turf Club and the Albion Park Jockey Club, conduct all racing inquiries in private, and sometimes arrive at decisions to disqualify owners, jockeys, and trainers without the public, whose patronage makes racing possible, being afforded an opportunity of reading the evidence in the columns of the Press?"

"2. What racing clubs in Queensland admit the Press to racing inquiries at the present time?"

"3. As the Labour party is opposed to all trials that are conducted in the dark, will he consider the advisability of urging the Cabinet to introduce legislation immediately compelling all racing clubs in Queensland to admit accredited representatives of the Press to all racing inquiries?"

"4. Will he consider the advisability of taking action to urge the Queensland Turf Club and the Albion Park Jockey Club to agree in the meantime to admit the Press to all racing inquiries, the same as the Central Queensland Racing Association and the North Queensland Racing Association agreed to some time ago?"

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

"1. Yes.

"2. This information will be obtained.

"3. The matter will be considered by the Government as soon as possible.

"4. I will communicate with the racing clubs mentioned, with the view of getting the Press admitted to all racing inquiries."

WESTWOOD "COCKY" TRAIN.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What were the departmental reasons for recently cancelling what is known as the Westwood "Cocky" train in the Central district?

"2. What were the earnings of this train for the period six months prior to cancellation?

"3. What expenditure was involved in running this train for the same period mentioned in question (2)?

"4. As the cancellation of this historical train seriously inconveniences dairy-men and others between Kabra and Westwood, would he take into consideration suggestions that would enable the train to be reinstated without loss to the department?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1. The Rockhampton-Westwood local train has been withdrawn, but its place has been taken by the alteration of one of the Western trains, which runs within a few minutes of the previous times of the Westwood train, and provides a faster service on the outward journey.

"2 and 3. The actual figures are not available, as the records show the number of vehicles only. The train was always lightly loaded, however.

"4. See answer to No. 1."

CHILLAGOE AND ETHERIDGE RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—That this Bill be now read a second time. At the initial stage of the Bill, I gave the principal reasons for its introduction. It has only two main features, one of which is to increase the credit of the manager of the Chillagoe works, by removing the arbitrary limit in the Act requiring him to keep within the amount appropriated by Parliament during the year. The other is to remove the restriction which prevents the Government from working certain mining properties acquired under the original Act as well as other mines, the ore from which will assist in the profitable working of the smelters. I shall be glad to give hon. members any further information which they may require.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): Considering the general position of affairs to-day, I think we should have a great deal of information before this Bill is put through. The Auditor-General's report says that practically the whole of the copper for the smelters comes from one mine, and that "all ore treated at the lead furnace has been purchased, fully three-fourths of which came from one mine." In wiping out the provision contained in the 1918 Act, it appears that the Government do not only want to work their own mines, but they want to acquire mines belonging to other people, and under the present condition of affairs, that does not seem at all wise. They have already spent over £100,000 more than the Act allows them to do. It is becoming a common practice with the Government to break their own law. The report from the Auditor-General tries to cover up the maladministration of the

[Hon. E. G. Theodore.

Government in breaking their own law. There was a specific provision put in the Act which says that no more than £100,000 shall be spent.

The PREMIER: Do you suggest that the Auditor-General covered up something?

Mr. MOORE: No; but he tries to make it easy for the Government to excuse themselves for something they have done which they had no right to do. In America some of the copper mines have closed down altogether, others have reduced their output by 50 per cent. in an endeavour to keep up the price, which to-day is down to £85, and the Premier himself said the other day that it would not be profitable to work the mines—

The PREMIER: If copper came down below £80, it would not be profitable.

Mr. MOORE: It seems extraordinary to sink a lot of money in the North at present on a fluctuating market, when these mines have closed down in America because they were unprofitable.

The PREMIER: We always have a fluctuating market in copper.

Mr. MOORE: It has been on the rise for the last two years, and now it has fallen, and the mines are only working half-time in an endeavour to keep the price up, and the Premier wants to sink a lot of the taxpayers' money in an enterprise in which there does not seem to be an opportunity of development. I think if the Government have money to waste, it is better to go on with something which we know would be profitable—such as irrigation—than to put it in something which may be a huge failure. The mining industry in the North so far has been a regular sink for money, and people have lost large sums in it, and now, because the Government have taken over the smelters, they want to invest the taxpayers' money. Three-fourths of the lead ore comes from one mine, and now the Government want to take it over, apparently on tribute. I do not see any advantage in that. The Premier has told us nothing about any other mines, or any particulars about what he wants to take over. He just comes along with some vague particulars, and wants us to give him carte blanche to spend as much money as he likes. In the Treasurer's Statement he pointed out works that would be of genuine benefit to Queensland—irrigation works only waiting to be started. Any money put into works such as these, which we know are going to be productive, would be well spent.

Mr. POLLOCK: Go into details and show us where Chillagoe has not been successful.

Mr. MOORE: It has only been working for a very short time. The Auditor-General in his report says they have been reasonably successful, only because of the low purchase cost.

The PREMIER: Do you say they won't be successful under State enterprise?

Mr. MOORE: The Auditor-General in his report says—

"The following factors undoubtedly contributed to the success of the undertaking during the period under review:—

"1. The low purchase cost, together with the moderate outlay incurred in placing the whole concern on a working basis."

The PREMIER: That is one factor.

Mr. MOORE: Further, he says—

"2. The organisation in respect to ore supplies and improvements effected in dealing with the same."

The PREMIER: Those are two factors. Read on.

Mr. MOORE—

"3. The efficient administration in respect to labour.

"4. The effective costing system applied in the working of the concern.

"5. The satisfactory prices of metals during the period under review."

The PREMIER: You could not expect mining operations to continue if the price fell so low that the thing would be unprofitable.

Mr. MOORE: It has almost reached that stage now. The Premier himself says that copper is down to £85 a ton. If it is below £80, it is unprofitable.

The PREMIER: It is £87 10s.

Mr. RIORDEX: Do you think the smelters should be closed down?

Mr. MOORE: It is not a question of closing down the smelters. The question is: Are the Government to be allowed to sink money in this way in a mining venture?

The PREMIER: The smelters would have to close down unless we give the manager this power.

Mr. MOORE: I do not see that it says that the smelters would have to close down if they did not give him more power.

The PREMIER: We should have to close down if we limited the amount to £100,000.

Mr. MOORE: It is not a question of £100,000. What you want is—

"To acquire, whether by purchase or lease or on tribute or on a royalty basis, any mine or mining lands the ore won from which in the opinion of the Government will further the profitable carrying on of the business referred to in paragraph (b)."

The PREMIER: The other principle in increasing the limit. Both those things are practically recommended by the Auditor-General.

Mr. MOORE: One is to increase the limit to allow them to go on as they are going, and the other is to take over mines already being run by private enterprise for the Government to work, which is a very different proposition. The lessee of one mine is supplying ore for the Government to work it. We know that Chillagoe was a sink for money.

The PREMIER: It has been very profitable for North Queensland.

Mr. MOORE: It has been very unprofitable for people who put money into it. Now the taxpayers' money is going to be used for a speculative enterprise, and the Government are asking carte blanche to spend as much as they like.

The PREMIER: Very little money has been spent on mining in the State of Queensland.

Mr. MOORE: Because it is unprofitable.

The PREMIER: I say not much Government money has been spent on it.

Mr. MOORE: Not much up to the present time, because it has been restricted by a clause put in the Bill by the Legislative Council. The mining enterprises of the Government, other than this, I do not think anybody can say have been successful up

to the present time. What I object to is this principle of going in for general mining enterprise. The clause is too wide. It gives power—

"To acquire, whether by purchase or lease or on tribute or on a royalty basis, any mine or mining lands the ore won from which, in the opinion of the Government, will further the profitable carrying on of the business referred to in paragraph (b) hereof, and to open up, work, and develop such mine or mining lands, and deliver the ore obtained therefrom to the smelters and works aforesaid."

It is such a large order, and the finances are not in a position which allows the Government to gamble in mining enterprises. The principle is not one which should be granted. In the mining report, page 45, talking about Chillagoe, it says—

"The manager has evolved a system of assisting gougers, value advanced to be repaid out of results of ores supplied, and for the purpose has appointed an expert to inspect, direct, and advise gougers enjoying such assistance, and others if required. Tributes may be had at a nominal royalty on mines under smelter control. Liberal advances on ore parcels coming forward, reduced costs of treatment, sale, and realisation should induce owners to utilise the smelters and encourage mining and prospecting. It would appear that the manager's policy is to have his plant function generally for the benefit of the industry in the Cairns hinterland, and, as time brings cheaper coke and coal supplies to hand, shipping facilities swing back to normal, and ore supplies become more surely established, this policy should increasingly benefit the district and the State at large."

We do not find the manager recommending that he should take over and manage on the Government's behalf.

The PREMIER: If the manager does not wish to do it, he will not be forced.

Mr. MOORE: Individuals can prospect and supply the ore to the State. As long as that policy is pursued there is no risk taken by the State. That seems to me to be a far better principle than that the Government should step in and take all the risk. I do not see what the Government is going to gain. I can see what the individuals are likely to gain in being paid on a royalty basis on the leases they hold.

The PREMIER: The manager will not be directed to do anything he does not wish to do.

Mr. MOORE: This clause has been put in the Bill for some reason. It is not a question of whether the manager will be directed to do something he does not wish to do. In the report, the manager does not seem to favour it very much.

The PREMIER: The clause put in there is at his recommendation, and supported by the Auditor-General.

Mr. MOORE: If the Premier can tell me where the Auditor-General supports or suggests it, I shall be very pleased. I cannot see it in the report. He does not make any suggestion of such a thing. He endeavours to justify, from the moderate success achieved, the Government breaking the law. He has not made any suggestion

Mr. Moore.]

that the Government should go in for a large mining enterprise.

The PREMIER: What he suggested was inevitable in the circumstances.

Mr. MOORE: There is nothing to show it is inevitable. I have quoted from the mining report, and there is nothing in that to show it is inevitable or that it is required. Everything is put in the way we expect—to encourage the individual going in for mining so that he shall receive the benefit. In this way it is the money belonging to the taxpayers which is going to be speculated. I think there is no occasion for granting the wide powers contained in this clause. If the Government have any money to spare, it should be put into permanent reproductive works for the benefit of Queensland, and to reduce the high cost of living, instead of going in for something of which we do not know what the result is going to be, and which has not been recommended in either the mining report or the Auditor-General's report.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): I think it is necessary to reply to the mining expert of the Country party, and to point out what this Bill really does. I think he is in a fog regarding the Auditor-General's report. This Bill provides for two main principles. One principle is that the Government shall have the power to acquire, either by purchase, tribute, or some other means, mines, for the purpose of producing ore to keep the smelters going. I think everyone will agree that that is a wise provision. Anyone who knows anything about the smelting business knows that once the smelters go out of commission, once they are allowed to cool down, it takes hundreds of pounds to get them into commission again; and the Government or the man managing the business not having the power to obtain sufficient ore to keep the smelters going might mean the difference between success and failure in that enterprise. The Auditor-General does not say in his report that they have exceeded the amount which they were allowed to expend. Nor does he attempt to gloss over this in any way at all. But he does point out that they have departed from a certain portion of the Act, under which advances can be made to those who have been producing ore for the purpose of allowing the smelters to keep at work. This is the provision of the Act which has been departed from for the purpose of keeping the smelters at work—

“No advance on ore supplied to the smelters or works referred to in paragraph (b) hereof shall be made by the Government of Queensland unless and until proper assays of such ores have been made and such ore has been delivered in bulk at such smelters or works.”

It was found necessary, in order to obtain the ore, to make advances to those men who were getting the ore, so that they would be able to keep at work and keep the smelters supplied with ore. I do not think anyone can cavil at that, if the men have nothing upon which to live; so long as the manager has secured himself by an inspection or anything else, and it is perfectly safe to buy that ore, he should have the liberty to buy it in order to keep the smelters at work. That is the only provision the Auditor-General says they have departed from: and he does not castigate the Government for doing it. He simply says it has been done,

[*Mr. Moore.*]

and it has been found necessary on his part to draw attention to it. He has a perfect right to do so, and would be lacking in his duty if he did not do so. He does not say it was wrong, or that it has not been in the interest of the enterprise, or that it has not been absolutely necessary to keep the smelters at work. There have been two or three matters which have gone against the enterprise since they have started; not only the want of power to obtain ore, but also the want of proper fuel to keep the smelters going. These have militated against the success of the enterprise. The Opposition place obstacles in the way of the Government carrying on State enterprises, and in the next breath condemn the Government because the enterprises are not successful. We want to find out where the Opposition stand in these matters; whether they are here to assist the Government to make their enterprises successful, or to condemn the Government on every hand and try to make a failure of everything the State does.

The other provision here is to grant to the manager the power to expend the necessary money to make his business successful. That must be done. The Legislative Council limited the expenditure of money, pointing out that this was a matter which was an experiment, and the Council on behalf of the people of Queensland should go slow in the matter—adopt I.W.W. tactics—and allow the venture to get a start. It has a start; it has proved that, given a fair chance, it will be successful not only from the manager's point of view, but from the point of view of the people of Queensland, and we will be able to produce metals there which are necessary for our own work and for export. I do not belong to the North; I am a Southern member; but I do not think the deputy leader of the Country party has any right to be parochial and say the whole of the money should be expended in his electorate or in some other electorate in the South.

Mr. MOORE: Nobody did say that.

Mr. GLEDSON: He said they were spending this money in North Queensland instead of spending it in irrigation works in South Queensland. As I have said, I do not belong to North Queensland, but I recognise that anything that is done in the interests of any part of the State must be in the

[4 p.m.] interest of the whole of the State.

(Hear, hear!) If the mining industry in North Queensland is able to get a good footing, either by the assistance of the Government or through private enterprise, then it must react on the rest of Queensland, and the whole of Queensland will be successful. The deputy leader of the Country party tried to run down mining, and said that it was no good putting money into mining, and into schemes of this sort. I would remind the hon. member that the mining industry has stood to Queensland in the past when the agricultural and pastoral industries have gone to pieces, and there has not been a penny coming out of them. More than once under such circumstances the mining industry has pulled Queensland out of the mire. (Hear, hear!) The only way we can hope to send the State ahead is by developing the industries in every part of Queensland, and giving to every part of the State a fair show.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): As a rule, the Premier gives a good deal of

information when he is in charge of a Bill, but I do not think that this afternoon he gave nearly as much information as he might have given in connection with this Bill.

The PREMIER: I went very fully into the matter at the introductory stage.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That may be so, but this afternoon his remarks were very brief indeed, and probably the absence of information has very largely contributed to the discussion that has taken place. I recognise that it is the duty of every public man to see that all the various industries of the State are amply safeguarded and encouraged. The fullest consideration should be given to every proposal that has for its object the benefit of any industry in the State. I say that because the Premier must admit that very large sums of money have been lost, not by the Government, but by private individuals, in connection with the Chillagoe mines and railway.

Mr. RYAN: Through mismanagement.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is all very well to be wise after the event, but we must all admit that usually people who put money into a concern do not throw it away. The fact remains that a very large sum of money has been lost in connection with Chillagoe. I do not say that the Government are going to lose money in this venture, because it may be that there is still in existence an agreement that was said to have been made by the late leader of the Government when he went to the old country some years ago, and who, when he came back, said that he had a big order for, speaking from memory, something like 250,000 tons of copper. (Government laughter.)

The PREMIER: Oh, no!

HON. W. H. BARNES: Well, for a very large quantity of copper, when copper was selling at £150 a ton. It may be that the Government, figuratively speaking, have this order up their sleeves. If that agreement is still in existence, the Premier was very remiss in not informing us of the fact. We well remember how the hon. gentleman's late leader came back from his trip to the old country and told us about the wonderful sale of copper that he had made.

The PREMIER: The wonderful purchase that he made.

HON. W. H. BARNES: No, the wonderful sale of copper in North Queensland. The Premier might tell us whether that agreement is still in existence.

The PREMIER: I have not heard of any agreement for 250,000 tons of copper.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It may be that the Premier does not know of any agreement. It may have been merely an attempt to make the people of Queensland believe that something great had been done by the last Premier when in England. The fact remains that we are now asked to hand over—not to the Government, but to an officer of the Government—power to purchase certain lands, and to acquire mines, if he thinks it necessary to do so. This is a proposal to place a very great power indeed in the hands of any Government officer. I would like to ask the Premier, if all proposals for the purchase of lands or mines will have to be submitted either to himself or to the Secretary for Mines?

The PREMIER: They must be.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I would further ask the hon. gentleman if he knows sufficient of the manager to feel sure that that gentleman is going to do the right thing in this connection?

The PREMIER: Certainly; there will be no mine purchased without the consent of the Government.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman must admit that the provision made in the Bill leaves an open door that may prove most dangerous. I am prepared to admit that a great deal depends upon the man upon whom is placed this responsibility. In suggesting that there should be some limitation upon such powers, I have no desire to harass or to block the Government. We on this side have no desire to block the development of the mining industry, which has saved Queensland more than once in the past. I know I am not strictly in order in referring to the matter, but just by way of illustration I may say that at the present time there is a great need for gold, and anything we can do to develop goldmining will be an important factor in restoring prosperity to this State at this critical time. I hope that, when the Premier replies, he will give very much fuller information than he has given us hitherto. I am not on my feet to block what is proposed, but to ask that the House should receive the fullest information from the hon. gentleman or from some member of the Cabinet, because, in effect, we are asked, in passing this Bill, to give a blank cheque fully signed to someone who may not be under the control of this House at all.

Mr. GLEDSON: How many thousand copper mines do you think there are in North Queensland?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not know how many copper mines there are in North Queensland, but I should doubt if there are anything approaching thousands. I would ask the hon. member, however, how many of them have proved to be duffers? In the light of the past history of the industry, the greatest care should be taken in connection with this proposal.

The PREMIER: Any money required to be spent under the Bill will have to be appropriated by Parliament from year to year.

HON. W. H. BARNES: We all have a very vivid recollection of "Unforeseen Expenditure" coming along for confirmation at a later period. This Government have shown themselves adepts in connection with unforeseen expenditure. It is wonderful what they can do under the guise of "Unforeseen Expenditure." The hon. member could explain that to-day if he chose. Apparently, for some reason or other, the Premier does not want to give us all the information.

The PREMIER: I will answer every question you ask.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Speaker would rule me out of order if I asked questions on the second reading; but the Premier should give us the information when he replies.

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*): The deputy leader of the Country party takes objection to this Government doing anything to assist the mining industry in North Queensland, but he took a very prominent part in the discussion when the Government introduced

a measure here the other day to assist the farmers by guaranteeing them 9s. a bushel for their wheat. The position of the Chillagoe smelters is that the new manager has been trying to make those works a success without working any other mine but the Einasleigh mine. He has to depend on privately-owned mines, whilst other good mines could be worked, if the Government have the power, and worked successfully and beneficially for the State and the State smelters. A couple of gougers go out and try a mine. After they go down a certain distance they find that they need machinery to develop that mine, but they have no chance of getting it, and the Government cannot work the mine because they have not the power to purchase under the Act as it stands. If this amendment is passed, the Government will be able to assist any gouger or nomad—as the Opposition refer to the worker who has been responsible for making the Chillagoe fields—by purchasing those fields from the gougers.

Mr. GLEDSON: Or paying so much for the ore.

Mr. RIORDAN: Or advancing them money on the ore. The Government would not be in a position to advance them that money at a time when they may want to develop the mine by buying machinery. The Act as it stands is only retarding the progress of Chillagoe, and the whole hobby of the Opposition, right from the time when the Bill was first introduced in 1915 or 1916, has been to oppose any moneys going into North Queensland at all or assist the mining industry. While copper was at a high price, the Upper House, a nominee Chamber, was responsible for holding up the Chillagoe Purchase Bill and stopping the Government from working the smelters when they could have been worked for five or six years.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: And saved you a lot of money in the process.

Mr. GLEDSON: We are not talking about Darra.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: No. You cannot talk about Darra. You know nothing about it.

Mr. RIORDAN: The hon. member for Oxley seems to be opposed to mining. The only thing he seems to see is fruit or cement or something of that kind, just as the deputy leader of the Opposition can see no further than wheat. Even the leader of the Opposition has quite recently become a little sympathetic, although his party was responsible for hanging up the Bill for at least four or five years. The Government could work many payable mines on the Etheridge field which are at present hung up. Those mines are down 300 or 400 feet. The individual miner cannot afford to go in and work mines of that description, but they could be worked profitably by the Government. I do not think that the manager has embarked on any rash policy, and the purchase of any mine would be referred to the Government. I think the Government will be wise in amending the Act, and getting this Bill on to the statute-book to assist the mining industry, which is fast dying throughout Queensland.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I would like to state that the deputy leader of the Opposition did not in any way object to the moneys being spent in North Queensland

[*Mr. Riordan.*]

in the development of mining, but he did object to the moneys being spent without the information being given to the House. The money will be spent in the Premier's own electorate, and no man should be in a better position—

The PREMIER: About four or five electorates are concerned.

Mr. MORGAN: I quite admit that, but the Premier represents an electorate concerned, and should, I think, have been in a position to give more information than he has, and explain to the House what this Bill really means. The hon. member who has just resumed his seat stated that Chillagoe had not been more successful solely owing to the fact that the Einasleigh Mine only is being worked. That is not borne out by the Auditor-General's report, which, on page 70, says—

“All ore treated at the lead furnace has been purchased, fully three-fourths of which came from one mine. So far as lead smelting is concerned, Chillagoe is, therefore, practically dependent at the present time on the ore supplied from this one mine.”

Mr. RIORDAN: Did I not say that they were depending on privately owned mines?

Mr. MORGAN: He goes on to say—

“Statistics submitted by the inspector indicate that overhead costs are apparently too high to run a proper smelting plant alone at Chillagoe.”

The argument of Government supporters goes to show that copper smelting could not be run as a success without the lead smelting, so that the copper proposition has not been a success up to the present, and is not a payable proposition with copper at £80 a ton.

The PREMIER: It is £87 10s. now.

Mr. MORGAN: That shows the Government are working on a very small margin so far as the copper proposition is concerned, and apparently copper smelting alone in Chillagoe would not be a success and would not justify the expenditure incurred. The Premier also said that all money would have to be appropriated each year by Parliament. Let us look at the Auditor-General's report, which shows that it is only a fallacy.

The PREMIER: No fallacy at all.

Mr. MORGAN:

“As already stated, the Act appropriates a sum not exceeding £100,000 towards defraying the initial cost of unwatering the Einasleigh Mine and re-opening and recommencing the work of the smelters, etc., and also states that no sum in excess of the said amount shall be appropriated except by resolution of both Houses of Parliament.

“The balance-sheet shows that at 30th June the indebtedness to the Treasury was £203,880 13s. 11d.”

The PREMIER: Parliament was not in session.

Mr. MORGAN: But the Premier said by interjection that all money would have to be appropriated by Parliament.

The PREMIER: It will, on the Estimates.

Mr. MORGAN: It seems to me an extraordinary thing that the Minister endeavours to deceive this House by stating that it is necessary to appropriate it on the Estimates, when the Government have shown us, right

through the whole of their existence, that there is no need to take notice of Acts of Parliament at all. They have broken the law in respect to this question. The Auditor-General justifies them to some extent; but, notwithstanding that fact, the law has been broken, and the Premier admits it. We have on our statute-books an Act of Parliament which provides that £100,000 is the limit which could be expended in connection with this particular work, and if it was found necessary that a further sum was required, the Act provided that it would have to be appropriated by resolution of both Houses of Parliament, so that, as far as any assurance from the Minister is concerned that this Bill will not involve unlimited expenditure, I do not think he can be serious in that contention. I recognise that the manager cannot expend any money without the approval of the Minister or the Government; but if the manager recommends a certain expenditure and the Government approves of that expenditure, then there is no limit. I certainly think there should be some limit in the Bill. We are placing too much power in the hands of the manager, and likewise we are giving too much power to the Government. We do not know what amount of money is likely to be spent, and we should know that before we agree to the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): In considering the proposed amendment of the Chillagoe and Etheridge Railways Act we should take into consideration, as far as we possibly can, all the matters associated with the undertaking. Personally, I am one of those individuals who believe that if you have a good man running a concern you should give him his head and not tie him up, as is too often done in Government enterprises. This is an undertaking which the Government have entered into, and it has to be seen through, and, if possible at all, made a profitable venture. Anyone who reads the Auditor-General's report and goes through it closely must come to the conclusion that, so far, Chillagoe has proved itself. It is upon its trial still to a certain extent, but, so far as it has gone, the Auditor-General tells us pretty plainly that the undertaking has proved itself, and having gone so far we have to go further. On page 70 of his report, the Auditor-General says—

“A number of our mining properties were acquired by the Act, but these propositions are mostly large ones and require financing. These leases have remained idle throughout the year, and there appears no alternative but for them to remain until the abovementioned section of the Act is repealed or modified.”

The proposed amendment goes considerably further than that, as it gives the Government power to acquire, whether by purchase, or lease, or on tribute, or on a royalty basis, any mine or mining lands the ore won from which, in the opinion of the Government, will further the profitable carrying on of the business referred to in paragraph (b) hereof, and to open up, work, and develop such mine or mining lands, and deliver the ore obtained therefrom to the smelters and works aforesaid. That is new business.

The PREMIER: You will find that we are repeating the section, or that part of it which the Auditor-General calls attention to, and that amending clause follows.

Mr. TAYLOR: This is extra power which the Government are asking for to purchase further leases or mining properties in addition to giving the manager power to work leases that have been acquired under the previous agreement. We all know that mining is largely a gamble; but the probabilities are that with careful management, such as we are evidently getting at the present time, we shall benefit from the tremendous amount of money that has been lost in Chillagoe by those who previously undertook the running of those works. We find that the earnings on the railway for the past year exceeded that of the previous year by £30,000. This is a very fine increase in the earnings of the railway, and we must take that matter into consideration when deciding whether we should agree to this proposed amendment or not. Then, as regards the smelting of ore, we are told specifically in the report that had it not been for the purchase of that ore the smelters for a very considerable time would have remained idle. We learn from the Auditor-General's report that the manager made advances on the ore before he actually received the ore. Of course, that requires a man who knows his business, and we find in this particular instance that he has advanced to the amount of £2,403, showing that he took a very conservative estimate of the value of the ore he was treating, and had in his eye the safeguarding of the interests of the State. We are told by the general manager in his report that the fixed assets, which were valued at £104,000, could not be placed in a present state of efficiency for less than double that amount at the present time. Then we are also told by the Auditor-General that the ore which they have in stock has been underestimated, so that the figures in connection with the sale of that ore should show an increased return. With regard to the probabilities of the metal market in the future, none of us can tell what is going to happen. It is a matter of speculation as to what the future will bring forth with regard to metal; but anyone who takes a broadminded outlook of the position in the world to-day might in some directions—probably in many directions—come to the conclusion that there are going to be falls in the values of metal. Probably that will be so in connection with tin, but, so far as copper and other minerals of like nature are concerned, I do not think for many years to come they are going to get down to a non-payable value. If they do we will simply have to face the position. We are in this Chillagoe business, and will have to see it through, and do everything we possibly can to make it a success. With regard to State enterprises generally, I take it that if the Government can demonstrate that any particular industry or avocation is being neglected to the detriment of the people of the State, there is justification for them entering into that industry. We all know so far as Chillagoe is concerned, that had not the Queensland Government come along at the time this property was offered to them and taken up this particular activity, the probabilities are there would have been a tremendous slump in North Queensland. I have always been a “barracker” for North Queensland. I believe in the potentialities of North Queensland, and I believe for many years past the North has been neglected, and if it had only had a chance of forming its own Government and carrying

Mr. Taylor.]

on its own industries it would have been a better North Queensland to-day than is the case. I certainly think we should give sympathetic consideration to this Bill. We have a good manager, and I wish to say to the Premier that if he is satisfied the manager is a good man then give him his head, and let him carry out this venture to what we all hope will be a successful issue.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): When the hon. member for Burke was on his feet he seemed to create the impression that the Opposition at all times opposed this Chillagoe venture. If he took the trouble to read the debates during the passage of this measure in the year 1918, he would find that there were several members of the Opposition who gave this measure their blessing. The position we find ourselves in to-day is this: That this venture has been undertaken. Seven hundred thousand pounds have been spent on it, and if a proposal comes forward which is good business and shows that certain steps should be taken to make that venture a payable and business-like proposition, then I say no member on this side of the Chamber is going to oppose it. There seem to be four queries in connection with this proposal. One is: Are the deposits there? And from information obtained from those who know more about that neighbourhood than I do it seems to be quite evident that they are there. The second is: Is the price of copper likely to be maintained? which, of course, is the crux of the whole situation. As the hon. member for Windsor has said, if we are going to hold up the whole of our industries on account of the uncertainty of the future of copper, we are not going to make any headway at all. At the same time, we are quite justified in going on in reasonable anticipation that the price is going to be reasonably maintained. The third point is this: Can the Government manage this enterprise? Having met Mr. Goddard, I have formed the opinion that he is a man who is quite capable of successfully managing this enterprise. One of the qualities he seems to possess is the will power and the confidence which enable him to refuse dictation from anyone, and that is the main qualification which is necessary for the management of any State enterprise. The last point is: Are the labour conditions in the North going to permit of this being successfully conducted? To-day the position is fairly favourable in that regard, but it is not very long ago since the Chillagoe smelters were very adversely placed in that direction. Without wishing to throw any cold water on this proposition, I purpose reading from the remarks of Mr. Quilty, who is the district organiser of the Australian Workers' Union, regarding the smelters, in a report which he made—

"Notwithstanding that the management of Chillagoe and Einasleigh had voluntarily conceded an all-round increase of 2s. per day, and in some instances more, together with other improved conditions, certain persons, unfortunately members of the union, would seem to have been pursuing a vendetta against the State management there. Several attempts have been made to stop the Chillagoe smelters, and were only frustrated by the vigilance of members there.

The management complained that mining operations were being carried on at a dead loss there as a result of a 'slow down' in operation, and

[*Mr. Taylor.*

instanced the fact that, whereas the production was 80 tons per day for eighty men under private enterprise, prior to closing down 120 men were then only producing 40 tons per day, or only about one-third of what it was formerly. The management dismissed eleven of those whom is complained were 'slowing down.'"

It is gratifying that the manager of this enterprise is strong-minded enough to see where the trouble is, and to carry out his duty. I would suggest to the Minister in charge of the Bill, and the manager of the enterprise, that they consider whether it is not possible to develop some co-operative principle, whereby the operatives at Chillagoe can be brought in on a co-operative basis. One of the great troubles is in getting married men to reside there, and we should encourage the right type of men, and make Chillagoe one of the largest, instead of one of the smallest electorates.

The PREMIER: I can assure you it is not the smallest, it is one of the largest; it is 16,000 square miles in area.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: As far as gum trees are concerned, it is one of the largest, but we want to represent human beings, and not gum trees. In view of the possibility of labour conditions being adverse, and that the success of Chillagoe depends, to a large extent, upon a contented labour element, it seems to me there is a chance for the Government to put into operation some scheme which would bring out the best which is in human nature, rather than those ulterior motives which have been evidenced by what happened in Chillagoe a few months back. While on this point, I would like to touch upon one of the reasons why Chillagoe has so far succeeded. It seemed to me that a low capitalisation has been placed upon the smelters. In that regard, one is forced to comment upon the high valuation which is being placed upon the Chillagoe Railway. It seems to me that it would have been a much fairer proposition if the experts of both sections, having arrived at what they considered a reasonable valuation, had divided the margin which was left pro rata between the two undertakings, but the Premier, in rather an arbitrary manner, has allocated the whole difference to the railways, and left the smelters with the value which the manager has put upon them. Seeing that the financial success of Chillagoe to a certain extent depends upon the capital employed in it, it seems to me rather unfair to allocate to the railway the £160,000 which was unallotted. I would ask the Premier if an independent valuation was made on the Chillagoe proposition other than that made by the manager?

The PREMIER: The only valuation made was made by the Railway Department.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Is it fair to assume that these engineers are prejudiced in favour of the railways? If there is any doubt about it, why not have an independent valuation made of the smelters. If the Commissioner for Railways knows, for the sake of argument, that he has been mulcted in that £160,000 of cost for which he does not claim to have any asset, it stands to reason it must dim, to a large extent, his enthusiasm in this particular enterprise. He is judging the value of the Chillagoe Railway upon the valuation of his own experts. I contend that the position could be well met by having

an independent valuation made of the smelters; or, in the alternative, dividing the difference of £160,000 pro rata between the two ventures on the basis of their original valuation.

Passing on, the only criticism that I can launch on this venture is in regard to the unlimited extension which the Government is asking in connection with the expenditure on this mine proposition. When this measure was before the House in 1918, there was a limit to the expenditure of £100,000. Now, instead of bringing forward another reasonable limit, the Government is asking us to give them an open cheque. That is totally undesirable, and, in my opinion, the only criticism that one can reasonably launch at this measure. If the Government had asked for another £100,000, we would then have seen that there was some limit. The Premier must not wonder at us launching this criticism, because in times past he has given us plenty of opportunity for forming the opinion we have formed to-day—that it is most undesirable to give the Government carte blanche in the expenditure of money.

To summarise the whole situation, it seems to me that this measure should receive our support, because the mineral production in Queensland is on the wane, and anything that we can do to resuscitate it should most assuredly receive our support. The second point is that the unpopulated North is becoming a matter which is giving us very grave concern, and anything that we can do to bring population to the North deserves our consideration. It is comforting to see that there are about 1,000 men at present engaged directly or indirectly in connection with this Chillagoe proposition, and if the opening up of these additional mines is going to double that population, I am sure every hon. member will be delighted to see it. The third point is that it is not sane business to go on attempting to run smelters, unless you have got material to keep them going, and there is no argument that can be advanced against this proposition, except the one I have made. Another thing which gives us satisfaction is the fact that we have a good man in charge. I am sure that all of us who have come in contact with Mr. Goddard must appreciate the fact that he is a man who knows his business.

Another matter which I want to touch upon is the coke supplies in connection with the Chillagoe smelters. It is obvious that success at Chillagoe has been interfered with up to the present by the disturbance which has taken place in shipping, which has interfered with supplies. I, therefore, look with great happiness to the advent of coke supplies coming forward from Bowen. In this connection, I hope the Government will keep right in the forefront of their programme the necessity of installing some coke ovens and some coke and coal handling apparatus in Bowen, so that the Chillagoe smelters will not be interfered with in the future with regard to coke supplies. The Bowen Railway is getting near completion, but nothing is being done, as far as I am aware, with regard to having coke and coal handling appliances installed.

Mr. COLLINS: We are well able to look after Bowen without your help.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: We are asked to help the Government with propositions and suggestions, and when this session opened

the Premier stressed the point that he was looking to the Opposition to help him in this time of stress and strain. When I make a suggestion which, in my opinion, is worthy of consideration, the hon. member for Bowen thinks he is the only one capable of having any knowledge with regard to his electorate. I probably know as much about Bowen as the hon. member does, but I do not talk so much about it. In spite of that interjection, I contend that is a matter which the Government wants to keep before them. A whisper has come to my ear that the Government may, in the near future, be considering some proposition for the erection of coke and coal handling appliances from a certain Southern house, which would be prepared to take debentures in part payment of the Government's obligation. There may be business in that; but what I want to ask the Government is not to seize at the first opportunity that presents itself in that regard. There may be half a dozen houses prepared to take debentures in connection with the purchase of these appliances and other plant; so I suggest to the Premier that he search round and invite others to tender prices, so that the best and cheapest scheme may be accepted in the end.

With these few comments I wish the measure success, and all I regret is that the Premier is asking for a blank cheque in this matter when it would be much more acceptable had the amount been limited to £100,000.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Miran*): I do not wish to oppose the second reading of the Bill, because, as a northerner, nobody is better aware than I am of the great danger to Australia that lies in an empty North. At the same time I think the House must recognise that very considerable powers are asked for by the Government in this measure. I am not going to read the clause in full, as it has already been dealt with, but one of the clauses says—

“To acquire, whether by purchase, or lease, or on tribute, or on a royalty basis, any mine or mining lands,”

and so on. I would like to point out that, in transactions where large sums of money are concerned, there should be some check. With regard to railways, or any other public works in which the cost is likely to exceed £5,000, there is a Commission of inquiry to report on them, and as regards the principal Act which we are now amending there is, as the Auditor-General points out, a limit of £100,000. My suggestion is that, when we go into Committee, a proviso be inserted requiring that, before any undertaking is gone on with which would entail an expenditure of over £100,000, the House be consulted. In this connection my mind runs back to 1914, when some sugar-mill legislation was passed which required that when certain propositions were submitted, Parliament should have an opportunity of pronouncing an opinion upon same; and I take it that the sugar industry is not quite so unstable as the mining industry.

I would like to quote the following figures from a paper published to-day, showing how copper and lead are likely to fluctuate. On 2nd January copper was worth £116 0s. 6d. per ton. On the 29th of last month it was down to £77 7s. 6d. On 2nd January lead was worth £45 15s. per ton, and on 29th November it was down to £25 10s. per ton.

Mr. Swayne.]

I just mentioned this to show what risks there are in connection with mining.

Furthermore, we must not forget that the electors of Queensland on two occasions have lately pronounced an emphatic objection to the principle of State enterprise; so, although I am not opposing the second reading of this Bill, I certainly think the Government should be open to reason.

I think they would be well advised if they included in the Act, when it went into Committee, a provision such as I have outlined, which, I think, on behalf of the taxpayers of Queensland, is only a fair thing.

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*): It is very refreshing to hear the remarks of hon. members on both sides of the House regarding the development of North Queensland and the necessity for populating its vast empty spaces. This measure certainly appeals to me as a northerner. In accordance with the Auditor-General's report, the Chillagoe and Etheridge Railways Act of 1918 authorised the Government to acquire certain assets amounting to the sum of £701,000. It is a question whether we are going to allow that capital practically to lie idle, or are we going to allow a manager, who has proved his capabilities, as evidenced by the Auditor-General's report, to further develop the works, which, so far, he has satisfactorily carried out. Yet, under the provisions of that Act, we also find that he is bound by certain provisions, and he has found it necessary to break those provisions in a certain regard. The question arises whether it is not far better to amend those provisions of the Act, in order to give him wider scope to manifest his ability as a manager, in order to make the undertaking more profitable and give employment to men requiring it. We know there will be a large number of men requiring employment, as many of our railway construction works are closing down, and this might be a means of supplying employment to many of them. The development of the mining industry in North Queensland, and Queensland as a whole, has been sadly neglected. Perhaps industrial troubles have had something to do with the closing down of the mines; but I certainly regretted to hear the Premier interject that very little money was being spent in Queensland on mining.

The PREMIER: Very little Government money.

Mr. GREEN: Yes, I regret that that interjection was necessary, and that the Government is not spending more money in developing the rich vast mineral resources of this great State, which, from one end to the other, is a vast mineral field, with rich deposits of all classes of minerals, gems, and valuable ores, and yet we find the Government spending very little money in opening up and developing the industry at the present time. Unfortunately, capital from outside is not attracted to Queensland in connection with mining investments; partly, perhaps, because of industrial troubles, and because of the fluctuation in the price of metals. Hence we find in to-day's "Telegraph" a report headed "Rare Metals. Plea for North Queensland Mines." This plea comes, not from any labour unions or the unemployed, but from the Chambers of Commerce in Cairns and other parts of North Queensland. It says—

"That this chamber approach the

[*Mr. Swayne.*

Commonwealth Government with a proposition that we have in view—namely, the taking over of the properties of the late Thermo Company, and in doing so, seek the aid and support of other Chambers of Commerce throughout Australia.' Such was the substance of a motion carried at a special meeting of the Cairns Chamber of Commerce, after hearing Mr. F. G. Brown speak on the rare metals of the back country and their great importance as a national asset.

"Mr. Brown said: 'The late Thermo Company owned twenty-six leases, with a total area of over 200 acres. Briefly, since January, 1917, they have spent £357,000 and paid in wages £133,000. From May, 1918, to March, 1920, they sent £214,000 worth of metal away. The company produced from April, 1917, to March, 1920, £61,000 worth of metal from their own mines. This must not be taken as a criterion of what the mines can produce, because during that time they were installing the whole of their machinery. They never got to the true producing stage until March this year, when they closed down.'

I might interpolate here that I believe the Government, in bringing forward this measure and obtaining power to purchase mines, are endeavouring to prevent mines, which would be a payable proposition and would assist in the carrying on of the Chillagoe smelting works, from closing down. This report proceeds—

"The amount produced that month, if it had been kept up during the year, would have amounted in twelve months to more than was produced in the previous three years.

"The Wolfram and Mount Cuthbert mines are considered to be the finest group of mines of their class in the world. I have been in communication with London, but the main objection in London was the uncertainty of the labour market. I then tried the State Government, and Mr. Theodore said the Treasury was empty. The matter has been placed before the Prime Minister, and he is considering the question. My desire is to try to save a national industry, that should be of value when war breaks out. Probably the Commonwealth Government could get the properties for under £100,000. If they bought them to-day and did nothing till war comes, it would be an insurance."

If this Bill will assist in opening up such mines as these, and will develop the mineral resources of the State, as well as enable the general manager to make a success of this venture, with the result that the empty spaces of North Queensland will be populated, we should give it our support, and see that it is carried through this House.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): I want to say two or three words before this Bill goes through. I recognise the Opposition ought to be congratulated on supporting such a measure. There is one feature of the Bill, at any rate, which has not been touched upon, and that is that up to date the Government have not made any provision for finding new "shows" in the Chillagoe district; and the inclusion of this principle in the original Act by means of this Bill is going to give an opportunity to the gougers of that district to

find new "shows." If Chillagoe were being run for, perhaps, five or ten years from to-day, there is ample provision in the original Act introduced in 1913: but Chillagoe is a concern which will probably be going for another fifty or sixty years—and I hope longer—and there is no provision made to give ore supplies to Chillagoe after the present mines owned by the late Chillagoe Company have petered out. The Government are drawing practically all their supplies of copper ore from the Einasleigh, one of the "shows" of the Chillagoe Company, and when that mine peters out, there is a possibility that the Government will have no further copper ore to go on to—at least, not a very large quantity very handy to the smelters. Always the custom has been on mining fields to encourage the prospector or gouger by giving him some assistance. I know if the Government had not made provision by means of this Bill to purchase other mines, no matter what "shows" were discovered by the gouger in the vicinity of Chillagoe, they could not have been purchased by the Government. For instance, the Government are drawing about 100 tons of ore a day from Einasleigh. If gougers were successful in finding large high-grade copper "shows" very much nearer than Einasleigh—which is 100 miles away—the Government, unless they had this power, would not be able to buy those "shows," and consequently no provision would have been made for the future of the Chillagoe field. For that reason alone I hope the Bill will be passed, as I feel sure it will. I would like to say, too, that in my opinion the gouger is the maker of all mining fields; the gouger or prospector, whether it be copper mining, gold mining, or any other kind of mining field in Australia, is the man who has made the field, because, in the first place, he is the man who has gone out and incurred hardships in order to find the "shows." It is necessary to encourage that type of man. It is necessary further, because, as is instanced in the case of Chillagoe, every ton of ore taken out of the ground leaves a ton of ore less which cannot be replaced. It is different to wheat farming or pumpkin growing, in which you can take a crop off the land this year and get another next year. It is not possible to get a second crop of metal out of the ground. It is necessary to keep on encouraging men to find new "shows." There is no doubt there are large numbers of new "shows" in the Chillagoe and Cloncurry districts. I should say there are almost as many in the Chillagoe as in the Cloncurry district, and that is saying a good deal. Ample opportunity should be given to everybody who desires to go out and look for those shows. It is a job that entails a considerable amount of hardship, and very few men will be found prepared to do it. I believe the industry ought to be encouraged, not only because it will give additional opportunities to the gouger, but because in North Queensland copper mining means more for the man who follows up mining work than the old gold mines. It is true that most of the old mines which stood by Queensland when the seasons failed and crops were poor are not now being worked. That is emphasised when one looks at the position of Gympie and Charters Towers, and—going to the other States—at Kalgoorlie and Boulder City, in Western Australia, which have declined until they have only a few men working on tribute, and in conditions under which men should not

be called upon to work. In Charters Towers and Gympie the heat and dust have been a continual burden to the State Insurance Office, in connection with payments on account of miner's phthisis. That is the actual loss in money to the State. The actual loss in life, which cannot be computed, is something enormous. I think every encouragement should be given to copper mining, because copper mining is going to be the mining of the future—copper and silver-lead mining—but particularly copper mining; because copper mining means no hardship on the men working underground. With the exception of one or two, the copper mines of Queensland are very comfortable places in which to work. The silver-lead "shows" are not so comfortable. The deeper gold mines in Queensland are damnably ruinous to the health of most men. I hope in both Chambers this Bill is going to have a speedy passage, so as to ensure the success of this industry.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*): I do not pose as a mining man, neither am I conversant with the Chillagoe mines or the Chillagoe district; I only propose to deal

[5 p.m.] with the question from a business point of view. It seems to me that there should be a limit placed on the Government's powers of purchasing or leasing mines. I think the Bill gives altogether too much scope to the Government. We have evidence of that in a number of enterprises that they have undertaken without the consent of Parliament, and which have not proved successful. As an instance, I might quote the Hamilton Cold Store, which I believe will prove a white elephant, and which will cost something like a quarter of a million. I do not wish to oppose the measure, because, on the face of it, it seems all right; but there should really be a limit placed on the Government's powers of expenditure, and to-morrow, in Committee, I propose to move an amendment to that effect.

The PREMIER: We are going into Committee straight away.

Mr. FLETCHER: Another thing I would like to say is that all the markets of the world seem to be more or less slumping; and if one commodity slumps permanently other commodities will fall into line with that commodity. Therefore I think that we should be very careful in the matter of purchasing mines. The Government would be better advised if they lease shows for a limited period instead of purchasing them outright, or else they should work mines on the royalty or tribute system, as under either of the latter methods they are likely to lose less in the event of a slump. I do not wish to hinder the smelters going ahead, but really it is necessary that some limit should be placed on the expenditure.

The PREMIER: That may be necessary with other Governments, but it does not matter so much under this Government.

Mr. FLETCHER: The present Government have undertaken a lot of unsound ventures that posterity will have to pay for, and past experience shows that it is necessary that we should limit the powers of expenditure as much as possible.

Mr. COLLINS: It is quite refreshing this afternoon to hear members of the National

Mr. Collins.]

party praising this Chillagoe venture. Evidently our propaganda work is making good progress amongst them. The hon. member for Oxley praised it, and so did the hon. member for Windsor and the hon. member for Townsville. We all know that in 1918, when the original Bill was going through Parliament, there was considerable opposition to the proposal of the Government to take over the big Chillagoe scheme. I was one of those who supported that scheme both in Parliament and out of Parliament. Quite recently during the election campaign I pointed out that this was the one really big thing that the Government had done in Queensland, and I said that it required big minds to grasp the big things that this Government are doing. It is therefore quite refreshing this afternoon to find three or four members on the other side whose minds are developing in the direction of supporting State enterprises.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It shows how broad-minded we are. (Laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: I can understand the change that is coming over them. They have to be consistent to some extent. They have been quoting from the Auditor-General's report, which they were very anxious to get. They have quoted certain passages from that report which suit themselves, and I intend to get a passage from that report into "Hansard" which hon. members opposite have not quoted. But before I read the quotation I want to draw the attention of the House to a remark made by the hon. member for Oxley, who asked, "Can the Government manage this enterprise?" Then he went on to say that he believed that they could not. He led the House to believe that he had met the general manager, and he gave that gentleman the credit for the work that has been done at Chillagoe, whereas he should give the Government the credit for that work.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: No hope.

Mr. COLLINS: We are told that the creator is greater than the created, and it was this Labour Government that created Mr. Goddard. (Opposition laughter.) They appointed him to his present position. Mr. Goddard might not have had the same chance, under private enterprise, to develop his brain power and his organising ability that he has had under State control. The passage I wish to quote from the Auditor-General's report will be found on page 71—

"CHILLAGOE UNDERTAKINGS.

"Fares and freights payable to the Railway Department by the State Smelters to the 30th June last amounted to £20,109 2s. 2d., and the revenue at the Chillagoe Railway Station for the past year exceeded that of the previous year by about £30,000.

"The employees on the June pay-sheets numbered 563, and probably another 500 persons are employed indirectly at other mines, or getting firewood, etc., so that it may be assumed that fully 1,000 persons are actively engaged in production as a result of the operations at Chillagoe and Binisleigh.

"The following factors undoubtedly contributed to the success of the undertaking during the period under review:—

- (1) The low purchase cost together with the moderate outlay incurred in placing the whole concern on a working basis.

[Mr. Collins.

- (2) The organisation in respect to ore supplies and improvements effected in dealing with the same.

- (3) The efficient administration in respect to labour.

- (4) The effective costing system applied in the working of the concern.

- (5) The satisfactory prices of metals during the period under review.

- (6) The exceptional ability of the general manager.

"After a careful study of the balance-sheet and a general view of the whole position, I am of opinion that, provided metals maintain reasonable prices, and that the undertaking receives fair treatment, the Chillagoe proposition has every indication of proving a success."

If hon. members opposite are honest, they will admit that, when they were discussing the principal Act in 1918, they said it was not going to be a success. Now they have changed their tune on the strength of the Auditor-General's report. Coke supplies are mentioned in that report, and were also mentioned by the hon. member for Oxley. I would remind that hon. member that the Government are doing something for the development of the mining industry in North Queensland by providing supplies of coke. I am surprised at the hon. member for Townsville not knowing that thousands of pounds are being spent in the development of a State coalmine on the Bowen coalfield, with a view, when the railway reaches the coalfield, of providing cheap coke; not only for Mount Morgan, as the hon. member for Mount Morgan said, but also cheap coke for the Chillagoe smelters. This Government are not unmindful of the wants of North Queensland. They are taking the necessary steps in regard to the erection of coke ovens and to the building of a new wharf at Bowen, and they are doing everything that it is possible for any Government to do to assist in the development of the Chillagoe and Etheridge districts as well as the whole of North Queensland. I suppose I know just as much about the Chillagoe and Etheridge districts as any man in this House, because for nearly five years I was organising that part of Queensland and visited most of the mining camps.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You must have frightened the people out of the district. (Laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: I did not frighten the people out of the district. It was the hon. member's Government frightened them out—(laughter)—and it is this Government who have restored the district and are building it up and placing it in its proper position as a wealth-producing centre. (Hear, hear!) I would ask the hon. member for Bulimba whether during his occupancy of the Treasury benches he ever established any one industry that found employment for 1,000 people? Yet, according to the quotation I have just read from the Auditor-General's report, 500 persons are being employed directly by the Chillagoe concern and over 500 others are being employed indirectly. That is to say, over 1,000 persons are finding work in an industry which stands to the credit of this Labour Government. And the more the people of Queensland know about the big things this Government are doing, the better for this Government. Let us leave the little things for the hon. members opposite, because

they have small minds, and the result of their dealing with little things is that they have been able to get the numbers on the Opposition benches that they have at the present time. The people in the South, where they had most of their victories, were not able to grasp the big things this Government are doing with regard to the settlement of North Queensland and the development of Queensland generally. (Hear, hear!)

The PREMIER: There is very little to reply to in the debate which has taken place. The deputy leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Nationalist party asked certain questions, most of which have been traversed by other speakers on both sides of the House, who have in great part given the information required. I should like to quote from an interview with Mr. Thomas Glassey, published in the "Courier" a few days ago, which I think gives an impartial view of the Chillagoe enterprise and is apropos to this discussion. The "Courier" says—

"Mr. Thomas Glassey, who for many years has been closely identified with mining matters, both in his private capacity and as a former member of the Queensland Legislative Assembly, and an ex-Senator, has just returned from a visit to North Queensland. While in the North he spent a week at Chillagoe, and took the opportunity of getting into touch with the State Chillagoe mining works and the State smelters at Einasleigh. For four days in succession he was shown over the Chillagoe works, about the success of which he had not been optimistic. Speaking to a 'Courier' representative, Mr. Glassey said: 'I was agreeably surprised to find everything working so smoothly and apparently successfully. I may say that I am not a supporter of the Government, nor am I asking anything from the Government.'"

Mr. F. A. COOPER: He has changed his attitude over that.

The PREMIER—

"I have no axe to grind in the matter. But I must say that the last thing a stranger would observe is any evidence of Government control about the works. That was what pleased me more than anything."

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Rather suggestive, is it not? Generally speaking, apparently, he does not consider it good.

The PREMIER: Of course, Mr. Glassey's experience of State enterprise was gained during the time of the National regime. With his experience of State works under the Labour Government, he is nothing but complimentary.

"Mr. Glassey added that great credit was due to the manager (Mr. Goddard), who is evidently a man of considerable ability, and who, like Mr. Andrew Carnegie, has the happy knack of getting the right men around him to constitute his staff. Upon one point, however, Mr. Glassey lays stress, and that is that the management is greatly hampered by lack of a constant supply of ore. The State mine is at Einasleigh—known as the Einasleigh Copper Mine—and this is the only mine that the Purchase Act allows the Government to work. It is regarded as increasingly necessary that all fluxes should be obtained directly by the smelter management, and to do that flux mines

must be worked. The Einasleigh mine is 102 miles by rail from Almaden, and 120 miles by rail from the smelters. There are about 1,000 men directly or indirectly dependent on this State venture, and Mr. Glassey regards it as essential to the success of it that a continuous supply of ore, and of coke at a reasonable price, should be assured to the management."

There is an honest and unsolicited testimony from a man who is connected with mining, and is, I think, competent to speak on the situation, and everyone who knows copper and who knows the Chillagoe proposition acknowledges that, provided the enterprise has a fair deal with a reasonable field of operations, the manager can make a success of it. Of course, it all depends to some extent on metal prices. Neither Chillagoe nor any other enterprise, no matter how well it is managed, can be a success if the price realised for the product is less than a profitable price; but the expectation is that, although copper and metals of that kind will fluctuate in price for some time to come, they will retain a reasonable level—a level sufficient to enable Chillagoe and other mining propositions in Queensland to carry on profitably. My own opinion is that, although the price has slumped during the last week or two rather seriously, it is only the result of more or less obvious operations on the part of those who "bear" the market, and there is bound to be a recovery. That is also the opinion of some of the mining authorities, published in the papers recently. And I think that if the price of electrolytic copper keeps over £80 per ton, Chillagoe can be run successfully, but, perhaps, not otherwise—that is, unless the cost of mining came down in proportion to a reduction in the price below £80. Of course, years ago—up till about 1914—copper mines were worked successfully in Queensland and other parts of Australia when the average price was not more than £65, and even not so much. Mining cost us much less then than to-day, and yet, with a diminishing cost of coke and materials required and no increase in wages, possibly it would pay even now to work copper at less than £80 a ton. But that is mere conjecture. One cannot say what the copper market will be, but if the market does suffer such a slump that the enterprise cannot be carried on profitably, the enterprise will not be carried on. It has to be run as a commercial undertaking, and cannot be run under conditions which would require heavy subsidies from the consolidated revenue. I can lay that down clearly. It must be run as a commercial proposition; it must not be a heavily losing proposition to the State.

I do not think it is necessary for me to quote the various paragraphs of the Auditor-General's report again, but I remind hon. members that it is distinctly favourable to the enterprise. He compliments the management. He refers to the artificial limitation placed by the Act upon the manager in the matter of expenditure, and also points out what factors contributed to the success of the enterprise. That brings me to the point raised by the leader of the Nationalist party and touched upon also by the hon. member for Port Curtis—the question whether the House should be asked to give practically carte blanche to the manager of the works, and to that extent allow Parliament to lose control of the enterprise. I am not asking that,

Hon. E. G. Theodore.]

and the Bill does not provide for that. All the Bill does is to remove the artificial limitation in the original Act as to capital. It does not remove the control from Parliament, and whatever money is required by the manager, whether to carry on or to extend the enterprise, he must get authority for spending it from Parliament through the proper Minister. An amount must be placed on the Estimates. The hon. member for Bulimba said when I interjected that that was not much safeguard, because there were well known means of evading the necessity by charging any amount to unforeseen expenditure. There is, as a matter of fact, no means of evading the Government's responsibility. Whether the expenditure is incurred first and charged to unforeseen expenditure meanwhile, or whether appropriations are asked for as required, the amount must be appropriated by Parliament, and if the Government gave the manager authority to spend a large sum of money they would have to come to Parliament anyhow to ask for authority, even if it were charged to unforeseen expenditure in the meanwhile. The opportunity is given to members of Parliament to criticise or castigate the Government if they have done anything wrong in that respect.

Mr. MOORE: That is not much good after the money is spent.

The PREMIER: At any rate, the money has to come before Parliament. I am not saying that we are going to finance the enterprise like that—that we are going to come to Parliament to ask for validation of unforeseen expenditure. We are going to finance it by asking for so much money on the Estimates.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Are you doing that this year?

The PREMIER: Yes, we are asking for a definite sum, which will be found on the Estimates. But it is no argument to say that we can evade our responsibility by charging expenditure to unforeseen expenditure. That does not affect our responsibility to Parliament. There is no intention to do that. Our intention is to ask for whatever amount of money we think will be required in the course of the year, and it will be placed on the Estimates and be open to the scrutiny of members, who may ask as many questions as they like upon it.

As to the other suggestion that it is a big power to give the manager power to purchase mines—

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Is it not a very great power?

The PREMIER: It is, and that is what I want to indicate. There will be no power in the hands of the manager under this Bill to purchase any mine. He can exercise his discretion in making a recommendation, but it must be approved by the Minister and the Government. The manager will not be given carte blanche to buy mines all round North Queensland; but he can make his recommendation to the Government, who will be ultimately responsible for the purchase of any proposition. We do not want to injure or hamper a man like Mr. Goddard who has proved his worth and proved his ability, and if given a reasonable amount of freedom, I am sure he is going to make a success of the enterprise. I do not know that there is anything more I need touch on. The hon. member for Gregory spoke about the wisdom

of having a policy for the encouragement of prospecting in order to have new mines discovered and opened up when the old ones are exhausted. The manager is given a free hand in that matter, and he is carrying out a very wide system of assistance to prospectors, and much good work has been done by those in the Chillagoe and Herberton fields. He has a very business-like arrangement with the miners working in the bush, and whatever advances are made by him he deducts from the ore supplied to the smelters. He is giving valuable assistance to miners in that district, and the operations are not confined to the Einasleigh mine and the few mines comprised in the Chillagoe enterprise. The operations are widespread and are likely to lead to considerable development in North Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 1.—“Short title and construction of Act”—put and passed.

Clause 2.—“Amendment of section 6”—

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Notwithstanding what had been said by the Premier, there should certainly be some restriction placed on the manager in regard to the amount he might spend. If they allowed the clause to go as it stood, they were practically giving the manager carte blanche, and, as was pointed out on the second reading, they would be opening a very dangerous door indeed. There was a duty cast on members of the Committee to assist the Government themselves in the direction of economy—not economy for the purpose of hurting or injuring any enterprise—but in the interests of the country. He was quite prepared to admit the statements made by the Premier and other hon. members in the direction of saying that the manager was thoroughly competent, and a very careful man in every particular, but was it good business to permit the Bill to go through without any restriction whatever? The Premier stated on the second reading that if the expenditure exceeded the amount on the Estimates, that even then it had to be passed by the House. That was quite right; but when items like that had come up for verification by the House, was it at all likely that the Government's supporters in any case would vote against the Government?

The PREMIER: I have not stated that we are going to finance this scheme from unforeseen expenditure.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The Premier had not stated that, but he did say that if it so happened money had to be provided from unforeseen expenditure, then the House would have to confirm it. After the money had been spent, what chance was there of getting it back? The only remedy would be to pass a vote of censure on the Government. No matter how excellent the manager might be, hon. members owed a duty to the country in seeing that protection was given both to the manager and to the Government themselves. Probably even the manager himself might be approached by outside people and tempted to do certain things, and there might be pressure brought against the manager for certain reasons even by members supporting

[Hon. E. G. Theodore.]

the Government or other members, and, therefore, the Committee ought to safeguard the position by fixing an amount in the Bill, so that no mistake could possibly be made. What objection could there be to it? It would be remembered, in connection with the iron and steel works, that a proposal was made in the other Chamber that the expenditure should be limited to £100,000. There was no objection really to that, but the Assembly turned it down. As a matter of fact, no expenditure to that extent so far had been incurred in that particular instance. The Government talked about economy, but was it economy to say to the manager, "You have carte blanche; here is an open cheque"?

The PREMIER: This Bill does not give the manager carte blanche.

HON. W. H. BARNES: What was the good of the Premier saying that? Did not the Premier say that every detail could not come before the Minister?

The PREMIER: In a matter of the acquisition of mines, or the taking on of new leases, the manager cannot act on his own initiative. It is the Government that is responsible in such cases, and the Bill provides for that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: This enterprise was in the Premier's own electorate.

The PREMIER: That is not the only electorate concerned.

HON. W. H. BARNES: There were other districts in the immediate vicinity which were concerned; but, all the same, all kinds of things might be done in order to press even the Premier himself, and what an excellent safeguard it would be for the Premier to feel that in the Bill there was some restriction which would save him from people in his own electorate, or in the adjacent electorates! The danger of the position had been increased by the fact that the proposals would come before the Cabinet. He could imagine men like the hon. member for Bowen, who was very eager to do something for his district, pushing the matter very seriously, and, therefore, there ought to be ample protection in the Bill. He hoped someone would move an amendment in that direction.

Mr. FLETCHER contended that it was altogether wrong not to restrict the amount that the Government might spend. He was casting no reflection on the manager when he said there should be some restriction. If they gave the Government carte blanche there might be all sorts of things done, and in view of the position of affairs all over the world to-day, the Government should have restricted powers. One of the most extraordinary things that had come to his knowledge since he entered Parliament was the great freedom the Government had in doing things without consulting Parliament. They could enter into tremendous undertakings, and then come along and ask Parliament to ratify them. He thought there ought to be a limit of £100,000 to the operations which could be undertaken without the approval of Parliament. The Treasurer had asked him to mention some of the operations which had been undertaken without the consent of Parliament, and which had not been successful. The Hamilton Cold Stores was one in point.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. FLETCHER: Considering the state of the market, the Government would be wiser to lease mines and work on tribute and royalty rather than to purchase mines, and £100,000 would be a safe limit to adopt. He moved the insertion, after the word "aforesaid," on line 23, of the words—

"Provided that no expenditure in excess of £100,000 shall be incurred for the purchase referred to in this paragraph, except with the previous approval of Parliament by resolution of both Houses thereof."

The PREMIER said he did not know whether it would be wise to accept the amendment, as it would be rather a curious precedent to adopt by putting these parliamentary limitations into a Bill, and to that extent removing the responsibility of the Government.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It has been done before.

The PREMIER: He thought only in one or two cases where the Legislative Council had imposed limitations. There was no objection to giving the assurance, if that was sufficient, on the part of the Government that the expenditure should not exceed £100,000.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Why not put it into the Bill?

The PREMIER: He did not know whether the hon. member was aware that the clause did not give to the manager the power to acquire either by purchase or lease any mine or mining land; it left the power in the hands of the Government. This provision would have to be read in conjunction with section 6 of the Act, under which the Government of Queensland were authorised and empowered, in subsections (a) and (b), to acquire, "whether by purchase," and so on. It seemed to him that the responsibility must rest upon the shoulders of the Government, and not upon the manager, who would have no authority to acquire a mine, either by straight out purchase or by tribute. He would have only power to recommend, and the Government must take the responsibility of authorising him to acquire. There was certainly no intention of expending anything like £100,000 on the acquisition of mines, and he was prepared to give an undertaking on the part of the Government that before exceeding the expenditure of £100,000, the approval of Parliament would be sought. He thought the amendment would be a blemish upon the Bill, inasmuch as it would introduce a precedent which might have a bad effect later on. A limitation of that kind was placed in a Bill by the Council, which took up the ridiculous position of confining the Government to the expenditure of £100,000 in connection with the proposed iron and steel works.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That was only for one year.

Mr. FLETCHER: The two cases are not analogous.

The PREMIER: They were somewhat analogous. Personally, he had no objection to the amendment; but hon. members ought to be satisfied with the assurance of the Government that the amount of £100,000 was not to be exceeded.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Premier ought to accept this reasonable amendment,

Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

which would probably save the Government themselves a good deal of trouble later on. If it were moved with the view of harassing the Government, he could understand them not wanting it in the Bill, but it was only a reasonable safeguard. The Premier of to-day might not be the Premier twelve months hence, and he urged the Premier to accept the amendment.

The PREMIER: I will accept it.

Amendment (*Mr. Fletcher's*) agreed to, and clause put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with an amendment.

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

LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 1 put and passed.

On clause 2—"Amendment of section 11A"—

HON. W. H. BARNES asked the Minister the reason for the alterations suggested in the clause, namely—

"In paragraph (d) of subsection 1 of section 11A of the principal Act the words 'one-fifth' are repealed, and the words 'ten per centum' are inserted in lieu thereof."

The HOME SECRETARY: One-tenth is considered a fair number of the ratepayers.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It must not be forgotten that they were now proposing to make certain very drastic alterations in connection with local authority work. He considered the Committee should know the primary reasons for asking for the alterations.

The HOME SECRETARY: In Acts dealing with the initiative and referendum, in all countries where that law was in operation, it was provided that one-tenth of the electors should have a right to petition. The present Act provided for one-fifth of the ratepayers, but he thought one-tenth would be a safer provision, because, if "one-fifth" were left in the Act, and later on the word "ratepayer" were altered to "electors," it would mean one-fifth of the electors as against one-tenth as now proposed.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I think you are right.

Clause 2 put and passed.

On clause 3—"Amendment of section 12"—

Mr. MOORE: In connection with clause 3, they were going in for a new principle. The mayor was unable to be a councillor. He did not know the reason for it, but he did not see why, because a man stood for mayor, he should be debarred from standing for a councillor, and he did not see that there was anything to be gained by it. The object of the Bill, presumably, was to get into the council the men who were prepared to do the best work and whom the electors thought were best able to do that work, and this was debarring the electors from having a second choice. If a man were defeated for the position of mayor, the electors would not have an opportunity of putting him in the council, because the elections came on the same day. He would

[*Hon. W. H. Barnes.*

like the Home Secretary to give some reason for the proposal.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Another phase of the proposal which he would like to be put clear was that, from the amendment of the Act proposed in clause 3, it did not seem to him as if the mayor or chairman, as the case might be, were to be confined to the particular local area concerned. Should the mayor of North Brisbane, for instance, be elected from the ratepayers, or would it be possible for someone outside to be elected? He could quite understand that in the case of North Brisbane, where, probably, most of the large ratepayers lived outside, they might have the opportunity of selecting a man from outside. Could an elector of North Brisbane be elected, say, in Sherwood?

The HOME SECRETARY: There is an amendment from your side in regard to that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He presumed the Minister was going to accept it.

The HOME SECRETARY: He would hear what had to be said on it. The idea of electing a mayor as chief executive officer was certainly new, but there were good reasons why the mayor should not be an alderman. Firstly, if he were allowed to stand for alderman and mayor, he might win both seats.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: That would be easily overcome.

The HOME SECRETARY: It would not be easily overcome, and it would also mean a new election immediately. Further, the mayor was to represent the whole of the wards, and not any particular ward. He was not going to say that it would be the great success that some people probably thought; at the same time, it was worth trying. The mayor was the chief executive officer of the local authority elected by the whole of the ratepayers in that particular area.

Mr. WARREN: Had it ever been tried before?

The HOME SECRETARY: He was surprised at the hon. gentleman, a member of a new party which proposed to do new things, making such an interjection. If the Country party was going to "make good" as a political factor, it would have to do new things. An individual section of that area might not elect that man as a representative on the council, but the whole of the areas conjointly might select him as mayor and he would be the chief executive officer.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Is that at all likely?

The HOME SECRETARY: It was likely. In America the President was elected by the whole of the people and had extraordinary powers. He had found himself at variance with the representatives in the House of Representatives and with Congress.

Mr. MAXWELL: That is an argument against election in this manner.

The HOME SECRETARY: It was not; it was an argument for it. In this instance aldermen would be elected by the whole of the wards and would have complete control over the mayor's actions. They at all times would have the right to review any of his decisions. Consequently they were not giving the mayor any great executive authority although they were giving him some. It was a very good provision.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: He would like to point out to the Home Secretary that,

whilst, perhaps, one might be in accord with the idea enunciated, in many of the country districts the electors might feel in regard to a certain individual that he was the right man to represent them as a councillor and the consequence would be they would have to insist upon that man standing down from nomination as mayor and running as an ordinary councillor. He did not see any reason why there should not be a nomination for the mayor, and it could be arranged that the next three men on the poll for the subdivision for which the mayor was elected, would be duly declared elected as councillors. The Home Secretary would be well advised if he would give the matter consideration from the country point of view. There were many men in country districts who had done excellent work on the local authorities. Many men, no doubt, would aspire to the highest honour offered in their particular local authority, and he was sure the Home Secretary and members on the Government side of the House would not say a man was in the wrong in having ambition. That man would have considerable pressure brought to bear upon him by people who were certain he would be elected as councillor, but were not certain he would be elected as mayor or chairman. The result was, many of their best men would probably stand down. The Home Secretary might give that matter a little more consideration and alter the method of selection so that the mayor or chairman would be elected in the way he had suggested.

Mr. WARREN: The method proposed appeared to him to be utterly ridiculous. The Home Secretary had not given any reason why this new procedure should be followed. Councils, like companies, should elect their chairman. The method proposed appeared to him to be quite unworkable. The man chosen might be temperamentally unfitted to be chairman. He thought they ought to keep to the present method. An experiment was being foisted on to the people without reasonable ground for its introduction. The Home Secretary said it was a new move. The new moves of the Home Secretary did not seem to be beneficial to Queensland. They did not seem to be doing any better by them. If they were there would be some encouragement to take this chance of doing some good for the local authorities. This was not a party measure. He did not think the local authorities were desirous of having this provision in the Bill. It had come in by chance and the Home Secretary seemed to have accepted it.

Mr. MORGAN: The Minister had not replied to the point made by the deputy leader of the Opposition that men who stood for the position of mayor or chairman would be debarred for the ensuing three years from giving their services on the council. In New Zealand, while the mayor was elected by the people he could also be a councillor or an alderman. Why should not that principle apply in Queensland? Even under this Bill there would be times when there would be no election in many local authorities. The trouble to-day was to get men who were prepared to stand, and it would be the same under this Bill.

The HOME SECRETARY: That might apply to the country.

Mr. MORGAN: The Minister was looking at it from the point of view that the mayor of Brisbane was the only person who should be considered.

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

Mr. MORGAN (continuing) suggested that the clause should be restricted to cities and towns, and that shires might be allowed to elect one of the members of the council to be chairman, as at present. In cities and towns there was an identity of interests that did not exist in connection with shires. In cities and towns the properties were principally business sites, whereas in country shires, such as those in his electorate, there were pastoralists, dairymen, fruitgrowers, mixed farmers, as well as townspeople, and under the clause as it stood, in almost every instance the chairman would be elected by the townspeople, where the greater number of votes were concentrated. Taking the shire of Murilla as an illustration, the town of Miles contained one-half of the population of the shire. There were three divisions in the shire, of which Miles was one, and, under the clause as it stood, the town would have its three councillors, like the other divisions, and would have the chairman in addition. If, after the Bill had been in operation for two or three years, it was thought advisable to extend the principle laid down in the clause to shires, it could be done then, but at present the Home Secretary would be well advised if he excluded shires from the operation of the clause, and allowed their chairmen to be elected as at present.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowoong*) hoped the Home Secretary would accept the suggestions that had been made by the previous speakers on the Opposition side. He quite agreed with those hon. members that injustice would be done to a certain section by the clause. It might be possible that four competent local authority men would allow themselves to be nominated for the position of mayor or chairman, as the case might be, and they would be precluded from allowing themselves to be nominated for the position of aldermen. So that the citizens or residents in the shire would be deprived in that way of the services of a number of excellent men. It required a man with some knowledge and business ability to conduct the business of a local authority, and it was not likely that men not possessing those qualifications would have the temerity to allow their names to be submitted as candidates for the position of mayor or chairman. Unless a candidate had business acumen and some knowledge of how to conduct local authority meetings, he would only hold himself up to public ridicule, and the local authority would also be held up to public ridicule. He was sure the Home Secretary had no desire to do that. One hon. member on the other side interjected while an Opposition member was speaking that the present tendency was for a mayor or a chairman of a shire to have a leaning towards the wants of his own ward or division. That was not so. When an alderman or a councillor took the chair, he absolutely dissociated himself from his own ward or division, and became member for the whole local authority. Under the existing Act the chairman of a local authority was only empowered to expend £10, which quite precluded anything in the nature of logrolling in favour of his own ward or division. It was in the interests of local authority work that candidates for the mayoral chair or for chairman of a local authority should not be debarred from also standing as aldermen or councillors. The Home Secretary had said it would be difficult for a man who was a

Mr. Maxwell.]

candidate for mayoral honours to submit his name as an alderman, as it would cause another election, but a way out of the difficulty could be suggested. He acknowledged that the idea of electing a mayor apart from the alderman was one of the principles of the Bill, but the best judges of who was most eligible to fill the chair were the aldermen or councillors. The clause would be an injustice to the whole of the local authorities throughout Queensland, as it would deprive them of the services of many excellent men. He hoped the Home Secretary would listen to the advice offered to him by local authority men. He believed the hon. gentleman was sincere, irrespective of politics, and was anxious to make the measure something out of the ordinary. And if he wanted to do that, he must listen to those men who had had experience of local government work.

Mr. MORGAN moved the omission of subclause (2) of the clause, lines 8 to 15, both inclusive, page 2, as follows:—

“(2.) In the first paragraph of subsection two, after the words ‘composed of’ the words ‘a chairman and’ are inserted.

“The following provision is added to the said subsection:—

“The chairman shall not be assigned to any division. He shall be a member and a councillor by virtue of his office.”

The omission of that subclause would be to leave subsection (2) of section 12 of the principal Act intact—

“Every shire shall be governed by a council composed of not more than twelve members and not less than five members, as the Governor in Council from time to time declares by Order in Council.”

If the amendment were carried, whilst the principle enunciated by the Bill would be effective in the case of a mayor, it would not apply in the case of the chairman of a shire, who would be elected by the council. He thought that the Minister was favourable to the amendment, which would obviate a certain amount of injustice in the country. People were flocking into the towns because the inducements offering there were greater than those in the country; and anything that might tend in the direction of interfering with people in the country was going to lead to more dissatisfaction than existed at present. He hoped the Minister would accept the amendment.

Mr. SWAYNE desired to support the amendment. He really did not see that they were going to derive any advantage from the election of a mayor by a body outside the council. He thought they would get more effective work and better deliberation under a chairman elected by the body concerned themselves. In fact, if the idea was good in their case, would it not, perhaps, be well to ask the people of Queensland to elect the Speaker? And if the powers which the mayor would possess were the basis of the argument, might they not ask the electors as a whole to choose the Premier? In New South Wales, where they were supposed to be rather progressive—although, whether the progress had been good or bad, was a matter of opinion—the chairman was still elected by the council. The last New South Wales Act—that of 1919—provided in section 25 that each municipal council should elect

[Mr. Maxwell.

one of its members to be mayor, and each shire council should elect one of its members to be president. He thought it would be more conducive to effective work on the part of the council if they elected their own chairman, more especially in the case dealt with in the amendment—that of widespread shire councils. In a large, sparsely populated area, what opportunity would there be for the people to come together and decide upon the best man to preside over their shire affairs?

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*) also rose to support the amendment. He had been connected with various executives from time to time throughout Queensland, and he found that it would be most ridiculous if the chairman of a body of delegates were a man without knowledge of the particular function they were discharging. He had been secretary of a very large organisation—as a matter of fact, one of the largest in Australia—and he would have been very sorry indeed to have seen in the chair a chairman without knowledge of exactly what was required. He thought that was common sense and a principle that would be recognised if they thought over it for even a few minutes. One aspect of the case that struck him very forcibly was the position of a man who represented a very small outlying part of a shire council. This man represented a certain section of the people, and he travelled in some instances 6 or 7 miles to speak for them. He was a very worthy man, and yet, when it came to the case of electing a mayor of the whole shire, including the thickly populated districts, he would not have an opportunity of successfully competing for the office, notwithstanding that he had a vast number of years of experience, knowledge of procedure, and ability. He was very much in favour of permitting an alderman being elected mayor or a member of the shire council being elected chairman without vacating his seat in the council.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The amendment was like offering half a loaf in a certain direction, and the Minister had not given any indication as to whether he intended to accept it. The argument used in connection with shire councils applied equally to city and town councils, as there was no body of persons so qualified to judge of the qualifications necessary for the position of chairman as the members of the local authorities; the men who had to do with the internal work of the Councils. No one would presume to argue that all men possessed equal capabilities. It was no reflection upon any councillor to say that a man might be a good alderman, and be very energetic and very earnest in connection with his work, and, yet, probably he might not be temperamentally fitted for the position of chairman. A man might be particularly hasty, and he might not have the qualification and judgment necessary to make him an efficient mayor or an efficient chairman. Surely, experience counted, and yet under that clause it was quite possible for someone who was absolutely a raw recruit to municipal life being placed in charge as chairman of the council.

The PREMIER: That does not seem to have happened in Adelaide.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Why should the electors be debarred from electing a member of the local authority to be the chairman? As the hon. member for Toowoong had

illustrated, it was quite possible to have three or four very desirable men standing for election to the council if the clause were allowed to pass, and the electors would lose the services of those men in order that they might contest the position of mayor. After all, it was only another form of government, and the local authorities were doing magnificent work, and the Committee had no right to treat their work in any way lightly. The chairman had to do not only with borrowing, not only with the proper expenditure of money, but he had to do with worthily upholding the reputation of the council. Courtesy demanded that there should be some expression of opinion from the Home Secretary as to whether he intended to accept the amendment or not, and it should not be allowed to go as if it did not count at all.

Mr. COLLINS: He hoped the Home Secretary was not going to accept the amendment, and he wanted to point out that members representing country districts of Queensland, who were sitting on the Government side of the House, offered no objection to the chairman of a shire council being elected by the people. The hon. member for Pittsworth said that the Government were only concerned about Brisbane and he (Mr. Collins) really thought that the hon. member represented a very large country electorate. On looking up particulars he found that the hon. member represented only 2,370 square miles, and yet the hon. member claimed that he represented the country, and strongly objected to the chairman of the shire council being elected by the people. Then, the hon. member for Murrumba had a lot to say, and yet he found that that hon. member only represented 1,060 square miles. Members on the Opposition side spoke as if they were representing the country, which was not the case. The hon. member for Gregory had offered no objection to the election of the chairman of a shire council by the people, and yet that hon. member represented an area larger than the State of Victoria by 6,000 or 7,000 square miles. It was quite true that his own electorate was a very small one, being only 13,400 square miles in area, and he was offering no objection to the clause. The hon. member for Normanby represented about 29,000 square miles, and he offered no objection to the clause. Then, the hon. member for Leichhardt represented a little over 30,000 square miles, and he was offering no objection to it. He (Mr. Collins) wanted the country people of Queensland to realise that members representing the country part of the State were sitting on the Government side of the House. The hon. member for Toowong also objected to the clause, and he claimed that he, too, represented the country, but that hon. member only represented 66 square miles. Hon. members need not be afraid of the chairman of a shire council being elected by the people. Hon. members opposite talked about experience being necessary, yet, if experience always counted, very few new members would be elected to Parliament. He was satisfied that there was no danger in the chairman of a shire council being elected by the people any more than there was in a member of Parliament being elected by the people. Personally, he was not concerned whether the principle was in operation in any other part of the world. He was not concerned about what they did in other countries, but was concerned about what they did here. They wanted to lead the

world. Queensland had led the way more than once in the Commonwealth, and in other parts of the world, and they were going to lead the way in local government by providing that the mayor of a town council or chairman of a shire council should be elected by direct vote of the people.

Mr. KING: The only reason put forward by the Home Secretary in support of the clause was that if it were adopted they would have a mayor or chairman who was absolutely disconnected with any ward whatever. His experience of local government was that when a man was elected as chairman or mayor he had no interest whatever in a particular ward; he was there representing the whole area. He admitted that in a few isolated cases the chairman had shown favour to a particular ward, but those cases were very rare. He had had the pleasure of being chairman of a local authority on different occasions, and when he was chairman he always recognised that he represented the whole shire. As a matter of fact, the tendency in most cases was for the chairman to rather neglect his own ward for fear that he would be charged with favouritism. He could conceive a case where the most popular man would be elected as mayor or chairman under the clause. If a man like Charlie

Chaplin were to drop down in a [7.30 p.m.] country shire, he might make such a name for himself that the electors would vote for him as chairman, not considering for a moment as to how he would turn out. He need not have any local experience at all. The policy adopted in this clause had not always been the policy of the present Government, which had always claimed that a man who was mayor or chairman should have had previous experience. What about the change of policy?

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you know that this amendment was moved as far back as 1890?

Mr. KING: When the hon. gentleman's predecessor was giving the policy of the Government at the Local Authorities' Conference which was held in 1918, he said—

"It is considered that it would be an advantage in local government if the mayors and chairmen of local authorities were elected by the electors instead of by members of the councils, and that their tenure of office should be three years. It is thought, too, that no person should be eligible for election as mayor or chairman unless at some time he has had at least two years' previous experience in local government administration."

That was sensible. They understood that the then Home Secretary was *bonâ fide* in making that statement, and if that policy was adopted they would not have such an objection to the clause. He could quite conceive that, under the clause as it stood, a chairman with absolutely no experience might be foisted on to the board by the electors.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooberoo*) thought the amendment of the hon. member for Murilla was a very happy compromise. Although there were many things in the Bill that he did not agree with, he thought this was one of the most impracticable provisions in it. The amendment would get over the difficulty somewhat by allowing country shires to elect their own chairmen. Anyone with experience

Mr. Walker.]

of councils or directorates must admit that the individual members thereof were best fitted to decide upon a chairman, who must have ability to conduct business. Who knew better than those who sat round the table as to the abilities of a chairman? With regard to co-operative concerns, under the ward system the shareholders did not know the directors, and how would the people know the man who was putting up as chairman? In the Widgee Shire, for instance, the individual farmer knew nothing about the capabilities of the members of the council. Besides, the members of the council had power to pass the chairman out if he did not pay attention to his work. The amendment of the hon. member for Murilla, although it did not include city councils, went half way, and would be a great help in the working of the measure. He hoped the Home Secretary would accept the amendment.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*) supported the amendment. The hon. member for Bowen kept pointing out that hon. members opposite were in favour of the clause as it stood, but they knew that those hon. members dared not give their own opinions in the House. (Government dissent.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Had they not had one man and woman dismissed from the Labour union in Toowoomba because they did not attend some meeting?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member for Bowen would admit that there were very good reasons why members on the Government side did not give their opinions. On the Opposition side they discussed what was best in the interests of the State, and not of any party in particular. In the co-operative factories there were men who had given the whole of their time to the work, and the same thing applied to shire councils. Under the Bill it was possible that an outsider altogether might be elected and these experienced men cast aside, which would be a big loss to the shires. Between the Main Roads Act and this Local Authorities Bill, the position of the local authorities was very serious. The rates and taxes already levied were very large.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the amendment. The question of rates and taxes does not come in on this amendment.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It had a great bearing on the question.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*): The hon. member for Logan had been good enough to say that his twenty-five years' experience of local authority work led him to believe that a mayor or chairman, immediately he was elected to the chair, ceased to be a ward man. If that was true, it would be sufficient if the mayor or chairman was elected by the whole of the electors, because there was no reason why a ward should be disfranchised by the election of a mayor. That argument killed the amendment and supported the argument of the Home Secretary.

Mr. MORGAN: Did the Premier lose interest in his electorate because he was Premier of Queensland?

Mr. F. A. COOPER: He was taking the word of the hon. member for Logan, who said he had had many years' experience of local authority work, and stated that the

moment a man went into the chair he became non-representative so far as his ward was concerned. They wanted every ward to be fully represented on the council and the whole of the electors represented in the chair. Today the chairman was generally put in the chair simply because "it was his turn," or because No. 1 ward had it last time, and No. 2 ward ought to have it this time, irrespective of the capabilities of the aldermen or councillors. It went by the wards. No. 1 ward had it last year, No. 2 must have it this year, No. 3 next year, and No. 4 the year after. That was the practice to-day. Capability for the position did not count, and as for ability to conduct a meeting, it was the very last thing thought of. At the last meeting of the Ipswich City Council, a body of some standing in the matter of local authority work, a motion was moved "That the question be now put." The mayor put the question, "That the question be now put"; the question was carried, and the council rose up and walked out without putting the motion. The chairman in question was a man who had had fourteen or sixteen years' experience as an alderman and three or four years' experience as a mayor. He considered the present a very opportune time for seeing that the whole of the shires were represented in the mayor or chairman.

Mr. MORGAN considered that the Minister had a right to reply to his amendment before the question was put. They could only deal with one clause of the Bill at a time, and he considered the whole time of the Minister should be given to the particular clause they were dealing with. The Minister admitted that it was an important question and so did the draftsman.

The HOME SECRETARY: Didn't I reply to the objection?

Mr. MORGAN: No.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, I did. I replied to the objections raised by several members opposite.

Mr. DUNSTAN (*Gympie*) was surprised that a conservative member representing a conservative country constituency should have the temerity to say that his constituents would prefer a Charlie Chaplin to a practical and serious-minded candidate. He was sure that that moving picture kind of criticism would carry no weight in the House. If the electors in municipal areas were to have the privilege of electing a mayor, the electors in shire areas should have the same privilege; to admit otherwise was admitting that they were less capable or had less intelligence. His experience had proved that a progressive member of a shire council, or even of a city council, very often earned the antagonism of his fellow-councillors simply because he was progressive, and for that reason under the present system such a man was often denied mayoral honours or the position of chairman to which he might be entitled, even if they followed the present rule of taking the position in their turn. He considered that the electors of the shire council should have the privilege of filling the important position of chairman.

Mr. MOORE: Surely the Home Secretary was going to reply to the amendment, which was a most important one, and concerned a large number of people. He did not see where they had asked for anything unreasonable, and he did not agree with the argument put forward by the Home Secretary. In one

[*Mr. Walker.*

case he had illustrated where the President of the United States was at loggerheads with his Parliament. Surely he did not mean that a chairman, if elected, was going to be at loggerheads with his councillors, or that, if it were so, any benefit would accrue! The wards were made in such a way that everybody should have proper representation, and yet in this Bill there was a new principle by which the country interests are cut out altogether in favour of a small portion which happened to be closely populated. They only asked for a reasonable opportunity of getting proper representation in those shires instead of being dominated by one small section which happened to be thickly populated.

The HOME SECRETARY did not think it necessary to keep repeating again and again what he had already said in reply to the objections to the clause.

Mr. MORGAN: You were inclined to accept my amendment.

The HOME SECRETARY: He was not. He said that there might be something in the contention that the shires should be under a different Local Government Act. The hon. gentleman must know that the Divisional Boards Act controlled shires previously, and had not been found to work very satisfactorily, and to-day they had the local authorities controlling the whole of the local government of Queensland. In most country shires there were a number of small towns, and they were not all going to vote for one particular man. As a matter of fact the present system, as was pointed out by the hon. member for Bremer, was the "go-round" system, without any regard to the capabilities of the councillor elected as mayor. Most men who were elected as aldermen or shire councillors could get knowledge sufficient to enable them to control a meeting inside of an hour if they had any intelligence. The argument that the mayor had to have a knowledge of procedure would not stand investigation. If he had not ability and personality he would never master anything.

Mr. MAXWELL: You know he cannot do it in an hour.

The HOME SECRETARY: Of course, he could. To be chairman of a meeting did not require any great capacity. The real principle in the clause was the desire to give the whole of the electors of the area a say in the election of their mayor or chairman. The electors who elected members to the Assembly did not elect a Charlie Chaplin, simply because he was Charlie Chaplin. What was happening in Melbourne and Sydney?

Hon. J. G. APPEL: In Sydney the caucus want to elect the mayor.

The HOME SECRETARY: Of course, the hon. gentleman wanted to get away from the subject. If, instead of the wrangles that took place each year in the large cities in connection with the election of Lord Mayor, the electors themselves had the selection, it would be a good thing. It was working in Adelaide and Perth, and there was no reason why it should not work in Queensland in regard to shires, towns, and cities. The new principle was to give at least one man in the local authority a representation, not only for one particular ward, but for the whole area. They knew very well that under the present system part of the "perks" of his office was to get good roads in his particular section.

Mr. MOORE: Oh, no.

1920—2 K

The HOME SECRETARY: In most cases. Hon. J. G. APPEL: That is not my experience; I had the worst roads.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. gentleman must have been very busy on some other business. To obviate that, he proposed this change, and he thought it was reasonable they should give it a chance. He did not think it would operate in country districts as the member for Aubigny said it would. Most of the country districts had a number of small towns. As soon as a town became sufficiently large to control an area, it sought to become a municipality, and break away from the adjoining district. That was a good thing. He did not propose to accept the amendment.

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

AYES, 34.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Fuxham
Mr. Bortram	Mr. Kirwan
Mr. Brennan	Mr. Laid
Mr. Bulcock	Mr. Larncombe
Mr. Collins	Mr. McCormack
Mr. Cooper, F. A.	Mr. Mullan
Mr. Cooper, W.	Mr. Payne
Mr. Coyne	Mr. Pease
Mr. Dash	Mr. Peterson
Mr. Dunstan	Mr. Pollock
Mr. Ferricks	Mr. Riordan
Mr. Fitchly	Mr. Ryan
Mr. Foler	Mr. Stopford
Mr. Forde	Mr. Theodore
Mr. Gilday	Mr. Wellington
Mr. Gibbs	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Gledson	Mr. Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Forde and Mr. Kirwan.

NOES, 24.

Mr. Appel	Mr. King
Mr. Barnes, G. P.	Mr. Logan
Mr. Barnes, W. H.	Mr. Macgregor
Mr. Bobbington	Mr. Maxwell
Mr. Cattermull	Mr. Moore
Mr. Costello	Mr. Morgan
Mr. Deacon	Mr. Roberts, J. H. G.
Mr. Elphinstone	Mr. Sizer
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Swayne
Mr. Green	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Jones	Mr. Walker
Mr. Kerr	Mr. Warren

Tellers: Mr. Costello and Mr. Kerr.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That clause 3 stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

This division was identical with that just recorded.

Resolved in the affirmative.

[8 p.m.]

Clause 4—"Amendment of section 14—Qualification of electors"—

Mr. MOORE moved the omission, on line 22, of the word "elector" with a view to the insertion of the word "occupier." They already had a definition of "occupier." His contention was that, if a person paid rates in a local authority area, he was entitled to have a voice in the spending of those rates. The fact that a person was a Commonwealth voter did not debar him from voting at a State election. In the same way, if a man had property in two areas, he was entitled to have a vote in each of the two areas. He did not think it could be contended that, because people were interested in certain questions, they should therefore have a vote

Mr. Moore.]

in the settlement of these questions. Every person in the community was interested in the price of butter, but the Government did not suggest that every person should have a voice in electing the directors of a co-operative butter factory. They were all interested in the question of whether there should be a strike on the wharves or not, but it was not suggested by the Government that every elector should have a vote in the Wharf Labourers' Union to say whether there should be a strike or not. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What would be the effect if everyone had a vote?

Mr. MOORE: If everyone had a vote, there would be no strike.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If every elector had a vote, it would have no effect on the union.

Mr. MOORE: Applying that argument, what would happen if local authorities were to say they would not abide by the vote of the electors?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The present local authorities will not be the future local authorities.

Mr. MOORE: The Home Secretary said that the clause would not make any change; another Government member said that 75 per cent. of the present members of local authorities would go out; another hon. member on the other side said that the whole lot would go out, so that evidently there was a great diversity of opinion on the other side. He did not think there would be much difference in the smaller shires; but in the big Western shires there would be an absolute block Labour vote, and both there and in cities like Brisbane, there would be a big change. He did not think that the Home Secretary realised what the clause meant—that the people who found the money would have no say in the spending of that money. The principle of all Government was that the man who paid taxes should have some say in how the money was spent. The fact that the Government proposed to give every adult a vote should not debar the payers of rates from having a vote.

The HOME SECRETARY: Your amendment defeats your argument, because you propose to give the occupier a vote.

Mr. MOORE: The occupier pays rates.

The HOME SECRETARY: You say he does not pay rates.

Mr. MOORE: Members of the Opposition did not say that. They were quite prepared to give the occupier a vote. The Home Secretary would recollect that when he first became Home Secretary a deputation waited on him and suggested that the occupier should have a vote, and the hon. gentleman's reply was that he was not wedded to adult suffrage, and that he thought an occupier's vote was a reasonable one.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member to keep to the question before the Committee.

Mr. MOORE: He was keeping to the question. He was moving the omission of the word "elector" with a view to inserting the word "occupier."

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The House has already affirmed the principle of adult suffrage.

[Mr. Moore.

Mr. MOORE: The House affirmed it by a majority vote, but that did not make it right. The people outside, by a majority of votes, said that they did not want it—(Hear, hear!)—and they had as much right to protest against it then as at any other time.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You cannot reverse that principle in Committee.

Mr. MOORE: They would see. They, at any rate, had every right to put their point of view, because they considered injustice was being done. It was only a fair thing that a man should have a vote where his money was being spent, and if he paid rates in thirteen shires, he should have a vote in thirteen shires. If they were going to adopt the principle in one case, they should adopt it in all cases. A non-unionist should have a vote in a union, because he was just as much interested as the unionist. He did not think the Home Secretary could defend it. He did not think anybody had ever defended it. The only thing that was being put forward was that it was the policy of the Government. Could it be said that that was an argument? It might be said that it was an excuse. Health was said to be a matter of interest to everybody. Was not a sanitary strike something that was going to affect everyone? Yet was the ordinary elector to have the right to vote in the sanitary men's union? Of course not. It was all very well to talk.

Mr. PEASE: We are not talking.

Mr. MOORE: They were not game to talk. If they were allowed to talk, and express their own individual views, they would not have such legislation as this.

Mr. COLLINS: Yours is a very large electorate. You need not worry.

Mr. MOORE: Size did not count. It was the people who lived in the area who counted. But he was not talking about the area; he was talking about the principle of giving everybody a vote. Mill, on page 169, said—

"It is also important that the assembly which votes the taxes, either general or local, should be elected exclusively by those who pay something towards the taxes imposed, and those who pay no taxes disposing by their votes of other people's money have every motive to be lavish and none to economise. . . . It amounts to allowing them to put their hands into other people's pockets for any purpose which they think fit to call a public one—which in some of the great towns in the United States is known to have produced a scale of local taxation onerous beyond example—and wholly borne by the wealthier classes."

He would like to hear some definite arguments from the Home Secretary to account for or, at any rate, excuse the proposal. He could understand it if it provided that the occupier should have a vote, the man who had resided for twelve months, and intended to continue to reside there, but he could not understand why the ordinary elector who happened to be passing through should have a vote. They had railway camps and other workers' camps in shires, and all those men would get on the roll and have just as big a vote as the men who used the land. If they were going to give them that vote, they should have some power of taxation, as in France, where the ordinary elector bought

stamps and became a taxpayer. The ordinary man should not be able to put a mortgage on another man's property, and walk out of the area; and he would urge the Home Secretary not to go so far as to give adult franchise throughout the whole of Queensland.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why did you not defeat the principle on the second reading? You have affirmed it.

Mr. MOORE: Of course they did, and they were going to affirm it still more. They hoped that the Home Secretary had seen a little light, that some fairness had got into his head, and that he might realise that the Bill was not fair to the ratepayers of Queensland.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He was quite prepared to admit that by carrying the second reading they had affirmed the principle, but they were now dealing in Committee with matters most vital to the interests of the State, and he said that the actions of the Government in regard to that and other clauses were reprobate actions, unfairly asking certain classes of the people to carry a load they had no right to ask them to carry, and in many cases placing in the hands of irresponsible the privilege of saddling other electors with burdens it might be impossible for them to bear. The principle was intolerable. Assume that the Committee were a board of directors, and a certain expenditure of money had to be discussed. Would the Home Secretary for one moment suggest that somebody from outside who had no interest in the matter should be called in to decide whether that money should be spent or not? They knew perfectly well that hon. members opposite had a lot of interests—landed and otherwise—though sometimes they were told that they were only champions of the poor widows, etc., and they would never consent to that being done. The arguments put forward by the Opposition had not been replied to, and they could not be replied to, because they had reason on their side, and could it be supposed that members on that side, representing a majority of the people, should quietly sit down and say they were going to allow that clause to pass?

The PREMIER: Do you say you represent the majority of the people?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Premier knew that when the votes were counted on the Government side and on the Opposition side the former were 20,000 short, and yet the Government came along and had the audacity to suggest that extra burdens should be laid on the people by those who had no responsibility whatever. Originally, there was a limit, and the local authority could only rate so much in the £1, but it was proposed to remove that limit. Was that another of the proposals to help the Government in their time of need? They knew the Government were seeking to skedaddle out of Parliament as quickly as possible, because, on the other side, there were a lot of members who were discontented, and they did not like what was happening outside. Was it a fair thing that a proposal should be made to try and take from the Government the responsibility of finding work for a number of people who were unemployed, and then providing in a Bill like the one under discussion that certain people who had no liability could so fix a rate as to be a burden on the community generally and which would relieve the

Government of their difficulties? It was a most unfair proposal, and he hoped hon. members on the Opposition side would fight every vital clause.

Mr. KING: The question of adult suffrage was of vital importance to the people of Queensland, and the amendment sought to give a controlling influence to the bonâ fide residents of Queensland. It had been argued in support of adult suffrage that such a franchise existed in connection with the State and Federal Parliaments, but local government was not at all analogous to either the State or Federal Parliament. Parliament was absolutely supreme, and had all sorts of revenue. Local government, on the other hand, was absolutely limited in its powers. It had no legislative functions, and its only source of revenue was the money it made out of the unimproved value of land. If they gave the irresponsibles a vote they gave to these persons the right to put a preferential mortgage on every bit of rateable land in Queensland. They knew perfectly well that the rates always remained as a charge on the land, and the person who owned the land was responsible. Members on that side of the House desired to give the bonâ fide occupier a vote, as that was the man who had to put up with all the surrounding difficulties and disabilities in connection with drainage and roads, and they also knew that the occupier was liable for the rates if they were not paid. The man who lived in a boarding-house had no responsibility whatever. He was a bird of passage, as a rule, and was here to-day and gone to-morrow. The man they wanted to satisfy in local government was the person who made his permanent residence in the area.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): The class of individual in the community whom members opposite said should not have a vote was more entitled to a vote in local authority matters than any men sitting on the opposite side of the House. What would be the position of Queensland to-day if it had not been for those men who put their swags on their backs and went out and opened up the country? Hon. members opposite said that unless a man owned property, or was renting a house, he should not be entitled to a vote. Was a man staying in a boarding-house not as great an asset to the owner of property as the man paying rent for a house? What would be the value of property in the different districts of Queensland if it had not been for that class of men which hon. members opposite were pleased to call nomads? He did think that hon. members opposite had sufficient Australian fair play to recognise that these people were the most deserving class in the community. It was those men who made it possible for the hon. member for Bulimba to open up his great business, and who made it possible for Brisbane to be what it was. Those men were just as keen in seeing that the place in which they lived was kept clean as were the owners of property. That class was the backbone of the community, and yet, in this twentieth century, they had a body of men on the Opposition benches who said that that class of man should not have a vote!

According to the argument of [8.30 p.m.] hon. members opposite, he should not be a member of the House, because for twelve years of his life he was not settled down in a house. According to them, a man who was not renting a humpy

Mr. Payne.]

on a 16-perch allotment was not entitled to a vote, although he was living there, and had to put up with all the conditions in the place. If there were not lodgers in a boarding-house the proprietor would not be able to run it. In fact, they would not have had any community at all had it not been for this class of men. If it had been left to the ordinary citizen to go out and explore the country and open it up, the blacks would have been here to-day. These men had travelled hundreds of miles and put up with hardship and inconvenience, and now, because the community had been developed, hon. members opposite said they should not have a vote. He hoped the Government would give them a vote. It might as well be said that if these nomads should not have a vote in a local authority, they should not have a vote to return a member to Parliament. They should be given the rights which they had hitherto been deprived of.

Mr. SWAYNE: It was because they were watchful over the interests of the deserving settlers in Queensland that they were supporting this amendment. The man who went out on the land and made a home for himself at the cost of a lifetime's work was the one who was deserving of a vote, and it was not a fair thing to give that advantage to someone who had only been in the district three months. It must be remembered that the vote was not only for the election of aldermen, but to decide as to borrowing money and other things. The "Daily Standard," in a leading article, spoke about the lack of accommodation for the sporting public, and proposed that those grounds should be made good, not at the expense of the frequenters of them, but by the municipal council out of rates. That was what they had argued was likely to occur under such a franchise as this. He had a telegram from Mackay giving the result of a public meeting, which was held in the town hall, on this question. The telegram read—

"At meeting held town hall last night following resolution carried by seventy votes to three that this public meeting of representative ratepayers emphatically protests against proposals contained in Local Authorities Act attempt amendment Bill which are totally opposed to spirit of democracy as non-ratepayers would have power to impose rates of local authorities."

He did not think that any other town in Queensland had a larger proportion of those residing in it who owned their own homes than the town of Mackay. This telegram represented the opinion of the most democratic body of property owners in the State. It was on account of such proposals as this that the Government were placed in a minority on 9th October last. This was the kind of thing which damaged them in the eyes of the world. He had a newspaper extract containing a report of an interview with Mr. Theodore in London recently. The Premier was speaking of the need for settlement. He said—

"The future depended on the development of Queensland's resources. It was important to attract people and capital, and any policy which prevented the flow of people and money to Australia, was a mistaken policy, which he would condemn."

[Mr. Payne.

The Premier went on to point out the need of getting people on the land, and invited people to come from overseas to Queensland for that purpose. That clause was more likely to deter settlement and to prevent people going on the land than anything else. Who was going to settle on the land in Queensland if their property was to be at the mercy of the thriftless and improvident? He knew instances of farmers who had voted for the party opposite for years, and had now turned against them because of this policy. The main point was that the people of Queensland had emphatically turned down this policy on 9th October last. If the present Government had any tinge of democracy in their composition they would refrain from forcing legislation that the people signified they did not want, and would so arrange the electorates that they could get a fair test of what the people really desired in those matters.

Mr. FORDE submitted that no notice could be taken of the telegram read by the hon. member for Mirani, because, although he (Mr. Forde) was not well known in Mackay, he thought, if he went there and advertised that a special meeting would be held for the purpose of considering what form of franchise would be adopted for municipal elections, he would get a ten times larger meeting than the one referred to in the telegram; and he considered that the hon. member for Mackay would have no difficulty in getting probably 1,000 or more people to attend a meeting to discuss such an important question, and if the whole of the people of Mackay had a vote on the question he felt sure they would carry the adult franchise by an overwhelming majority. The meeting held the previous night at Mackay no doubt was rigged for the purpose probably of trying to deceive members of the House.

The people of Rockhampton were looking forward to the time when every man and woman would have the same say in the municipal elections as they had in the State and the Federal elections. If the whole of the people of Queensland were trusted to elect men to serve them in the more important spheres of the State and Federal Legislatures—where they had great and far-reaching powers—surely they could be trusted to elect representatives to sit on the local governing bodies!

A lot had been said about giving an occupier a vote. They knew that if an occupier had his name on the roll only one vote could be recorded from that house, although probably six or eight adults resided in it. He considered every person over twenty-one years of age in that house should be able to exercise the franchise at the municipal elections. Further, in many houses the man, who usually got his name on the roll as the occupier, had a vote, while the woman—who was expected to bring up and educate children for the development of the State—was denied the franchise. He contended that the women of Queensland should have the same right with regard to municipal elections as men and women had in the State and Federal elections. The people who did not own property, who did not have palatial residences, were referred to by hon. members opposite as irresponsibles, nomads, and loafers. He was going to defend those people, because he believed that the amount of property a man owned or the palatial residence

in which he resided was no criterion as to his worth to the community. He considered those people were more deserving of the franchise, in many cases, than were hon. members opposite who owned property but who would be parties to profiteering, and would rob those people for whom the Government were putting up a fight to-day. Another thing was that, owing to the lackadaisical method of their local governing bodies, the health of the people was not cared for in the way in which it should be. In Rockhampton there were drains that were not looked after by the city council, because on that council they had many representatives who were afraid to make any move which would be prejudicial to the moneyed interests and the property-owners. When they elected the representatives of democracy who would not be tied by money and property, and whose only consideration would be the welfare of the people, they would have all these filthy spots wiped out of the municipal areas, they would have a more advanced municipal council, a more healthy and virile people, and the people of Queensland would have reason to feel deeply grateful to this Government for the great service they had rendered to Queensland.

Mr. TAYLOR: It was rather amusing to hear some hon. members on the other side talking about the privileges and rights of ratepayers to be the only people who exercised the franchise. Every member on the other side was selected as a candidate for Parliament by men who were financial in their organisations. The man who was not financial had no vote in the selection of a single candidate. Yet they got up in this Chamber and decried the right of people who had the money to exercise the franchise. That showed the humbug and hypocrisy of it all. They lost sight of the fact that every one of those individuals had the right to elect representatives to Parliament, and those representatives framed the Act which directed the activities of the local authorities. No one had stated that those men had not rights, that they were worthless characters, and had not helped to build up the State. There was no necessity for a great number of men to carry their swags throughout Queensland. There were opportunities for them to do better than that, but, unfortunately, they did not embrace them. To say that because men had exercised a certain amount of thrift, and had got a little home, they should not have certain privileges was a slander and a libel on those individuals who had managed to do that. It was to their credit that they had been able to marry and raise families, which were wanted. They did not want single men wandering about the country, who did not marry and raise families. They heard a lot about plural voting. If they took two individuals who owned two or three allotments of equal value, they would find that in one house there would be six or eight votes, and in the other only two. If that was not a system of plural voting, he would like to know what was. To say that local authorities had failed in their duties in the past, and that democracy was going to cure all the ills to which the public were subject, was so much humbug. He hoped the amendment would be carried.

Mr. COLLINS: He had been looking forward to this measure of reform, because he realised the great powers which could be exercised by the local authorities. He was

surprised that any member of the Country party should be opposed to this proposal. It was as well to know the power the local authorities had, so that they could get a grasp of what this particular [9 p.m.] franchise really meant. The whole of the powers under the Local Government Act had seldom been availed of by any local authority. Section 62 of the Local Authorities Act of 1902 provides—

“The local authority may, from time to time, take, purchase, erect, rent, contract for the use of, or otherwise provide, either within the area or, subject to this Act, at a reasonable distance therefrom, land and buildings to be used for or in connection with aqueducts, baths, bores, bridges, canals, cemeteries, crematories, dams, electrical works, experimental farms, ferries, fire stations, flood gates and flood warnings, fords, gas works, gravel and sand pits, gymnasiums, works for conservation of hydraulic and other power, jetties, landing places, libraries, locks, markets, museums, offices, omnibus services, parks, appliances for the destruction or prevention of pests, pounds, public meetings, public music, pumps, quays, quarries, recreation grounds, reservoirs, roads, rubbish depots, sewage farms, disposal works and depots, septic tanks, slaughter-houses, sewers, viaducts, washhouses, watercourses, waterworks, wharves, weighing machines, weirs, wells, or other public purposes.”

and so on. Yet, hon. members opposite were trying to belittle local government. Just as great reforms could be carried out by local authorities as by the State Government if they endeavoured to carry out the works he had enumerated; and yet they had members like the hon. member for Mirani opposing the reform proposed by the clause under discussion. Anyone would think that hon. member was living in the dark ages. He was aware that, if the hon. member had his way, North Queensland would be populated by the dark races, and there would be no need for that measure, because he did not suppose the hon. member would be willing to give the dark men a vote.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. COLLINS: The Bill was one of the measures that he was glad to have lived to see upon the statute-book. What were hon. members opposite afraid of? He could not understand how thirty-four of them ever got into that Chamber on the broad franchise. If they were not afraid of the broad franchise in connection with parliamentary elections, why should they be afraid of it in connection with local authorities? What was behind the amendment? When the single men and single women left their goldfields owing to depression, immediately there was a decline in land values, and, if all the single men and single women were to leave the electorates of Carnarvon and Murrumba, immediately there would be a fall in land values in those electorates. Because their forefathers refused to give the whole of the people a vote in connection with local authorities, was there to be no progress at all? This was a progressive measure, and he was surprised at any hon. member opposing it. Reference had been made to the man who carried his swag being put on an equal footing with the man who owned property. Were hon. members prepared to refuse the vote to the man who carried his swag for

Mr. Collins.]

the return of a member of Parliament? He was inclined to think there were a lot of misguided men, who owned no property, who had voted for the hon. member for Port Curtis and many other hon. members on that side. The hon. member would not be prepared to go to his electorate and tell those men that, because they did not own any property, they should not have a vote to return a member to the Assembly. He was surprised at the hon. member for Windsor—a man with a wide knowledge of things, and a wide reading, who knew full well that the great teachers of the world, especially a great religious teacher of the world, owned no property. Would the hon. member say that such men should not be allowed to vote for some Mr. Bumblefoot as a member of a local authority? The Country party claimed to represent the country, though they only represented a very small portion of it. How many of the local authorities in the electorates of those hon. members had carried out any of the long list of works he had quoted? How many of them had established experimental farms? The establishment of such farms by local authorities would be one means of dealing with the unemployed problem that members of the Country party were continually talking about. Considering that the restricted franchise in connection with local authorities had existed for generations, what progress had been made by those local authorities? Take the city of Brisbane! How much better would it have been if, instead of handing over the right to run trams to a private concern, they had undertaken the work themselves? If there was any city in the Commonwealth where there was a good groundwork for broadening the franchise, it was the city of Brisbane. Here they had a city with a population of 200,000, with a sanitary system similar to what they found in the country districts. He did not want to boast about it, but the sanitary arrangements in his own district were a long way ahead of those in the part of Brisbane in which he lived. (Opposition laughter.) Hon. members opposite were not speaking on behalf of the country. Government members were offering no opposition to the broad franchise; they represented the country parts of Queensland. The opposition was coming from a few city and town representatives and persons who represented very small electorates, like the hon. member for Drayton, who represented 525 square miles.

Mr. MAXWELL: You do not represent square miles, you represent humanity.

Mr. COLLINS: What did humanity mean? Did it not mean men and women? If it did, he claimed the hon. member's vote for the broad franchise, on the ground that it was humanity that should be represented by local authorities. Did those great teachers, to whom they owed so much, worry about corner allotments or other property? They were, none the less, great teachers. Ideas, not property, counted. The man who invented a cream separator may have owned no property, but he conferred a great benefit on humanity, and saved millions of hours of toil. Would anyone say that because a man owned no property he should not be able to occupy the position of mayor of Brisbane, and help to solve some of the problems facing mankind at the present time? They lived in a changing world. It had to move on and on, and this was one of the

[Mr. Collins.

methods by which it would move on. So hon. members need not be afraid of the measure. One never need be afraid of the common sense of the people. They talked about irresponsibles. He, himself, at one time, was classed as an irresponsible, and a good many other reformers also, but they now held responsible positions, and sat on the front Treasury benches, and just as they were fit to guide the destinies of this great State, so people outside who owned no property were fit to guide the destinies of municipal or shire councils, or any other local authorities. He had not yet seen great wisdom displayed by local authorities. When one went from town to town, and city to city, he was astounded at how backward they were. They needed to get a move on. There were more powers in the Local Authorities Acts than powers to make a road, or tip a load of stones in front of an alderman's door. They needed to do more things than that, and they could only be done by broadening the franchise. He hoped there would be no division. Let them be unanimous for once. Let them say that they believed, as the hon. member for Toowong said, in humanity.

At five minutes after 9 o'clock p.m.,

Mr. POLLOCK, one of the Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): Some of the speeches they had heard were a revelation. It had been a revelation to him to hear the abuse that had been hurled at local authority men by hon. members on the other side who knew nothing about the matter—who criticised the work that had been done by a body of honourable men, who, for the interest of their own cities, of their country, and their communities, had given their time and money, purely for humanity, irrespective of what any member on the other side might say. (Hear, hear!) The hon. member for Bowen had said that no wisdom had been displayed amongst local authorities. Then, what idea could the Home Secretary have had in calling in the local authorities to combat the influenza epidemic, after the Government of the day had tried and were defeated? (Hear, hear!)

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They were not.

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. member knew they were. They threw up the sponge, and turned to the local authorities, and practically said, "We cannot control this scourge. For God's sake, you local authority men, take hold of it!" He knew the time the local authority men spent in connection with it, and they did it, not for areas, for square miles, for dingoes or kangaroos, but for humanity. It was all very well to talk about the leaders of religion in early days who owned no property. Let men who talked of such things be consistent, and take the whole of the advice given to them. One of the exhortations of Christianity was to live peacefully with all men, and if your neighbour struck you on the right cheek, to turn to him the left. It was all very well to talk part of the doctrine, let them have it all.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why not wait till Sunday?

Mr. MAXWELL: He was giving it to them because the hon. member for Bowen wanted to usurp the whole function of

proaching christian ethics, whereas he maintained that on the Opposition side there were just as many men who believed in the christian ideal as on the other side. They had been told that they were fighting one of the principles in the measure. He was not going to deny it, and, with the leader of the National party, hoped they would fight every clause that they thought was an injustice to the people of the State. It was not only the big man—the capitalist—who owned property, but also the middle-class man and the worker, who had his property in his building society. It was the occupier of the house and the land who was worthy of consideration. The opportunity for the franchise being broadened was given to representatives who came to vote in the Parliament of the State, and what did they do? They took a man's property, and said, "We are going to hold your property as security against mortgages and overdrafts, and against loans." They did not want property for representation, but when they went to the banker, what did the banker say? If they asked for a loan of £5,000, not as against rates, but as against individuals, the banker would say, "You must let me see your security."

Mr. WINSTANLEY: He would say, "What are your rates?"

Mr. MAXWELL: He would open the safe, and say the same as an eminent financier in London said—"Gentleman, come in here; this is where I keep my securities." There had been a great amount of mud-slinging at local authority men throughout the debate, but they were a body of men who had devoted years to the work, and there had not been a Home Secretary at any one of the conferences that had been held for some years past who had not stood up and said local authority men had done a great work and a noble work for the advancement of this State. And what did they get? They had hon. members on the other side telling them that the sanitary system in Brisbane was a disgrace. That was not the fault of the Brisbane local authorities. The Government had created already the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board, and they had introduced in the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board a system which would take some time to get into operation—the day labour system—and God knows when they were going to finish their work.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you say that is the real trouble?

Mr. MAXWELL: It was part of the trouble; and he would quote Mr. Smales, from New South Wales, who was brought up here and gave a report as to the work of the board in certain matters, and he pointed out that the system was bad, and yet they persisted in it.

The HOME SECRETARY: What system?

Mr. MAXWELL: The day labour system.

The HOME SECRETARY: He pointed out that the direction was bad.

Mr. MAXWELL: It was all very well for the hon. gentleman to blame a section of the local authorities in connection with the sanitary system. It was not Brisbane, South Brisbane, Toowong, or any of the other local authorities that were to blame. Members opposite spoke in a loud voice about the democracy which they represented. It was a wonderful thing to him that members on the Opposition side of the House had a 20,000 majority over the other side if mem-

bers on the other side represented the people. If it were the case that they did represent the people, he would draw their attention to the fact that associated with local authority work were men who held Labour views; and, in his experience, the question of politics never entered into the matter. Those men were working shoulder to shoulder with others who held different views in civic life. The other night a meeting was held. He, as mayor of Brisbane, happened to call that meeting, and he would tell hon. members that certain resolutions were carried unanimously at that meeting, and one resolution was "Absolute opposition to adult franchise in municipal government."

Mr. COLLINS: How many attended the meeting?

Mr. MAXWELL: Twenty local authorities.

Mr. FORDE: How many representatives?

Mr. MAXWELL: Before the debate was finished he would endeavour to get the information, but he would say that Brisbane, South Brisbane, Toowong, Ipswich, Hamilton, Stephens, Windsor, Sandgate, Kedron, Sherwood, Taringa, Yeerongpilly, Toombul, Wynnum, Moggil, Maroochy, Ithaca, and Coorparoo and others were represented. If it was good enough for those men to come the distance they did to discuss upon subjects such as they were discussing—subjects of such vital importance—surely the House should listen to what those local authority representatives had to say.

Mr. FORDE having repeatedly interjected, The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member for Rockhampton will obey my call to order.

Mr. FORDE: I will, Mr. Pollock; but I cannot stand the hon. member telling lies.

HON. J. G. APPEL rose to a point of order. The hon. member for Rockhampton said the hon. member for Toowong was telling lies. He asked that the hon. member be compelled to withdraw.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must withdraw.

Mr. FORDE: The hon. member is a prevaricator of the truth. Probably I was not in order in saying he told lies.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Do I understand the hon. member to withdraw?

Mr. FORDE: As it is unparliamentary, I withdraw.

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. member knew full well that the statements he was making were absolutely true. Was it untrue that Mr. James Page rose to one of the highest positions a man could have? It was not untrue that Mr. Andrew Fisher rose to the highest position any man could reach, and he said all honour to those men. The late Hon. Andrew Dawson and the late Hon. T. J. Byrnes all rose from the people. And the Hon. William Hughes also rose to a very high position, and the opportunity was given to him.

Mr. FORDE: Thanks to the waterside workers of West Sydney.

Mr. MAXWELL: The least the hon. member says about West Sydney the better.

Mr. FORDE: Why?

Mr. MAXWELL: If the hon. member wanted to know he would tell him. One hon. gentleman—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. Maxwell.]

Mr. MAXWELL: He had submitted the names of local authorities represented at the meeting the other night, which passed a unanimous resolution, and the amendment proposed was a very fair one, and one that should receive the consideration that it deserved. "Property" was a word that had been hurled at hon. members on that side of the House, and he wanted to emphasise the fact that if it were not for property the local authorities could not get their loans, they could not get their overdrafts, and could not carry on their local government work. Any man who had an ambition to own a little home was a good [9.30 p.m.] asset to the State. (Hear, hear!) The electors of Toowong had sent him into Parliament to represent them, and he would do all he possibly could to prevent such an unjust measure as this from being placed on the statute-book.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The HOME SECRETARY: He thought that about sixty speakers had now addressed themselves to the question of adult franchise; everything that could be said either for or against it had been said, and it was only fair that they should now do some business. (Hear, hear!) The same speeches had been made again and again—on the leave to introduce the Bill in Committee, again on the second reading, and now on this clause of the Bill. He appealed to hon. members, having registered their objection to the principle, to take a vote on the matter. He did not remember a Bill since he had been in the House on which there had been so many speeches on the second reading.

Mr. MAXWELL: It is very important.

The HOME SECRETARY: It was very important, but saying the same thing over and over again did not make it more important. The hon. member for Toowong introduced the question of local authorities opposing the Bill. Of course, the local authorities would oppose it, because people elected under a limited franchise would naturally oppose the extension of the franchise, as it might jeopardise their position on a local authority, but it was no argument against the principle. Either the principle was right and sound or it was wrong. The argument that local authorities all over Queensland objected to it, did not prove anything. It was merely a statement that privileged individuals elected under a privileged franchise objected to the extension of that franchise. The hon. member for Toowong argued that the local authorities had done good work. No one had said otherwise. The question at issue was whether it was right to extend the franchise or not. He thought that everything that could be said against the clause had been said, and that they should now come to a decision.

HON. J. G. APPEL: He proposed to support the amendment. He had been a landlord, and had always given the local authority vote to those who occupied his premises. Hon. members opposite had talked about the man with a swag on his back, who had blazed the trail and developed the State, but he had been to a certain extent a parasite on the State.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is scandalous.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The Minister, more than anyone, knew that that was a fact,

[*Mr. Maxwell.*]

because those men simply followed other men who, by their enterprise and capital, opened up the country. They had followed them from station to station, where they knew they could get rations and something to do. Hon. members opposite were simply puppets, selected by caucus and the little junta which sat as the executive of the Australian Workers' Union, and who must obey the Australian Workers' Union.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I trust the hon. member will speak to the question.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Those men who had carried their swag on their backs were simply loafers, going from station to station cadging provisions. They were not the men who had made the State.

Mr. BRENNAN interjected.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. member who interjected is the "boss" cadger.

Mr. BRENNAN: Mr. Chairman, I would ask if the hon. member for Albert is in order in using such an expression.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I point out to the hon. member for Albert that he is not in order in referring to the hon. member for Toowoomba as the "boss cadger," and I would ask him to withdraw.

HON. J. G. APPEL: He would withdraw the remark. He admitted it was only a reasonable proposition that every member of the community who was an occupier should have a vote. It was only fair that those who were interested in any local authority as occupiers should have a vote, because the taxation of that local authority, more or less, fell upon them.

It was an unfortunate thing, in the affairs of our Australian democracy, that a certain section of the community who were elected as representatives—supposedly—of the people, were under the control of a power which was not controlled by the people. Unless hon. members opposite were prepared practically to enslave themselves, they could not enter that House, and it was a greater misfortune that, owing to the conditions which existed to-day, they were enabled to impose upon the ratepayers a proposition such as was contained in the Bill. The hon. member for Rockhampton spoke about dirty drains and insanitation which existed under the present system of representation. He could tell that hon. member the men who were most insanitary were those they proposed to enfranchise. Under the Shearers and Sugar Workers' Accommodation Act it was required of station-owners that they should erect buildings superior to those which they themselves occupied.

Mr. KIRWAN: Nothing of the kind.

HON. J. G. APPEL: What did the hon. gentleman know about it? He never was in the West.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. gentleman, for the last time, to connect his remarks with the amendment.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Hon. members knew as well as he did, that those men abused the accommodation. Then hon. members opposite got up, and for political purposes, spoke about local authorities not having provided sufficient sanitary accommodation. As soon as settlements ceased to exist, where were those men? Hon. members on the other side said labour was the only thing

which developed the State. But when capital left any section of the State, labour immediately drifted elsewhere. If hon. members opposite were not under the control of that little junta which exercised a greater control over them, and unfortunately over the workers of Queensland, than ever was exercised by Czardom, or the infamous council of ten, and if they expressed their honest opinions, they would vote for this proposition which asked that the occupiers of premises in a local authority should exercise the franchise. Not one member sitting on his side of the House was opposed to that proposition, because more or less those people contributed to the funds of the particular local authority. But to say that the parasite of the community—the criminal scum of Queensland—were to exercise a controlling influence in the election of representatives to local authorities was absolutely opposed to democracy and to the settlement and development of this fair State. It was useless appealing to hon. members on the Caucus side of the Chamber, as they had their commands and they must obey those commands.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): If any reason was needed why the clause should be passed in its present form, it was to be found in the attack made by the hon. member for Albert on^o unfortunate people who were not able to protect them-

[10 p.m.] selves otherwise than through their representatives in that Chamber. If the hon. member's remarks were made to those people outside, they would be highly indignant. The hon. member had referred to them as "nomads," "wasters," "criminal scum," "parasites," "crawlers"—

Hon. J. G. APPEL: I did not say crawlers. You are a crawler.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask the hon. member to withdraw that expression.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: If the hon. member would withdraw the statement that he (Mr. Appel) referred to members of the community as "crawlers" he would withdraw what he said. He had not used the expression "crawlers."

Mr. BRENNAN: He would withdraw the statement, but the hon. member called them "criminal scum," which was worse. He also said that those people were not entitled to a vote because they were the most insanitary portion of the population. It was the duty of every member of the Opposition who did not endorse those sentiments to rise and protest. It was a disgrace that any hon. member should use such language with reference to people who were not able to deal personally with such conduct. For that reason alone, the clause should go through.

Mr. FLETCHER: The amendment was both fair and just, and he hoped the Government would accept it in place of their proposal as set out in the clause. He viewed the proposed alteration of the franchise as one of the most dangerous proposals to the community that had ever been introduced in this Chamber. He did not think the public realised what was coming, and it was their duty to protest to the utmost of their ability against it. No words of his could possibly convey what he felt upon the subject. It was a big step down the path to socialism, which would smother all the finer instincts of the race, such as resourcefulness, initiative,

determination, patriotism, and all the other virtues that made a great nation, and would encourage and foster idleness and slothfulness. It meant that they would become a degenerate race, an easy prey for some more virile power that might arise, and he was sure that none of them had any wish to see that brought about. Some hon. members on the other side might be sincere, but he was certain there were others who did not believe in the measure. He did not think the Home Secretary believed in it, and the hon. gentleman should rise superior to his surroundings and oppose it.

At three minutes past 10 o'clock p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. FLETCHER: In opposing the clause he was not against the worker. He really thought it was better for the workers that the clause should not be carried. Those elected might be the very best citizens possible, but they had not the ability or the experience to run the affairs of the local authorities. The hon. member for Mitchell said the election for Parliament and for the local authority was one and the same thing, but it was totally different, because they would have no opposition in many of the local authorities. In the hon. member's own district, there would be seven Labour councillors and no opposition whatever, so that the seven Labour men could do just as they liked. In Parliament there would always be an Opposition, and the one party always counteracted the other. Seeing the financial distress of the country, such a revolutionary alteration of the franchise should be submitted to the people. If that course were followed, it would be defeated by at least 100,000 votes. If the Government were honest at all, they would take it to the people, seeing they were in a minority of 20,000 votes. It was not fair at the present juncture, in view of the financial distress that existed, that they should pass a measure that involved an expenditure of £20,000 or £30,000 next year to initiate the scheme. It was a deleterious and deteriorating proposition, and he could only protest against it and express the hope that, before it was too late, the Government would see the dangers lying ahead. The community would not feel the effects immediately. It did not feel the effects of Government whether good or bad for some little time, and it was going to be the same with this alteration of the franchise. It would probably be two or three years before the effects were felt, but it would have a very damaging effect throughout the whole community, and he was sorry to see it introduced.

Mr. MORGAN: He would like to deal with one or two of the arguments adduced by hon. members opposite as reasons why the local authority franchise should be extended to all adults in the community. One of the reasons given by hon. members on the other side, was that in some towns in Queensland, more especially in the North, there were slums—which they called Chinatown—and, if the franchise were extended so that Labour representatives should be elected to the councils, they would do away with those slums. He was very pleased to know that such slums did not exist in South Queensland. He found from a recent issue of "Smith's Weekly" that in Sydney—where the Labour party had control of the city council—the greater number of properties in the slum districts were owned by the Sydney City Council itself. That showed

Mr. Morgan.]

that, although the Labour party had a majority on the council, they had not done anything to improve the conditions which existed prior to their advent.

The hon. member for Rockhampton told them that if people were intelligent enough to have votes for the Federal and State elections, they should have votes for local government. He never had anything to say against the nomad, but whilst he would admit that the nomad did contribute directly to the taxation of the Commonwealth and State, he did not do so in the case of local government. If the Government endowed local authorities to the extent of £1 for £1 or £2 for £1, as they did many years ago, there would be some force in the argument for the clause, because it then could be said that the nomad contributed something towards the funds of local authorities, through the Government. In a similar manner, the nomad had a right to have admittance to their hospitals, because the Government subsidised them to the extent of £2 to £1. But the argument held no water so far as local government was concerned, although hundreds of men who had carried their swags through Australia had become successful and prosperous citizens.

The Home Secretary, when introducing the Bill, said that although he was an occupier of a house, he had not a vote, and that probably if he insisted on having one, as he could under the present Act, as an occupier, he would be told to get another house. His amendment did away with any trouble like that. Although, even if the occupier insisted at the present time, he could get his vote, the amendment went one better. It would not be a matter of whether the landlord liked it or not. The occupier, purely and simply by operation of law, would obtain the vote automatically.

Mr. FORDE: What if there happened to be two families?

Mr. MORGAN: If their wives had property or were occupiers, they would get votes.

The HOME SECRETARY: If you admit that, the whole of your case falls to the ground.

Mr. MORGAN: Not at all. The hon. member for Rockhampton pointed to the fact that under the amendment teachers and University professors might not have votes. He thought that was very far-fetched. Perhaps he knew of no teacher or University professor who would not be entitled to a vote, but when they were dealing with such a matter, let them get down to concrete cases, and deal with the matter from a sensible, practical point of view. Suppose two men went into a certain locality to live. One man, when he drew his pay at the end of the week, perhaps attended the races, spent Saturday night in gambling, and paid his board, and on Monday had nothing left till next pay day. The other man cut out the gambling, lived comfortably, and put something in the bank every week. The latter would eventually become a property-owner. He would become that detestable thing, a capitalist, that he felt sure the hon. member for Rockhampton was endeavouring to become every day of his life. He hoped he would succeed, because every man should be ambitious to own his own home and have a little bit of a stake in the country.

Mr. FERRICKS: A stake in the country did not count in the case of conscription.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

[Mr. Morgan.]

Mr. MORGAN: His idea of the law of the land was that it should be such that every young man might easily become a property-owner. He knew that was not the idea of the socialist. He wanted to prevent men from owning property, because he knew, as Andrew Fisher once said, that once a man owned property he ceased to be a Labour man.

Mr. COLLINS: He never said anything of the kind.

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

Mr. MORGAN: That, in his opinion, should be the object of legislation, to enable every young man at a very early age to become a land-owner. He certainly would be a better citizen than if he followed the example of the first of the men he gave as an illustration, who gambled his spare cash and eventually ended up in Dunwich, or somewhere else like that. After all was said and done, the whole of the revenue of the local authorities came from those who owned property. The Bill was going to have a far-reaching effect in Queensland, and if passed as introduced, it was not likely to help the Premier obtain his loan money.

Mr. COLLINS: Keep your threats to yourself. You are not the Government.

Mr. MORGAN: It was not a threat; it was good advice. He intended to vote for the amendment, and hoped the Minister would accept it.

The HOME SECRETARY: No.

Mr. GILDAY (*Ithaca*): The Opposition had moved an amendment to the clause, and he remembered when he was sitting in opposition that the then Opposition had endeavoured to pass a somewhat similar amendment giving larger powers so far as local authorities were concerned, when they could not get adult suffrage, but the then Government fought them strongly on that occasion. The amendment was somewhat sugar-coated, because he knew of one case, and the hon. member for Toowong could not deny it—it was very prevalent during municipal elections—where a gentleman who owned a number of allotments in different parts of Brisbane was in the habit of paying the rates for property in the name of many of his friends.

Mr. MAXWELL: I do deny it.

Mr. GILDAY: He could prove it, and he challenged the hon. member to prove that his words were not correct.

Mr. MAXWELL: I deny it.

Mr. GILDAY: He would bring proof of what he was saying. A banker in Brisbane paid the rates for fifteen different individuals, such rates being on the property that was owned by the said banker.

Mr. MAXWELL: In the Brisbane City Council?

Mr. GILDAY: He was taking the metropolitan area. The rates were paid, and several of them did not know their names were associated with those allotments, and two days before the election he came round and asked those people to vote for him. That kind of thing had been going on for years in Brisbane. The hon. member for Toowong had stated that Ithaca was represented at a meeting held recently, but he would tell the hon. member that the representative from Ithaca had no mandate from

the people of Ithaca. The workers of Ithaca knew nothing of the matter. He would also tell the hon. member for Toowong that the streets of Brisbane were the most dangerous of any in any city in Australia to-day.

Mr. MAXWELL: I deny that.

Mr. GILDAY: Let the hon. member go to any of the other cities in Australia, and he would see for himself. The motor garages in Brisbane were pleased with the roads in Brisbane, because it meant more work for them from the people who owned motor-cars.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GILDAY: Under present circumstances, it was no earthly use a man putting up for election to a shire council unless he was connected with vested interests. A great deal had been said about people who did not own land. What about the unfortunate teamster? He had to pay a wheel tax, and why should he not have a say as to who should represent him on the local authority? He said unhesitatingly that the streets of Brisbane were the worst in Australia. Eagle street was the only portion of Brisbane where the council had done any work that was a credit to them, with the exception of a small piece in Albert street, opposite the Empire Theatre. Outside these two places, the work carried on by the city council had been disgraceful, taking into account the amount of money spent. If the hon. member for Toowong would look at his own door, he would see that it was absolutely necessary to have a different class of people elected to the council in order to get better work done for the money spent.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): There seemed to be a misconception in regard to the word "parasite." When he was in New Zealand some years ago, they had in New Zealand a number of racecourse "touts," who made their living on the racecourse. Some years ago New Zealand abolished those men from the racecourses, and the result was an influx into Queensland of men who were known as parasites, and they were to be seen in the streets of Brisbane every day. They were people who had not asked for a vote, but they had been compelled to go to the poll and vote under adult franchise. He thought that the roads in Queensland were not bad in comparison with the roads in France and Belgium, which countries he had been in. He thought it was right that the occupier should have a vote. There were very few people, after all, who were not occupiers. It seemed to him that this Bill was the extreme apex of socialism. The man who had worked hard to get a small home would have to mortgage his place owing to those who were not residents. In opposing the clause as it stood, he was out for the man who had a small cottage and had paid it off or was paying it off. He might refer to a co-operative society which was proposed to be formed in Brisbane at an early date, in which gratuity bonds were being put in to the extent of £20,000, and he, as a member who had put in his bonds, objected to anyone who had no stake in the undertaking coming to vote at the meetings. This Bill was aiming at a similar thing in connection with local authorities.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) said that if it was only in the interests of the nomads,

of whom they had heard so much about during the debate, he would support the amendment. There were two classes amongst the nomads; a great many of them were working men who had to travel to and from their work, while the other portion of the nomads were of no good to the community. It was interesting to see hon. members opposite taking such an interest in the nomads, but they had never done anything for them before.

Mr. BRENNAN: We gave him a vote at the elections.

Mr. DEACON: It gave him no opportunity of doing anything for himself. There were more nomads now than there were before the present Government took office. This clause would injure the people who helped the nomad now, because he had to depend for work upon the people who owned land. This Bill would not be an improvement in local government work, although it might change the members in some shires. There were some nomads, and they were not the majority, who took no interest in the country, and it would do a great deal of injury if they were given a vote. Why not make it embrace the people the Home Secretary said did not get the vote?

The HOME SECRETARY: What about the thousands of public servants who are removed from one town to another?

Mr. DEACON: They could make the Bill apply to them. They were going at it indiscriminately, and it was not fair. Objection was taken only to the class of people who were not entitled to a vote.

Question—That the word proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Moore's amendment*) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 34.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Huxham
" Bertram	" Kirwan
" Bresnan	" Land
" Bulcock	" Larcombe
" Collins	" McCormack
" Cooper, F. A.	" Mullan
" Cooper, W.	" Payne
" Coyne	" Pease
" Dash	" Peterson
" Dunstan	" Pollock
" Ferricks	" Riordan
" Fibbly	" Ryan
" Foley	" Stopford
" Forde	" Theodore
" Gilday	" Wellington
" Gillies	" Wilson
" Gladson	" Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Dash and Mr. Dunstan.

NOES, 24.

Mr. Appel	Mr. King
" Barnes, G. P.	" Logan
" Barnes, W. H.	" Macgregor
" Belbington	" Maxwell
" Cattermull	" Moore
" Costello	" Morgan
" Deacon	" Roberts, J. H. C.
" Elphinstone	" Sizer
" Fletcher	" Swayne
" Green	" Taylor
" Jones	" Walker
" Kerr	" Warren

Tellers: Mr. Costello and Mr. Green.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. MAXWELL moved the omission of "an area" on line 22, and the insertion of

Mr. Maxwell.]

"any area within Queensland." As the Bill stood, only those who were in the area could stand as a candidate for municipal honours. The amendment would place it on the same footing as the provision regarding State elections. In his own case, under the Bill as it at present stood, he would not be able to nominate for Brisbane, but would have to confine himself to Toowong, where he resided.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. MAXWELL moved the insertion, after the word "thereof" on line 22, of the words—

"A member of the local authority of such area' are repealed, and the words 'chairman or a member of the local authority of any area within Queensland' are inserted in lieu thereof."

Mr. MORGAN was not in favour of the amendment previously agreed to, and he wished the Minister to indicate whether it was his intention to accept the present amendment or not. Evidently, there had been some secret agreement between the hon. gentleman and the hon. member for Toowong. The Home Secretary had not stated whether he intended to accept the amendment or not.

The HOME SECRETARY: I said I was prepared to accept it by saying "No," when the Chairman put the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause." I did not need to make a speech to say that.

Mr. MORGAN: I object to an amendment being agreed to to benefit Brisbane if it is going to be against the interests of the country districts. It would permit a man from Brisbane being elected for a country place like Charleville. That kind of thing was not fair to the country districts. If the Minister intended to favour the city of Brisbane, let him confine the amendment to the cities and towns, but not extend it to the country districts. The people in the country districts were not in favour of being represented by people coming from outside those districts, and they were not going to be dictated to any longer by Brisbane. They wanted as their representatives, whether in Parliament or on the local authorities, men whose interests were in the electorates.

The HOME SECRETARY: It was very interesting to receive a lecture from the hon. member upon the duties of a Minister. He might tell the hon. member that it was his duty, as Minister, to accept any amendment with which he agreed, but it was not his duty to get up and make a speech on every occasion. The hon. member for Toowong submitted his amendments to him, and he told the hon. member to move them.

Mr. MORGAN: The rest of us knew nothing about it.

The HOME SECRETARY: That was not his fault. If the hon. member moved an amendment and he agreed with it, when the question was put by the Chairman, he would say, "Aye," and surely that was sufficient. The amendment was consequential on the one previously moved by the hon. member for Toowong. It meant that any elector of the State had a right to stand for any area within the State. It only gave to the people in an area the right to select any man they chose. If the people of the area were opposed to any

[*Mr. Maxwell.*

candidate from outside the district, they could defeat him, and that was an end of it. The hon. member did not seem to realise that everything he had said was a commentary upon the people in his own district. If the people did not wish to select someone who did not live in the area, they could vote against him. The original Bill was rather narrow, because it excluded people who might be property-owners but not electors from standing for the area in which the bulk of their property was situated. He had remedied the weakness, and now they could stand for such a district so long as they were upon the electoral roll for any district in Queensland. Apparently, the hon. gentleman's chief complaint was that he had not been consulted. He might tell the hon. member that he did not intend to consult him as to whether he should accept an amendment or not. He proposed to accept the present amendment, because it was consequential on the former amendment, and then they could adjourn.

HON. J. G. APPEL: He was of opinion that Brisbane influence should not be the controlling factor.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no mention of Brisbane in the amendment. The hon. member must confine his remarks to the amendment before the Committee.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The point was that there was evidently a controlling central influence, and the representatives of the country districts objected to any control by any outside influence. He was of opinion that the amendment, by which anyone could go into a country electorate and stand for the local authority, was not a wise one, and that the hon. member for Murilla, representing a country constituency, had taken a good point. The Country party had not been consulted, and, as the country made for the progress of the cities, he thought that it should have been consulted. The Minister might have given some indication to the whip or secretary as to what he intended to do.

The HOME SECRETARY: I never intended to overlook them at all.

HON. J. G. APPEL: He accepted the Minister's apology. (Laughter.) The Country party had no desire to offer any obstruction.

Amendment agreed to; and clause 4, as amended, put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported progress and asked leave to sit again. The Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—That this House do now adjourn. The business to-morrow will be Supply, commencing with the first department on the Estimates.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I would like to ask the Premier whether he has any information he can give to the House with regard to loan money matters.

The PREMIER: I have no information that I desire to give to the House now.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at five minutes past 11 o'clock p.m.