

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

WEDNESDAY, 22 DECEMBER 1920

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

WEDNESDAY, 22 DECEMBER, 1920.

The PRESIDENT (Hon. W. Lennon) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock p.m.

QUESTION.

GOVERNMENT DEBENTURES ISSUED SINCE 30TH JUNE, 1920.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES asked the Secretary for Mines—

“What debentures, if any, and at what price, and for what currency, have been issued by the Government since 30th June, 1920?”

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones) replied—

“£6,000 issued at par, interest 4½ per cent., redeemable 1st February, 1922.

£20,000 issued at par, interest 6 per cent., redeemable 1st July, 1924.

£39,300 issued at par, interest 6 per cent., redeemable 1st March, 1930.

£30,000 issued at par, interest 6 per cent., redeemable 1st November, 1930.

Total, £95,300.”

PROPOSED ALTERATION OF CONSTITUTION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

POSTPONEMENT OF ORDER OF DAY.

On the Order of the Day being called for the resumption of the motion standing in the name of Hon. E. W. H. Fowles, relating to the proposed alteration of the constitution of the Legislative Council,

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES said: I understand that both the Hon. Mr. Hawthorn and the Hon. Mr. Leahy desire to speak on this motion, but, unfortunately, they left early last evening, as the Hon. Mr. Leahy was not very well, and I do not know whether they were aware that the Council was meeting to-day at 3.30 p.m. instead of 4.30 p.m. I do not wish to take precedence of Government business to-day, and I would therefore ask the Minister whether he is prepared to accept a motion postponing the Order of the Day until after the consideration of Government business.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. gentleman might make an arrangement by a conference with the Secretary for Mines.

After consultation with the Secretary for Mines,

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: By the courtesy of the Minister, I move—That the Order of the Day be postponed until after the consideration of Government business.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: I have no objection to meeting the wishes of the hon. member. I understand that two hon. members who wish to speak are away ill, and that probably neither of them knew that the Council would meet to-day at half-past 3 o'clock. If we postpone the Order of the Day until after Government business is disposed of, we can take a vote on the matter after the hon. members who wish to speak on the motion have spoken.

Question—That the Order of the Day be postponed until after the consideration of Government business—put and passed.

JOINT COMMITTEES.

CONTINUATION DURING RECESS.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES moved—

"1. That, in the opinion of this Council, it is desirable that the members constituting, respectively, the Joint Library Committee, the Joint Refreshment Rooms Committee, and the Joint Buildings Committee should continue to control, during the recess, the several matters committed to their charge as such committees during the session.

"2. That the above resolution be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly by message, inviting their concurrence therein."

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I notice that the Parliamentary Buildings Committee have given to the Government and their supporters a beautifully appointed room downstairs. I do not know that some of the Prince's furniture is not in that luxuriously furnished room. We poor outcasts and exiles on this side have not received any formal invitation to use that room, and I would suggest that the room might, in an emergency, be placed at the disposal of any hon. member.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: Hear, hear!

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: That would be a fair thing, otherwise we shall have to do our thinking on our feet, as we do our business in town.

HON. J. S. COLLINGS: That is all right so long as we don't catch you in there. (Laughter.)

Question put and passed.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: This is "A Bill to amend the Local Authorities Acts, 1902-1917, in certain particulars." The main feature of the Bill is the alteration of the franchise in local authority elections, and in that respect the Bill meets with my approval. I say that unhesitatingly, because I have always advocated a broader franchise for all forms of government. We must recognise that local government is a form of government which affects every citizen within the particular local authority area; and I believe that all governing bodies should be elected on the broad franchise of one adult one vote. Probably Australia has led the world in connection with the adoption of that principle.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: New Zealand was first.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: Our Commonwealth legislators and the members of our Legislative Assembly are elected on the broad franchise of one adult one vote. As a matter of fact, I was very nearly elected on that franchise myself. (Laughter.)

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: There were too many wise people in Carnarvon. (Laughter.)

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: I cannot understand why there should be any objection to a similar franchise in connection with local government. In 1904, when I was returned to the Legislative Assembly for the constituency of Burnett, I was elected on the franchise of one man one vote. It is not so very long since we had a property franchise in Queensland in connection with our State elections, so that we have made some advance since then. It was not a purely Labour Government that amended the Elections Act and extended the franchise to women. It was a Government which was pushed pretty severely from behind by a number of Labour members forming and supporting that particular Government. I understand that the chief objection to this measure raised by members of the Assembly who were opposed to it was in regard to the franchise.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Would you allow non-unionists to vote at unionists' meetings?

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is not a parallel case. The hon. gentleman has a motion on the business-paper in which he suggests a very absurd franchise, which is worse than the property franchise. I am afraid I cannot agree with the hon. member in his proposal, and I do not suppose he is likely to agree with my views on the subject. There is nothing at all in the argument that some men should have votes and other men should not have votes. Those of us who have studied political questions in the past know very well that the ordinary man in the street does not take much interest in politics, and yet he has the same power at the ballot-

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box as any member of this House possesses. I claim that every adult should have one vote, and one vote only, for all governing bodies, whether Federal, State, or local authorities. This Bill is a fairly lengthy one and contains other principles besides that dealing with the franchise. For instance, under our present law the aldermen of a local authority are elected by the ratepayers, and the chairman or mayor, as the case may be, is appointed by the aldermen. This Bill provides that the local authority electors shall elect the mayor or chairman, as the case may be, and that the election of the chairman shall take place only once in every three years. The elections for local authorities cannot, of course, take place at the usual time in February next year. The other principles contained in the Bill can probably be better discussed in Committee when we deal with the measure clause by clause than by hon. members standing up and making long second reading speeches. I propose, therefore, to reserve anything I have to say on the other part of the measure until we go into Committee.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: You did not give everybody a vote in connection with the Sugar Cane Prices Board.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No; the hon. member objected to that. Under this measure every elector will have a vote at a local authority election, and that is a very proper proposal, as every elector is affected by local authority administration, even though he is not a ratepayer. I know very many people at the present time who have to pay a wheel tax, and yet have no vote in the local authority election. In such cases it may truly be said that there is taxation without the right of representation. As I propose to deal with the Bill clause by clause when they come up for consideration in Committee, I do not intend to detain the House at any greater length, and I shall now move—That the Bill be read a second time.

Hon. T. M. HALL: I do not intend to detain the Council at any great length in connection with this measure. The most objectionable feature in connection with the Bill is the provision which extends the franchise to any person who may, for the time being, be living in the local authority area and have his name on the electoral roll. I hold that those who own property in a local authority area have a right to vote in that area. I do not agree with the proposition that those persons who happen to be living in a district for the period of a few weeks or a few months and happen to have their names on the parliamentary electoral rolls should have a right to a voice in the control of local authority affairs in the same manner as persons who occupy premises in that area.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about the question of health?

Hon. T. M. HALL: If a person has lived in a local authority area for a few months, or a few weeks—and people of the right brand can get on the roll after a few weeks' residence in a place—it does not follow that such persons should be entitled to a vote. The proper franchise for a local authority is domicile in a particular district. I contend that only those persons who are interested in a district, and live in the district, or have property in the district, should be entitled to a vote, and that the franchise should not be

extended to birds of passage merely because their names happen to be on the Parliamentary electoral roll. What business have cancutters to have a vote in the particular district in which they make their domicile for a short time? Under such an arrangement some 500 or 600 men who are itinerant workers in the district may outvote those persons who reside permanently in the district, and have their businesses or properties located in the district. There has been a good deal of talk about the unearned increment on properties which were originally purchased for a few hundred pounds, but it must be remembered that many of those properties are now held by men who have paid a great price for them, and as they do not live on the property they will have no vote in a local authority election under this Bill. That is a matter which will indirectly affect the stability of the community.

Hon. J. S. COLLINGS: That objection has been urged against every reform in the world's history.

Hon. T. M. HALL: Yes; and it is perfectly true. I have no objection to a person living in a house in a district having a vote, or even having a vote in the selection of chairman or mayor, but I object to a measure which allows men who are wandering from one district to another to have votes, and be able to outvote those persons who live in the district and have all their interests in that district.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Would you give any man more than one vote?

Hon. T. M. HALL: No, I would not give anyone more than one vote; but I think only those who have a definite interest in the district should be given votes. I was a local authority man for many years, and got into trouble because I wanted to push things ahead—to get reserves established, to get water laid on, and so forth. I was not satisfied with the condition of affairs then existing, but wanted to improve matters, and now in my district we have splendid reserves—there should be twice as many—and we have the water laid on. The suburban districts will probably be represented on the local authority by persons who live in houses in the district or own houses in the district, but my objection to the proposal in this Bill is that a very different state of affairs will be brought about in the cities. Birds of passage may go into cities in large numbers, and, having their names on the electoral roll, will be able to outvote the residents who have definite interests in the district. However, I am not going to labour my arguments on this matter. I merely enter my protest against the proposed franchise. I realise that members on the other side of the Chamber are in an overwhelming majority, and will carry the measure; but I warn the Government that the effect of the measure will be inimical to the interests of a large number of people. It is going to hit the hard-working man who to-day has established a little home, with plenty of free air and land room.

Hon. R. J. CARROLL: That is all he does get free—air.

Hon. T. M. HALL: Thanks to the Workers' Dwellings Act and the late Government; but if the people I have mentioned get to work and start to tax the ratepayers, he will have to bear his share. I am speaking now against those persons who have no

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responsibility in the district. Their votes will be cast for persons who have been put up by others who have no interests in the district. It does not refer so much to city or suburban areas as it does to

[4 p.m.] country districts. From previous experience, we might expect they would even put up whisky and soda fountains on the corners, so that their friends could sit down and enjoy themselves. That would be done at the expense of the ratepayers. The men who get into power will be able to tax from those who owned a little property all their substance. When I spoke on the Bill on the last occasion, one of the members on the other side interjected that that was intended, and that nobody should own property, but that taxation should be made so heavy that property would be ultimately worthless, and so revert to the Government.

HON. W. J. RIORDAN: Can you show that statement?

HON. T. M. HALL: Yes, I can show it in "Hansard," and the hon. member is the one who made it. (Laughter.) However, that does not matter. What does matter, and what I want to impress on everybody, is that I am not afraid of the sensible man who has an interest in the district concerned and has lived in it, but of the influence of the man who has no interest there and who may create disruption and cause trouble throughout a whole district which was being conducted in a first-class manner. That is the only objection I have to the Bill.

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

COMMITTEE.

(Hon. T. Nevitt in the chair.)

Clause 1 put and passed.

Clause 2—"Amendment of section 11 (a)—Loans"—

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: He would like to know what the reference to 10 per cent. in the clause meant.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The clause provided for the repeal of the words "one-fifth" in the principal Act and the insertion of the words "ten per centum." That referred to the proportion of the ratepayers of an area who might petition for a referendum on a question relating to local government. The proportion was being reduced from 20 per cent. to 10 per cent., which was an amendment in the right direction.

Question put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 6, both inclusive, put and passed.

Clause 7—"Amendment of section 17 to 20—election of mayor, etc."—

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES asked if it was quite clear whether the mayor or chairman would be in addition to the ordinary twelve or nine or six members elected to the various local authorities. If so, it would mean, in the first case, that there would be thirteen members, and they would have a continuation of the usual spectacle of a deadlock on every question, because there might be six votes to six, and the mayor would be in the chair.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He read the clause to mean that the mayor would be additional to the other elected

aldermen. If he happened to be an alderman, a vacancy would occur and nobody else would be elected.

HON. A. H. PARNELL: It was a question whether the election of mayor by the ratepayers was a good proposition. He had had twenty-five years' experience of local authority work, having been chairman of local authorities and mayor of Rockhampton three times. There were things to be said in favour of the election of a mayor by the ratepayers, but the weight of argument would probably be against the principle. His experience was that the case was analogous to the choice of a Premier by the body over which he had, as it were, to preside. If a mayor or chairman of a council had to preside over nine or twelve aldermen or councillors it was only natural that he should be elected by those men. He remembered such a case at Rockhampton, where the wards were abolished and the whole of the aldermen were sent up for re-election. Twenty-one persons were nominated, and he topped the poll. When it came to the election of mayor, the aldermen naturally said: "Well, Mr. Parnell is at the top of the poll, and we think it is right to give him the mayorship for the third time." He thought it far better and wiser for the councils to elect their chairmen to preside over them, and far better, also, if the mayor were elected for three years, because, in many cases, it took some time for him to get into the practice of the council and the application of the rules, whilst in the second year he would be more efficient, and in the third year more efficient still.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He would call the attention of hon. members to the proposed paragraph (3) of new section [20] (1), on page 4—

"At such first election, and every subsequent triennial election, the chairman and the whole number of members shall be elected,"

and to clause 3—

"The mayor shall not be assigned to any ward. He shall be a member and an alderman by virtue of his office."

HON. A. H. PARNELL: In some cases there are no wards.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That was provided for in clause 7, which read—

"If the area is not divided, the other members shall be elected by the electors of the area. If the area is divided, the other members shall be elected for each division by the electors of such division."

That was after the chairman had been elected by the electors of the area.

HON. A. H. PARNELL: Must the candidate who offers himself for election as chairman be a separate individual, in addition to the nine or twelve aldermen, as the case may be?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Absolutely. That was the way he read it.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: It seemed to him that the clause was a little inconsistent. On page 5, it was provided that a local authority in certain cases could elect its own chairman, whereas clause 4 provided that no person should be qualified to be a candidate for the office of chairman and also for the office of an ordinary member. One part of the Bill debarred a man who was an ordinary member from even being qualified to be

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nominated for chairman, whereas the other part said that the council could, under certain circumstances, elect one of their own members to be mayor. The Government were blowing hot and cold on that principle.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: If a vacancy occurred in two years, the Council may appoint a chairman.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: If a vacancy occurred in one year, what would happen? The Government were out to get votes, but votes would not feed the people.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: It would be a very great mistake to allow the electors to elect the chairman, and more particularly would it be a mistake to elect a man who was not going to be one of the aldermen. The qualification for chairman should be some knowledge of local authority affairs, as he had very large responsibilities, though, fortunately, the expenditure that he was enabled to incur had been cut down in the Assembly. The chairman would not now be able to spend on his own initiative an unlimited amount, but he could spend his limit so many times that probably he would be able to make it up in that way. It would be a fatal mistake to allow the electors to elect a chairman, more particularly as the electors in future were probably going to include boys and girls of eighteen years of age.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Bill does not say so.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: They knew very well that the Government were anxious to bring in an amendment of the electoral law to that effect.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would call the hon. gentleman's attention to the fact that clause 7 is now under discussion, and there is no reference in that clause to the question of bringing in a Bill to give votes to those under twenty-one.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He was arguing that the electors were going to elect the chairman, and they knew the franchise that the Government had in view. When that state of affairs came about, it would be a very unwise position for the chairman of the local authorities to be elected by the electors. Probably a man who happened to be popular and who could get a majority of votes in any particular district would be foisted on the council. He might know no more about local government than the man in the moon, and he would not be able, as he should, to give a lead to the aldermen. Probably they would have a man elected as chairman, who, as well as the whole of the aldermen, was new to local authority work. That would be a deplorable state of affairs.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: Why assume that?

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: It was quite as easy to assume that as it would be to assume anything else. That would be a lamentable state of affairs, and he hoped, before the Bill was actually passed, that the Government would reconsider that clause, and allow the chairman to be one of the aldermen. That could easily be arranged, and would be more satisfactory and would give more confidence to those connected with local authority work. Clause 7 was not the most objectionable clause in the Bill, but it was one of the most objectionable.

HON. A. H. PARNELL: When the Minister was moving the second reading of the

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Bill, he said it was a Committee Bill, and he would like to ask the hon. gentleman as a favour to explain each clause as it was put.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: If any points are raised I will certainly explain them.

Question put and passed.

Clauses 9 to 13 put and passed.

Clause 14—"Amendment of section 209"—

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES asked if there was any intention on the part of the Government to limit the number of special rates that might be levied by any local authority. The limit under the present Act for general rates was 6d., but the local authorities in their stringency had had to exact certain other levies—for very good reasons in a number of cases—but that, in some cases, brought the total rate up to 8d., 9d., or 10d.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: What is your objection to this?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: He was not objecting at all, but he was suggesting that the Government might place some restriction in regard to the maximum rate. The whole community would have to bear heavy taxation in connection with the Federal Parliament, and they would have to pay increased land tax and increased income tax to the State Government, and now they were faced with taxation without any limit by local authorities. The nominal limit under the Bill was 1s., but nothing was said about the special rates which might be levied by local authorities.

HON. J. S. COLLINGS: Do you know the amount levied in the old country?

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: That is on a different basis entirely.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The clause provided that the maximum general rate should be 1s., but a local authority might levy as much as 9d. or 1s. in special rates, thus making the total rate 2s. in the £1. Would it not be a wise thing to place some limitation in the matter of special rates?

HON. J. G. SMITH: Why should we limit it?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Why should they limit the ordinary rate? Would the hon. gentleman vote against the clause, and thereby remove the limit?

HON. J. G. SMITH: A special rate has no right to be limited.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Then why limit the general rate? Why not be consistent?

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: Clause 14 amended section 209 of the principal Act and raised the limit for the general rate from 6d. to 1s. in the £1, and it had no application whatever to a special rate. But the effect of it might be that the local authorities who were at present rated up to the full limit of 6d. might go beyond 6d., and thus relieve themselves of the necessity of imposing further special rates. Of course, it was a debatable question as to whether there should be a limit in the Bill at all. If they gave the local authorities certain power, it might be a good argument to say that they should have unlimited power in the matter of taxation. What ought to be done was to pass the Land Valuation Bill, which had been before the Council on one or two previous occasions, because the absurd

valuations in many of the cities and shires were responsible for the small amount of revenue that the local authorities could receive in any one year. That Bill provided for uniform valuations, and it

[4.30 p.m.] would have given a great deal of relief to local authorities. It was agreed upon at a Premiers' conference, but Queensland was the only state where the Government made any attempt to pass it. It provided for a uniform valuation for Federal, State, and local authority purposes, as well as for borrowing, probate, and taxation. In his opinion, land had only one value. A clause like the one under discussion would not be necessary if that Bill had been passed, as the local authorities would then have had a proper value for all properties, and it would be an easy matter then to fix the rate. No city had suffered more than Maryborough from absurdly low valuations. He had the honour of being selected by the city council of Maryborough on one occasion to value all the properties in the city, and he raised the values by something like £66,000. He contested an election shortly afterwards and was returned, although his opponent attacked him on the ground that he was responsible for the increased taxation. To show how Maryborough suffered from low values, the highest value in that town was £35 per foot, whereas in a back street in Toowoomba they could get £120 per foot, and there was very little difference between the two towns. He hoped that the Land Valuation Bill would yet be passed, so that local authorities could fix their rates on the values arrived at under that measure. It would be economical, as one staff could do all the work. The clause, however, had no reference to special rates, but would only apply to the general rate.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He was glad to see that the Assembly, after consideration, fixed a limit of 1s. for the general rate, because in the original Bill there was no limit at all. He agreed with the Hon. Mr. Fowles that a rate of 1s. was ample for all purposes, and there should be some limitation inserted with respect to special rates, so that property-owners would know exactly the extent to which they were going to be hit by whatever party was in power.

HON. J. G. SMITH: Local authorities do not know what special business they will be required to do.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: The power to impose practically unlimited rates would have a most damaging effect upon property values. The passage of the Bill would reduce the value of property throughout Queensland. A limitation was necessary, because the franchise proposed by the Bill would work adversely against the interests of property-owners and against the progress of Queensland generally. An adult franchise for local government would have a very sinister effect even with the limitation of 1s. to the general rate, because it would be within the power of a local authority to impose special rates to any amount. The alteration of the franchise was opposed by every local authority in Queensland. He had received a bundle of telegrams from about 150 local authorities, who were universally against the proposed franchise.

HON. J. S. COLLINGS: And just as universally against the Government.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He did not wonder at anyone being against the Govern-

ment, in view of their extravagance and their repudiatory legislation. This was only a part of the scheme of the party opposite to get hold of everything. They had now got hold of both Houses of Parliament; they controlled legislation; by and by they would control the judiciary—they had intimated that it was their intention to do so.

HON. J. G. SMITH: You controlled this Chamber long enough.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: The control of the Council by the Liberal party was most reasonable. Their legislation was always in the interests of the whole of the people of Queensland, and not in the interests of one class alone.

HON. J. G. SMITH: Not according to the votes of the people.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: According to the last vote of the people the Government had no right to be in power.

HON. J. G. SMITH: They were returned the first and second times by an absolute majority.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: They were in a minority of 20,000 at the present time.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The question the hon. gentleman is now discussing has no bearing upon the clause before the Committee, and I would ask him to confine himself to the clause.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He was trying to prove that, with practically unlimited powers of rating, under the proposed franchise men and women with absolutely no interest in a district would be able to impose all sorts of rates upon property-owners, and could make the owning of property so burdensome that the owners would be only too glad to get rid of it. Of course, that was what the present Government were trying to bring about. Under those circumstances, he thought there should be some limit to special rates as well as to the general rate.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We are not interfering with property by this Bill.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: The Government and their supporters were trying to get control of the local authorities.

HON. E. B. PURNELL: It is the will of the people.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: It was not the will of the people. The Government had no mandate at all. If they got any mandate at the recent elections, it was a mandate to get out of office. There was a majority of 20,000 voters against the Labour party.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: What has that to do with clause 14?

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: It had a great deal to do with clause 14. It was a reason why there should be a limit to the amount of special rates as well as to the general rate. He was glad to see that the general rate was limited to 1s., but the rates could be increased by imposing special rates.

HON. J. G. SMITH: But you cannot limit the special rates.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: They could limit anything.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: In your council you keep down the value of property so that owners will not have to pay a land tax.

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HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Not at all; there were high valuations and high rates in his district. He repeated that there ought to be a limit to special rates in view of the unlimited franchise that was provided for in the Bill.

HON. A. H. PARNELL: If a general rate of 1s. was levied in Brisbane, it would double the rates, and properties that were now only paying 3 per cent. on the capital value would return nothing to the landlord. The effect would be still worse in the country. In country shires the capital value was fixed at twenty times the annual rent, and, if the rates were increased to 1s., the rent of all the Western lands would be doubled. The Minister had advocated a system of uniform values. His experience was that it was the town values that were always pushed up and not the outside values. On one occasion he bought an allotment from the Government for £250, paying a deposit after one month and the balance in three months. A few months ago he was very glad to sell that allotment for £1. It was just the same in Brisbane to-day. People who had paid £5,000 or £10,000 for properties had no earthly chance of getting their money back. Only twelve months ago cattle were selling at £10 and £12 a head, but in a coastal town three weeks ago milch cows and calves were sold for £2 a head, and the same depreciation in value was going on with regard to land. There were local authorities which had five or six special rates of 1d. or 2d. each in addition to the general rate. He was glad to think that the Assembly had limited the general rate to 1s., because he maintained that the Government should keep a firm hold over every local authority and especially over their borrowing powers. When local authorities were able to borrow money outside the Government, it would be a bad day for Queensland and for the Government.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: He did not know whether the Government had considered what would be the effect of this clause upon a large number of their own supporters. The clause would allow local authorities to hit up the man who did not happen to own his own house but had to pay rent, because, undoubtedly, with the imposition of high rates there would certainly be an increase in the rents. There was nothing more vicious than allowing a man to spend another man's money, and the result of that proceeding in the present instance would inevitably be that rents would go up.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: Why do you assume that a local authority will increase the rates beyond the amount which is required?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: He did not suppose that men who had an interest in a district, or were resident in a district, would do anything of the kind; but the average man who was simply an elector and not a resident would always be ready to raise money simply for the purpose of spending it. The clause was merely a dodge for pushing the unemployed on to the local authority, and relieving the Government of their responsibility.

HON. J. G. SMITH: Have you no sympathy with the unemployed?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: There was no reason why there should be a single unem-

ployed man in Queensland to-day if he wished to work, and the fact that after five years of administration by a Labour Government there were so many unemployed men in the State was a disgrace. The clause under discussion, if passed, would mean inflicting greater burdens on ordinary working people and increasing their rents.

HON. A. H. PARNELL: The Minister had by interjection stated that it was not likely that the local authorities would increase the rates. He was afraid that local authorities were likely to increase the rates under such a provision as that now under consideration. At one time he was a member of a local authority which had an overdraft of £11,000 and had rates outstanding to the amount of £8,000. Those rates had been outstanding for some considerable time. Why were they not collected? The reason was that when a mayor was asked to sign 300 or 400 warrants for the recovery of rates he objected to doing so, saying that it was not his business to act as a "bumbailiff" to collect rates. There were 172 local authorities in Queensland, and some of the members of the local authority councils had given valuable services to the State for twenty or thirty years. He had served as a local authority member with pastoralists, storekeepers, business men, and Labour men, and he could say that all those men had done their duty; but he had not heard a single word of commendation of them for the services they had performed, either in the Assembly or in that Chamber. In many cases the members of local authorities had to ride many miles in order to attend the meetings of the local authorities. He remembered that he, as a member of a local authority, had to ride 70 miles to attend the meetings. Besides having to ride long distances to attend the regular meetings of the local authorities, members often gave up Saturday and Monday, and, perhaps, all day Sunday, for the purpose of inspecting works, and yet their services to the country had not been recognised by members in either House of Parliament.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: He would urge upon the Minister the necessity of making the limitation with respect to general rates apply to all rates, so that a local authority should not be allowed to levy rates, general and special included, to a greater amount than 1s. in the £1. Surely 1s. in the £1 ought to be sufficient, and more than sufficient, for the purposes of any local authority. He felt certain that the Minister had an honest desire to make the Bill workable and not do serious injury to anybody, and, that being so, the hon. gentleman might agree to an amendment to subsection (4) of section 209 of the principal Act providing that all rates, including general and special rates, made in any one year should not exceed the amount of 1s. in the £1. The Government and their party were dependent in a large measure upon a number of small landowners who owned nothing more than their own homes so far as land was concerned, and probably those homes were built on 16-perch allotments. He felt sure that the Government would regret the effect which this clause would have upon those people. If the Government were so callous and were so driven by their supporters that they would not listen to reasonable representations on this matter from that side of the Chamber, then they would have serious cause for

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regret. Did the Minister not regret the Government having brought upon the State the detestation of all honest men in London and elsewhere in connection with financial matters?

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not regret having passed the Land Act authorising the Land Court to fix the rents of pastoral holdings.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Did not the hon. gentleman regret the imputations which had been cast upon Queensland because of the action of the present Government in that matter and in other matters?

THE CHAIRMAN: Order! This discussion has no bearing whatever on the clause before the Committee.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: He accepted the Chairman's ruling, but at the same time he claimed that he should be allowed to reply to interjections.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order! Interjections are at all times disorderly, and it is equally disorderly to reply to them.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: If he was stopped from replying to interjections, then the interjections also should be stopped. He regretted to have to make these remarks, but at the same time he could not allow an interjection to be made in his speech without replying to it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order! Interjections are at all times disorderly.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: The Government should endeavour to do their business without creating enemies, or doing acts which brought hostile criticism from honest men, as the amendment of the law that they were now discussing would certainly do. The Bill would place in the hands of irresponsible persons the power to tax other people's land to an unlimited extent—limited only to 1s. in the £1 in respect of ordinary rates, but unlimited as to the amount of special rates—and that would be a dangerous power to place in the hands of irresponsible persons.

He had a very vivid recollection [5 p.m.] of the same questions arising some years ago when the late Mr. Hamilton was occupying the Minister's position, and he well remembered his comments—not in "Hansard," but to those of them to whom he could speak freely and not for publication. He admitted that he would not advocate the principles in the Bill.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: Did he not introduce it?

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: He automatically performed his duty, as the hon. member was doing now. He thought that the Hon. Mr. Hamilton's and the Minister's opinions were identical, and that, if the Minister had his way, they would not have the Bill before the Council.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: You did not hear my second reading speech.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Even if he had, he would hold the same opinion. He paid him the high tribute that he would carry through whatever he conceived to be his duty.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: You are wrong. I think the clause is just.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: He was sorry to hear the hon. gentleman class himself as an

extremist, because he did not think he was an extremist. He did not think any fair and reasonably minded man would bring the principle forward unless he was pushed on by others less broadminded, but who, by reason of their position, were able to compel even Ministers of the Crown to do and say things that they would not do or say if they were not coerced. The Minister would agree that the principle of limitation was a good one—it was already law in the principal Act—and, that being so, the hon. gentleman must agree with his further contention that there should be a limitation of special rates as well as of general rates. The Act of New Zealand, which was generally looked upon by hon. members as a good democratic model to follow, provided—

"The total amount of all such separate rates made in any one year within the whole borough or within any ward or defined portion thereof shall not exceed three farthings in the £1 on the total capital value, or one shilling in the £1 on the total annual value of the ratable property."

So that in New Zealand they limited the special rates and the ordinary rates. The Government had admitted the principle of limitation with respect to general rates, and they must accept it in regard to special rates, or they immediately left the door open to what they wished to prevent. It was like having two gates to a paddock, one open and the other shut and then putting cattle in.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: It is the principle of the old Act.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: That Act had been administered by the men who found the money; the new Act would be administered by men who would not find the money, and it was necessary to insert safeguards to prevent the taxpayers from being victimised. It was a good old British principle that he who paid the piper called the tune.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: How many people pay a wheel tax and have no vote?

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: That did not deal with rights to land; it was beside the question altogether. The payment of a wheel tax was not the payment of a tax in the ordinary sense. It was the payment of a license for certain privileges—a payment towards the upkeep of roads which the payer used.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: A payment for services rendered.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Purely. The owner of the vehicle paid a contribution to the local authority for damage to its roads.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: But he has no vote for the representatives who have the power of imposing that tax.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: It was not a tax; it was a license—a payment for services rendered or for repairs to the road he injured. Take the case of a man who hauled heavy timber across country roads recently metalled by the local authority with a thin coating of porphyry or shale. After a heavy shower his wagon would sink down beneath the covering and cut it up in such a way that, if he paid wheel tax for ten years, he would not liquidate the damage. And yet

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the Minister said it was a tax. The good old principle that he who paid should call the tune was particularly applicable to the Bill, and the hon. member would know, if he looked back to history in which he was deeply interested at one time, that England lost the United States of America simply because she sought to impose a tax without representation. Would the hon. member tell him that he would hold the allegiance of the small property-owners when they found that they who paid the rates had no voice in how their money was spent? Would not such a principle recoil on the heads of the Government and their supporters? Why have a limitation in one case and not in another? Why leave one horn muffled and the other bare? Why leave one gate open and the other shut? If the Minister would consider the principle of the limitation of special rates, he would readily draft an amendment which would be acceptable to him, but there was no use in framing one if the hon. gentleman would not accept the principle.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He would not have risen had it not been for the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Parnell, who stated that he (Mr. Jones) had said that there was no likelihood, if the clause remained in the Bill, of the rate being raised to 1s. He did not say that. What he said was that the Council had no right to assume that any local authority would increase the rates because of that limitation. No local body was likely to tax the people beyond what they considered was necessary to carry on their undertakings. He was sure that no Government would impose a tax for the fun of doing it, and he really thought hon. gentlemen saw something in the clause that was not really there. He disagreed with Hon. Mr. O'Shea, because the principle the hon. gentleman referred to was already in the Local Authorities Act, which the present Government did not pass. In the present Act there was a limit in connection with the general rates, but no limit in regard to special rates. When the Bill was introduced in the Assembly by the Home Secretary, there was no limitation whatever, and it contained exactly what the hon. gentleman now suggested—that the local authorities should have the same power regarding general rates as they had in regard to special rates; but the Opposition in the Assembly had an amendment inserted fixing the limit of the general rate at 1s. It was no use, therefore, accepting an amendment, and sending the Bill back to the Assembly, when a majority of the Assembly had accepted an amendment which was really opposed to the views expressed by the Hon. Mr. O'Shea.

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: You are wrong; I want to limit both.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He was quite sure that the local authorities representatives elected under a broader franchise would be just as responsible as those elected under the present Act.

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: Although they pay nothing towards the fund!

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If his memory served him correctly, under the present Act a person could be a candidate for election to a local authority although he had not paid his rates for years.

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Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He would not be on the roll if his rates were not paid.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He could not possibly accept the suggested amendment, because the clause as it stood was really the result of a compromise between the Government and the Opposition.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: A good deal had been made of the fact that there was a limitation in connection with the general rate in the present Act, and no limitation in regard to special rates; but he would point out that the present Act was drawn on an entirely different franchise. The general body of the public had no reason to expect that the men who were going to pay the rates were going to be so irresponsible as to impose an unduly high rate. That was why no limit was put in the Act, but now the representatives were to be elected on quite a different franchise. When they got men in power who could borrow money, impose rates, and leave the other man to pay, they did not know what they would do. Conditions at present were quite different to what they were under the old Act. It was the unfortunate man who had the land who would have to pay. It was ridiculous to think that a body of men who had no responsibility and who could get all sorts of works done in a shire were not going to be any more unreasonable than the men who had to find the money.

Hon. A. H. PARNELL: He would point out that New Zealand had a somewhat similar Act in force, and as soon as that Act came into force the loans to local bodies in New Zealand increased to £30,000,000. It had been pointed out time after time that men who carried no responsibility at all should not be allowed to borrow money to carry out improvements that were not required at the present time, and then leave the property-owners to find the money.

Clause 14 put and passed.

Clause 15—"Amendment of s. 210"—

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: He would like to see the word "may," on line 55, altered to "shall," otherwise it was nothing but a mirage and a hollow sham for the farmers. The clause read—

"Provided that in cities and towns any local authority may make and levy a general rate less in amount, in respect of farm land."

What was the good of that unless they made it "shall"?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It gives them the power.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: What was the good of the power unless it was made obligatory on their part to exercise it? There was nothing making it obligatory for the local authority to make a less rate for farm lands when the farmer was cultivating half his area, which was all he could cultivate—because every child in the family was working day and night in order to cultivate the land to give cheap food to the hangers-on in the city. If the Government said the local authority must remit a portion up to half the rates on the farm land that the man could not cultivate, then they would be doing something for the farmer.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He did not agree with the Hon. Mr. Fowles, as the clause placed the responsibility on the local authority.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: It merely gives them the option.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It placed the responsibility on the local authority, and that was the right thing to do. Local authorities were the best judges as to whether they should exercise the right under that clause or not. If they made it mandatory they would have a conflict between the Government and the local authorities, as the local authorities would do nothing until compelled to do so by the Government.

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: If the suggested amendment were accepted, the Bill would compel the local authorities to be equitable to the man who cultivated half his land.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The responsibility was placed on the local authority, and they were the governing body who should know whether they should exercise the power or not. The clause was all right as drafted.

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: He would illustrate a case which would indicate to the Minister at once the fallacy of his contention. He would assume that there was a local authority which comprised a town and a section of arable country which was farmed. He would assume that it was divided into

[5.30 p.m.] three wards, two of which comprised a town or residential quarters, and the third included farming land which was occupied by farmers who cultivated at least half their holdings. Assuming that each ward had four representatives on the local authority, was it likely that the eight men representing the residential quarters would relieve the farmers in the other ward of any imposition they could place upon them?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Yes.

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: Then they would be more altruistic than the usual Labour man.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We do more for the farmers than your side.

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: They had heard that kind of talk too long. The farmers were the best judges, and they had plainly said that they did not think so. If the option were left in the hands of local authorities, it was not likely that they would do justice to the farmers. At the present juncture the Government should do everything possible to encourage production; but in the Bill they were proposing to relieve themselves of the responsibility and thrust it upon the local authorities in order that they might still carry on the camouflage that they were the friends of the farmers. Hon. members who were now criticising the clause desired that it should be made obligatory for the local authorities to deal fairly with the farmers.

Hon. G. PAGE-HANIFY: The clause only applies to farmers "in cities and towns." How many farmers are there in cities and towns?

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: There were many boroughs or shires containing large farming areas.

Hon. G. PAGE-HANIFY: But the clause only refers to farm lands "in cities and towns."

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: The hon. member seemed to think that the provision was simply nonsense, because there were no farms in cities; but there were many farms in shire council areas.

Hon. J. S. HANLON: There are many farmers around Roma Street. Those are the ones you want to protect.

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: He had no interest in Roma Street.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: They are the men who farm the farmers.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Have you no interest in your friend Mr. Barnes?

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: He had nothing to do with Mr. Barnes. He was speaking solely as a member of that Committee.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Do you repudiate your friend Barnes?

Hon. T. M. HALL: This is a larrikin establishment now.

Hon. J. G. SMITH: He objected to the remark the Hon. Mr. Hall had just made, and asked that he should be made to withdraw it.

The CHAIRMAN: I would ask the Hon. Mr. Hall to withdraw the remark, as objection has been taken to it.

Hon. T. M. HALL: In deference to the Chair, he would withdraw the remark; but it was very objectionable to have to sit and listen to that kind of talk.

The CHAIRMAN: It is impossible for any Chairman to maintain order unless he receives the assistance of hon. members. (Hear, hear!) There have been a great many interjections this afternoon which, to say the least, have been very disorderly; and I would remind hon. members that, when an interjection is made, it is only fair that the person against whom the interjection is directed should have the right of replying to it. I would ask hon. members in future to refrain from interjecting so frequently, and, if an interjection is made, let it be relevant. I trust that I shall receive the assistance of hon. members in conducting the business of the Committee as it should be conducted. (Hear, hear!)

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: He thanked the Chairman sincerely for the protection he afforded him and for his desire to interfere with flippant larrikinism wherever it arose.

Hon. J. G. SMITH: You are not in the police court now.

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: He could take care of himself wherever he was. The suggestion made by the Hon. Mr. Fowles was a good one. The onus should be on the local authority to treat the man who was cultivating at least half his holding on better terms than the ordinary taxpayer whose land was unoccupied or was held for speculative purpose or for any other purpose than that of production.

Hon. J. S. COLLINGS: This clause puts the onus right on the local authority.

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: The hon. member evidently did not know the definition of the word "onus." There was no onus; there was an option; and there was a great difference between an onus and an option. The clause gave a local authority a permissive power of differentiation.

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THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is a responsibility.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: It was not a responsibility. It was something they could evade, and anything that could be evaded was not a responsibility. It was the duty of the Committee to insist that every local authority should give the producing farmer better terms than the man who was letting his land lie idle.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: If you look at section 147 of the principal Act, you will see that it gives local authorities optional powers with regard to providing weighing machines and other things.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: It gave local authorities power to spend money in providing weighing machines for certain purposes, but it did not compel them to do so. The clause should compel local authorities to treat more leniently the man who was cultivating half his holding, and, if the Government did not do so, then the responsibility was on the Government.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: Previous Governments did nothing for the man on the land, and now, when we propose to do something, you are objecting.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: It was no answer to say that previous Governments had not done anything.

HON. J. G. SMITH: Why did not your Government do it?

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: The matter had never been before them previously. It was before them now, and anyone who was not blind must see the utility of the suggestion made by the Hon. Mr. Fowles. He had illustrated his argument by taking the case of a local authority with three wards, one of which comprised farming lands, which might be penalised for all time and not given the benefit that the Government said should be granted to them.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: There are no cities or towns of that kind in Queensland.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: He was prepared to say that in every town between Brisbane and Rockhampton, beginning at North Pine, the local authorities had some ratepayers who were farmers cultivating one-half of their holding.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: Isn't North Pine a shire?

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Yes, but it was a local authority.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: But the clause refers only to cities and towns.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: It could be declared a town to-morrow, and so could all the other little centres along the railway line. There were shire councils which had large residential areas and which also contained lands that were cultivated. He would suggest to the Minister the advisability of not leaving to aldermen the option of saying whether they would or would not give the owners of cultivated land better terms than ordinary ratepayers. If the hon. gentleman would not accept the suggestion, then the responsibility rested on him and his colleagues, and not on the local authorities.

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HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Was the Minister going to ignore absolutely the request of the Hon. Mr. Fowles? The Government claimed to be the friends of the farmers, and an opportunity was now given them to assist the farmers by saying that where a man was using his land and cultivating it the rate thereon should be restricted to 2d. in the £1. The suggestion was that the clause making it optional for local authorities to exercise their discretion in that direction should be made compulsory, and yet the Minister would not accept the responsibility of amending the clause to make it compulsory as hon. members proposed.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: He did not in any way ignore the suggestion of the Hon. Mr. Fowles, but had replied to the hon. member's argument and told him that he could not accept the suggested amendment. Hon. members could not accuse him of having no sympathy with the farmers, as he had done more than any Minister to assist them in certain directions, especially in their efforts to destroy prickly-pears; and yet he got no thanks for the action he had taken. Personally, he thought the local authority was in the best position to deal with the matter of rating lands used for agricultural purposes, and the clause proposed that the discretion in that matter should be left with the local authority.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 16—"Amendment of section 226"—put and passed.

Clause 17—"Amendment of section 277"—

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: This clause dealt with the question of loans, and provided that, if a local authority borrowed a sum of money for any particular work and the Minister was satisfied that the amount borrowed was inadequate to complete the work, he could force the local authority to borrow an additional sum. That practically meant that the Government could inflict a loan on a local authority whether the electors wanted it or not. Under the present Act the ratepayers had a right to object to a loan, and to express their objection by means of a ballot. But the clause under discussion gave the Government power to compel a local authority to raise a loan whether the people wanted it or not. If a local authority borrowed £5,000 for a certain work, and the Minister was not satisfied that the money was sufficient to complete the work, he might compel the local authority to borrow an additional £10,000 for that purpose. That was most inequitable. The electors would be irresponsible as they would have no taxes to pay, and they might borrow money for specified purposes and then relieve themselves of all responsibility for repaying that money by leaving the district.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The clause contained a dangerous provision, as it gave unlimited power to the Minister in charge of the administration of the Local Authorities Act. Surely, it was a democratic principle that the electors should be allowed to say whether they wanted to borrow money or not. No matter who the electors might be, it was a democratic principle that they should be allowed to vote on the question of obtaining a loan; but the clause said that

if the electors had voted for a loan of £5,000 for a particular purpose, the Minister might, at his own sweet will—supposing the money was not expended discreetly—force the local authority to obtain an additional loan of, say, £10,000. In fact, the Minister could force the local authorities to borrow money in order to provide work for the unemployed.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY: No! Read the clause.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: The clause gave the Governor in Council power to compel local authorities to take a loan whether they liked it or not. In New Zealand—a democratic country which was always quoted by democrats on the other side as a good example, as a land of freedom and brotherhood and universal suffrage and everything else that was good—they did not consider that the residential qualification was sufficient to enable a man to vote upon a loan. Did the Minister not think that a reasonable proposition? Did he not think the Government ought to be willing to allow the persons most concerned to have self-government?

Question put and passed.

Clauses 18 to 21, both inclusive, put and passed.

Clause 22—"Consequential amendments"—

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He thought this was an opportunity for discussing the universal franchise. They had in the clause a definition of "elector," who was practically now going to become the ruler of local authorities and would be able to impose any expenditure he chose on the ratepayers—who, up to the present, had been the men to be consulted on all points. It had always been said that there should be no taxation without representation, and no representation without taxation; but they were going to give every man who had the right to call himself an elector the right to say what should be done in the raising of rates and the spending of money, and what a local authority should borrow.

HON. R. SUMNER: Who does it now?

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: The ratepayers—the men who owned the property—the men who had to pay and were responsible for the liabilities of every kind.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: Did you not belong to a Government which granted the universal franchise, and who, when the Opposition in the Assembly used the same arguments that you are using now, made use of the arguments we are using now?

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: There was no comparison between the two things. Every local authority that was going to be run by this franchise would probably go the same way as the Government—their credit gone, their ability to raise money and their ability to pay interest gone. That was what he looked forward to in the future. In New Zealand, as he had already said, the residential qualification was not sufficient for voting on a loan, and that was the principal objection the people of Queensland had to the universal franchise in local authority matters. There were about 162 local authorities in Queensland, and 150 had wired to the Local Authorities' Association saying that they did not want the universal franchise.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Naturally.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: They knew the peril it involved. They represented the people who had a stake in the country and who had to pay these debts, and they said unhesitatingly that they did not want the universal franchise.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: You might say whom those wires were addressed to.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: They were addressed to the secretary of the Local Authorities Association—a combination of the whole of the local authorities throughout Queensland.

HON. L. McDONALD: On which the working classes have no representation.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: The working classes were better off than if they had representation. They got their work done without any responsibility for paying for it. He said unhesitatingly that local authorities were out to work for all classes. Every man in every area was just as much entitled to have a road past his door or repairs done as the man who paid rates; but so long as they did not pay for it they should not have the right of saying how much should be spent or how it should be spent. A meeting held at the Brisbane City Council Chambers the previous afternoon passed this resolution—

"1. That this meeting of citizens, comprising property-owners and ratepayers, after discussing the Local Authorities Acts Amendment Bill now before Parliament, and realising the drastic provisions embodied therein, enter an emphatic protest against it being placed on the statute-book, for the following reasons:—

(a) That the Government has no mandate from the electors, inasmuch as their supporters (as evidenced by the recent general election) represent 20,000 less than those who recorded their votes against them and their policy;

(b) That the Bill contains clauses which are unfair and unjust to owners of property, and aim at destroying the age-old and wise British principle that there shall be no representation without taxation; and

(c) That it will tend to leave property-owners (who by this evidence of thrift have made themselves better and more loyal citizens) and their land at the mercy of irresponsible electors, without responsibility as ratepayers."

Then he had this resolution from the Stephens Shire Council—

"I am directed by the chairman of this council to inform you that the following resolution was passed at a public meeting held in this shire on the 15th instant:—

That this meeting of representatives of Stephens Shire enters an emphatic protest against the proposal of the Government as embodied in the Local Authorities Act Amendment Bill in certain particulars.

That the introduction of adult franchise as applied to municipal government is inequitable and opposed to the well-recognised principle of no representation without taxation; that the

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alteration with regard to the qualification of candidates will have a tendency to debar persons of experience from becoming members of the local authorities; that the elimination of the maximum rate to be struck is likely to be dangerous, and lead to extravagance; and that the election of mayor by irresponsible electors is an experiment which is not advisable at the present juncture, and presents an element of grave danger to property-owners."

Hon. W. J. RIORDAN: Who signed that?

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: The shire clerk. The Mackay Harbour Board—not exactly a local authority on the same lines, but still a body regarded as a local authority so far as borrowing money and so on was concerned—wrote—

"I have to advise you that the following motion was carried at yesterday's meeting of the board:—

That the Mackay Harbour Board protests against the clauses in the Local Authorities Amendment Act that provide for adult franchise on the basis of the electoral rolls.

"I am to ask you to bring the protest under the notice of the Minister, and take the usual action in the matter."

Those were a few of the opinions of local authorities who were going to be affected. Those were bodies of men who for years had been working—

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: In their own interests.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He said most emphatically that they had not been working in their own interests; they had worked in the interests of the [7.30 p.m.] general public. Hon. gentlemen could not say that the local authorities throughout Queensland had not done good work.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: And some very bad work, too.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He was a very poor man who did not make a mistake sometimes. The local authorities, as at present constituted, were doing their best for the ratepayers, and what more were others likely to do? The present members of local authorities represented the men who had to pay for all improvements, and it was only a fair thing, if a town was going to get improvements, that those who had to provide the money should say how that money was to be spent. He knew it was one of the planks of the platform of the Labour party that they should get control of municipal bodies, but he did not think that would be a good thing. He believed in the adult franchise so far as parliamentary elections were concerned, but it would be a mistake in connection with local authorities. There was another aspect that had to be considered, and that was the question of the Government assisting the local authorities, either by paying rates on Government properties or by giving a subsidy.

Hon. G. PAGE-HANIFY: He rose to a point of order. Was the hon. gentleman in order in making a second reading speech on that clause.

[Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn.]

The CHAIRMAN: This clause is a very wide one, and is practically the Bill; and, while I do not think the hon. member would be right in making a second reading speech, the clause enables the hon. member, if he feels so disposed, to cover a big range of subjects.

Hon. T. J. O'SHEA: Are fourteen hon. gentlemen on the other side justified in keeping up a continual fire of interjections from the time the Hon. Mr. Hawthorn commenced his address until the present moment?

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He was getting used to interruptions. If the Government wanted a Bill of that nature, why did they not put it before the people by way of referendum? If they did that, they would be defeated by as big a vote as they were on the question of the abolition of the Legislative Council. Why did the Government not consider those people who, through luck or thrift, had been able to get a bit of land of their own? They were going to be penalised, as they would have to pay the piper while somebody else spent the money.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: They are the men who will sit on the councils.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He hoped they would sit on the councils, because, if they got an occupier on those councils, he would take pretty good care that the money was not squandered. The definition of "elector" in future would include the "flapper" vote, as they called it; that was girls and boys of eighteen years of age.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: What possibility had they of knowing how the money should be spent? They knew that one of the planks of the platform of the Labour party—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I called the hon. gentleman to order previously for dealing with that question. That question is not now before the Committee, and the hon. member must deal with the clause, and not with any proposed alteration of the electoral franchise.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He was sorry he was not allowed to enlarge on that point, as he looked upon it as a very distinct menace. He knew it was no good persevering with his objections to the Bill, but it was just as well to point out what the feeling of the local authorities, who represented the bulk of the owners of property throughout Queensland, was in regard to the menace under that Bill. All the other alterations were subsidiary to that one.

Hon. J. F. DONOVAN: Whom do they represent?

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: They represented people who had some responsibility, and, if he were talking to men with responsibility, he might have some hope of inducing the Minister to alter the Bill. Hon. gentlemen opposite professed to represent one class only.

Hon. J. F. DONOVAN: We represent the people.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: They represented a minority of the people. When they saw an electorate like Bulimba, with 12,000 voters, and an electorate like

Chillagoe, with 2,000 voters, was that a fair deal?

HON. L. McDONALD: He rose to a point of order. Was the hon. gentleman in order in discussing the question of a redistribution of seats?

THE CHAIRMAN: I would call attention to the fact that when an hon. gentleman has the floor he is entitled to be heard. At the same time the hon. gentleman is asking for interjections. If the hon. gentleman would address the Chair instead of addressing hon. gentlemen on the other side, he would get along a great deal better.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: How could he address the Chair when there were fifteen or twenty members addressing him? The Government, at any rate, should subsidise the local authorities in some way. In New Zealand the local authorities received a subsidy of a quarter of a million every year, but in Queensland they got practically nothing. The State enterprises should pay rates the same as private individuals. They entered into competition with private enterprise, and they should accept all the responsibilities and liabilities of private enterprise. The bulk of the property owned by the State did not pay any rates. What did the local authorities get from the State stations? A small amount compared to what they got when the properties were owned by private persons. At that time they paid a tremendous amount in rates and in income tax, but now they were paying nothing—not even dividends.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: All our State enterprises contribute a sum equal to the amount that the private owners were paying in rates. Chillagoe and Irvinebank have been paying rates since they were opened.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: That was only one instance. According to what the Minister told them, they could well afford to contribute. The Minister told them that Chillagoe was making a large amount of money, but now that copper was coming down it was a very different proposition.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: You will gloat over that.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He was very sorry to see copper coming down, and he hoped the Government would make money out of Chillagoe. Anything that would assist the mining industry would be a very good thing for the State. He hoped the Minister would consider the question from a reasonable point of view.

HON. R. SUMNER: Speaking with an experience of local authority work extending over twelve or fourteen years, he believed in the extension of the parliamentary franchise to the local authorities. He did not think the alarmist ideas of the Taxpayers' Association would be justified by results. It would have a very beneficial effect upon the community if every adult had a voice in local government affairs. The contention of hon. members opposite was that only property-owners should be allowed to vote in local government matters, but that was wrong, even on the basis of taxation, because every man in the community was just as much a citizen as a property-owner. A man might own half of Queen street, but he was no more a citizen than a lodger in a boarding-house. The great value of the extended

franchise was that it would evoke a general interest in the civic life of the community. The Hon. Mr. Hawthorn had some experience in Ithaca, but could anything worse be found on God's earth than the position in Ithaca to-day? Where could they find anything worse than the state of affairs in the city of Brisbane, where one alderman had to canvas for the support of other aldermen in connection with anything he wanted done? At the present time there was not a decent road in Queensland outside the cities, because a few property-owners objected to paying the rates with which to make good roads.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: When you were a member of a local authority didn't you get a good road? (Laughter.)

HON. R. SUMNER: He remembered driving through the Balmoral Shire with a friend some years ago, and meeting a resident of the shire who had resigned from the shire council shortly before. His friend asked the ex-member of the board why he had resigned after twelve months when he had been elected for three years, and the answer was, "I will tell you the honest truth. I have fried my fish. I have got a good road to my door, and I wanted to give someone else a chance to fry his fish." (Laughter.) He could also quote the case of a doctor who lived at Zillmere some years ago, and who, when addressing a meeting there said, "I travel round this district, and whenever I find a good road I find that there is either a member of a shire council or some relative of a member of the shire council living there." Evidently, that was the position throughout Queensland. He had advocated the universal franchise ever since he had anything to do with local authorities. He had property and he had a family, and he was not afraid of the universal franchise. If the Bill were passed they would have much better councils. They were setting an example to Australia in passing the Bill, which would have a greater effect than even the Ministry anticipated. It would have a most beneficial effect on the community if they could arouse a general interest in the civic life of the community. He thought it was only right to say that credit was due to members of local authorities for having devoted so much leisure time to the work, and he hoped that that could be said of members in the future. Certainly, he did not believe for a moment that the fears of property-owners about excessive taxation would be realised. The Hon. Mr. Hawthorn was afraid of the Bolsheviks getting control and that they would borrow thousands of pounds in Ithaca for some wild-cat scheme.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I am not afraid of the Bolsheviks, but of those who have no responsibility for finding the money.

HON. R. SUMNER: The Government would still have control with respect to loan expenditure.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: No; the rate-payers will have control under this Bill.

HON. R. SUMNER: If the local authorities had to raise money by the issue of debentures, people would not lend them money unless common sense was being exercised by the members of the local authorities. Why was there all this objection to the extension of the franchise?

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Because it will stop progress.

Hon. R. Sumner.]

HON. R. SUMNER: It would not stop progress. It was one of the best Bills the Government had ever introduced. In the past, local authorities had the opportunity to make good roads, but property-owners kept down the rates to 4d. in the £1, with the result that the roads were left unimproved, and yet the people who were responsible for that state of affairs objected to the men and women who were living in the locality voting with a view to bringing about a better state of affairs.

HON. I. PEREL: The Hon. Mr. Hawthorn had dilated upon what might happen under the new franchise. Personally, he believed it would have a good effect, as everyone living in an area would share in the responsibility of improving local conditions. In spite of the arguments of hon. members opposite, he contended that a boarder was a ratepayer, and yet it was urged by hon. members on the other side that he was an irresponsible individual. But, if he went from one locality to another, he was still a citizen, and was as much interested in the civic welfare of the community as a property-owner. He (Mr. Perel) was a property-owner, but he also had a family, and he cared more for his family than he did for his house. The local authorities were supposed to administer the Health Act, but they had proved anything but a success in their control of the public health.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: The Government were very glad to push the responsibility of dealing with the influenza epidemic on to the local authorities last year, and the local authorities combated it at once.

HON. I. PEREL: He was very sorry indeed that the Government had handed the control of health matters over to local authorities. He had suffered by reason of that control. A child of his, two years old, contracted diphtheria, and was taken to a private hospital. The health officer came along four days after the epidemic broke out in the house; the premises were fumigated; the doctor came along later and took half a dozen swabs from the other children, and three of them were sent off to Wattlebrae by the local authorities.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: It was not the local authority that sent them there. It was the Health Department.
[8 p.m.]

HON. I. PEREL: He was told it was the local authority. Because it was alleged that those children were carriers—and it was a moot question amongst medical men whether they were carriers—those children were practically kidnapped from home and were sent to Wattlebrae. That was the kind of thing that happened under local authoritydom. The children were taken away to Wattlebrae. Two examinations were held in connection with them, another examination after the forty-eight hours, then another after a further forty-eight hours, when a negative was obtained. Then another examination was made after a further forty-eight hours, and a positive was obtained. Those children were immured at Wattlebrae for some time, and then he got a bill for £18. He was told that that bill came from the local authorities. If it was necessary that children should be taken to the hospital because they were a menace to the community, then the treatment of those children should be made as cheap as possible; but, if people could

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afford to pay, they were supposed to pay. Was he to send the money to the Government or to the local authority?

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Whom does the bill come from?

HON. I. PEREL: From the Home Secretary's Department.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Then, it is from the Government.

HON. I. PEREL: In any case, it seemed to him that the local authority was not handling the health business very well. They did not send a man to fumigate his house until four days after the first case occurred. With regard to the objection of hon. members opposite to the adult franchise because they feared that it would bring terror with it, he did not think they need feel at all alarmed in that connection. If adult franchise brought something new—something different from what they had in the past—it must be something better. If the legislation of the City Council was the kind of legislation they might expect from local authority government, then the sooner they got rid of it the better. He had just returned from Victoria, and he found that they had beautiful roads there. The road from Melbourne to Geelong was as good as Queen street, but they could not say that about the roads in Queensland. With regard to the fear hon. gentlemen entertained as to an irresponsible body of electors outweighing the vote of property-owners, he did not think there was any justification for such a fear. He believed that under the proposed system of election they would get different mayors to what they were getting at the present time, and he did not think the adult franchise would bring any terror to the people, or that they need have any fear of danger arising from its introduction.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: He was not going to follow the lead set by some hon. members on his left of sneering at men who had devoted possibly a lifetime to local authority work. From what had been said by those hon. members, one would think that members of local authorities were the worst mortals alive, whereas the fact was that they were men who had rendered good service to the community. If the Bill became law, as apparently it would, judging from the tone of the speeches of hon. members opposite, he thought it would have a serious effect in connection with the raising of money necessary for local authority work. The Government had indicated to local authorities that they did not desire to lend them any more money, but that they would afford them facilities for raising money on loan by debentures. He presumed that the local authorities would be compelled to attempt to raise money by means of debentures, and, if they had as members of local authorities persons who had no stake in the community and had no regard for anything except the spending of money, did they think that people who had money to lend would rush municipal and shire councils with loans on debentures? A man who had money to lend, if he was sane, considered the borrower, the possibility of being repaid, how the money would be applied when he lent it, and what prospect he would have of getting back his money. Did hon. members think that the appointment of irresponsible individuals as members of shire councils was

likely to induce people to lend money to those councils. What had happened in London quite recently? Queensland was for the first time turned down when she applied to the money market for loan money.

HON. J. S. HANLON: That is not correct.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Some hon. members interjected that there was a failure before. If that was so, it must have been a very long time ago, for he did not remember it. There was no doubt that the action of the Government in the past had had the effect of making persons who had the control of loan money chary about lending money to Queensland. Well, that kind of thing would be accentuated when they had irresponsible persons who had not the security of the Government behind them asking capitalists to lend them money. Hon. members opposite would be the last men in the world to consider a proposal to lend their own money, or trust money, to people who would not be likely to repay it or to respect their obligations with regard to the payment of interest and principal. Up to the present time the local authorities of Queensland had met their obligations. Since 1878 their borrowings had invariably been from the Government. Sometimes they were a little in arrears in their payments, but, as a whole and as a rule, they met their obligations faithfully.

HON. J. S. COLLINGS: And they will continue to do it.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Would they, if they got the money? What would the hon. member himself lend to such local authorities? This fact stared them straight in the face—that the demolition of the present system of obtaining loans, and the substitution of another system for it, would not inspire confidence in the general public; and, if the Government would not lend money to local authorities, what would happen? The fact was that the Bill tended towards chaos. How were local authorities going to get along if they were not able to obtain loan money? The Government had failed to get money up till now.

HON. J. RIORDAN: Thanks to you people.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: They had heard that hoary joke so often that it had become nauseous.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Did you ever hear of the Philp delegation?

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: He had heard that joke before. It was a poor compliment to the Government of Queensland to say that one or two men could go to London and wreck their plans by making a speech or two. The Bill now before the Committee was the only instance in Australia where such a thing as was now proposed had been attempted. It had not been attempted in New Zealand, the model country of their friends opposite in days gone by, although they seemed to have gone back on it that evening. He had no faith in the idea that the placing of irresponsible men in control of finance would give any confidence to financiers or money-lenders either in Australia or in England, and the provision would mark Queensland in a way that would prevent forever, or as long as the law stood, the raising of money easily. Labour institutions were quite as markedly subject to the influence to one trait of human nature—selfishness—as any other institutions. When

Labour units got together and put their funds together for specific purposes, each individual of them became extravagant in expenditure from the pool—he did not care how recklessly it was spent. He would remind them of many unions now in existence which pooled their funds for specific purposes, say—to use a colloquialism—for “tucker” purposes.

HON. J. S. HANLON: And they always pay 20s. in the £1.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Because they had always had the means of extorting it from the individuals. Those individuals were economical and thrifty with their own money, but, as soon as they were drawing from a general pool, they became hideously extravagant.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Give us one instance.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: The Dickson award. He had travelled a good deal, and he lived fairly well and he was not emaciated, but in the Dickson award he saw many items on the menu he never saw or heard of before.

HON. R. J. CARROLL: Do you think they are too good for the worker?

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Nothing was too good for the worker in the shape of good food, but there was silly extravagance in that menu.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Give us instances.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: He challenged hon. members to read the Dickson award and interpret every item in it. He found in the menu silly delicacies that were not necessary for the sustenance of a man in good condition.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Name one of them.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Caviare. (Laughter.) When the list was read out in that Chamber, the Hon. Mr. Leahy made the droll remark, “Are there no oysters?” He apologised for the digression, which was brought about by interjections on his left from men who, apparently, did not see the trouble they were bringing upon local authorities. The Government would not lend them money; the money-lenders certainly would not. Where was it to come from? It could only come from extortionate taxation on the landowners, which would have a very injurious effect on primary production. Hon. members were wrecking the structure by knocking the foundations from under it, and then they wondered why the house tumbled down.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: A bogey.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Was it a bogey when loan money was refused to Queensland a few months ago? Would it be a bogey when loans were refused to local authorities in the future? He was just as much interested in the welfare of local authorities as hon. members opposite, and he would like to see them operating fully and beneficially for the country. He who found the money should decide how it should be spent; but those who paid the rates in future would not have the right of deciding how the funds should be disposed of. However, apparently, it had been decreed in another place.

HON. J. S. COLLINGS: Hear, hear!

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: He was glad to have that “Hear, hear!” because the hon.

Hon. T. J. O'Shea.]

member knew that that decree was not given in that building. He did not hesitate to say that it had been decreed outside Parliament that this should become the law of Queensland, and the Ministry were obeying orders.

HON. J. S. COLLINGS: The same as previous Ministries used to obey orders.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Never so far as he knew had anyone ever given them an order from outside the Chamber to do anything.

HON. J. S. COLLINGS: Never cracked the whip?

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Never. Never had anybody suggested he should vote in any particular way. Never had a member of another Chamber solicited his vote one way or another on any Bill before the Chamber.

HON. J. S. COLLINGS: You were brought to heel.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: That was a lying insinuation. He never came to heel to anybody.

HON. J. S. COLLINGS: That is a compliment from you.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: When he taxed the hon. member with lying then he should take the insult.

HON. J. S. COLLINGS: I did not take it as an insult.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: Then he was too thickskinned.

HON. G. PAGE-HANIFY rose to a point of order. Was the hon. member in order in saying that another member was lying? He suggested that he be asked to withdraw.

HON. J. S. COLLINGS: I do not object to the remark. It was the very best testimonial I have ever had. (Laughter.)

THE CHAIRMAN: It is out of order for any hon. member to say that another hon. member is lying.

HON. T. J. O'SHEA: So it was to say that another hon. member was brought to heel—the one was as bad as the other. The Bill clearly placed local authorities in an infinitely worse position than before. There was a time when local authorities did not need to go into the open market for money, but now they had no other

[8.30 p.m.] resource, and the Government said they could not help it.

Why should Parliament put on the statute-book a provision which would make their position more difficult than before? The men who would be elected to local authorities in the future would not be the thrifty section of the community, for thrift was an abomination to some people. They heard soapbox oratory denouncing thrift over and over again. Nationally that was bad. The Government of the day should encourage thrift. Thrift was the foundation of all civil communities. If everyone went on the theory of spending money, the country would go to ruin. It should be the duty of the Government to encourage the people of the country to be economical. Each individual had responsibilities on him; and one of the greatest responsibilities on him was that, for his own protection in his old age and for the safety and comfort of his family, he should be thrifty. But in these days men were encouraged not to be thrifty. There was a time when men's spirit in Queensland was such that they would spurn the idea of being handed a dole, but now it seemed to

be the general principle to rush in and try to get it whether one was entitled to it or not, and that spirit seemed to be encouraged by the Government.

HON. G. F. MCPHAIL: One could hardly sit silent and listen to some of the statements made by hon. gentlemen sitting on the opposite side, especially those about the irresponsibility of the class which was practically represented in the Council by hon. gentlemen who sat on the Government side. To every reform that had taken place the same opposition had been shown, and, when the party opposite had been entrenched in certain privileges, they had hung on tenaciously to those privileges and had striven to prevent other people in the community from getting the rights to which they were entitled. When they heard that irresponsible people would secure seats on the local authorities, it made one wonder whether they were fitted to be citizens of the State at all. Surely the gentlemen who at present almost monopolised positions on the local authorities of the State did not have a monopoly of all the good qualities that men were supposed to possess. All the talk about the ruin that would take place when the adult franchise came about, all the talk about the public not allowing them to have money to carry on, seemed to be the last dying cry of men who wanted to continue a position which, to all thinking men, had been a wrong one. Much that had been said about the ruin that would take place was altogether wrong, as the electors and members of the local authorities would realise their responsibilities, and surely they could not do worse than what was being done at the present time. Members of almost every council in Queensland were showing their incapacity. He believed, with the Hon. Mr. Hawthorn, that it was possible for anyone to make mistakes, but they should not go on making mistakes. Money to-day was being spent in a way that it should not be spent, and the people generally were not getting a full return from the spending of that money. With a change in the franchise the people generally would realise their responsibilities, and the men who would be elected to the councils as the representatives of the working men would not seek to do harm to themselves or to others who were also members of the community, and they would find that the result would be beneficial. They all had responsibilities, and it seemed to him to be a slur on one section of the community when they were told that only those on the councils at the present time would do what was right. He knew of councils not very far from Parliament House which had shown incapacity. Estimates had been given for bridges, and, after the contracts had been let, the contractors had gone to the councils and stated that the sums for which they had taken the contracts were wrong and that they could not carry on; and yet they had been allowed to continue the work. It was even found in the end that, though they should have been penalised for not carrying out the work, they were given an extension of time. Then, again, money was expended on things which the ratepayers never intended it should be spent on. That condition of things would certainly be improved after the passing of the Bill. He did not intend to take up any more time, but he wished to express his resentment at the slur cast upon those who in the future

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would possibly be conducting the municipal affairs of the State.

HON. J. S. HANLON: He had no intention of saying anything on the clause until he heard the remarks passed by some of the hon. gentlemen opposite in regard to that great mass of the people who were at present required to meet their obligations, and who were denied representation upon any of the local governing bodies. The Hon. Mr. O'Shea pointed out that there were reprehensible expressions used concerning aldermen, and quite ungenerously he went on to express reprehensible sentiments regarding honest working people. The hon. gentleman knew, and every business man knew, that the workers of the country had combined, and that they had to conduct their own business on businesslike lines. Ever since the Labour movement commenced, the unions had met their obligations. It was characteristic of big business people that they were very anxious to do business with combinations of those people who were condemned at the present time, because it was recognised that they had always met their obligations and had always fulfilled their responsibilities. When they wanted loans to build a trades hall or any other big union undertaking, the financial institutions came along cap in hand to get their business, because they knew those men honoured their obligations. He wanted to defend that big body of men who, when they came to possess the franchise, would lift local government to the same high standard as that upon which the trade unions conducted their business to-day. There had never been a failure; and he challenged any hon. gentleman on the other side to point out where any Labour organisation had failed in its obligations, or one which had not conducted its business on sound economic lines; and they had never asked for a subsidy. They had heard a good deal about representations upon the basis of taxation. Hon. gentlemen opposite had made a big mouthful out of that; but they forgot that every person in the community was compelled to obey the by-laws of the municipality, and it was only a just and fair thing, if there were certain obligations in that respect, that the workers should, at least, have some say in the restrictions that the ratepayers and property-owners desired to place on them. He hoped that in the future hon. gentlemen would be slow to condemn the honourable body of men who were being catered for under that Bill.

HON. A. H. PARNELL: He would like to know from the Minister whether the postal vote was done away with under that Bill?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There is no postal vote.

HON. A. H. PARNELL: If the postal vote was done away with a very serious difficulty would arise in connection with shire councils in the Gulf, at Winton, Longreach, and many other places where voters had to go many miles in order to cast a vote. At the present time the shire councils had a very inexpensive way of getting in votes. When an election was coming on a ballot-box was placed in charge of the postmaster of the principal town in the area, and it was left there until 4 o'clock on a certain day. Postal votes were sent out to each elector, and in a majority of cases a good vote came in. It appeared to him that under the Bill those men would have to come in 20 or 30 miles in order to cast

a vote. Were they likely to do that? If not, then the small towns would dominate the vote so far as shire councils were concerned. That would not be a good thing. So far as Brisbane and other large cities were concerned, it was all right, but it would be a very serious thing to the country if they did away with the postal vote. It seemed very hard that men who had to take the whole responsibility for the payment of loans, and who had to find all the rates and taxes, were not going to have a say as to how the money should be spent. Like a good many men on the other side, he paid a large amount of taxation, yet at the present time his son, who was twenty-two or twenty-three years of age, and who took no interest in either politics or local government affairs, could outvote him.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He will have the same voting power.

HON. J. S. COLLINGS: You should have educated him better than that.

HON. A. H. PARNELL: As a rule, young men took very little interest in politics or in local government affairs until they were married.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The person who has a vote takes a keener interest in politics than the person who is denied a vote. When the women were disfranchised they did not take the same interest in political questions as they do now.

HON. A. H. PARNELL: Many women who took a great interest in politics, and who helped at elections, said they did not think women should have a vote. He knew the Bill would pass, no matter what hon. members on his side might say.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Things have changed.

HON. A. H. PARNELL: They had changed; but, old man though he was, he believed that he would live long enough to see that very Bill repealed in that Chamber.

HON. J. S. COLLINGS: You will see the Chamber repealed before that.

HON. A. H. PARNELL: Hon. members on the other side knew that the Chamber would never be repealed, though the Constitution might be altered. When he stood for Barcoo in 1905, and was defeated, as many hon. members on the other side had been, he advocated the reform of the Council on every platform; but, while he believed he would live to see the Constitution reformed, he did not think that it would be abolished during the lifetime of the youngest member on the other side.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: The Coalition will see to that directly.

HON. A. H. PARNELL: Unquestionably the Bill would reduce the value of property. He never liked saying a hard thing unless he could support it by facts, but he had no hesitation in saying that since the present Government took office the value of property had depreciated throughout Queensland.

HON. G. H. THOMPSON: You can't buy a house now that is worth calling a house under £550.

HON. A. H. PARNELL: He would be very pleased if he could sell his property, which represented the savings of a lifetime, for the money he gave for it in 1914. Since the

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present Government came into power, he had to pay a land tax of about £300 per annum, or £6 per week.

Hon. J. S. COLLINGS: You must be on a very good wicket.

Hon. A. H. PARNELL: He was on a very bad wicket, and he would like to get off it. The taxation imposed by the Government had reduced the value of property all round. He knew properties in Queen street that were not returning 2½ per cent. If the Brisbane City Council raised the rates to 1s. in the £1, his income would cease. That was not a very bright prospect to look forward to in his old age. Then the Water and Sewerage Board increased their rates last year by 25 per cent.

Hon. A. SKIRVING: You were lucky it was not more.

Hon. A. H. PARNELL: Probably he was, but they recently received warning that next year there was to be a further increase of 27½ per cent., and in all probability the municipal rates would be increased too.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: There will be a new Water and Sewerage Board then.

Hon. A. H. PARNELL: Yes; but the rates would be increased just the same.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Federal land and income taxes are higher than those of the State.

Hon. A. H. PARNELL: No. Speaking from memory, his Federal land tax was about £68, and this week he had to pay the Queensland Government £180 for land tax. Like many other property-owners in Brisbane, his income had largely disappeared owing to the heavy taxation of the State Government, and it was practically going to be confiscated altogether.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: That is what they are after.

Hon. A. H. PARNELL: One hon. member on the other side spoke about unions. Though he was loath to speak about himself, he (Mr. Parnell) had a lot to do with unions in the past. He was through the 1891 shearers' strike with them, and at that time he was practically excommunicated because of his relations with the unions, but his store was not shut down. The unionists got credit from him to the tune of £4,000 or £5,000 during the strike, which they repaid afterwards. (Hear, hear!) It had also been said during the debate that one could get an advance from a bank. Just the other day a bank was asked for a loan of £500, and a Commonwealth war bond for £1,000 was offered as security, but the bank refused the advance. In another instance an individual wanted £1,000, and offered his bank securities worth at least £8,000, but the bank manager said, "We don't want securities at all. We want to keep our money." He could see that things were going to be exceedingly hard in Queensland.

Hon. J. S. COLLINGS: You cannot have destruction on a wholesale scale for five years without feeling the effects of it. Every country in the world is feeling the effects of the war.

Hon. A. H. PARNELL: Queensland practically did well all the time the war was on, because Commonwealth money was pouring in. It was only during the last eighteen months or two years that they had been feeling any ill-effects from the war; but they

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were going to have very bad times indeed, and it behoved everyone to assist the Government to get their loan to keep things going in Queensland. He noticed that the Minister intended going up North in a week or two, and he hoped the hon. gentleman would visit every mining camp in North Queensland. When the Select Committee on the Chillagoe and Etheridge Railways Bill, of which he was a member, visited the North, men came in many miles to meet them, and told them that they were bringing in so many tons of ore to Chillagoe, and that it was quite possible to keep the smelters going. He was a regular reader of the "Mining Journal" and the "Agricultural Journal," and he was very sorry to receive notice that they were probably going to stop the "Mining Journal."

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Oh no! If you indicate that you want our journals, you will get them; but many people who get them throw them away without reading them.

Hon. A. H. PARNELL: He always perused the journals and got very valuable information from them. Two mining inspectors—Mr. Horsley and Mr. Young—pointed out that mining was under a cloud. Mr. Horsley said that practically every mine from Croydon to Forsyth was deserted. They were not spending as much money in assisting the mining industry as should be spent, and during the last few weeks the managers of the principal mines in North Queensland had pointed out what would be the result in North Queensland if the price of copper fell any further. The general manager of the Mount Morgan Company pointed out the other day that during the last fifteen months his company had not paid a single dividend, and, if copper fell below £80 a ton, the mine would not be able to carry on at a profit. Yet in the face of that, the employees of the company had a claim before the Arbitration Court which involved an increase in the paysheet of the company of £58,000 per annum. They all knew what that meant. He hoped that the Minister would point out the position of affairs to the manager at Chillagoe, and that the management, both at Chillagoe and at Mount Morgan, would receive the assistance and co-operation of every worker. (Hear, hear!)

Clause 22 put and passed.

Clause 23—"Reprinting Act"—put and passed.

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

The report was adopted.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I beg to move—That the Council do now adjourn. The business to-morrow will be the third reading of the Local Authorities Acts Amendment Bill and the other Bills that will come from the Assembly. By arrangement with the Hon. Mr. Fowles, that hon. gentleman's motion will be dealt with to-morrow. I just desire to intimate that the Council will meet to-morrow at the usual time, 4.30 p.m.

Question put and passed.

The Council adjourned at 9 o'clock p.m.