

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Council**

**WEDNESDAY, 19 OCTOBER 1921**

---

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.**

---

WEDNESDAY, 19 OCTOBER, 1921.

---

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN (Hon. T. Nevitt) took the chair at 4.30 p.m.

**AMENDMENT OF STANDING RULES  
AND ORDERS.****APPROVAL.**

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN announced the receipt, from the Deputy Governor, of a message conveying His Excellency's approval to the amendment of the Standing Rules and Orders as adopted by the Council on 4th October, 1921.

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF  
GOVERNMENT.

## RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day being called for the resumption of the adjourned debate on Mr. Fowles's motion relative to the financial administration of the Government—

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES said: I thank hon. gentlemen for giving me the opportunity of a brief respite and of being able to resume what few remarks I have to offer on this motion. If time would permit, probably every member of this Council, and every member of the public outside, would prefer to have something to say on this matter. Paragraph (h) deals with the fact that this Government last year dealt with an unprecedented amount of public money from Loan Fund, from Trust Fund, and from consolidated revenue. Roughly speaking, the revenue to-day is £12,000,000, while in 1914 it was £6,000,000, practically half of what it is to-day. Of course, it will be said that the £1 note to-day is only worth 15s., and that the real increase in revenue is only £3,000,000. Our revenue to-day is £12,601,000, and the Government in 1920-21 manipulated a loan expenditure of £4,251,248.

HON. T. L. JONES: What do you mean by "manipulated"? Is there any sinister inference?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Not at all. Would "handle" do?

HON. R. BEDFORD: That is much better.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The Government handled a loan expenditure of £4,251,248, and a Trust Fund expenditure of £4,644,224. That is a large sum of money for a small community of 750,000 souls to handle in a year, and yet, in spite of all that the dole for the year amounted to £120,519, or thirteen times what the public expenditure on relief was in 1918. That is all after the boom of the war. That is after six years' trial of an alleged Labour Administration. That is after six years of administration supposedly in the interests of the working man. I do not suppose any Government in the history of Queensland has talked more about the working man and done less for him than the present Government.

HON. R. BEDFORD: Still they saved £2,000 in connection with that coalmine.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The Government want as much credit as they can get. They have lost all credit in London, and everywhere else, except in New York; the compatriots of J. S. Badger. For the first two months of this financial year the amount paid in relief was no less a sum than £30,000. No one objects to relief being given to needy persons. The point I wish to make is that there should be no call for relief in a country such as Queensland. The relief amounts to £15,000 a month at the present time, and probably by the end of the year £200,000 will have been spent in relief. Can the Government say that is an economical way of spending money?

HON. E. J. HANSON: They spent £100,000,000 in relief in Great Britain last year.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The hon. gentleman says so. Here we have a Labour Government that claims the right to work. The country is calling out for work; £450,500

worth of buildings have been stopped in Queensland for one reason or another.

HON. R. BEDFORD: Where do you get those figures from?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The hon. gentleman has been away from Parliament for the last three weeks.

HON. R. BEDFORD: You cannot alter the fact that you get these figures out of the air.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The hon. gentleman, if he reads "Hansard," and it is his duty to do so, will get the actual names of the firms who were ready to expend that amount on buildings, and the amount was certified to by the architect.

HON. W. J. DUNSTAN: The question is whether they had the funds to go on with the work.

HON. T. L. JONES: I challenge the figures, and I have not been away from Parliament.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: They are the figures that were given in another place. I am not allowed to quote from the debates in that place, but the full list was given in another place.

HON. T. L. JONES: A very loose statement.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The actual figures were given.

HON. T. L. JONES: But they were not justified.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: At all events, the buildings were stopped. The hon. gentleman can have the full list, and he may be permitted to see some of the plans, which I have had the privilege of seeing, which were arrested at the last moment.

HON. T. L. JONES: You said "stopped for one reason or another." I hope you do not mean that they were stopped as a result of the administration of this Government.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: It was probably owing to the uncertainty running throughout the whole community with regard to business ventures; it was probably owing to the high cost of material; it was probably to some extent due to the high cost of wages.

HON. T. L. JONES: That applies all over the world.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: These buildings have been stopped here. This is supposed to be an advanced Government that looks years ahead, and are prepared for contingencies like that, and have a remedy at hand. At any rate, half a million pounds' worth of buildings were stopped in Queensland. The Christian charity of this Government ran to £120,519 last year, and an average of £15,000 a month for this year. We have not been able to get the figures for September of this year.

AN HONOURABLE GENTLEMAN: Do you say it was ill-spent?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The prosecutions show that some of it was ill-spent. I suppose the police do their duty in the matter as well as can be expected. There is a certain class in the community—not many—who will not work so long as they can get three meals a day.

HON. R. BEDFORD: That is so; I have seen them on the other side.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Many people in Queensland, when they see that the result of the policy of the present Government is high wages just for a little while and then

*Hon. E. W. H. Fowles.]*

men flung out of employment—when they see that is the policy, they say, “Rather than get £7 or £8 per week for a month and then starve for the rest of the year, we would sooner get £5 10s. a week regularly throughout the year.”

The next paragraph deals with the efforts of this Government to settle returned soldiers on the land. Admittedly that is a difficult matter. The soldier's welfare sometimes falls between two stools in this way: The Federal Government are supposed to have the oversight of a certain expenditure, but they delegate their powers and cash to the State Government, and between the two the soldier does not get a fair spin from either Government. That may be fairly admitted. It also may be fairly admitted that not every soldier is ordained by Providence to be a farmer. A man thinks he will make a success, but finds after months or years of experience that that is not his forte in life. I hope that the Government will not find this in some of the settlements round about Stanthorpe—that some of the soldiers having borrowed to the limit of £625 and finding themselves up against a bad season or in some other untoward circumstances, simply walk off the farm, and the Government have to foot the bill. We know that the Commonwealth Government has been very generous to us. They have given us £2,779,000 up to the end of the financial year in order to settle soldiers on the land. But there is a big difference between the perfunctory carrying out of administration and a really sympathetic carrying of it out, and I think that the Government ought to make every possible effort to help soldiers to find out their proper vocation before they endeavour to put them on the land.

HON. T. L. JONES: Do you not admit there has been a large number of failures?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: There ought to have been greater care taken in order to reduce the number of failures. The figures, which we cannot refute, in the Auditor-General's report show no less than 400 soldiers—

HON. W. R. CRAMPTON: Some of the best results have been obtained at Stanthorpe.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: A lot of good things can be said about soldier settlement at Stanthorpe. I did not mention any other place, because the Auditor-General's report indicates that there is room for a difference of opinion as to the success of other places. I am also free to admit, whether we like to own up to it or not, that the sentiment in favour of patriotism and really helping the soldiers is gradually lessening as the months and years pass away. Unless any Government are kept up to their strict duty in regard to these matters they will probably forget. I make these remarks lest we do forget.

HON. A. SKIRVING: Some of the private employers forget.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The private employer is not endowed by the Federal Government; he has not the inexhaustible Commonwealth purse behind him. The Government who pose as the general benefactors of the soldiers are really paid by the Federal Government.

HON. E. J. HANSON: Practically none of the unemployed soldiers were ever in the Government service before.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: That is so, and I would go a little further, because, that

[*Hon. E. W. H. Fowles.*

being so, the soldiers have not the privileges they would have had otherwise.

HON. E. J. HANSON: These chaps have lost their employment altogether from private enterprise.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Employment is getting scarcer and scarcer.

HON. W. P. COLBORNE: Why don't the private employers stick to them?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Business men have to shorten sail. Taxation and financial embarrassment of one kind and another, the overlapping of departments, and the uncertainty of control of business are driving men out of the country or into the Insolvency Court. We are nearer to the edge of things than the hon. gentleman knows in regard to many things. I refer now to the next paragraph—the fact that the Government Savings Bank has been handed over, and wish to emphasise that that was handed over by what the Labour party would call “secret diplomacy.” I just use that phrase because it is a very common one. I think the whole of the negotiations with regard to the handing over of a large State asset should be known by the people as they proceed.

HON. T. L. JONES: It was ratified by Parliament.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: It is very easy to ratify with a majority in both Houses. I think a matter such as that, involving the handing over of £15,000,000, ought to be put to referendum. Here, the State has an opportunity of building up a huge financial institution on which future generations in Queensland could rely.

HON. A. SKIRVING: Why did you not vote for the Initiative and Referendum Bill?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: That, at all events, is a question involving 270,000 depositors and also involving almost the financial stability of our State. That Savings Bank has been the petty cash bank of the Governments of Queensland for years. It has been the pride of Queensland.

HON. E. J. HANSON: I remember certain public men leading a rush on it.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Hon. gentlemen of this Council did their very best to stop that rush, and it was very fortunate they did succeed. The result of the transfer is that the State has to pay  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. more on all money in it than previously, and this money is badly needed at the present time to reduce the deficit. Are the present Government satisfied with their own record? They promised a number of cheap things—cheap food, cheap fish, cheap money, and cheap everything; but, really, during the six years they have been in office, they have scarcely delivered the goods if we except cheap promises.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: We have provided cheap meat.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: It is dearer than in Sydney at the present time.

HON. W. J. DUNSTAN: Would you rob the pastoralists?

HON. T. L. JONES: You do not consider that paragraph (j) is a fair statement of the facts of the case? I object very strongly to saying that it fell into the hands of the Commonwealth.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: How would the hon. gentleman alter it? I am willing to alter it. There is the fact that the Federal

Government have gone into possession, and I would put it that way if that will do. I give the page of the Auditor-General's report, and the hon. gentleman has a copy of the actual agreement, no doubt. The concluding paragraph is—

“That in view of the parlous position of the State finances the electors should be granted an opportunity of restoring public credit.”

Hon. gentlemen will see what are the alternatives.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: The Government should be asked to resign.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Certain constitutional questions arise regarding a dissolution; but anyone can see that a Government with a narrow majority of thirty-six votes to thirty-five, and those thirty-six votes representing a minority of over 20,000 electors, cannot be in a satisfactory position.

Hon. W. J. DUNSTAN: Mr. Peterson was elected as a Labour man, and now he opposes the Government.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: And his people are behind him.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: It does not speak well for the treatment of a man who for years has been loyal to his party.

Hon. W. J. DUNSTAN: He would have still been a good Labour man if he had been allowed to transfer to the safer seat of Leichhardt.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: There is no one here to contradict that statement.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: The alternative would be a dissolution.

Hon. W. P. COLBORNE: A double dissolution?

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: I would not like to lose the hon. gentleman from this Council. Another alternative is a coalition Government, but, on looking at things dispassionately, we must confess that coalition Governments do not often prove a success. The third alternative is for the Government to keep on as long as they can, to go into recess at present and call Parliament together as late as possible next year—about show time, probably—and get Supply until the end of the financial year. Can any decent citizen say that that is the way to govern the country? That brings me to the last paragraph, as to whether Parliament has not outlived its usefulness? Everybody knows that this Government has outlived its usefulness. That is as clear as the sun. I am advancing this—whether Parliament as an effective means of governing the country has not become effete?

Hon. T. L. JONES: You only say that because your party has lost the reins of power.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Not at all. I am dispassionately discussing this. What are the alternatives? Sovietism, local government of that kind, or reconstruction of the Constitution. That may have to come; I suppose it will come within the next three years, and that may include elective Ministries. As a matter of fact, parliamentary government has many advantages.

Hon. R. BEDFORD: Who would elect the Ministry but the party?

[5 p.m.]

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: No; they could be elected by the ballot of the people. That

has been tried in Switzerland with a good deal of success. Not only in Parliament but outside of Parliament a voice is being raised in regard to this Government's financial position. That voice of dissent, concerning the way in which the present Government is running the country to disaster, will grow. There will spread throughout Queensland before long a feeling, not so much of antagonism to the present Government, but a desire for better things in Queensland. We are squabbling about party politics; the Labour party says we have the best State in the world, and yet we have this damning record of which any Government should be thoroughly ashamed. Any Government, if they live on borrowed money, can make things very merry so long as they continue to borrow money. Any Government in the world can do that; but there must come a time when the borrowing of money must stop. That time is when we have to meet the interest from loan money. Queensland will have to meet a big interest bill next year—£3,500,000. All that money must go overseas, and we do not get one pennyworth return for it. That is a statement of fact which ought to make hon. gentlemen pause and think as to how we are going to meet it. How does this Government propose to meet it? By borrowing money to pay the interest?

Hon. W. P. COLBORNE: Do you suggest repudiation?

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Not at all. I am only saying that when a man expects a storm, he should prepare for it. If we have to send out from this country a large sum of money without any return for it, it is time that we stopped borrowing money and took steps to live within our means.

Hon. R. BEDFORD: This motion, or series of motions, can only have been tabled by the Hon. Mr. Fowles to give him that lime-light for which he so much yearns, because the statements following on this motion have only been in the direction of hurting Queensland. Among other things, he remarked that Queensland was gradually sinking to the level of a fifth-rate American republic, and one of the reasons given us was that we were borrowing money to pay interest on old loans. It may be stated that no country in the world to-day conducts its business out of revenue. The terrible aftermath of the war had the effect of causing Governments to turn wherever they could for money. If, as the Hon. Mr. Fowles has always said, Queensland is a Bolshevik State, and that the present rotten position he ascribed to it is because of this present Government, and when as we know he has always been insistent on the wonderful good that would accrue to this State if we carried its business on the lines of the motherland, one is attempted to ask him why has Queensland sunk to the level of a fifth-rate American republic because it has to borrow money for the conversion of old loans at a bigger rate of interest, when England, which owes a thousand millions to America, has defaulted on the interest for three years, and has asked that the debt be cancelled. If we make absentee foreign pastoral companies pay rents equal to those paid by Queenslanders living in the State, then we are guilty of repudiation.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Of breaking a contract.

*Hon. R. Bedford.]*

HON. R. BEDFORD: Breaking a contract; but England could not be guilty of repudiation—because it is England. It is only low countries like Australian States that do that. A great country like England can ask for cancellation—

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: She did not ask for cancellation.

HON. R. BEDFORD: She did, and it was refused. The Hon. Mr. Fowles, true always to the little scheme of innuendo on which he thrives and lives, says that this Government—which is continually fighting the trusts and which fought the meat trusts of America, a matter for which he is not going to forgive them, and he says it for the purpose of making himself as nasty as possible—had to go to the beef trusts.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES (rising from his seat): I do not rise to a point of order.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: To draw attention to the state of the Council?

HON. R. BEDFORD: To draw attention to himself. (Laughter.) The statement that this country had to sneak to the beef trusts of America for the purpose of getting the money which was necessary to carry on the public services of this State, is only generally part of the innuendoes which these, the worst enemies of the State, have pursued the State with ever since the present Government came into power. It is alleged that the real reason why Queensland could not get a loan in London was owing to the fact that money-lenders did not like our legislation. It is news to me that any usurer would lend money for God's sake. The Hon. Mr. Fowles says that the figures shriek to heaven, and that if they were known throughout the length and breadth of Queensland, there would be a revolution, and that if he were not a member of the Council, pledged to uphold law and honour, he would lead it. The hon. gentleman would lead a revolution!

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: That is not in his motion.

HON. R. BEDFORD: He did say that. I read it in one of his worshipping papers the other day. He could also lead a goose to the water, when it rained, but not in time of drought. Mr. Fowles has practically put the position of this Government in such desperate straits that he thinks of revolution even for himself, a man of peace whose weapons are prayer, fasting, and charity; a man so kind, so pure, so noble, and incorruptible—that he would not in any circumstances add to the burdens of this country by selling it a coalmine. This pure-minded, noble, incorruptible gentleman says that, if the present Government persists in its efforts of the last five or six years, this country will be in such a frightful condition that even he himself will lead a revolution. The Hon. Mr. Fowles, while dealing with his own virtues, by innuendo, said that Ministers were pilfering—that Ministers were guzzling the money of the State. He did not remark at the time that, strongly opposed as he is to State enterprises, he proposed to increase the cost of State enterprises by selling to the Government a coalmine. The only reason was that the coalmine was his, and that circumstances alter cases; and what harsher term can we think of to use for a man who, while pure, noble, and incorruptible—

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. gentleman to resume his seat. The hon. gentleman must know he is not

[Hon. R. Bedford.

in order in casting reflections on another hon. gentleman. I hope the hon. gentleman will try to use language a little more becoming, because it is impossible for anyone to attempt to keep order if language of that kind continues.

HON. R. BEDFORD: I bow to your ruling. The language I used was something which sprung out of earlier remarks by the mover of this motion, and to which I presume I am entitled to refer. The motion says—

“The annual interest on the public debt of the State for the year ended 30th June, 1911, was £1,670,772; for the year ended 30th June, 1915, was £1,975,580; for the year ended 30th June, 1920, was £2,665,548; for the year ended 30th June, 1921, was £2,930,703.”

Practically, the Hon. Mr. Fowles sought to make the people of the country believe that all this debt was caused by the defaulting, by the pilfering, or by the general extravagance of the Government; as a matter of fact, the Government came into power at a time when all the public service had been starved, when, following on the 1912 general strike, the boot was being put into every man employed on public works, and it either became necessary that the Government should go behind on the ledger, or attempt to remedy matters in the good old Tory way of grinding the skulls of the employees on the doorstep. A great deal of this debt is a monument to the humane legislation of the Government. Considering that this State is eight times the size of Victoria, and has a less population than Melbourne, a State with six times more mileage of railways open than any country in the world in proportion to population, the fact that it has gone back in that way does not say anything against the people who are running the State or against the State itself. It must also be taken into consideration that there is a great public estate which is being served by these lines. Victoria, with a population more than that of the State of Queensland sitting in Melbourne, with the most compact railway system in Australia, and with the blessing of a Nationalist Government, even went behind to the extent of £651,000 in railway accounts last year. But, of course, the “Courier” does not print that, because the business of the “Courier” is to run its local lie factory for foreign consumption. One cannot libel with impunity a man or slander a man, but one can slander a country because it is a corporation which has no possible power of hitting back. There should be some law passed which will prevent men running newspapers for political purposes traducing a country in order to get the Government which they are opposed to out of existence. Likewise, the Auditor-General's report is taken to prove that the Government, through their general ineptitude, have made a loss on the production of arsenic. But here was this tremendous legacy of a million or more acres of land destroyed by the mean and greedy early holders of the land, by the men who allowed these pests to increase to such an extent that now in the Central-Western areas some of the best land in the State is menaced, and the loss that was made on the arsenic was merely the Secretary for Mines' contribution to the prickly-pear question.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The price quoted to-day is £62 per ton, and we are selling it at £10 per ton.

HON. R. BEDFORD: Also, this is the kind of thing that is put in the motion—

“The Government’s policy of debenture schemes, by which non-paying propositions are purchased on certain terms by the Government, and after being temporarily run at a loss, then fall bankrupt, is a disastrous policy.”

This is alleged to be a motion, and here is special pleading that has as much truth in it as there is in the general inaccurate statements of the hon. gentleman. We find this generally is only part of a crusade against the Government, the crusaders caring nothing how much the fair name of the State is defamed. It is necessary for the Hon. Mr. Fowles even to attack the Government on the question of the settlement of returned soldiers, and, if there is one State in the Commonwealth that has done its duty by the returned soldier, it is this State. He is convicted out of his own mouth when he says—

“Although the State Government agreed to settle 2,326 soldiers on the land, and has already, up to 30th June, 1921, received from the Commonwealth Government £2,079,451 for this purpose, nevertheless only 2,413 soldiers have been actually settled.”

What is the position in the other States? In Victoria the repatriation of the soldier has been largely the repatriation of the estate agent. Land quite valueless has been bought at frightful prices and men put on land on which they could not possibly make a living, and by innuendo the people outside the State, who do not know the Hon. Mr. Fowles as well as we do, are led to believe that these statements of his are correct, whereas there was never anything more false in hell or out of it. This ridiculous attack as regards these returned soldiers has only to be compared with the work of the Commonwealth Government, which is really responsible for the returned soldier, as no State Government is—in order to show the absolute foolishness of it. Already we see in regard to the returned soldier that the Commonwealth have absolutely closed down on those two booding pine propositions they bought at Canungra and other places, and they are now seeking to break their contract in Sydney with timber merchants who erected large plants for the purpose of turning out soldiers’ homes. This Government have not defaulted to any returned soldier. This Government, which promised to settle 2,326 soldiers, has now settled 2,413. The time of the Council has been taken up with mere futile party politics, because that is all this long-winded motion is. It synchronises with further attacks by newspapers opposed to this Government. It synchronises with further attempts to reduce the credit of this State again. For instance, the “*Courier*” this morning says—

“Considerable interest is being centred in the public meeting which is to be held under the auspices of the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Manufactures in the Exhibition Hall on Friday evening.”

There is only one man convening it, and he feels considerable interest, and he tells the reporter that considerable interest is being centred in the meeting. The great heart of that gentleman is being considerably exercised over this fact—

“The gathering will be of a non-party

character, and no politicians will appear as speakers. The decision to hold the meeting arose out of the growing feeling among business men and manufacturers that the time has arrived when greater interest should be taken in the financial affairs of the State.”

If it spoke the truth, it would say, “Out of the growing feeling of business men that have bitten off more than they can chew, and have bought stocks at high prices that they now want to get out of.” The “*Courier*” continues—

“Not from a party point of view, but from the broader standpoint of the concern of the citizen for the welfare of the country. The meeting will be addressed by representative commercial men and men connected with the industrial activities of the State, who will discuss impartially the present financial position and its effects on trade, commerce, and manufactures, as well as upon employment.”

Then we get this in another part of the “*Courier*”—

“The keen resentment caused by the Government’s fatal policy towards industry, its financial ineptitude, and its tactics in Parliament in forcing important measures through by the use of the ‘gag’ has created a demand from various parts of the country for meetings of protest. To meet this demand the National Democratic Speakers’ Association will launch in Brisbane and suburbs, as well as in the provincial towns, a series of meetings condemning the policy of the Government and demanding a dissolution.”

Then follow the names of a lot of gentlemen who were never heard of before, but are now in print for the first time. I may point out to the Hon. Mr. Fowles that this campaign of vilification, if persisted in by the people he is helping, is going to have the worst possible kind of effect on this country. Everybody knows that this American loan is anti-“Jap,” and everybody knows that the New South Wales loan which Mr. Storey was refused until he agreed to delete certain provisions from projected land legislation—

Hon. P. J. LEAHY interjected.

HON. R. BEDFORD: He did not. Just so soon as the American loan went through to Queensland, then did the English end fall over itself in advancing money to New South Wales without any consideration of politics. As a matter of fact, whereas the American loan to Queensland is anti-“Jap,” the English loan to New South Wales is anti-American. In any case, this was probably reconverted money.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: It was arranged while Mr. Storey was at home.

HON. R. BEDFORD: It was not. That was Mr. Storey’s dream. Mr. Storey came back to the State and said he had £19,500,000 running over three years. That is not so. The position at the American end is just this: the sceptre of finance has passed from Britain to America. From being a creditor nation, Great Britain is now a debtor nation. During the war America repurchased all American securities held in England and Europe, and then out of its war profits financed other nations. It considers

*Hon. R. Bedford.]*

Queensland as a fine risk, and, while it has loaned this money at 5½ per cent., it has loaned £100 bonds, issued at 85, to Continental nations at 8 per cent., which means 9½ per cent. These circumstances generally prove that if ever there was a time when the prospects of this State looked rosy, it is now. This country must be developed to carry the tremendous number of people who must come to it. The Commonwealth Government had defaulted in connection with the Burnett lands, and the State must find the money to carry on that work. My advice to the Government is to dare in borrowing—to dare wisely, to spend wisely, and consider that every £1 so spent is in nowise a tax on the people who come after commensurate with the advantages they derive from the investment of that money.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Nobody said that, if spent wisely, loan expenditure would be a tax.

HON. R. BEDFORD: You spent money very wisely when you had the chance, did you not? And the people liked you so much that they put you out. The general position, then, is that any man who is seeking to detract from the stability of this country is the enemy of it. A large amount of American money is bound to come in here, not only through public borrowing, but through private enterprise. I know, for instance, that a big coalmine property at Maitland is to be handled with American money. A great mining proposition in Western Australia, probably the biggest in Australia, is to be handled with American money, and it is white man's money. Another reason why this policy of detraction should be departed from and absolutely finished with for "keeps" is that we shortly will be embroiled in another war—within twelve months, I believe—by reason of the certainty that America and Japan will only face this disarmament conference as a prelude to war. It is for these reasons that I deprecate general attacks on this country's credit. They had some effect before; and it is just as well they did have an effect, in order to lead us to borrow from the American market and for ever put out of commission the superstition that only the British Empire could lend a British State money.

HON. W. R. CRAMPTON: I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Before this motion is put, I would like to know whether the Secretary for Mines will permit the Hon. Mr. Fowles's motion to be considered again next Wednesday. If he does not, it is treating hon. gentlemen on this side of the Council very unfairly. The Hon. Mr. Bedford has made a very characteristic speech; and when I use the words "very characteristic" I do not think I need say any more. If this debate is adjourned now, and if the matter is not to come on again for discussion, the Hon. Mr. Bedford will have had the last word, and the people who read "Hansard," and who do not know the Hon. Mr. Bedford as we know him, may believe his statements. I certainly would like to make some remarks in reply to the hon. gentleman. I do not want to make attacks on anybody, nor do I wish to misrepresent anything, but there is certainly room for one or more gentlemen to get up and comment on the matters referred to in this motion without going beyond the realm of facts.

[*Hon. R. Bedford.*]

I would like, and I am sure other hon. gentleman also would like, to discuss the Hon. Mr. Fowles's motion, which we will

[5.30 p.m.] not be able to do if this motion is carried. I would ask the Minister either to permit Mr Fowles's motion to be discussed further now or that it be set down definitely for Wednesday next. I put that in common fairness. I believe, if he permits that, we will be able to finish the debate on the motion in about an hour and a-half after tea. I hope the Hon. the Minister will not use his—I will not say brutal—majority to prevent our continuing this debate. He has made a promise that Mr. Fowles's motion would be discussed. I am sure he did not mean that he would crush all discussion after a couple of speeches were made. I appeal to his sense of fairness. I must say, in justice to him, that I do not know that I have ever seen him take up an unfair position, and I hope he will not do so now.

HON. A. DUNN: A number of statements have been made during the afternoon that have been painful to me personally. They detract seriously from the standing of members of this Council. I am of opinion that they should not be allowed to go unchallenged. I think it is cowardly for any member to make a statement in the Council that he is not prepared to make outside. It appears to me—I have no brief in the matter of the charge made by the representative of the Government here against the Hon. Mr. Fowles—that for the sake of the honour of this Council the matter should be cleared up. Either one or the other is in the wrong. Apparently, the matter is not to be allowed to rest. I do not think it should be allowed to rest; but there is no probability of its being cleared up within this Chamber. Therefore, I think it is really due to the members of this Council that the statement should be made outside, where the matter could be sifted to the bottom, and we would know whether or not an hon. member has done something discreditable to him as a member of this Council. Would I be in order at present—I can hardly do anything that I can see—

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: The question at present is "That the debate be now adjourned." I think the hon. gentleman had better give notice of a motion dealing with this matter. He cannot pursue that line of discussion on this motion.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Why don't you move my expulsion?

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: There is a Standing Order under which the hon. gentleman can give notice, so as to bring the matter up for discussion again.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Private members' day is cut out; he cannot do so now.

HON. A. DUNN: I have the greatest respect for the Hon. Mr. Jones, whom I have known for a long time, and also for the Hon. Mr. Fowles.

HON. J. S. HANLON: What has that to do with this motion?

HON. A. DUNN: I think statements made this afternoon are not conducive to fair debate. I think it is wise that members should have some regard to conducting a debate in such a way as will not stir up illfeeling.

Hon. R. BEDFORD: Was there any ill-feeling in the Hon. Mr. Fowles's saying that Ministers pilfer?

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: I take no notice of what the hon. gentleman says this afternoon, nor does the country.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I think the Hon. the Minister would be well advised to let the debate go on now or undertake that we should, before the session closes, have an opportunity of continuing it. He has already passed a motion cutting out Wednesday as private members' day. If this is adhered to there will be no opportunity of anybody else discussing Mr. Fowles's motion. I would also draw the Hon. the Minister's attention to the fact that he promised that he would answer this motion, and he has not said a word about it. He said he had a full reply to it. I was hoping that as soon as Mr. Fowles sat down the Minister would reply, and that we would have known, his version of it. I understood he was prepared to justify the Government on all those points. The Minister undoubtedly should give us an opportunity of continuing the debate.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Hon. gentlemen opposite have formed a very wrong impression regarding the Hon. Mr. Cramp-ton's motion, which has been moved by arrangement with the Hon. Mr. Fowles.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: I am quite willing that it should be adjourned if it were brought up again on Wednesday next.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The motion I moved yesterday was that Govern-ment business will take precedence of all other business on Wednesday. That must stand. We do not know what important business there may be on Wednesday. I would point out that the Hon. Mr. Fowles spoke on this motion for about three hours.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: The importance of the matter justified it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There has been only one speaker on this side. Where is the unfairness in that? The Hon. Mr. Bedford has been the only speaker, and he did not occupy more than half an hour.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Have other hon. gentle-men no rights at all?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Just so. But hon. gentlemen must admit that three hours is a fair time to debate any question. Government business must now take precedence. When the Hon. Mr. Fowles was speaking we arranged, as we wanted to amend the Standing Orders, and needed thirty members to do it, that he should sit down if I promised that he could resume his speech to-day. He kept his part of the arrange-ment, and to-day I have kept mine, because I distinctly stated the motion would not apply to to-day's debate. I propose to finish the Government business to-night and adjourn until Tuesday next, and to let Government business take precedence afterwards. We are prepared on this side to speak. Many members are prepared to speak to-day, if I desire to go on. The suggestion I make is that we adjourn to-night until Tuesday next and allow Government business to take precedence on all days, and if the opportunity occurs we will have a further debate on this motion.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Will you see that an opportunity occurs?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I have no intention of stifling discussion in this

Chamber. It would be a bad principle. As a matter of fact, I did want to reply. I have a few notes and really intended to reply, but the urgency of Government business and the arrangement to complete it here to-day stands in the way. On Tuesday next, probably, we will have an opportunity of further discussing this motion.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Can you not finish all the business on the business-paper to-night?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We must have some reply. I suggest that hon. gentlemen agree to the adjournment of the debate. I do not think there has been any breach of faith.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: So long as you say we will have an opportunity next week.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If there is Government business on the paper I claim the right to go on with it first. I may be able to give an opportunity of further discussing this motion on Tuesday next. Will that satisfy hon. gentlemen?

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: The proper thing is to continue the debate now, and the Govern-ment business on the business-sheet also can be finished by 9 o'clock to-night.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I cannot make any definite promise. I repeat that Government business must take prece-dence of all other business, but that if an opportunity occurs next week, we will go on with this motion again. As a matter of fact, we are prepared to sit after 7 o'clock if hon. gentlemen wish to continue this. But I understand they do not wish to sit after 6 o'clock, and that arrangement has been made with an hon. gentleman on the other side.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Which hon. gentleman?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I understood that hon. gentlemen on the other side wish to leave as soon as after 6 o'clock as possible.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Let the debate go on. If hon. gentlemen are not present on this side, of course, they cannot talk.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: You can easily make an opportunity without the slightest difficulty

Question put and passed.

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

#### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ACT AMEND- MENT BILL.

##### THIRD READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR MINES, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be returned to the Assembly by message in the usual form.

#### CONTRACTORS' AND WORKMEN'S LIEN ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### THIRD READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR MINES, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be returned to the Assembly by message in the usual form.

#### CITY OF SOUTH BRISBANE LOAN ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

##### THIRD READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR MINES, this Bill was read a third time, and passed.

*Hon. A. J. Jones.]*

## TITLE.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I move—

“That the title of the Bill be ‘A Bill to enable the Council of the City of South Brisbane to raise by debentures a sum of £105,000.’”

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: One thing that strikes me in the title of the Bill is that it is rather misleading to say “to enable the Council of the City of South Brisbane to raise by debentures a sum of £105,000.” I think the Bill says, if it can be arranged, a certain amount of money shall be raised to meet the amount of £105,000. The South Brisbane Council may have to arrange for more than that.

Question put and passed.

The Bill was ordered to be returned to the Assembly by message in the usual form.

## GOVERNMENT INSCRIBED STOCK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

## COMMITTEE.

(Hon. L. McDonald, Acting Chairman, in the chair.)

Clause 1 put and passed.

Clause 2—“Stock in joint names of minor and adult”—

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He would like to say that the matter raised by the Hon. Mr. Thynne the previous day was dealt with in the regulations which were made under the principal Act in March last. Hon. gentlemen would remember that the Hon. Mr. Thynne had referred to the matter as follows:—

“The Bill is quite right so far as it goes; but should not some provision be made for the payment of interest during the minority of the minor in the event of the other person’s death?”

Regulation 27 read—

“On the decease of one of the owners in a joint account, the death may be proved by production of probate of will, letters of administration, or certificate of death, and, if required by the Registrar, by a declaration by some disinterested person approved by the Registrar as to the identity of the deceased as the owner.”

Regulation 28 read—

“On completion of the proof of debt in a joint account the dividends thereon will be registered in the name of the survivor or survivors.”

Then regulation 41 (2) applied. It was as follows:—

“Interest on stock inscribed in the name of a minor solely shall be paid as directed by him, provided that if the minor has not attained or appears to the Registrar to have not attained the age of fourteen years, interest may be paid at the discretion of the Registrar to the minor’s guardian, whose receipt shall be a valid discharge.”

[6 p.m.]

He had held up the Committee stage of the Bill last night to settle that particular point, but, according to the regulations, an amendment would not be necessary.

Clause put and passed.

The Council resumed.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

The report was adopted.

[Hon. A. J. Jones.

## THIRD READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR MINES, the Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be returned to the Assembly by message in the usual form.

## INFANT LIFE PROTECTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

## FIRST READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR MINES, this Bill, received by message from the Assembly, was read a first time.

The second reading was made an Order of the Day for a later hour of the sitting.

## WATER AUTHORITIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

## SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: This is a Bill to amend the Water Authorities Act of 1901 in certain particulars. Hon. gentlemen will observe that Part X. of the Water Authorities Act provided that water boards might borrow from the Treasurer only. It is proposed, under this Bill, to give them power to raise money also from other sources by the sale of debentures. The Bill is practically a replica of the measure recently passed by this Council, which enabled the Metropolitan and Ipswich Water Supply and Sewerage Board to float loans, the only difference being that under that Act the Metropolitan and Ipswich Water Supply and Sewerage Board can issue inscribed stock, which other boards will not be empowered to do. A board must obtain the approval of the Governor in Council to any loan, and he may make the establishment of a Sinking Fund a condition of approval. If a board makes default in the payment of interest or principal, the lender’s remedy is to apply to the Supreme Court for the appointment of a receiver. Although important, the Bill is non-contentious. I beg to move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I have only had time to glance through a portion of the Bill, and it appears that in describing it as non-contentious the Minister was fairly accurate. It is a strange thing to me if a water authority can borrow money at the same rate of interest that the Government can borrow, because, undoubtedly, the security is not so good. There was a time not so long ago when water authorities had no power to borrow except from the Government; but now, whether it is that the Government cannot find sufficient money to finance the water authorities or not, I do not know; but, under this Bill and the Bill passed recently by this Council, power is conferred upon the water authorities to borrow money. If the water authorities can borrow money at the same rate of interest as the Government, I cannot see any objection to it; but the better the security is, the lower the rate of interest, and undoubtedly the security of the whole is better than the security of a part. The security of the whole of the State of Queensland is behind a Government loan; but there is only the security of a very small portion of the State behind a loan floated by a water authority. If it were possible for the Government to lend money to the water authorities, it would be better than allowing the water authorities to borrow money for themselves, because the Government should be in a better position to borrow money. As it appears, however, that the Government have as much

as they can do to borrow money for public works carried out on loan money, it seems to me we have either to pass this Bill or compel the local authorities to go without the money they require. A great deal of loan money has been wasted in connection with the sewerage scheme in Brisbane. The sewerage system is going to cost infinitely more than was contemplated when the Metropolitan Water Board came into existence, and we do not know to what extent the rate-payers in the metropolitan area are going to suffer. However, the only thing we can do is to allow the necessary money to be borrowed to allow works already commenced to be completed.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

(Hon. L. McDonald, Acting Chairman, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

The Council resumed.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

The report was adopted.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR MINES, the Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be returned to the Assembly by message in the usual form.

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION ACT  
AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: This is a Bill to amend the Infant Life Protection Act of 1905, and is a small measure of a humane character, which is introduced to further protect infant life. Hon. gentlemen, I am sure, will not object to the speedy passage of a measure of this kind. The object of the measure is to tighten up the Infant Life Protection Act. Under the Act, as it will be amended by clause 2 of the Bill, no person, other than the parents, who is not a registered occupier of a registered nursing home, will be able to take or retain in his custody any infant under three years of age for the purpose of nursing or maintaining it. I have read the Bill very carefully, and have a lot of notes on it, but I do not wish to weary the Council by further explaining its provisions. It is not a contentious Bill, and hon. gentlemen will admit that it is quite necessary, and is introduced in the interests of the little orphan children of this State. I have much pleasure in moving—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

HON. P. J. LEAHY: It is a pleasure to have a Bill submitted to us of a humanitarian nature. I have perused this Bill, and there does not appear to be anything in it to object to. I take it the necessity for this Bill has been recognised by the officials of the department in carrying out the provisions of the Infant Life Protection Act, and it seems to me that the amendments proposed by it will make the principal Act more workable. In clause 5 it is provided—

“Upon and during the hearing of any complaint made under this part of this Act no person shall be or be permitted to be present in court except the following persons.”

It then gives the names of those persons who may appear in court. That is a very proper provision, and I would be very glad to see something of the same kind inserted in the

laws dealing with divorce proceedings. In all these matters the judge should have authority to limit the number of persons present to those who have some real interest in the case. Cases of this kind should not be used, as a theatre is used, by people for the purpose of getting some amusement. I have great pleasure in supporting the Bill. On the very rare occasions when anything comes up here of a non-party character, the Minister can be assured that he will get the hearty support of this side of the Council.

Question put and passed.

The consideration of the Bill in Committee was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I beg to move—That the Council, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday next. We shall then have some legislation from the Assembly, but the business sheet is almost cleared now, with the exception of the Committee and third reading stages of the Bill the second reading of which we have just agreed to. As there will be no business from the Legislative Assembly in the meantime [7.30 p.m.] time, it will not be necessary to sit to-morrow or Friday; but we should have ample business for next week. I hope hon. gentlemen will attend on Tuesday next.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I do not know that any hon. gentleman on either side has any desire to come here if there is no business to transact. The Minister perhaps should have mentioned the Bills which are to be brought forward next week. I take it from various things, such as the suspension of the Standing Orders and the providing of an additional sitting day, that it is intended that the session will close probably on Friday of next week. I see no reason why we should not get through all the business which may come up from the Assembly in the meantime. Are we likely to get any new Bills introduced in the Assembly next week?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There are some quite important Bills.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Can the Minister tell us if it is intended to introduce a Bill to abolish the Legislative Council, because if that comes up here it would cause some discussion.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Will the hon. gentleman give notice of his question for Tuesday next?

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I think I will wait for developments. We should have some definite understanding regarding the resumption of the debate on Mr. Fowles's motion. The Minister should give us the opportunity of concluding that. There is no intention of discussing it in any acrimonious spirit on this side of the Chamber. Our speakers will not occupy more than two or three hours.

HON. R. BEDFORD: Each?

HON. P. J. LEAHY: No. We are not long-distance talkers like some hon. gentlemen on the other side, including the Hon. Mr. Bedford. I do not occupy the time of the Council very much, although I think I sometimes say more than some hon. gentlemen. The discussion on the Hon. Mr. Fowles's motion I am sure could be concluded in from four to six hours, and I think we can spare that time, and get through all the business the Minister may have to submit.

Question put and passed.

The Council adjourned at 7.35 p.m.

Hon. P. J. Leahy.]