

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 6 JULY 1922

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THURSDAY, 6 JULY, 1922.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Bertram, *Marzo*) took the chair at 3.30 p.m.

QUESTIONS.

OWEN CREEK RAILWAY.

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

“When is it intended to complete the Owen Creek Railway?”

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

“The line was opened to 5 miles 40 chains for traffic on 22nd February last. The work of constructing the bridge over Owen Creek and to the terminus at 6 miles 18 chains is now in progress.”

SOLDIER SETTLERS IN GROUP SETTLEMENTS

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

“1. How many soldier settlers were placed on blocks in group settlements during each of the financial years 1917-1918, 1919-1920, 1921-1922?”

“2. How many of these settlers were on the blocks concerned on 30th June, 1922?”

“3. How many blocks—being repurchased lands and being once occupied by soldier settlers—are now vacant?”

“4. How many vacant blocks on repurchased soldier settlements are unoccupied?”

“5. How many blocks are occupied on soldier settlements other than by soldiers?”

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

“1. The total number of blocks allotted to soldier settlers in group settlements during the financial years 1917-1918, 1919-1920, 1921-1922 is 1991.

“2. The total number of such allotments in force at 30th June, 1922, was 1758.

“3. 133.

“4. 299.

“5. 10.”

BOWEN COALFIELD RAILWAY.

Mr. BLPHINSTONE (*Oxley*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. When does he anticipate that the Bowen Coalfield Railway will be completed?”

“2. What is the cost to date?”

“3. What is the estimated cost when completed?”

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

“1. The line will be open for traffic not later than September next.

“2. £539,882 to 30th June, 1922.

“3. £604,000. The original estimate prepared in 1915 provided for 44 miles 50 chains of line only. The present estimated cost to complete is for 48 miles 10 chains.”

MINISTERIAL TRAVELLING EXPENSES.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*) asked the Premier—

“In view of the fact that the following motion was unanimously carried by members of the Legislative Assembly on 1st September, 1921:—

‘That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing the amount paid or incurred by the State in respect of the travelling expenses of each individual member of the Ministry during the years ending 30th June, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921’—

does he intend supplying the information; and, if so, when?”

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

“The information will be supplied as early as possible.”

RAILWAY EMPLOYEES, REVENUE, AND TRAIN MILEAGE.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. How many (a) permanent, (b) temporary employees were employed in the State Railway Department on 30th June, 1922?”

“2. What was the net revenue per employee in the Railway Department during the year 1921-22?”

“3. How many train miles were run during the year 1921-22?”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

“1, 2, and 3. The figures are not yet prepared.”

PENALTY ON OVERDUE CROWN RENTS.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

“Will he bring in an amending Bill so that the Secretary for Public Lands may possess the power of abolishing the 10 per cent. penalty on overdue rents during periods of depression and drought?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS replied—

“This question is receiving the close attention of myself and the Cabinet at the present time.”

AMOUNT RECEIVED FOR RETROSPECTIVE PASTORAL RENTS.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Treasurer—

“What total amount was received by the Treasury for retrospective rents under the Land Act Amendment Act of 1919 for the year ended 30th June, 1922?”

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

“£60,253 8s. 3d.”

AMOUNT EXPENDED ON GOVERNMENT RELIEF.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*) asked the Treasurer—

“What was the amount expended in Government relief for the year ended 30th June, 1922?”

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

“£174,094 11s. 10d.”

FINANCIAL EMBARGO AGAINST ITALIAN AND DANISH IMMIGRANTS.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*) asked the Premier—

“1. Has the Government placed any financial embargo against the landing of Italian immigrants in Queensland?”

“2. Has the financial embargo placed by the Queensland Government against Danish settlers arriving in Queensland been rescinded?”

“3. Under what Statute, Federal or State, have the Queensland Government power to enforce such embargo?”

The PREMIER replied—

“1. No; nor has it power to do so.

“2. There never was such an embargo.

“3. The State has no powers of exclusion or admission, such functions being vested solely in the Commonwealth.”

REDUCTION OF SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES OF MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

Mr. PETERSON asked the Premier—

“In view of the decision of the Government to apply to the Arbitration Court for a reduction in the salaries and wages of civil servants and State employees, respectively, will he take into consideration the advisability of the following:— (a) A reduction in the salaries of Ministers; (b) curtailing of travelling allowance privileges accorded Ministers; (c) reducing the salaries of members proportionately to the distance of electorates from the seat of government?”

The PREMIER replied—

“The Government's intentions will be disclosed at the proper time. I would remind the hon. member that when he sat on this side of the House he was most clamorous in his demand for increased Parliamentary allowance.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and laughter.

REPORT OF VALUATION BOARD ON ASSETS OF BRISBANE TRAMWAYS COMPANY.

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

“Will he be pleased to place on the table of the House the report of the Valuation Board appointed to value the assets of the Brisbane Tramways Company, Limited?”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Larcoube, *Keppel*) replied—

“For obvious reasons the report is of a confidential nature at present.”

FRUIT PULP IMPORTED INTO QUEENSLAND.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Brisbane*) asked the Minister in Charge of State Enterprises—

“What quantity of fruit pulp has been imported by his department from the Southern States during the last twelve months?”

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Machay*) replied—

“The pulp of fruits not grown or procurable in Queensland is imported from the South in sufficient quantities to meet our requirements.”

INCOME TAX AND RETROSPECTIVE RENTS
COLLECTED FROM CATTLE INDUSTRY.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*) asked the Treasurer—

"1. What was the total amount of income tax received by the Treasury from persons or companies engaged in the cattle industry during—(a) financial year ended 30th June, 1921; (b) financial year ended 30th June, 1922?

"2. What was the total amount of retrospective rents collected from all sources during last financial year?

"3. (a) How many persons or companies received extension of time to pay retrospective rents? (b) What was total amount of same?

"4. What is the total of retrospective rent yet to be collected?"

The TREASURER replied—

"1. The annual report of the Commissioner of Taxes shows the total amount of tax assessed to pastoralists and pastoral companies. The information dissecting the tax paid by sheep or cattle men is not available.

"2, 3, and 4. It has not been possible to prepare this information in the time available. I suggest that the hon. member move for a return."

EXPORT CHARGE ON LOG PINE.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Is it a fact that his department is making a charge of 1s. 3d. per 1,000 superficial feet on the export of log pine to the Southern States by private enterprise, and is issuing receipts on the collection of same by the State sawmills?

"2. If so, is this practice being adopted with the object of assisting this State enterprise to pay?

"3. Does he not consider this charge on Queensland timbers to other States in Australia an export tax?

"4. If so, is this legal?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS replied—

"1. No.

"2. See answer to No. 1.

"3. See answer to No. 1.

"4. See answer to No. 1."

INCOME TAX ON SALE OF MUNGANA MINES.

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*) asked the Treasurer—

"1. Was income tax charged and paid on the sale of the Mungana mines to the State Government?

"2. If so, what was the actual amount paid?"

The TREASURER replied—

"1 and 2. As the sale did not take place until 25th March, 1922, the tax to be paid on the profit (if any) made by the sale will not be assessed until after 30th September next, the date on which returns of income earned during the financial year ended 30th June, 1922, are due."

INKERMAN IRRIGATION SCHEME—AREA AND
CHARGES.

Mr. GREEN asked the Treasurer—

"1. What is the area of land under cultivation at present being irrigated by the Inkerman irrigation scheme?

"2. What is the estimated area of land under cultivation to be supplied with water during the forthcoming twelve months?

"3. What is the present annual charge to benefiting farms, per acre, cultivated area?

"4. Is there any other charge being made on benefited areas?"

The TREASURER replied—

"1 and 2. This information is being obtained.

"3. No charge will be decided upon until the information referred to in Nos. 1 and 2 is collected.

"4. A special rate will be levied on farms which are provided with fluming."

REPORT OF VALUATION BOARD ON ASSETS OF
BRISBANE TRAMWAYS COMPANY.

Mr. KING, without notice, asked the Secretary for Railways—

"Will hon. members be permitted to peruse the report of the valuation board appointed to value the assets of the Brisbane Tramways Company, Limited?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"I would refer the hon. member to my answer to his previous question."

MOTION FOR CREATION OF NEW STATES.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*), without notice, asked the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Forde—

"Recognising the importance and value to the new States movement of the business being transacted by the conference at Albury, will he allow the motion standing in his name on the business-paper this day to lapse until such time as the direction from the Albury conference has been carried into effect, such direction being that, prior to submission to State Parliaments, a conference be convened of members of Parliament favourable to the new States ideal, quite irrespective of party politics?"

Mr. FORDE (*Rockhampton*) replied—

"Seeing that the hon. member for Burrum, in all the division lists, is seen voting side by side with the hon. member for Bulimba (Mr. Barnes)—"

Hon. W. H. BARNES: That shows his good sense.

Mr. FORDE—

"And with the hon. member for Windsor, the author of that famous petition to the Commissioner for Railways asking him not to disclose to the farmers particulars of the prices realised on their produce, it is no wonder that the hon. member for Burrum is 'in the bag' on this question, and does not want the country districts to get the recognition that is due to them."

(Loud laughter and interruption.)

The SPEAKER: Order! I would ask hon. members to restrain themselves.

Mr. BRAND: I desire to ask the hon. member for Rockhampton a further question without notice—

“Is it a fact that there has been initiated a movement in North Queensland with the object of electing him president of the republic of Central Queensland?”

(Laughter.)

Mr. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, if you will permit me to answer that question, I will tell you, Sir, that there is a very live movement in Central Queensland to out a republican and to elect me member for Capricornia.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and laughter.

The SPEAKER: Order!

PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF COMMONWEALTH CONSTITUTION.

NEW STATES MOVEMENT.

Mr. FORDE (*Rockhampton*), in moving—

“That in the opinion of this Parliament, the time has arrived for the remodelling of the Commonwealth Constitution, providing for the subdivision of Australia into a greater number of self-governing States, making for more economical and effective government, and also providing an easy method for the people living in any district, such as Central Queensland, or Northern New South Wales, to obtain self-government, and that the Prime Minister of Australia be urged to take the necessary steps to bring about these reforms.”

said: It is essential, when considering such a very important matter as this—a matter of national importance—to look at it from the viewpoint of Australia. Queensland is one of the self-governing States of Australia, and sometimes it is as well that hon. members in this House should look beyond the confines of Queensland and consider the interests of Australia as a whole. I hope that during this debate there will be a non-party spirit displayed. The conclusion of the World War ushers in the advent of a new world, and Australia is taking stock of her position, and she finds herself a much more important nation than previously. She has to take a more important part in the councils of the world, and what suited Australia as a Constitution for twenty years now requires revision. I think every patriotic Australian views with alarm that, under her present system of government Australian production, especially her primary production, is not progressing as it should. In fact, in some States, I am sorry to say that it is languishing, particularly in States like Western Australia and South Australia. In many cases there is an actual decline in rural population, and, in order to prevent the trend of population to the cities, we shall have to encourage people to go into the country districts. Country life must be made more attractive by the conservation of water, by the construction of additional railways and good roads; by providing better postal and telephonic communication, and by establishing modern civilised conveniences, thereby providing a market for primary products, which will bring in its train additional manufactures. We want to build up our secondary industries. All that will mean additional population and the establishment

of a greatly increased home market. That is of vital importance to Australia, and it can be brought about more rapidly by a subdivision of Australia into more manageable areas, giving self-government to Central Queensland, North Queensland, Northern New South Wales, and other portions of Australia that ask for it. The present time is a very appropriate one to carry such a motion as this, because there is meeting in Albury the All-Australian New States Conference, the object of which is to thrash out a policy common to all the New States movements, with the idea of securing a definite amendment of the Commonwealth Constitution, and deciding along what lines the New States propaganda shall be pursued in the future. This movement, which is a very live one in Albury, is a good one, and I am pleased to be able to say that we have representing Central Queensland at that conference Mr. W. S. Buzacott, the editor of the “Daily Record,” and Mr. Mawdesley, the secretary of the Rockhampton Harbour Board—two very fine representatives who for years have been interested in the New States movement in Central Queensland, and who will put the case for Central Queensland very effectively before the very important conference in Albury. At the All-Australian New States Conference in Albury the following New States movements are represented:—

Riverina New State Movement;
Northern New State Movement, New South Wales;
New States of Australia League, Sydney;
Australian Legion, Melbourne;
Central Queensland Separation Movement;
South-West Australian Separation Movement; and
Separation Movement, Northern Western Australia.

There are over sixty delegates present at the conference, and they are all men of some standing—men who have made a study of constitutional history—and the result of the conference will be to establish firmly the New States movement, not only in Central Queensland and Northern New South Wales, but all over Australia, and to educate the people on these important matters.

I had an opportunity of being present at the New States Conference in Armidale in April last year, as the representative of Central Queensland, and I there met over 200 delegates from all parts of

[4 p.m.] North New South Wales. The

Northern New South Wales League has 132 branches, and those branches all the year round are raising money. They hold competitions and bazaars, and raise large sums of money, and go in for propaganda work, which is very important to such a movement as this. It is no use any centre expecting the Government of a State to agree to the subdivision of the State without proving to the Government in a convincing manner that public feeling is behind the movement. It is no use sending resolutions down unless they can show that the majority of the people in the area are in favour of self-government for that particular area; and that is why I say they should not expect a Government to do everything, but, by organisation, get a sufficiently large membership to impress the State or Federal

[*Mr. Forde.*

authorities. I believe we can do that in Central Queensland. When I was in Northern New South Wales I had an opportunity of getting round and seeing the country, and just to show how it has been held back for want of self-government. I want to point out that it is as rich in soil and as good in climate as, if not better than, Victoria. It is as large as Victoria, and not inferior in any way from a natural point of view: yet Victoria, with self-government, has a population of 1,500,000, as against Northern New South Wales, with 300,000 without self-government. Victoria has 4,000 miles of railways, as against 1,000 miles of railways in Northern New South Wales. There are operating in Victoria to-day 5,000 factories, as against a fruit factory and a flour-mill or two in Northern New South Wales. Queensland, at the time she got self-government, had 25,000 people. She now has 750,000 people and 7,000 miles of railways. If she had not got separation from New South Wales, she would not have made that progress. In fact, I had the pleasure of listening to an address delivered by Sir William Cullen, the Chief Justice of New South Wales, at Armidale New States Conference, when he recounted a conversation which he had with the late Sir Samuel Griffith, in Brisbane, when Sir Samuel Griffith said to him—

“I believe that, if Queensland had not got separation from New South Wales, she would not to-day have half of the population she has.”

The cost of government in Australia is too great. The taxpayers cannot stand the heavy burden much longer. Government must be simplified and all the expensive and unnecessary paraphernalia of government must be cut out. According to “Knibbs,” the cost of parliamentary government in Australia is £467,154 per annum. The total cost of the seven Parliaments, electoral offices, and Royal Commissions amounts to £962,619, or close on a £1,000,000 per annum, which has to be met by the taxpayers of Australia. There are 635 members of Parliament, and the cost of conducting the Commonwealth Electoral Office alone is £94,536.

Mr. VOWLES: And you want another Government in the North?

Mr. FORDE: Yes; but I want to simplify and cheapen government. Instead of seventy-two members sitting in this corner of Queensland, I stand for twenty members here, twenty members in Central Queensland, and twenty members in Northern Queensland, so that the people living in remote parts can be looked after. The townspeople and lawyers in the cities do not care about them.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Do you call that economy?

Mr. FORDE: I would economise by reducing the number of members in Australia. We should economise. People cannot stand this burden, and particularly the people in the country districts, on the farms, which hon. members on the Opposition benches misrepresent. The cost of conducting the Commonwealth Electoral Office alone is £94,536 per annum. The cost of the upkeep of the six State electoral offices is £43,403 per annum. The time is coming when there must be one Commonwealth Electoral Office dealing with both Federal and State elections.

Mr. GREEN: Why do the Government not do that, the same as South Australia?

Mr. FORDE: I think it would lead to economy. Sooner or later it must come. If the hon. member will vote for this motion, as I believe he will, because he stands for self-government for Northern Queensland, he will be confirming my argument on that point.

I want to deal briefly with the history of the advocacy of self-government for Central and Northern Queensland. The very earliest movement in the direction of the division of Queensland into self-governing provinces was initiated in 1864, when there appeared in the Governor's Speech prepared by the Government led by the then Premier, Mr. Herbert, the following statement:—

“The question of local self-government is of peculiar importance to this colony, in consequence of the remoteness of many of its districts from the seat of government. A Bill will be introduced to enable local affairs to be administered, and local expenditure to be controlled by provincial councils.”

In September, 1864, a Bill to establish provisional councils was passed. With regard to the birthplace of the separation movement, I am pleased to say that Rockhampton was its birthplace. It was started there in 1866, or seven years after the great colony of Queensland was established. A petition on the subject was sent to the Imperial Government in that year, but it was rejected for the reason that no resolution on the subject had been made before the local Legislature. Of course, the local Legislature was not sympathetic, and it was not approached. The next move was a petition to the Legislative Assembly presented on 21st May, 1867, by Mr. Charles Fitzsimmons and signed by 531 residents of Rockhampton and neighbouring districts. The advocacy was so strong in those days that Mr. A. H. Palmer, the Premier, introduced a Bill to provide for financial separation in the Central Division, the North, and the South, by the establishment of councils, but the Bill was lost. It met a similar fate in 1872, and a like result in 1876, and in 1877 it was introduced and again defeated. The next move was a separation memorial, signed by the inhabitants of Central Queensland, which was despatched to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on 24th January, 1871, but the then Acting Governor, Sir Maurice O'Connell, inserted a personal expression of opinion, which read—

“The matter to which it refers is not yet ripe for legislation.”

A further intimation was made that the Premier, Mr. Palmer, was disinclined to make the matter one for deliberation in the Executive Council. The Government actually refused to make the subject one for deliberation in the Executive Council at that time. Another petition was forwarded through the Marquis of Normanby, the then Governor, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, on 26th December, 1871. The Governor, in commenting on the petition to the Secretary of State for the Colonies at that time, said—

“The subject is one which is left an open question with my Council, and one on which, as a Government, they declined to offer any advice.”

They failed in their duty. They would not offer their opinion one way or the other. That is the attitude of Tory Governments on these matters. Again the people were sidetracked—the people the descendants of whom I represent

Mr. Forde.

to-day in the Queensland Parliament. In 1879 Mr. John M. Macrossan, being then Secretary for Works and Mines, introduced and had passed a Bill to divide the colony into districts for financial purposes, and to adjust the general and local receipts and expenditure of the colony. A motion was introduced in the Legislative Assembly by Mr. Macrossan in 1886 for the subdivision of Queensland, but the motion was defeated by a majority of members representing Southern Queensland. Another motion was moved by Mr. Macrossan and defeated in 1890. Then later on Mr. A. Archer, one of the members for Rockhampton, moved a resolution on the 14th November, 1890, and it met the same fate as the previous resolution. Then came along Mr. G. S. Curtis. Mr. Curtis about this time came into prominence as an active advocate of self-government for Central Queensland. He took a very prominent part indeed. Let me say here that, although Mr. Curtis and I do not see eye to eye on political matters, he became a very able representative in favour of self-government for Central Queensland. A petition which emanated from Central Queensland was signed by 7,727 inhabitants, and it was sent down to Parliament in 1890, but a reply was given to that petition stating that the question was not yet ripe for a decision. So it was again sidetracked. On the 12th November, 1890, a further communication was addressed to Baron Knutsford, Secretary of State for the Colonies in England, by twenty-six members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, who favoured the separation of Central Queensland. A reply was received that the matter would receive consideration. Sir Henry Wylie Norman, the Governor of Queensland, made the following memo. at that time:—

"I have not as yet been convinced that a majority of the people in Central Queensland desire separation."

So the matter was again dropped, and the people of Central Queensland were again frustrated in their desire to obtain separation. Sir S. W. Griffith, who was then Premier of Queensland, was opposed to the subdivision of Queensland into three colonies. He, however, was induced by great pressure from Central and Northern Queensland, as a result of a tour through that part of the colony, to introduce a Bill, and that Bill came before this Assembly on 23rd June, 1892. The real proposal in the Bill was for the division of Queensland into three provinces. Mr. A. H. Barlow moved an amendment eliminating Central Queensland, and the amendment was carried. That amendment was carried by a majority of members of this Assembly who were opposed to the Labour party. As the result of that amendment being carried, the Bill was withdrawn. They were playing with the people of Central Queensland. Another Bill was introduced entitled "Constitution Bill, No. 2" and it provided for two provinces, the Centre forming part of Southern Queensland, while self-government was to be granted to Northern Queensland. That Bill was carried in this Assembly by thirty-two votes to eight. The late Sir Robert Philp was one of the strongest supporters of that Bill; in fact, he was a champion of self-government for Northern Queensland and for Central Queensland. The third reading of the Bill was carried by thirty votes to thirteen, and it was then sent up to the Legislative Council, which is now defunct.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

[Mr. Forde.

Mr. FORDE: Even in those days the will of the people of Queensland was defeated by the Upper House. The second reading of the Bill in the Legislative Council was defeated by seventeen votes to nine. I am glad that to-day no legislation passed by this Assembly can be defeated by any other body.

The year 1893 was the next stage in the separation movement, when Mr. G. R. Burns, one of the members for Townsville, moved a motion in favour of territorial separation for the Northern portion of the colony. That motion was defeated. Mr. G. S. Curtis, who showed great ability as a champion of the separation movement in favour of self-government for Central Queensland, came into this House in 1893. On 20th August, 1893, Mr. Curtis moved a motion affirming that as the constituencies of the Central Division had at the general election declared in favour of territorial separation, it was desirable that the territory comprised within such division should be erected into a separate colony. That motion was defeated in this House by thirty-two votes to fifteen. I am mentioning these facts so that hon. members will know that it is no new idea for the people of the Centre and North to want separation. In fact, the people of Central and Northern Queensland have been fighting for self-government for over half a century. In 1893 the women of Central Queensland took an interest in the matter, and a petition signed by 4,000 women was sent to Her Majesty the Queen asking her to grant Central separation. A very diplomatic reply was received to that petition, stating that Her Majesty was pleased to receive it very graciously. So again the people of Central Queensland were set back. In 1893 the separation convention assembled in Rockhampton and passed five resolutions in reference to the separation of Central from Southern and Northern Queensland. These were forwarded through the president, Mr. G. S. Curtis, to the Governor for transmission to Her Majesty the Queen. They were advised of the result by Sir Thomas McIlwraith, who stated that it had become a matter for serious consideration, but nothing further was done. Again the people were sidetracked. In the session of 1896 the late Hon. W. Kidston, who represented Rockhampton in this Parliament, moved a further motion in connection with separation. On 17th September, 1896, Mr. Kidston moved a motion in favour of taking a referendum "to obtain a direct expression of opinion from the electors of Northern and Central Queensland as to the desirability of their respective districts being constituted separate colonies." That motion was defeated by twenty-five votes to fourteen. Another motion of similar importance was moved by Mr. Kidston in 1897, when his colleague, Mr. Curtis, moved an amendment directly affirming that Central and Northern divisions should be constituted separate colonies. Mr. Curtis's amendment was put, and the result was twenty votes for the "Ayes" and twenty for the "Noes." Mr. Speaker Cowley voted with the "Ayes," and the motion was therefore carried. Then what happened? That was about three years before federation and the Queensland Parliament affirmed that there should be territorial separation for Central and Northern Queensland, and also that the people had a right to govern themselves. However, what was wanted was an Act of Parliament, not a resolution. The then Government would not

take the question up. Federation then arrived, and the big issue swept the people off their feet for a time, so the separation question was overshadowed.

The next move came from the late Hon. T. J. Ryan, who, as member for Barcoo in the Queensland Parliament, moved on 28th July, 1910—

“That, in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived when Queensland should be divided into three States, and when Central and Northern Queensland should each be granted a separate Constitution, subject to the Constitution Act of the Commonwealth of Australia.”

That motion was put to the House and carried but nothing further was done, which shows that pious resolutions have no business in them. Legislation is what was required. The people were again sidetracked. In the session of 1913, Mr. John Adamson, who represented Rockhampton, tabled a motion affirming that Queensland should be divided into three States with separate Constitutions. What happened? That motion was defeated by 27 votes to 21. The division list shows that the members of the Labour party supported the motion. The division list was—

“Ayes (21)—Messrs. Adamson, Archer, Crawford, Fihelly, Foley, Gillies, Grant, Hardacre, Kessell, Kirwan, Land, Larcombe, Lennon, Macrossan, May, McCormack, Murphy, O’Sullivan, Payne, Ryan, and Theodore.

“Noes (27)—Messrs. Appel, W. H. Barnes” —

I see Mr. W. H. Barnes voted against that motion. I have in mind that, when Mr. Barnes was in Rockhampton recently, he told the people that he loved the people of Central Queensland. A lady said to him: “Seeing that you love the people of Central Queensland, can you tell them why you voted against the motion for self-government in 1914?” Mr. Barnes replied, “Well, I really do not know. I think probably our lady friend is misinformed.” “Oh, no, Mr. Barnes,” she replied, “I will quote to you page 1,146 of ‘Hansard.’” She gave him the page and the date, and, of course, he had to sit down. She is a person who reads and takes an interest in political issues.

Mr. KERR: Who prepared that question for her?

Mr. FORDE: She prepared it herself. The other “Noes” were—

“Messrs. Bell, Bertram, Blair, Bouchard, Bowman, Bridges, Caine, B. H. Corser, E. B. C. Corser, Cribb, Denham, Forsyth, Gilday, Gunn, Hamilton, Hodge, Paget, Petrie, Lieu-Col. Rankin, Messrs. Swayne, Tolmie, Trout, Welsby, Winstanley.”

Mr. KERR: Who is Mr. Winstanley? (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. FORDE: Well, if those Labour members who voted with the “Noes” were asked questions on the platform they would not tell lies over it. They would tell the truth. Messrs. Barnes, Denham, Blair, Corser, and others voted against it. And I want to say that pressure was brought to bear on the Prime Minister some time ago particularly as a result of that New State Conference at Armidale, and a Constitution Convention Bill was introduced into the Federal Parliament. It was drawn up in such a way that it was not

acceptable to the majority of the Federal members—no doubt, the Prime Minister knew that when he introduced it. He played with Dr. Page, the leader of the Federal Country party, and he had no difficulty in having the Bill thrown out. On page 14,260 of Federal “Hansard” No. 108, session 1920-21, Mr. Hughes said—

“The present position is well known to hon. members. There is no prospect of the Bill being passed into law I desire further to announce that the Government, at the earliest possible moment next session, will bring down such proposed amendments of the Constitution as it thinks desirable, and afford the House the freest opportunity to suggest others. The Government will exercise its own right to determine which, if any, of such further amendments so suggested shall receive its support when they are submitted to the people.”

That is what the Prime Minister told the Federal members. He had no intention of passing that Bill. He wanted to conciliate Dr. Page—there is no doubt about it—one has only to read the newspapers. It will be seen that reform must come from the Federal Parliament, and it is well that we should pass a motion such as this and show how, right from the time the matter was first mooted away back in 1866, successive State Governments sidetracked the issues. I would like to see the reforms brought about by the legislation of this Parliament, if possible; but past experience over a period of fifty years makes that unlikely. So I say that the Federal Constitution should be amended to give the Federal Parliament power to facilitate the giving of self-government to any recognised districts such as Central Queensland and Northern Queensland. Section 123 of the Commonwealth Constitution provides—

“The Parliament of the Commonwealth may, with the consent of the Parliament of a State, and the approval of the majority of the electors of the State voting upon the question, increase, diminish, or otherwise alter the limits of the State upon such terms and conditions as may be agreed on, and may, with the like consent, make provision respecting the effect and operation of any increase or diminution or alteration of territory in relation to any State affected.”

And section 124 provides—

“A new State may be formed by separation of territory from a State, but only with the consent of the Parliament thereof, and a new State may be formed by the union of two or more States or parts of States, but only with the consent of the Parliaments of the States affected.”

Now, let me read what the Labour party’s platform says with regard to the alteration of the Commonwealth Constitution—

“(1) Complete self-government as a British community.

“(2) The Commonwealth Constitution to be amended to provide—

(a) Unlimited legislative powers for the Commonwealth Parliament, and such delegated powers to the States or Provinces as the Commonwealth Parliament may determine from time to time.

(b) The Commonwealth Parliament to be vested with authority to create new States or Provinces.”

Mr. Forde.]

That is important

"The Senate to be abolished. The High Court of Australia to have final jurisdiction in all Australian cases. The principal of adult suffrage to be embodied in the Constitution."

Now, the Commonwealth Constitution is the third in a chain of four great written Constitutions of English-speaking people. The fundamental principle of the American Constitution is the weakness of the central power. That Constitution makes the State Governments the rivals of the central power. The result is State jealousies, which is very unsatisfactory, and it was adopted as the model for the Australian Constitution. The Canadian Constitution has as its fundamental principle the strength of the central power. It has been said that South Africa adopted the Canadian distribution of powers between the central and local organs of government, but the South African scheme is not federal, but unitary. That is the principle which is popularly known as unification. The South African people selected that form of Constitution after they had had some experience of the Australian Constitution. They would not follow the latter, according to the statement made by Major Belcher, the manager of the British Empire Mission, when he was out here. They considered that the Canadian Constitution suited them much better. The Parliament of the Commonwealth cannot alter the Constitution of New South Wales, and, consequently, the Australian Constitution is what is called a federated Constitution. On the other hand, the Parliament of South Africa can alter the Constitution of Cape Colony, and that is why it is unificatory. It means that the central Government is the sovereign power from which the powers are delegated to State or Provincial Governments and further powers to municipal councils, if considered advisable. I maintain that great progress can be brought about more rapidly in Australia by a general subdivision of Australia into more manageable areas than by any other means I can think of.

Here I want to quote what Dr. Dunmore Lang, the renowned legislator of New South Wales in the early days, and a man who took a foremost part in the advocacy of self-government for what is now known as Queensland, had to say after his return from the United States of America—

"In the course of a visit to the United States of America in 1850, I learnt that much of the social comfort and happiness depended on their having the government in all the more important concerns of life brought to their own doors through the division of their country into a number of separate States; also, that they had found from experience that from 40,000 to 50,000 square miles was a proper extent of territory for a separate State."

It stands to reason that even a station is better managed within a radius of 20 miles from the head station than within a radius of 50 miles or 100 miles from the head station. A system of small States means that the Government are more sympathetic and that members of Parliament have a better opportunity to get in touch with the people personally. Ministers can become known to the people and learn their requirements and the conditions under which they live much more intimately than they could in a great State like Queensland, where it takes close on

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a fortnight to travel from one end to the other. It only requires common sense to know that it would lead to better government and a livelier sense of responsibility on the part of the people outside if we had as States such districts as Central Queensland, Northern Queensland, and Northern New South Wales.

At 4.30 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES, Mr. Kirwan (*Brisbane*), relieved the Speaker in the chair.

Mr. FORDE: I am a great believer in a member of Parliament knowing his people—getting in touch with them, mixing among them, living the same life as they live. Australia is unique in the paucity of its subdivisions when compared with all the other large areas in the world. For instance, take Brazil. It has an area of 3,200,000 square miles, and has twenty provinces in addition to its Central Government. The Argentine Republic has ten provinces and fourteen territories to administer an area of 1,100,000 square miles. Germany had about 200,000 square miles and twenty-five State Administrations. The United States of America, for an area which is 900 square miles smaller than Australia, has forty-eight Governments as against Australia's five on the mainland. The progress of the United States, which started originally with thirteen States for 3,000,000 people, has been particularly marked since they went in for general subdivision. The States in America are 50,000 to 60,000 square miles in area, with the capital somewhere near the centre of the State. In fact, all the countries that have gone in for general subdivision present very striking instances of rapid growth of population following the division of the existing areas and the creation of additional States, because they have been better managed, the subdivision having led to better government. I would not for a moment advocate that there should be established in Australia twenty State Governments, with twenty Upper Houses, twenty Governors, and with the same expensive governmental machinery as we have to-day in the average State in Australia. A lot of that could be eliminated. The number of members of Parliament could be reduced, and, if Queensland were divided into three States, each State could have twenty members, but each State must have adequate governing powers.

I will give a few instances of the rapid growth of States after they have obtained self-government. Take Iowa, in America. It has an area of 56,000 square miles. In 1840, the nearest census to the year in which the State was created, it had a population of 43,000. Ten years later it had a population of 102,000. In 1910 the population was 2,224,000. Kansas, with an area of 82,000 square miles, had a population of 107,000 in 1850, and increased her population to 364,000 in ten years. In 1910 she had a population of 1,600,000. Now take Kentucky, with an area of 40,000 square miles and a population of 75,000 in 1840, the year in which it was created a State. It increased its population to 220,000 in ten years. Take Wisconsin. It increased its population from 30,000 to 335,000 in ten years, because it was able to look after the requirements of the people, and the legislators, having a small area to concentrate upon, could keep in touch with the people. The population of Mississippi increased from 8,000 to 40,000 in ten years. Tennessee increased her population from

35,000 to 105,000 in ten years. Oklahoma increased from 61,000 to 398,000, and in 1910 had a population of 1,657,000. Illinois increased from 12,000 to 55,000 in ten years. Mark that sudden leap of population owing to good government! In 1910, Illinois had a population of 5,638,000.

Good government from Southern Queensland is a poor substitute for self-government. I recognise that, since the present Government came into power, Central Queensland has had less reason to feel aggrieved than ever before, because we have gone in for such schemes as the Dawson Valley water conservation and irrigation scheme, the Northern Burnett scheme, the Alton Downs Railway, and the North Coast Railway, having spent £2,000,000 on public works in Central Queensland. In addition, we have given £250,000 to the Rockhampton council for providing a new water supply. I mention these things to show that the people of Central Queensland know they have good government from the South, but they believe it is a poor substitute for self-government.

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

Mr. DASH (*Mundingbarra*) formally seconded the motion.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I am very pleased at having had the opportunity of listening to the remarks of the hon. member for Rockhampton in his advocacy of unification and the principle of separation. One can safely say that the speech of the hon. gentleman was merely a repetition of ancient history, which he has collated from this little work published by Charles Arrowsmith Bernays. Whilst the hon. member has been kind enough to mention the names of other authorities, he has not had the decency to give credit to the gentleman who has been responsible for the whole of his quotations. I have been looking up Mr. Bernays's book, and I desire to tender my congratulations to him on the splendid information that is contained therein. The hon. member's speech has been one of quotations. He has not given any argument why his motion should be supported. I do not intend to support it. I am going to give the House an opportunity of coming to a division on an amendment. Before doing so, I wish to refer to the speech delivered by the hon. member. For a long time I was dissatisfied whilst I was a member of the party opposite. By the way, I do not take the slightest umbrage at their feeling sore over my defection. I must expect that. I myself used to feel sore at and say hard things about members who left the Labour party, and I am prepared to put up with the consequences of having done so, because, to the best of my ability, I have obeyed my conscience. The speech delivered by the hon. member is one purely in favour of unification, and is against the spirit which has been behind the great movement in Central Queensland for the last forty-five years. I challenge the hon. member to go into any part of Central Queensland and advocate there unification as a solution of the troubles of Central Queensland. He knows that he has signed a pledge which practically binds him to unification, and he can speak in no other way. He also knows that he does not stand for the separation of Central Queensland, but for the conversion of Central Queensland into a glorified municipal council. He talks about the high cost of government,

the maintenance of government, and the rest of it. That is beside the question, and all the authorities that he quoted, from Mr. G. S. Curtis upwards or downwards, in every case showed that the agitation was in favour of separation with full sovereign rights to the new States that were created. The hon. member proposes to bring the people of Central Queensland down to the level of municipal councils.

Mr. FORDE: I do not mean anything of the kind, and you know it, too.

Mr. PETERSON: I did not interrupt the hon. member when he was speaking. He has an opportunity of replying, and will be in a position to reply to my arguments, if he is able.

Mr. FORDE: I will finish my speech when I reply.

Mr. PETERSON: I believe all the speakers on this side of the House will be very brief, in order to give the hon. member a chance of testing his sincerity.

Mr. FORDE: We know the hon. member's sincerity when he accepted £35 from the Central Queensland Political Executive at the last election. Tell us about that.

Mr. PETERSON: I do not know what the hon. member is driving at.

Mr. FORDE: I will read the letter.

Mr. PETERSON: If the Central Queensland Political Executive contributed towards the election expenses in Normanby, it was not in proportion to what I put in myself, and the hon. member cannot deny that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the hon. member for Normanby to confine his remarks to the motion before the House.

Mr. PETERSON: I quite agree with you, Sir, that we should confine our remarks to the question before the House, but a rather personal statement was made, and I naturally accepted the opportunity of replying. I propose to move the following amendment:—

"That all the words after 'that,' in the first line of the motion be deleted, with a view to substituting the following:—

This Parliament hereby consents to the creation of a new State comprising the territory known as North Queensland, and a new State comprising the territory known as Central Queensland."

There is no need to go beyond the present Constitution, which has been provided by the Imperial authorities. That Constitution has a provision that we can secure self-government for new States in Queensland, if we care to take the necessary steps. For years past in Queensland it was no use going to the utmost limits, for the simple reason that we had an Upper House to contend with, and it was usually accepted by hon. members that that body would not vote for a motion such as the one I have indicated. In section 124 of the Federal Constitution the following provision is made:—

"A new State may be formed by the separation of territory from a State, but only with the consent of the Parliament thereof, and a new State may be formed by the union of two or more States or parts of States, but only with the consent of the Parliaments of the States affected."

Mr. Peterson.]

You have there absolute power for this House to grant separation to Central and Northern Queensland. The hon. member for Rockhampton, in order to get a huge advertisement in Central Queensland, comes along here with a camouflage—something like the Labour objective—to pose as the political Moses of Central Queensland. The thing is absurd. I am going to give the hon. member an opportunity of voting against this amendment, and to satisfy the people of Central Queensland that he is not prepared to grant them an immediate opportunity of obtaining separation.

Mr. GLEDSON: Is that a Country party amendment?

Mr. PETERSON: No. Probably there are hon. members on this side, as well as hon. members on the other side, who will vote against the amendment, and against the motion, if the motion is put.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I do not think so.

Mr. PETERSON: This is my own business, as one of the members from Central Queensland. The reason why I support the amendment is because I believe that, with a unified system of government, we cannot hope to achieve that success that we can under a system of government with sovereign rights. In 1909, the population in Northern Queensland was 122,614, and on the 4th April, 1921—twelve years later—the population had increased to 129,756, or an increase of a little over 7,000. What becomes of the talk of the hon. member for Herbert about the great prosperity of the North in the face of these figures? The population in Central Queensland in 1909 was 70,859, and twelve years later it was 88,945. Taking the Southern Division—which is the crux of the whole position—we find the population in 1909 was 364,764, and twelve years later it was 538,933, clearly showing that the drift of the population, through the lack of having sovereign and self-governing States, is towards the capital. Unless we have an opportunity of changing the system that we have operating against us to-day, we cannot hope to develop Queensland in the way it should be developed. It is not my intention to speak at great length, and I do not want to be accused of talking this matter out. I am not going to take my full time. I want the House to come to a division to show where the hon. member for Rockhampton stands, and whether he is a true separationist, so far as Central Queensland is concerned. The hon. member in his speech took care not to mention the fact that the Federal House of Representatives has already assented to the principle of dividing the State of Queensland. The hon. member quoted many authorities, but he never mentioned that the Federal member for Capricornia introduced this motion on the subject in the Federal Parliament in 1912—

“That this House, with the consent of the Parliament of Queensland”——

We have to get the consent of the Queensland Parliament first. What is the use of talking about what any conference at Albury, or any other place, has done? We have the Federal Constitution, which says that once the Queensland Parliament has agreed to separation it is an assured fact. The hon. member does not want sovereign rights for Central Queensland, but he wants to bring that part of the State down, so that it can

[Mr. Peterson.

come under the socialistic objective, of which he is a bond-slave, under the system of unification.

Mr. FORDE: That is untrue, and you know it.

Mr. PETERSON: The hon. member for Capricornia, Mr. W. G. Higgs, moved the following motion, which was carried unanimously by the Federal Parliament:—

“That this House, with the consent of the Parliament of Queensland, and in accordance with chapter 6 of the Commonwealth Constitution, is prepared to form two new States out of the territory now known as Northern and Central Queensland.

“That this resolution be forwarded to the Senate with a request for its concurrence therein.”

That did not end the business. While the Federal House of Representatives may have passed that motion and showed that it was prepared to approve of the division of Queensland into three States, the responsibility still rests with the Queensland Parliament to declare whether or not the people of Central Queensland shall have separation. I am sorry that the hon. member for Rockhampton has taken up his present attitude. If hon. members look at the motion, they will see that he was in such a tremendous hurry to get it before the House that he forgot to include “North Queensland.” He mentioned the Northern district of New South Wales, and also Central Queensland, but he forgot to put in any word whatever about North Queensland.

Mr. FORDE: I said “and other districts in the State.”

Mr. PETERSON: I am going to read the hon. member's motion, and then we shall see what he is driving at, and whether there is any chance of getting anywhere in view of the amendment I have moved. The motion reads—

“That, in the opinion of this Parliament, the time has arrived for the remodelling of the Commonwealth Constitution providing for the subdivision of Australia into a greater number of self-governing States——”

Has the hon. member only just come into existence? We have already got these powers under the Constitution. Why does he want to waste time when the workers are starving in their thousands? When the people are demanding work, and when we should be doing something for the salaries we are getting here, what offrontery and what cheek on the part of the hon. member for him to come along here and give us dope like this, when we already have the power. The motion continues—

“making for more economical and effective government, and also providing an easy method for the people living in any district, such as Central Queensland.”

Is there anything easier than the chance the hon. member already has? All he has to do is to get a majority of hon. members sitting on his own side of the House to carry the amendment I have moved, and then he could probably go back to Central Queensland and say, “We have got separation for Central Queensland and for Northern Queensland at last.” His motion gets nowhere. It is only a little phase in the political campaign for the

purpose of boosting himself at the expense of his fellow Central members. He is not prepared to play the man in his electorate. He goes poking his nose into our electorates in order to discredit us, and, instead of consulting us in the matter, he brings forward an absurd motion such as this, which makes him appear ridiculous. I trust the House will carry the amendment.

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*): It gives me very much pleasure to second the amendment moved by the hon. member for Normanby.

Mr. FORDE: What is the amendment?

Mr. GREEN: It provides for self-government for Central Queensland and Northern Queensland.

The HOME SECRETARY: No, it does not.

Mr. GREEN: That is the object of the amendment.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you agree with the hon. member for Normanby?

Mr. GREEN: I agree with the hon. member for Normanby that a motion has only to be carried by this House for Northern and Central separation to become a fact.

The HOME SECRETARY: He said it was already carried by the Federal Parliament.

Mr. GREEN: He said it was carried by the Federal House of Representatives by a unanimous vote, but that it had not been carried by the Senate. If this House agrees to pass a direct motion in favour of separation, making it a tangible affair, then I feel sure we shall have gone a long way to bring about separation for Central and Northern Queensland.

The HOME SECRETARY: We can get control of the Senate by this means.

Mr. GREEN: I stand absolutely for separation of a tangible kind. I do not want unification, and I do not want glorified municipal councils governing Central Queensland and Northern Queensland. If we want to develop Northern and Central Queensland, we must have sovereign rights for each division. That is what we demand, and it is for that reason that I am supporting the amendment. In so doing, I feel that I am following in the footsteps of two of the greatest statesmen we have had in Queensland—the late Sir Robert Philp and the late Hon. J. M. Macrossan—who fought in and out of season for separation for North Queensland. When there were traitors in the camp, those two men stood firm and true to their principles. I do not intend to speak at any length on the amendment, because I want a division taken to see how hon. members stand on the question. My reason for supporting the amendment is that it is the only method of developing North Queensland and Central Queensland, and allowing those two great portions of the State to come into their own. The hon. member who has just resumed his seat showed us the growth of population in those two great districts during the last thirteen years, and it is a disgrace to Queensland that the richest portions of this great State should have shown so little advancement during that period. I do not condemn the present Government, nor do I condemn past Governments, but I do say that Queensland is too vast a State to be ruled from a corner in the South. Hon. members of this House do not realise the greatness of the State of Queensland. The town which I represent is only half-way along the Queensland coast,

and, if we look at the wonderful resources of North Queensland and see the little that has been done for the development of those resources, I feel sure that every hon. member of this House will stand absolutely and unitedly for the division of the State into three portions.

The HOME SECRETARY: I will vote for the amendment if you can assure me that there will be eighteen senators from Queensland.

Mr. GREEN: If we have three States we will have eighteen senators.

Mr. POLLOCK: Why stop at three States?

Mr. GREEN: When the hon. member looks at the portion of North Queensland that he represents, and sees how little development has taken place therein, I am surprised that he should put any difficulties in the way of separation coming about.

Mr. POLLOCK: You have squeezed out all the chemists there.

Mr. GREEN: And you squeezed out John Wren.

Mr. POLLOCK: You are a liar if you say I squeezed John Wren.

Mr. GREEN: The hon. member for Burke said he represented one of the richest portions of Queensland.

Mr. POLLOCK: You are a dirty liar.

Mr. GREEN: If that portion were developed and came into its own—

Mr. POLLOCK: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Townsville, I understand—I did not catch what he said personally—said that I squeezed John Wren. (Opposition laughter.) The only construction I can place on that is a construction that no honest member of Parliament could permit, and I ask that the expression be withdrawn.

Mr. VOWLES: You withdraw what you said.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: As the hon. member for Gregory regards the remark as being offensive, I would ask the hon. member for Townsville to withdraw.

Mr. GREEN: If the hon. member for Gregory regards the remark as offensive, I will withdraw it; but I ask your protection from the hon. member, who said that I squeezed certain other individuals out of Queensland.

Mr. POLLOCK: That is true.

Mr. GREEN: If there is to be courtesy on one side, the same courtesy should be extended on the other.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member for Gregory said that the hon. member for Townsville was a dirty liar, and he said previously that the hon. member was a liar, and I ask that those words be withdrawn unreservedly.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the hon. member for Gregory made use of that expression, I hope he will withdraw it, as it is hardly parliamentary.

Mr. POLLOCK: As the hon. member by withdrawing his statement has proved that he is not now a liar, I withdraw.

Mr. GREEN: The hon. member for Gregory has manifested his unmanliness, which he has exhibited time and again in this House. I treat the hon. member as beneath contempt.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member proceed with his speech.

Mr. Green.]

Mr. GREEN: The hon. member for Burke, in dealing with North Queensland, stated that if it was developed it would become one of the richest portions of this State. How can he expect to have it developed unless they get self-government? I trust that the House will come to a division in connection with this matter, because I am in earnest, and I am sincere, and I believe that the people of North Queensland and Central Queensland absolutely stand for separation for North Queensland and separation for Central Queensland. I know that, if the House agrees to the amendment, it will give great satisfaction to the advocates of separation in both those portions of Queensland.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): I desire to oppose the amendment moved by the hon. member for Normanby. The hon. member shows his inconsistency, just as he has shown his inconsistency on previous occasions, in moving such an amendment as this. The hon. member now moves an amendment for the creation of two new states [5 p.m.] in Queensland—two new Parliaments with all the consequent expenditure—although to-day he asked a question about the reduction of the cost in connection with this Parliament. Although to-day he is arguing that the salaries of hon. members be reduced, he threatened previously to leave the Labour party because his salary was not big enough. He threatened to leave the party if they would not do something to increase the salary of hon. members.

Mr. PETERSON: That is untrue. I rise to a point of order.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Quite true.

Mr. PETERSON: I rise to a point of order. The remarks attributed to me by the hon. member for Ipswich are absolutely untrue, and I ask him to withdraw them.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Perfectly true.

Mr. GLEDSON: Mr. Peterson—

Mr. PETERSON: You look after the Ipswich railway workers.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would ask the hon. member for Ipswich to refer to the hon. member by the name of his electorate.

Mr. GLEDSON: The hon. member for Normanby, in addition to that, said that the cost of conducting his election for Normanby was so great that he could not remain a member of Parliament.

Mr. PETERSON: That is absolutely untrue. I rise to a point of order. The statement made by the hon. member for Ipswich is absolutely untrue, and I ask for its withdrawal.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: It is not untrue.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think the hon. member has not sustained his objection under the Standing Orders.

The HOME SECRETARY: A denial of the truth does not make it untrue.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): Last session you ruled, Sir, that if an hon. member took exception to a statement made by another hon. member, that hon. member must withdraw it. That was the ruling you gave in my case. I hope you will do the same with the hon. member for Ipswich.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

[Mr. Green.

Mr. GLEDSON: I hope that hon. members on both sides will take it from me that I am not in the habit of making misstatements. I would neither make a misstatement nor tell an untruth about the hon. member for Normanby, independent of what he has done in this House, or about any other hon. member of the House, and hon. members know that.

Mr. PETERSON: I did not say it.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: You did say it.

Mr. GLEDSON: The hon. member for Normanby asks the House to accept an amendment such as this, and at the same time he brings forward the inconsistency of the hon. member for Rockhampton—a man whose boots the hon. member for Normanby is not fit to wipe. (Loud Opposition laughter.)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GLEDSON: I say that the hon. member for Normanby was pointing out the inconsistency of the hon. member for Rockhampton—a man whose boots he is not fit to wipe—and hon. members opposite find something to laugh at in the statement. The hon. member for Normanby makes the statement that the hon. member for Rockhampton and others were going about his electorate trying to damage him, and to create a false impression in the minds of the electors, but that is not correct. The hon. member for Rockhampton, myself, and other hon. members have had opportunity to go into that electorate, as we have gone into others, and tell the electors the truth about the man whom they selected to represent them on the Labour ticket, and who has turned round and is doing all he can against the interests of the workers. I said that the electors of Normanby were doubly cursed because they had not only a representative who had turned against them in the State Parliament, but also a representative who had turned against them in the Federal Parliament. We were out to do what we could to wipe the State clear of men like that both in Federal and State Parliaments. Not only the hon. member for Rockhampton, but every member of the Labour party, has a right to go out and tell the electors of Queensland what their representatives do in this House. They themselves are not game to go up and tell them. They do not go near them at all, but they come into this House and vote, and work, and speak against the pledge they signed when they were elected. An hon. member like that actually moves an amendment for the purpose of increasing the cost of government of this State. For the purpose of trying to get support for his amendment he uses the argument that the Northern and Central portions of the State are being neglected by the Government. Let us take the hon. member's own words, and find out what he said about the neglect of the Government. On one occasion he said—

"I am getting a good deal for the farmers of the Central district, and other members with me have been able to get concessions for the farmers that they never got from the Liberal Government. That is because we have a sympathetic Government."

Mr. PETERSON: I said that. I do not deny that.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*): I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Ipswich in order in referring to matters which have nothing to do with the question under discussion?

Mr. GLEDSON: I do not know why the hon. member for Port Curtis interrupts me in this way. Perhaps he has a kindly feeling for the hon. member for Normanby. They seem to have a very kindly feeling for one another. One left the Labour party and the other left the Nationalist party, and now they both sit cheek by jowl in this House trying to protect one another. Here is another quotation from a speech made by the hon. member for Normanby in this House—

“He would never be done thanking the Government, nor would the settlers ever be done thanking the Government, for the assistance that had been given to them.”

Mr. PETERSON: What year was that?

Mr. GLEDSON: That was on 26th October, 1915.

Mr. PETERSON: 1915! You have damned the country since then.

Mr. GLEDSON: Then, in the following year, the hon. member for Normanby made use of these words—

“The longer I am in Parliament the more I am convinced of the utter hypocrisy of members on that side of the House who claim to be the friends of the men on the land. I have seen two members, who pose as the representatives of the man on the land, to-day make an exhibition of themselves in irrelevancy, in immature facts, and in statements which cannot be borne out by facts.”

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to connect his remarks to the question before the House.

Mr. PETERSON: It is nothing but abuse.

Mr. VOWLES: He is killing time. He wants to talk the motion out.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. GLEDSON: An amendment has been moved by the hon. member for Normanby to omit certain words from the motion and to provide for two Parliaments to be set up—one in Central Queensland and one in Northern Queensland—owing to the neglect of the Government to do anything for those districts. I am connecting my remarks with the question by showing what the hon. member for Normanby said the Government had done for the Central district.

Mr. GREEN: I never said anything about the Government neglecting those districts.

Mr. GLEDSON: That is the nature of the amendment. The hon. member for Normanby quoted figures, giving the population of Northern Queensland, the population of Central Queensland, and the population of Southern Queensland, and he said the present Government were not doing the right thing for the people settled in the country districts. The hon. member for Townsville said that the motion moved by the hon. member for Rockhampton, if carried, would mean the establishment of glorified municipal councils, and that it was a disgrace to Queensland that the State was so far back as it was, and that it was all due to the Government of Queensland.

Mr. GREEN: I did not blame any particular Government.

Mr. GLEDSON: It is quite true that the hon. member did not blame any particular Government.

Mr. VOWLES: You are out of your depth again.

Mr. GLEDSON: I was quoting the statements made by the hon. member for Normanby to show what the Government had done for the Central district.

Mr. PETERSON: I never complained of the Government treatment at all.

Mr. GLEDSON: On page 1686 of the “Hansard” for 1916, we find that the hon. member for Normanby made use of these words—

“As a country member I must say that I am absolutely satisfied with the way the Government have treated my electorate . . . I feel sure that when we go before the electors in eighteen months’ time, the people will be satisfied with the work of this Government.”

The hon. member for Normanby also said on that occasion—

“The party opposite is made up of Labour rats.”

Mr. PETERSON: I admit that I said in 1916 that the people were satisfied with the way the Government treated my electorate.

Mr. GREEN: Let us take a vote on the question.

Mr. GLEDSON: There are one or two other quotations made by the hon. member for Normanby which I would like to give. I am sure hon. members opposite want to know all about the member they are now sitting with. They want to know what sort of a member the hon. member for Normanby is, and I can only show that by quoting some of his statements. The statements which he previously made in this House are quite different from the statements which he made this afternoon. On page 2466 of “Hansard” for 1917 I find that the hon. member made the following statement:—

“Since the Labour Government have been in power more money had been spent in two and a-half years in his electorate than in twenty years under the Liberal Government.”

Mr. PETERSON: They are going to spend more money next year than ever they spent before.

Mr. GLEDSON: The hon. member admits that the Government spent a lot of money in his electorate, and he says they are going to spend more next year than ever they spent before; so how can he claim that his electorate has been neglected by the Government? I give these quotations to show the inconsistency of the hon. gentleman when he now asks the House to carry a motion such as he has proposed to-day. I have a sheaf of quotations here from speeches of the hon. member for Normanby, but I am sure hon. members do not want me to give all of them at once. We will have the others at another time.

Mr. VOWLES: We want to have a vote on the question.

Mr. GLEDSON: Later on we will give all the quotations made by the hon. member for Normanby.

Mr. PETERSON: You said that you were against a reduction of wages in 1920.

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Mr. DASH: And you said you would not be found dead with the Country party.

Mr. PETERSON: There was no Country party then.

Mr. GLEDSON: The hon. member for Townsville said that the motion was a proposal to form glorified municipal councils in Queensland under a unification system. The hon. member has no right to reflect on municipal councillors, because they have done good work for Queensland, and the hon. member has no right to sneer at them when he talks about glorified municipal councils.

The HOME SECRETARY: He is the chief Pooh Bah of the Townsville Municipal Council himself.

Mr. GLEDSON: I am satisfied that the municipal councils deal with many of their problems to-day in a proper manner. I am satisfied that they deal with them in as satisfactory a manner as they would be dealt with by the hon. member for Normanby or the hon. member for Townsville. These men devote their time, and energy, and ability to municipal work, and they are sneered at in this House by hon. members who say that we are attempting to set up glorified municipal councils. We say that it is a good thing to bring legislation and administration in local affairs to their immediate vicinity. The closer you can bring them to the people, the more chance you have of their being carried out in a proper way and for the benefit of the people concerned.

Mr. BRAND: Does not the amendment say that?

Mr. GLEDSON: The amendment does not say that. It gets no nearer the solution, which lies in getting the Parliaments nearer to the people. The amendment would increase the cost of government, and the inconsistency of the hon. member for Normanby is shown when he turns round and says that he is in favour of a reduction of the salaries of members of this House. The people of the Normanby are not going to be gulled by any such statement. They judge a man by what he has done, and not by his coming here and trying to make out that he is something which he is not. I hope the amendment will not be carried, because we do not want any more increase in the cost of government. We have quite enough government, if not too much government, in this country.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I have to support the motion moved by the hon. member for Rockhampton, but I regret that it has not been received in the manner which it demands as the biggest subject that could engage the attention of the people. I think a great number of people and politicians agree with the principle, and it has been so generally recognised that the subdivision of Queensland and other States would be beneficial to the whole of Australia that it cannot be taken that the movement is primarily a Queensland movement. It will be of value to Queensland if it is divided into a number of States—I do not say two, or three, or four; that is a question upon which the best statesmen and statisticians should give an expert opinion. I think the conference now sitting in Albury will probably outline a policy which will go a long way towards solving the question as to how the partition of Queensland and the other States should be brought about—not for the advantage of any particular State, but for the advantage of

the whole of Australia. So far as I can see, the amendment is a very obscure amendment. It is evidently founded on the old-time movement—the movement of twenty-five years ago, when there was a keen desire for the division of Queensland into three colonies. It seems to have that idea; but I am not at all clear as to whether the mover wants Queensland divided into three States or two States. I put the latter construction on it; and it is an interpretation which, if carried out, would be to the detriment of the Central district, at any rate. That is something which we in that district have always feared might occur on account of the greater weight of influence of the representation of the South in the State Parliament. I do not know whether the hon. member's recent associations with hon. members opposite have made his opinion akin to the Southern point of view.

Mr. BRAND: Why do you not test it?

Mr. HARTLEY: I do not know how I can do so, other than by the amendment, which shows that he is inclined to advocate what the Southern people have always had in their minds—that is, to divide Queensland by a line practically across the middle of the country, making a Northern Queensland and a Southern Queensland.

Mr. PETERSON: That is not so.

Mr. HARTLEY: The amendment provides for the omission of all words after "that," and the insertion of the following words:—

"this Parliament hereby consents to the creation of a new State comprising the territory known as North Queensland, and a State comprising the territory known as Central Queensland."

That can be read to mean a State comprising the territory known as Central and Northern Queensland.

Mr. PETERSON: No.

Mr. HARTLEY: I take the hon. member's denial.

Mr. PETERSON: Do you approve of the present boundaries of what are known as Northern, Central, and Southern Queensland?

Mr. HARTLEY: No; I do not approve of any boundaries. I think the newer idea prevailing amongst the people of Queensland will eventually find expression in the division of Queensland into four States—not three; but it will be a matter for the people of Queensland in conference to decide for themselves. I am of opinion that Queensland should be divided into States each of which will comprise within its boundaries the greatest community of interests. I think that the Central West and South-west of Queensland has a big claim for a State of its own, because it is peculiarly and particularly engaged in the pastoral and grazing industries.

Mr. CATERMULL: Would you be in favour of more decentralisation in the larger towns?

Mr. HARTLEY: You do not want a policy of decentralisation if you have a policy of separation. I do not think anyone will deny that the amendment is a bad amendment, in that it brushes away the need for the recognition of an Australian spirit. This is not a Queensland movement; it is an Australian movement. It is not for the benefit of Queensland alone that we want to divide this and other States into

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smaller areas. It is doubtful whether, under the Commonwealth Constitution, Queensland, standing alone and fighting its own battles, could ever get anywhere on this question. It is a question for co-operation between all people who believe in the division of States throughout Australia, and the amendment would cast aside the spirit that is recognised in the motion that this is an Australian movement—not merely a narrow parochial Queensland movement. We ask the assistance of those men in New South Wales who believe there is room for another State there, and of those in South Australia who believe there is room for another State there. The division of Queensland into two or more States cannot be obtained without the consent of the Commonwealth Parliament, and therefore it is much better that the motion should be carried in the form which provides that Queensland should be divided into a number of States—whatever number may be subsequently decided is best. It is much better that the demand for the creation of these States should come from an All-Australian Conference, such as that at Albury, rather than that it should be a purely Queensland demand such as that outlined in the amendment. A very big proportion of the people in Central Queensland recognise the value of separation.

[5.30 p.m.] Illustrations of its value in other countries were given by the hon. member for Rockhampton. It has been demonstrated particularly in the United States of America, where, after the formation of various new States, production increased in practically every branch, and population advanced. In no instance that I know of were there bad effects from the division of a big State into two or more smaller States. In Queensland lately we have not had the bad effect of government from one end of the State that we had previously. Some twenty years ago the amount of revenue which was secured from North and Central Queensland and the small proportion that was expended in those districts was notorious. Brisbane and a good deal of the southern portion of this State were built up at the expense of the wealth of production of North and Central Queensland. With the creation of new States in the Centre and in the North, and possibly in the West, that could not occur, because they would have their own revenue, the wealth from their own resources, to expend within their own territories, and that must eventually work for the benefit of those districts in the creation of new wealth and the settlement of a bigger population. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion moved by the hon. member for Rockhampton.

Mr. FORDE (*Rockhampton*): There is no doubt that the hon. member for Normanby got his cue this afternoon from the hon. member for Bulimba, who voted against self-government for Central Queensland when it was brought before this Chamber in 1914. I saw those two hon. members collaborating on the matter. No doubt when the hon. member for Normanby is seen on the division lists voting side by side with the produce merchants of Turbot street, Brisbane, his farmers in the Normanby will know that he has lost all interest in Central Queensland. (Ironical Opposition laughter.) There is no business intended by the hon. member for Normanby in the amendment. It is moved with a view to side-tracking this big

Australian question. I am prepared to support any amendment to this motion, or any other motion, which will bring nearer to fruition self-government for Central Queensland, in which I have taken a keen interest for some years. What is required is legislation. The hon. member for Normanby wants to delay this matter coming before the Prime Minister of Australia and the Federal authorities. Does any hon. member think that this Parliament has the power to divide Queensland into three States and give us eighteen senators to cast votes in the Federal Parliament for the North-South railway and other benefits for Queensland, against the senators from New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia? The hon. member for Normanby knows quite well that the amendment of the Australian Constitution is an Australian question, and must come under the notice of the Prime Minister of Australia. That is why I moved this resolution. It deals with the whole of Australia—not only Queensland. I am not alone in holding that opinion. Dr. Earle-Page and all the leaders of the New States movement in other parts of Australia know that it is an Australian-wide problem. Just as the farmers must band themselves together all over Australia if they are to get any redress, so those connected with this New States movement must work unitedly: it is not a matter for any one centre alone. The hon. member for Normanby moved his amendment with a view to side-tracking this big, national question.

Mr. PETERSON: No. I want separation for Central Queensland.

Mr. FORDE: Since the hon. member has been associated with the produce merchants of Turbot street he wants them to control everything the farmer produces, just as they have done in the past.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will address his remarks to the amendment.

Mr. FORDE: I say the hon. member for Normanby is insincere in sidetracking this question. Why did he not say he was in favour of an amendment of the Commonwealth Constitution providing for self-government for Central and Northern Queensland?

Mr. PETERSON: I am in favour of it.

Mr. FORDE: He brings forward this amendment at the behest of the produce merchants of Brisbane, in order to sidetrack the question. State jealousies have greatly impeded the progress of Australia in the past. We can get over that if we go in for a remodelling of the Australian Constitution to make provision for new States. Although the Commonwealth Constitution was framed by eminent men—men such as Sir Edmund Barton, Sir Alfred Deakin, and others—it has outlived its usefulness. The time has come when we can get a better Constitution. Australia has made great progress during the last twenty years. Why not have the best we can get? All students of constitutional history know that the reform must come from the top. Let me here quote what Mr. B. R. Wise, a member of the original Federal Convention, had to say in his book entitled "The Making of the Australian Commonwealth"—

"The remedy of the difficulties for the Constitution is to be found rather in the extension of Federal powers with extension of local government by subdivision

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of the larger States. Only by this means will be secured that enlargement of the powers of self-government of the people of Australia which was the declared object of the Constitution."

Let us come now to a recognised authority on constitutional law—Professor Harrison Moore. That gentleman has made the following statement:—

"The multiplication of political communities in Australia with the plenary powers of the present States is hardly to be contemplated. On the other hand, small areas for administrative purposes are eminently desirable."

I quoted, in my previous remarks on the motion, how many of the States of the United States of America have made rapid progress since they obtained self-government. So would Central Queensland. The subdivision in the United States of America applied only to the then existing thirteen original States, the total area of which was only 312,710 square miles—less than that of the State of New South Wales—with a population of 3,000,000 people. To-day they have forty-eight States and over 100,000,000 people. It originally had nothing to do with the enormous territories that were subsequently acquired by the National Government of America by the purchase of territories from Spain and France. Those were subsequently divided up and given self-government. There are to-day forty-eight progressive States in America which, during ten years, increased their population tenfold. That is a splendid progressive development that took place because the different States were given a great degree of self-government.

The ex-Governor-General of Australia, the Right Hon. Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson, in a very thoughtful speech which he delivered before he departed from Australia, had this to say—

"However, the necessity of unity was brought home to us during the war, while pride in the achievement of our national army, the recognition by other countries of Australia's nationhood, all tend to incline men's hearts to a constitutional readjustment of local government, and maybe pressure will come from the increasing necessity for devolution to demand more decentralised local government, and also from the growing recognition that Australia has sufficiently specialised in large and beautiful cities, and should turn her attention to developing a number of organised communities as centres of industry, population, and of local administration."

The Labour party in Australia agrees with the ex-Governor-General that there should be a devolution of adequate local governing power from the Federal Legislature to the State Legislatures, and there should be a greater number of State Legislatures with self-governing powers in Queensland, and the method to get them should be made easier. I find that many members of the Federal Parliament, including Nationalist members, Country party members, and even Labour members, are agreed that reform must come along the lines advocated by the Labour party. I went to the Federal House of Parliament and had a long interview with Dr. Earle Page, leader of the Federal Country party, who told me in a conversation that he believed in the Labour party's proposal for an amendment of the Common-

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wealth Constitution. The motion does not provide for a glorified municipal council, as was stated by the hon. member for Townsville, but for local Legislatures with adequate power for carrying on the government of the country in those areas. Up to 1902 in Queensland the expenditure was apportioned to Southern, Central, and Northern Queensland, but for some reason the practice was discontinued. With some difficulty I have been able to get some figures showing the amount of money spent on railway construction in the three divisions of Queensland for the last twenty-five years. I will take the period up to 1902, up to which period figures have been kept. In the Southern division the amount spent was £12,857,000, whereas the expenditure in the Central division was £3,358,000. Why, the Dawson Valley scheme decided on by this Government will cost £4,000,000, and the Northern Burnett scheme cost over £2,000,000, to say nothing of the North Coast line and other lines that the Government are building, because it recognises that Central Queensland has been neglected. Up to 1902 previous Governments had only spent £3,358,000 in Central Queensland. From 1902 to 1910-11 the expenditure on railway construction in Southern Queensland was grouped with the expenditure in Central Queensland, and the total expenditure was approximately £4,000,000.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Might I call the attention of hon. members to the fact that the rather loud conversation that is going on must be disconcerting to the speaker, and I trust that hon. members, if they wish to converse, will do so in a lower tone.

Mr. FORDE: The greater portion of that money was spent in Southern Queensland. £20,000,000 has been spent in Southern Queensland, £5,000,000 in Central Queensland, and £10,000,000 in North Queensland over a period of twenty-five years, when Conservative Governments were in power.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman is going to connect his remarks with the amendment.

Mr. FORDE: I am. I recognise that the hon. member for Normanby and some other hon. members on the other side are trying to sidetrack this issue.

Mr. PETERSON: You want to see a specialist.

Mr. FORDE: We have different railway gauges in different States of Australia, and different machinery of government. You find in most States the Commonwealth Savings Bank on one side of the street and the State Savings Bank on the other. We find great unnecessary expense in government machinery. With a proper remodelling of the Commonwealth Constitution, the whole matter could be reviewed, and we could have one Government sitting in Southern Queensland, another Government in Central Queensland, and another Government in Northern Queensland. National matters could then be left to the National Parliament; that would tend to greater development. The great natural resources of Central Queensland would be developed, and we would be able to establish our secondary industries. We are producing this year nearly £500,000 worth of cotton. We could have cotton spinning mills, weaving mills, and woollen mills, also the Dawson Valley water conservation and irrigation scheme and the Northern Burnett schemes, with big cotton

developmental schemes. With all these established we would be a much more important district. If the hon. member for Normanby would only assist in having the Commonwealth Constitution remodelled, Central Queensland would come into her own and be probably the richest State in the Commonwealth.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): This is one of the biggest questions that is likely to come before the people of Queensland. We believe that the Commonwealth Constitution wants remodelling. As one who has lived in Queensland for nearly forty years, I believe that Queensland would have made greater progress if we had had three Parliaments instead of one.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: I am not bound down to three Parliaments in Queensland. Having travelled over a good deal of Queensland, I am satisfied that, if ever the Gulf country, which was mentioned by the hon. member for Burke, is going to be developed, it will be developed by creating that part of the State into a separate province or a separate State.

Mr. SIZER: Why not make the electorate of Bowen into a separate State?

Mr. COLLINS: When one considers that the hon. member for Nundah only represents a very small portion of Queensland, and the hon. member for Bowen represents an area nearly the size of Belgium, perhaps there would not be anything wrong in creating the Bowen electorate into a province. But I am not here to advocate that the Bowen electorate should be created a province. I am here to support the hon. member for Rockhampton, who, it may be said, is one of the rising hopes of this young Commonwealth. (Laughter.) It is all very well for hon. gentlemen to laugh. The hon. member for Rockhampton is far more able to deal with this particular question than Dr. Earle Page, who poses as a big authority on this question.

Mr. KING: That is not saying much for him.

Mr. COLLINS: Dr. Earle Page is one of the leaders of thought in this Commonwealth. I attended a meeting addressed by him in Bowen, and, after listening for over an hour to this possible Prime Minister of the Commonwealth—all leaders of parties are possible Prime Ministers—I told my friends that it was a pity that we could not have a repetition of the Lisbon earthquake to swallow up the whole of us. That was the opinion I formed of Dr. Earle Page. I am not saying anything against the policy he was outlining, but he was not able to outline a policy in connection with this creation of new States in a manner in which it has been outlined this afternoon by the hon. member for Rockhampton. It is quite true that Dr. Earle Page, the leader of this New State movement, has got a powerful Press behind him, and, if our friends opposite had not got the Press behind them, and the people of Queensland and the Commonwealth could listen to them as we listen to them, they would realise the small amount of ability they possess on the Opposition side of the House.

At 5.50 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. COLLINS: As the hon. member for Rockhampton said, this question is nothing new. Years ago there was a strong separation movement in North Queensland, and that

movement only died with the advent of a strong Labour party in this House. We all know who were the leaders of the movement at that time. Mr. Hume Black, Sir Robert Philp, and many others advocated that North Queensland should be created a separate State, because at that time they were strong advocates of black labour, and they thought that, if they got North Queensland made into a separate State, they would be enabled to get a big influx of coloured labour in the North. Times have changed since then. We have seen the Commonwealth established, and surely no one who has travelled from here to Perth would argue that this great Commonwealth can be developed with six State Governments. We believe, therefore, in remodelling the Constitution to provide for more States or Provinces, or whatever the people of Australia may decide, with a view to having a better system of government. I hold in my hand a book which it would be wise for present-day politicians to read, because it was written by a Queenslander named Albert E. Church, at present occupying a position in one of our State schools. The book is entitled "Advance Australia: The Way to Nationhood."

At 5.53 p.m.,

Mr. VOWLES said: Under Standing Order No. 140, I move—

"That the question be now put."

The SPEAKER: Mr. Collins!

Mr. COLLINS: I am surprised at the leader of the Opposition taking advantage of the Standing Orders in order to stifle discussion on an important question such as this. (Laughter.) This question is occupying the attention of sixty delegates from different parts of the Commonwealth who are meeting at Albury at the present time. I am surprised at the attitude taken up by the hon. member for Townsville, because he seems to be out of touch with the gentleman who represents the Herbert, or misrepresents it; in the Federal House at the present time. I suppose he is well aware that on the 13th September, 1910, Mr. Bamford introduced a measure into the Commonwealth Parliament dealing with this question? Whatever may be said for or against Mr. Bamford, he can claim, to some extent, that he is the father of the unification movement in Australia. While I do not agree with him politically, I am willing to give him that credit, inasmuch as I have here a copy of the Bill that he introduced into the House of Representatives. Since then our party, which is the progressive party—

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Which party is that?

Mr. COLLINS: The Labour party, which is the progressive party. They have adopted to some extent the principle which was outlined in Mr. Bamford's Bill of 1910. When one takes into consideration the size of Queensland, and when I realise, as the representative of a Northern constituency, that I am nearer to Sydney at the present moment in a direct line than I am to my own electorate, I realise that there must be some different form of government if this country is to develop as it should develop. I am satisfied—I do not know whether the hon. member for Townsville will agree with this statement or not—I am satisfied that, had separation been brought about in the early 90's, North Queensland would have had

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50,000 to 100,000 more people in it than it has at the present time.

Mr. GREEN: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: With its splendid resources—which I am pleased to say this Government have done a great deal to develop—if there had been self-government, with the seat of government at, say, Charters Towers—which has a very good climate—or in some other part of the North, not only would we have had larger cities, but we would have had more settlement and better conditions than we have at the present time. It is no use the hon. member for Normanby thinking that, by carrying his amendment, we are going to settle this question. This question can only be settled on the lines indicated in the motion moved by the hon. member for Rockhampton. This is a matter that must be dealt with by the Federal Parliament. The greater Parliament controls, to a large extent, the lesser Parliament; and the Federal Parliament is the Parliament that will have to deal with this big question, because, after all, it is a big question, and a question that requires all the intelligence we can give to it. We all know that many men in Queensland in the past have outlined schemes for the division of this State. I remember reading some years ago with a great deal of interest Sir Samuel Walker Griffith's speech on this question. Men like the Hon. John Macrossan and others in the Queensland Parliament at that time were strong separationists. I just got up to let it be known that I am not in accord with the amendment moved by the hon. member for Normanby, and that I am supporting the motion moved by the hon. member for Rockhampton.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): I should like to say, in the first place, that I am rather sorry for the constitutional knowledge of the hon. members who moved and seconded the amendment. Certainly, if they are going to be leaders in the separation movement, and do anything to bring about separation, or be prominent in the movement when separation does take place, they will have to be much better posted on constitutional law than they are at the present time, because, undoubtedly, without the authority of the Federal Parliament nothing can be done in this matter. To pass an amendment throwing the responsibility on this Parliament is utterly futile. It is quite evident that those hon. members have not given the question that consideration which it demands and which it needs if it is ever to succeed. The question of separation is by no means a new question. For the past forty years it has been periodically revived in Queensland and discussed again and again, and I well remember when it was discussed in North Queensland some thirty years ago, Townsville had practically made up its mind that it was to be the capital of the new State and black labour was not to be banished from North Queensland, and when the people of Townsville thought that their corner allotments were going to be enhanced in price, separation in Townsville was really a live movement, and a good deal of energy and money was expended in that direction; but it is just as well known that outside Townsville practically the whole of North Queensland was against the movement. At any rate, Charters Towers was against it, and that was one of the towns that helped to squash the movement at that time. The hon. member for Townsville said that, if separation had taken

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place, there would have been a great difference in the Gulf country to-day, as pointed out by the hon. member for Burke. What prevented the Gulf country from being developed as it ought to have been was the fact that one of the Premiers of Queensland was member for Townsville, and was interested in Townsville, and everything was centralised in that city. And what has been done in regard to Townsville has been done in other cases.

At 7 p.m. the House, in accordance with Sessional Order, proceeded with Government business.

REVISION OF STANDING ORDERS.

The PREMIER: (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

“That the Speaker do now leave the chair, and that the House resolves itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the proposed amendments and additions to the Standing Orders as recommended by the Standing Orders Committee.”

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Kirwan, Brisbane, in the chair.*)

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That the amendment in Standing Order No. 1.—‘*Proclamation to be read*’—be agreed to.”

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): This, with many of the other amendments, is merely consequent on the altered conditions of Parliament, and for that reason I do not propose to take any exception to them.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That Rules of Practice Nos. 1 and 2 be omitted, and the following new Rule of Practice be inserted in lieu thereof:—

Members await Commissioners appointed for the opening of Parliament and the Commission is read.”

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That the amendment to Rule of Practice No. 3.—‘*Commissioners for swearing members*’—be agreed to.”

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That the amendment to Standing Order No. 2.—‘*Writs for general election*’—omitting the words ‘of the Assembly’ and ‘the Clerk’ and inserting the word ‘him’ be agreed to.”

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That Rules of Practice Nos. 6 and 7 and Standing Orders Nos. 7 and 8 be omitted, and the following new Standing Order be inserted in lieu thereof:—

A member of the Government shall inform the House at what time the Governor will be pleased to receive the House for the purpose of presenting Mr. Speaker to His Excellency, and the sitting of the House shall be suspended until that time.

Mr. Speaker, with the House, shall present himself to the Governor, and shall report to the House his presentation to His Excellency.

(Commonwealth Standing Orders 12 and 13.)"

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

"That the amendments to Standing Order No. 9—'Vacancy in office of Speaker'—be agreed to."

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

"That Rule of Practice No. 3—'House attends Governor in Council Chamber'—be omitted."

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

"That the amendments to Rule of Practice No. 9—'Speaker reports Speech'—be agreed to."

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

"That the amendments to Standing Order No. 16—'Address in Reply to Speech'—be agreed to."

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

"That the following new Standing Order—'Debate on Address in Reply'—to follow Standing Order No. 16, be agreed to.

"DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Debate on the Address in Reply, together with any amendment thereon, shall be limited to four full sitting days, exclusive of the day upon which it is moved and seconded, the debate on each of such days terminating at 10.30 o'clock p.m. If a speech be not concluded at 10.30 o'clock p.m., it shall be within the discretion of Mr. Speaker to permit the member speaking to complete his speech, notwithstanding that the hour of 10.30 o'clock p.m. has arrived.

At 10.30 o'clock p.m. on the last of the days allotted, Mr. Speaker shall put forthwith the question for the adoption of the Address, together with such amendment or amendments, if any, as may have been moved upon it, to be decided without any further amendment or debate:

Provided that, on any of the days so allotted, formal business, the preliminary stages of Bills, or the asking and answering of questions may be taken up to 4.30 p.m. After 10.30 p.m. other business may be proceeded with as usual:

Provided further, that until the Address in Reply is disposed of no private business shall intervene.

Business under consideration at 4.30 p.m. on any of such allotted days shall stand as an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House, unless disposed of after 10.30 p.m.

Nothing in the foregoing provisions shall be construed to prevent the interception of the debate on the Address in Reply by the passage of a Temporary Supply Bill, provided always that the time as above allotted for the consideration of the Address in Reply shall in no case be curtailed."

There may be a difference of opinion as to the advisability of adopting this new Standing Order, which was submitted at the meeting of the Standing Orders Committee the other night, at which there was a full attendance of all members of the committee. It is advisable, I think, to allow the House in each year to proceed as early as possible with the real business of the session. We recognise, of course, that it is an inviolable right that hon. members have to discuss grievances or bring forward any matter they desire to discuss in the early part of the session, when the opportunity to do that is taken on the debate on the Address in Reply. One would think that allowing four full days after the day on which the Address in Reply is moved and seconded would give ample opportunity for all members on each side to address the House on subjects which are usually discussed on the Address in Reply. In some cases it is considered, if not actually a waste of time, at any rate that there is a considerable amount of time taken up in discussing purely formal questions on the Address in Reply. For that reason I think it is desirable that we should get to the real business of the session as soon as possible, and not allow hon. members to indulge in a full-dress debate on the topics of the day under the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. At the same time, the Government have no desire to burke discussion.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: This Standing Order is against that statement, at any rate. You are only allowing seventeen minutes for each member.

The PREMIER: Do all members speak on the Address in Reply?

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Nearly all. The business of the country will soon be so run that some hon. members will not be able to speak at all.

The PREMIER: It is the desire of the Government to get to the business of the country, and not to indulge in an unreasonably long debate on the Address in Reply.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You want to avoid a discussion of your misdeeds during the recess.

The PREMIER: We do not desire to burke discussion on what the hon. gentleman calls our misdeeds; nor do we wish to take away any rights of hon. members to address the House or Committee. Under our Standing Orders hon. members can address the House on grievances on the Address in Reply, on the Financial Statement, on censure motions, on Supply Bills, and also on the motion that the Speaker leave the chair.

Mr. VOWLES: A nice chance we have got! You will move—"That the question be now put."

The PREMIER: Last year you took the opportunity of moving two censure motions yourself.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: When the Labour party were in opposition they used to move two in a week.

The PREMIER: There was no "gag" on the censure motions last year.

Mr. SIZER: How many times last session did you use the "gag"?

Mr. VOWLES: Forty-five times.

Hon. E. G. Theodore.]

The PREMIER: We had to use the "gag" last year because of the tactics of the Opposition. But, no matter how many times we used it, we did not make such a ruthless use of it as the Denham Administration did. (Opposition dissent.) A lot of hon. members who are raising a chorus of interjections were not here when the Denham Administration was in power; but I can assure them that what I say is true. Mr. Denham made a most ruthless use of the "gag." I thought hon. members came into this Chamber to get on with public business, and we are faced this session with a purely constructive businesslike programme, and it is the desire of hon. members opposite to stave off the consideration of that programme.

Mr. VOWLES: We have not been here a week yet.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman said last night that we were meeting too early. If the hon. gentleman wishes to discuss Government measures, we shall be here for the next few years and we will try to accommodate him. (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES (*Dolby*): This is opening up a very big field for argument. This alteration is going to deprive hon. members of certain privileges which they have now as a matter of right—one of the very few privileges which they can insist on—since 1910, when we last revised the Standing Orders. Previous to that every member of this Assembly was entitled, as a matter of right, to speak on the debate on the Address in Reply, and could not be "gagged." In 1910 there was a time limit of one hour fixed for his speech.

Hon. W. BERTRAM: We do not propose to "gag" him here.

Mr. VOWLES: That was one occasion on which he could not be "gagged"; he could demand his rights. I well remember when the last Standing Orders were introduced and speeches were delivered by the present Secretary for Public Lands, by the present Premier, and by the present hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Ferricks.

The PREMIER: You look up those speeches and you will be considerably edified.

Mr. VOWLES: I have looked them up, and I am very edified. I remember the speech made by the present hon. member for Bowen on that occasion. He talked about the way our forefathers had to fight for the liberties they had won, and the way blood had been shed in order to gain our present privileges. He objected to any curtailment of his rights when he was in opposition. Every one of those hon. members spoke in the same strain on that occasion. They wanted to see that their privileges were protected. Yet we find to-day that those privileges are being further filched away. In twelve months the present Government will be the sufferers from these Standing Orders, because we shall be over on the Government benches by then, and they will be in opposition. So I am protecting their interests and the interests of future Oppositions by endeavouring to see that our privileges are not taken away from us. It is all very well for the Premier to say that our object in coming here is to do business. When the Standing Orders were under consideration in 1910 the very subjects that we are dealing with to-night took six days to discuss, and the "gag" was not put on them at all. We are told

that we have certain powers and certain privileges in this House.

At 7.15 p.m.,

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*) took the Chair as Temporary Chairman.

Mr. VOWLES: On that occasion we were told that the rights of members of the Opposition were taken away from them. I do not want to go into the question of the "gag," because that comes up under another Standing Order. I will show later on how many times the "gag" was used last session, and how many times the bulk of the Opposition were disfranchised, and prevented from carrying out the purposes for which they were elected.

Hon. W. BERTRAM: You agreed with this amendment the other evening in the Standing Orders Committee.

Mr. VOWLES: I was there as one of the Committee, and the majority agreed to it. What was the use of my putting in a protest when I was in the minority? I say that four days is too little time to discuss the Address in Reply. If this is going to be carried, I would like to make a suggestion to the Premier. As this Standing Order takes away certain privileges from the Opposition, and seeing each member is only to be allowed forty minutes, I suggest that hon. members on this side should be given preference in catching the Speaker's eye, and that the time should be equitably distributed over members on this side. Every member in this Chamber has the same right as every other, and each has a right to express his own opinion. Because I am entitled to certain privileges as a matter of courtesy because I sit on the front bench, that is no reason why the members sitting behind me should be deprived of the right to voice the opinions of the electors who sent them to this House. We are disfranchising the electors by limiting speeches and limiting the number of days.

The PREMIER: Who brought in the limitation of speeches?

Mr. VOWLES: Mr. Kidston brought it in in 1910.

The PREMIER: He had coalesced with Mr. Philp before that.

Mr. VOWLES: If the time is to be divided amongst all members, it will allow seventeen minutes to each. If you are only going to allow seventeen minutes to discuss the Address in Reply, you are reducing it to a farce. The Premier told us that we could speak on want of confidence motions. We might bring one forward as an amendment to the Address in Reply.

The PREMIER: That would be absurd.

Mr. VOWLES: What would our position be? We would still be within the four days.

The PREMIER: Do it straight out.

Mr. VOWLES: If we moved it straight out, we would be told that we should do it on Supply, and if we did it on Supply, we would be told that we were depriving the public servants of their salaries. If the Premier is satisfied to move—"That the question be now put"—at any time, then hon. members can be deprived of their rights, and be silenced at any time.

Hon. W. BERTRAM: You cannot "gag" a want of confidence motion.

Mr. VOWLES: I would not be positive of that, because we had so many samples

of the "gag" last session that I cannot remember when it was not used. I thought the "gag" could be used on every opportunity the Government had a chance. Want of confidence motions are moved only when there is cause for them, and are we going to be deprived of our right under the Standing Orders of expressing our views on the Address in Reply, and then be compelled to resort to subterfuge, and afford our members the opportunity of speaking on a useless and formidable want of confidence motion? We want to carry on in a business-like way. I think everybody must admit that time is not of so great value as to justify this proposal, unless the Government have a definite programme to clean up the business on a stated day and go to the electors, as I understand they have. Sooner than see the right to which every member is entitled filched from him, the Premier should have called Parliament together a week earlier, which week could have been devoted to the discussion of local and country matters, which hon. members do not often have the opportunity of debating. There are many local matters in connection with departments that require ventilating—matters which, from a Brisbane point of view, may be of very little concern, but which, from a local and country point of view, are of very great urgency. There are very many cases where grievances need rectifying, where the departments should be put in the limelight, and some where officers need to be placed on the mat.

I submit that this House should deal with the matter as a non-party question. Merely from the fact that this has been brought forward by a committee, through Mr. Speaker, is no reason why hon. members should vote for it purely as a party measure. I ask every hon. member to take into consideration that in a very short time there may be altered conditions here. Hon. members opposite may be in opposition to-morrow and my argument now may apply equally well to them in the future. If hon. members opposite are a party to taking away a right for which they fought in the past, and they are the sufferers in the future, they must remember that they do it deliberately—some of them in the face of the arguments they have used in the past that every man should stand up for freedom of speech and his privileges under the Standing Orders. So strong were some of the arguments in the past that the present hon. member for South Brisbane held that there should be no limitation at all of any speech. We know why the Standing Orders limiting speeches were first introduced—because Mr. Lesina on one occasion made a speech running into some eight hours. Hon. members opposite then objected to the limitation to one hour in some cases, and to forty minutes in others. The Secretary for Public Lands was very interesting in his remarks.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I made a very good speech.

Mr. VOWLES: You made a very good speech from our point of view now. I do not want to waste the time of the House by reading it, but it is full of good common sense, standing up for those privileges, yet to-day we shall possibly have that same hon. gentleman and the Premier and our friend from Bowen going right back on the opinions they expressed then. If they are going to do that, I should just like them to explain the altered conditions which justify them.

Four days is too short a time for the discussion of the Address in Reply. I suppose I am not giving any secrets away when I say that in the first draft the time proposed was three days, but the Premier in his goodness and kindness of heart extended it to four days.

The PREMIER: The Speaker made the suggestion.

Mr. VOWLES: Does the hon. member suggest that it was not a party decision?

The PREMIER: There were four on each side.

Mr. VOWLES: And the Speaker was the chairman of the committee, and one of the members was the Chairman of Committees. While those gentlemen may be officers of the House, they are also attendants at caucus meetings—a thing which never happened before. (Government laughter.) I can assure you that on all occasions when I have been associated with Governments the Speaker never attended a party meeting.

The PREMIER: You nearly fired a Speaker out at one time for not attending party meetings.

Mr. VOWLES: We got as far as four days, and the Premier or Speaker, or, at any rate, the committee, decided that they were not going any further. I offered as a solution of the problem, in order to give more members an opportunity to speak, that we should amend Standing Order 107 and reduce the time to forty minutes; but it was only as a matter of expediency, or an alternative in order to give hon. members generally a little more justice. If each member has forty minutes, in four days we shall be able to put up thirty-two speakers—sixteen from each side—which means that more than 50 per cent. of the members of the House will be deprived of their rights. Someone is going to suffer on each side, and what justification is there for taking away the rights of even the newest, or smallest, or meanest member? We are all on the same footing, and the Standing Orders should apply to the prince and the pauper alike—that is, to the Premier and the private member. In order to give hon. members opposite, who in the past have expressed themselves as against taking away rights which have been so dearly fought for, an opportunity to prove their sincerity, I move the omission of the word "four," with a view to inserting the word "nine." That will give everybody an opportunity under the altered conditions of speaking for forty minutes each, and we are giving something away there.

The PREMIER: That is three weeks of normal time.

Mr. VOWLES: No. That is another thing to be taken into consideration—we are sitting four days a week. If what the Premier says is correct, his following should not waste time, as they usually do, putting their stuff into "Hansard."

Mr. HARTLEY: How do you justify that?

Mr. VOWLES: The Premier says it is unnecessary for these speeches to be made. If that is so, hon. members opposite should follow the lead of their Premier, and give the whole of the time to the Opposition, and not be a party to wasting time.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): I suppose there is not a member in this Committee to-night who, if he were probed to the bottom, would not say he was astounded

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that there should come from the Government a proposal such as this. I can remember when the Estimates of the Home [7.30 p.m.] Secretary's Department were debated for six weeks. I do not say there was any justification for that. Here we find a democratic Government—so called—who come along with these proposals. What do they mean?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS interjected.

HON. W. H. BARNES: If the hon. gentleman is consistent, he will come over and vote with us. The records of "Hansard" show that very clearly. We are being asked to do something which will simply mean that a vast majority of the members of this House on important questions will not have a chance of expressing themselves. Is that democracy?

Mr. Fry: That is communism.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Is that the democracy which we are told springs from the other side; or has the Premier received his instructions from a body which sat here in Brisbane last year and adopted certain resolutions? Is that the way the government of the country is going to be carried on? It will be impossible for a member in the space of seventeen minutes to express himself on the matters which have cropped up during the recess. That is what this proposal would amount to. What opportunity will be given to a member to deal with matters of importance? Once this Standing Order is passed it means that those men who have not already spoken will get less than seventeen minutes, because the speeches up to now have been for the present limit of one hour. I am not blaming those who have availed themselves of the privilege. The Premier himself took an hour. Coming from recess, hon. members are full of things which demand the greatest attention from the House. If we dealt only with the unemployed question, there would be sufficient for any man to speak for the full term of one hour.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You are not serious.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am serious, especially when I remember that a Minister said not long since that in a certain time there would be no unemployment. An answer given in this House to-day revealed the fact—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. W. H. BARNES: That £174,000 had been spent in relief—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. W. H. BARNES: During the past year.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to obey my call to order and to deal with the amendment.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I will obey your call to order. I am dealing with the amendment. I am quite sure that what I was saying was very relevant to the question.

Mr. Ryan: Send him out for life.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It will be realised that, if justice is to be done to the misdeeds of the Government during the past year only, it will take the full time which the hon. member for Dalby has suggested in his amendment. The amendment makes it possible for full ventilation to be given to the

various matters which have cropped up during the recess. I ask the Secretary for Lands—whom, I think, this House generally has recognised as being a fair man—if it is not a reasonable thing for him to say, "We are desirous of giving an opportunity for expression of opinion in connection with the affairs of this great State on the Address in Reply."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Wait until the Budget comes along.

HON. W. H. BARNES: All along the line we have been told to wait. If we wait for the Budget, we shall find ourselves shut out. The hon. gentleman may think we are ready to be gulled, but we are not going to be gulled in that particular direction. The affairs of Queensland are such to-day that it is imperative we should have the full time to discuss them.

Let me illustrate one or two matters, quite apart from the question of unemployment, which I used as an argument incidentally. If you take up the "Queensland Times" or the "Daily Standard" of to-day, you will find that Ministers and some members of the party supporting the Government have been very eagerly doing their best in connection with affairs at Ipswich. When we on this side are the men who represent the democracy of the country—(loud Government laughter)—I will put it this way—when we are the genuine representatives of the democracy of the country, surely it is right that we should have an opportunity to defend them in the House and to put their grievances before the House! We know that in other directions there is very serious trouble just now. Take, if you will, the departure from a very important part of the policy of the other side. I can remember when the cry used to be "No victimisation." There has been a departure from that, and because one man had the courage to speak his convictions—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am using that as an argument to show that we must have time to discuss these affairs. There are other things which demand the best attention from every member in this House. There is a bigger question which has to be considered, quite apart from party politics. Some of the statements I have made to-night reveal the fact that the House should have the fullest opportunity of expressing itself at a critical juncture. The Premier himself has made statements that the finances are such as to demand careful consideration. Surely when, linked up with the question of the finances, there are other questions of great importance, we should have the fullest time allowed to deal with them. How singular it is that this attitude should now be adopted by the Premier when we remember what his attitude was away back in 1910. Probably the hon. gentleman would like "Hansard" to be buried, so far as it relates to his speeches on that occasion. He was one of the most powerful advocates in the direction of not shortening time, but of giving every opportunity to hon. members to express themselves. If the Government will not give full time for discussion, the only conclusion to be drawn is that their sins are so numerous that they are afraid to give the House the opportunity to discuss them. They have disappointed their friends; they are angling in another direction; and because they have failed they say

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the best way is to close the whole business up, so as not to give those men who represent the people in the House an opportunity of placing before the public the condition of things as they exist to-day. If the amendment of the leader of the Opposition is turned down, it will be another nail in the Government's coffin, and will show that they are absolutely afraid of the people, and that they want to get into recess as quickly as possible because of the danger they are in.

Mr. FRY (*Kiritpa*): I am going to resist the proposal before the Committee to limit the debate on the Address in Reply. The Governor's Speech contains somewhere in the vicinity of twenty-seven paragraphs. Hon. members are asked to consider the important Speech of His Excellency to this Parliament in the small space of seventeen minutes. It raises the question of whether the Government consider that their programme is worth considering at all. They have set before the representatives of the people this Speech, involving many phases of administration of the State's affairs, and to ask us to terminate our discussion, or criticism, or helpful remarks inside of seventeen minutes is asking us to treat the matter with something little better than contempt. For that reason alone I think the resolution should not be accepted: and if we are going to look for any further proof of the reason why we should not give away our opportunities to discuss the administration of the affairs of the country, we have the speeches made by hon. members who are now occupying the Government benches when they were in opposition. We have all read the very interesting and strenuous fight those hon. members put up in defence of the right of free speech for the people's representatives. If it was right twelve years ago, how much more is it right to-day when the conditions of the world's affairs warrant a careful, wise, and mature consideration? The debate on the Address in Reply is a reply to the Governor's Speech. If there was no reply to the Governor's Speech, what would the debate be for? His Excellency is brought here, and the Government hand him a programme containing their proposals for the coming session, which he reads, and we should have plenty of time maturely to consider those proposals, and deal with them in a way which is befitting an intelligent deliberative Chamber. All the facts are against the acceptance of the resolution. The people elect us as their representatives, and they would think very little of us if we could be induced to accept a seventeen minutes' time limit in connection with such an important debate. We would be nothing more than mere automata instead of being intelligent, thinking individuals. I claim that the members of the Opposition have a duty to their constituents, and I am going to resist the resolution at every opportunity. I do not altogether agree with the leader of the Opposition in being prepared to accept a nine days' limit. If every hon. member here wished to comment upon the administration of the Government, he should be given a reasonable time to do so. I consider that thirty-five minutes in some cases is not a reasonable time. Frequently we find hon. members having to give up their right to speak in order that other members may obtain an extension of the time allowed by the Standing Orders because they are not able to deal with their subject in the time allotted to them. The evidence goes to show that the time now available is not sufficient. It is proposed that we should

have four days, equalling twenty hours, allotted to seventy members in which to speak. Within that time they are expected to deal with important affairs of State, important social questions, and matters which are of vital importance to the welfare of the community, not only in the cities but in the country. The state of the country at the present time is such as requires careful, wise, and detailed consideration.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It would be much better for the country if there was less talk.

Mr. FRY: I agree with the hon. gentleman. It would be better for the country if responsible Ministers of the Crown would make statements such as should emanate from responsible Ministers.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. FRY: I am replying to the Minister.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will be in order in dealing with the amendment.

Mr. FRY: The session last year lasted eleven whole weeks, during which time thirty-two Bills were put through, and the Opposition were "gagged" on forty-one occasions. Evidently the experience of the Government during that session is manifest in the resolution here to still further reduce the time for which hon. members may address this Chamber. If eleven weeks were sufficient time last session, it would appear to me that the Government are anxious to make it less this time—making it about eight weeks. I am going to resist the curtailment of my right, at any rate, to discuss the matters placed before the House as indicated by the Government in the Governor's Speech. I hope that hon. members opposite, who have fought so hard in the past in defence of their right to speak, will boldly stand up and declare for the people and not for party. The party is responsible to the people; the party cannot control the people. At the present time the people are given the right of representation; but what is the good of having representatives if they are not permitted freely to discuss matters that come before them? We may, perhaps, be coming down to the position of the leaders of parties making speeches and then taking a vote. That might be in the Premier's mind. So far as I can see, there is no intention on the part of the Government to economise. If there were, economy could have been exercised during the last year or two, and extravagant expenditure saved in many directions.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. FRY: That is the truth—economy could have been exercised.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. FRY: To economise in discussion, to economise in criticisms of matters of importance, is unfair. We know that the Government are pledged to a new objective which covers Bolshevism, and everything must be considered in the light of the objective of a party when that party is in power. The objective of the party in power must be set out in their programme, and it is the duty of the Opposition to inquire very closely into any proposition put before Parliament, in order to see what is behind it. I would like to discuss, in the interests of the country generally, the programme put forward by the

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Government, because I realise that, unless the country is prosperous, the cities cannot be prosperous. Everyone realises that, if the man on the land is not contented, then the people in the city cannot be contented.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will connect his remarks with the amendment.

Mr. FRY: All these matters are referred to in the Governor's Speech. I consider the proposal to limit the debate on the Address in Reply to four days is an unfair one, and it must be borne in mind that what applied to Government members when they were in Opposition will apply to them again after the next election.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I can quite understand that the Premier, having a very small majority, and with the risk of that majority vanishing at any moment, desires to curtail the business of the House and get into recess as quickly as possible. I quite sympathise with the Premier in the position in which he finds himself, but, notwithstanding that fact, it would be unwise on the part of the Opposition to allow any of their privileges to be taken from them. Hon. members representing country districts find it necessary, on the Address in Reply, to bring up many matters of local importance. They may be parochial to a certain extent, nevertheless they are of great importance to the electors they represent; and, unless they have an opportunity of speaking on the Address in Reply, they will be practically debarred from placing their grievances before Parliament, and letting the departments know the requirements of their electorates. Very often good results are brought about owing to the fact that Opposition members are able to let Ministers know just what is occurring in their electorates. Even on the present occasion the seconder of the Address in Reply brought forward some very important local matters as far as the Gulf country is concerned, and I feel sure that the fact of the hon. member making his announcement in this House will carry much more weight than if he had made his remarks appertaining to the land question in his electorate to individual ministers. If this proposal is carried, only thirty members will be able to speak on the Address in Reply, that is, allowing full forty minutes to each speech; and most hon. members in this House, especially those on the Government benches, occupy the full time allowed at present. In fact, on occasions, they have received an extension of time, although the present limit is fixed at one hour. Only fifteen out of thirty-five members of the Opposition will be able to take part in this debate if it is limited to four days, because hon. members, such as the hon. member for Bowen and the hon. member for Fitzroy and others would do their level best to talk to their constituents through "Hansard." I remember the hon. member for Bowen at one time suggesting that "Hansard" should be made free; that a verbatim report should be published of all speeches and sent to every elector, so that he would know what was taking place in Parliament. The reports, generally, that appear in the Press do not give much information. The Press devotes as much space as it can to the reports, but the people in the country do not get an opportunity, generally speaking, of judging the speeches made by hon. members. That is why hon. members

take advantage of "Hansard" and send so many copies to the people in their electorates. If the length of speeches is limited to forty minutes it will mean a difference of twenty minutes in each speech, and I think that is a fair thing. I am entitled to speak on the Address in Reply. It is only right to my electors that I should speak on the Address in Reply. The electors expect their members to voice their grievances in this House, and to curtail that privilege would be unjust. The Speaker, by interjection, said that the "gag" could not be used in connection with a "No confidence" motion. I feel sure that the Speaker was not correct when he made that interjection.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must deal with the amendment.

Mr. MORGAN: It was stated that one of the reasons why we should agree to the proposal was that on a "No confidence" motion we could not be "gagged," and I want to point out that, if we agree to the motion, we shall be doing away with one of our privileges that cannot be "gagged." Under the Standing Orders we have our full period of one hour on the Address in Reply and the "gag" cannot be applied, but that does not apply to a "No confidence" motion. "No confidence" motions have been "gagged" after the mover and seconder have spoken. Members of the Opposition have to depend a great deal on the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees to protect their rights. A Government with a majority have power, under the Standing Orders, to put on the "gag" at any time. They have power to suspend any Standing Order. The year before last, the Address in Reply was done away with altogether.

The PREMIER: For seven years the Federal Parliament had no Address in Reply.

Mr. MORGAN: Whatever the Federal Parliament may do, I feel sure such a proposal as this would be opposed very strenuously by Labour members in the [8 p.m.] Federal Parliament. I will admit that, if we were on the Government benches, we should perhaps endeavour to curtail the privileges of the Opposition; but would the Premier, if he were leader of the Opposition, allow that to be done without putting up a fight?

The PREMIER: I could quite understand that being done.

Mr. MORGAN: I remember the occasion when it took six and a-half days to dispose of the amendments of the Standing Orders then being made. The Opposition stonewalled to a considerable extent, and the journals which were supporting the Labour party at that time were very pronounced in their attitude. I remember that the Labour journals were against the Government at the time they did away with the Address in Reply. They were opposed to the curtailment of the privileges of members, recognising the fact, no doubt, that it would not be long before the present Government would be in opposition. I shall be very interested to know what the Labour daily and the workers of this State will say in respect to this move on the part of the Government. I feel sure that, on the democratic principles which they profess, they will not support the Government in this matter. A Government, no matter what sort it may be, does not last for all time. If the present Premier should become the leader of the Opposition, that is

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not a matter about which we are concerned; but, eventually, hon. members sitting on the Government benches will be sitting on this side of the House, and they will be very sorry if their privileges are curtailed. I intend to oppose the motion. I hope that the Premier will accept the compromise offered by the leader of the Opposition. We all agree that the time should be forty minutes.

The PREMIER: I will agree to the compromise. Accept the motion as it is, and make the limit forty minutes.

Mr. MORGAN: Our leader has said that we will agree to forty minutes if the hon. gentleman will make it nine days. Later on, when the present Opposition get into power, we might ask the Premier, if he is leader of the Opposition, to agree to four days. It is only natural that a Government should want to curtail the rights of the Opposition. Generally speaking, however, Governments do not take full advantage—more especially when there happens to be a Government in power that is not a Labour Government—of the opportunity of curtailing debate.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I desire to support the amendment. I freely acknowledge that a great deal of latitude has been allowed previously in regard to the debate on the Address in Reply. That latitude is appreciated, but it has been used by Government members more than Opposition members. We have had only one day on the debate on the Address in Reply this week, and because two members of the Opposition spoke, the Premier thought it necessary to get up and occupy a full hour. I do not think that any restrictions should be placed on hon. members in the debate on the Address in Reply, as the debate saves a lot of time in discussion when the Financial Statement and important Bills are brought before the Chamber. I think there are other factors dominating the situation. The Financial Statement and the Estimates can come before the House at a much earlier date if the debate on the Address in Reply is limited. Under those circumstances we are not going to have the Auditor-General's report and the departmental reports to assist us. The Government are, therefore, going to get out of a good deal of criticism in regard to the conduct of the departments. We have had one department in particular brought under our notice. Those are the things we ought to discuss. The people realise that something should be done in regard to the present occupants of the Ministerial benches. There is another reason why no limitation should be placed on the debate on the Address in Reply, which reason, perhaps, applies more to-day than ever before. The Opposition are stronger in numbers to-day than they have ever been.

Mr. COLLINS: Weaker in debating power.

Mr. KERR: They are not weaker in debating power. They are much stronger than hon. members occupying the Government benches, who are not game to stand up to criticism, as is shown by the fact that they desire to reduce the number of days for discussion. At an early date there will be an election, and it is their duty to reply to the criticisms which we level against them. The Press gives reports of what is said in Parliament, which are read by the people, and, if we are not given the opportunity of stating the true situation with regard to the finances, the public will be deprived of

their rights. As a representative, I stand here to express my views on situations as they arise. I cannot emphasise too much what this means to us. With all the power that I possess I am going to voice my opinion in this House. There should be no deterrent factor when I want to express my views in this Chamber. I notice interjections from the Government benches are very few and far between. We have hardly had one interjection to-night. Hon. members on the other side are quite dumb. Not one of them is man enough to vote as his conscience dictates. Not one will vote according to how the people who sent them here wish them to vote, and that is to retain the rights and privileges of every hon. member. Some hon. members opposite expressed their views in 1910, and their speeches will be found in "Hansard," but they are sitting dumb to-night, and are not game to come out into the open. They will not vote as their conscience dictates, but as they are told to vote. They are not game to show their sound reasonableness by objecting to a restriction in the debate on the Address in Reply. They could easily do that, because they have an equal opportunity with other members of this House. I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I would like to support the amendment. I do not think it is a fair thing that any electorate should have its privileges curtailed. Every member should be allowed to express his views in this House.

The PREMIER: He has his privileges curtailed by hon. members gabbling on every occasion.

Mr. MOORE: This afternoon we had the example of the hon. member for Rockhampton wanting somebody to move that he be granted an extension of time because he could not finish his speech in the time allotted. He was not able to get in all that he had to say on the question in an hour, yet we are asked now to curtail the debate on the Address in Reply to four days. The Address in Reply is one of the two occasions when members have got the privilege of speaking and discussing grievances relating to their electorates, and it is not fair to limit our time. It is limiting the debate to thirty members. Why should the other forty members be debarred from speaking? Where are the champions of liberty who were here in 1910?

Mr. COLLINS: They are still here.

Mr. MOORE: What about the hon. member for Bowen? In 1910 he said that he came 1,100 miles to Parliament, and he did not want his electors debarred from having their views expressed in this House. Where is that champion of liberty to-day? He is sitting quietly over on the other side of the House because the Government have placed chains on his wrists, and because the Government are anxious to get through the business quickly and go into recess. The Government do not want to hear any criticism from the Opposition. Consequently, when they were in the caucus, chains were put on the wrists of all their members, and they are not allowed to speak on this question. In 1910 they were loud in their protests against any curtailment of the privileges of members. That was because the time was reduced for each member. I do not know what they would have said if

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there was a proposal to reduce the number of days for debating the Address in Reply.

The PREMIER: I suppose you know that you cannot "gag" a man by putting chains on his wrists? (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: The Government have stopped hon. members of their party from exercising their liberty. They have deprived them of their liberty of conscience, because members opposite are not allowed to say what they think. We know what they really think, because they gave expression to their views in 1910. The Premier is dominating the whole thing, because he wants to get through the session in record time, and, because he wants to get through quickly, the members of the Government party have to be subservient.

The PREMIER: We want to get through record work.

Mr. MOORE: Hon. members opposite are prepared to be subservient. They do not talk now about coming down 1,100 miles to express the views of their electors. It does not matter now so long as they can rush the business through.

The PREMIER: I come more than 1,100 miles from my electorate.

Mr. MOORE: There is no difficulty about you, because you are allowed an hour to speak.

The PREMIER: Just the same as the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. MOORE: Is that any reason why ordinary members of Parliament should be curtailed in their remarks?

The PREMIER: I think the ordinary members should be curtailed.

Mr. MOORE: A member should not have his rights and privileges curtailed at all.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Then why did you curtail our rights and privileges when you were sitting on the Government side?

Mr. MOORE: I have never sat on the Government side since I have been in Parliament; but if I do sit on the Government side, I will express my opinion as a private member just the same as I do on this side, and that is what hon. members opposite are frightened to do. I do not think it is a fair thing to disfranchise the people in the way that is proposed under this Standing Order. We are only asking for nine days to be allotted to the Address in Reply. That will give everybody an opportunity of speaking. Possibly, it will only take seven days, as every member may not wish to speak, but we should give every member the right to do so. It is not a fair thing to filch away our rights in this manner. Why should the members of the Opposition be muzzled? Why should the members of the Government be muzzled? Members opposite can have all they want to say distributed to their electorates in pamphlets.

Mr. BRENNAN: How do you know that?

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member must be very innocent if he does not know that these pamphlets are being sent into the electorates by the bushel. I want to see our present rights and privileges maintained intact. The Government have got the "gag" and the guillotine, and now they want to whittle away the rights of members in this way. We

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have had our rights and privileges curtailed too much, and now those who are always talking about free speech are assisting to curtail our rights still further. We know that the Government will not allow the right of free speech outside. We have had an example of that in the last two or three days. That is no reason why they should curtail the rights of members of this Chamber. We are not going to succeed in this matter because the Government have got the majority, and, if they want to filch away the rights of the electors, nothing can stop them from doing so. The Government have the power to stop the Opposition from speaking at all, but I am surprised that members opposite should be so servile and sit so quiet while this is being done.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It is a one-man show now.

Mr. MOORE: Merely because the Government are in an awkward position, members on the Government side have allowed themselves to be muzzled. Why should they do that simply because the Government are in a tight corner? You cannot speak on this question, Mr. Pollock, but I am satisfied that if you were able to speak, judging by the views you have expressed in this Chamber in the past, you would stand up for the rights and privileges of members of this House. The amendment is a just one, and for that reason it should be carried.

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*): I desire to express my disapproval of the motion of the Premier and my intention to support the amendment. In doing that I am voicing the opinions of the electors I represent. I know that a good deal of time has been wasted in carrying on the business of the House in the past, but that waste of time has not occurred during the life of the present Parliament, because the majority of the people of Queensland who are represented by the members sitting on this side have been denied time and again the privilege of expressing their views on important matters that have come before this Chamber.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: How many speeches did you make last session?

Mr. GREEN: I feel in taking up this attitude now that I am only following in the footsteps of the Premier when he was sitting on this side of the House.

I am following in the footsteps of the hon. member for Bowen, who, when sitting on this side of the House, protested against a motion which could not be compared with the drastic character of that which has been submitted this evening, but a motion curtailing speeches to thirty minutes in Committee, and still giving members the privilege of speaking for an hour on the Address in Reply. We find the Premier, who was then a new member, strenuously opposing a slight modification in the Standing Orders. He said—

"Still, I know full well the evils of a proposal which will be the means of bringing about an automatic 'gag.'"

What else is this but an automatic "gag?" We had a "gag" in the real sense last session; we are going to have it now in an automatic form, even on the Address in Reply to the Governor's Speech. The Premier went on to say—

"That is how it suggests itself to my mind. I can point out that we have

ample provision in our present Standing Orders which are quite competent to provide against any undue waste of time. Since I have been in the House that provision has been put into operation by the hon. gentleman who seeks now to carry these drastic proposals."

If they were drastic proposals, I cannot find words strong enough to describe the proposal which the Premier has submitted to-night—

"If there is any occasion for drastic measures to prevent a useless stonewall, then the best thing is to put into operation Standing Orders that have been found ample to meet all emergencies in this Legislative Assembly, and are all that are in force in other countries, and to allow the Opposition to retain that liberty of debate that they should have in discussing public business. The Opposition should be given a fair amount of time in which to express their opinions."

In the amendment which has been submitted we are only asking for a reasonable time for discussion. I cannot imagine the Premier, being a reasonable-minded man and a professed democrat at heart, and so sincerely desirous that the will of the people should be expressed through their representatives, refusing to accept the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition. The hon. member for Bowen on that occasion said—

"To my mind, this proposal is an attempt to curtail my liberty of speech in this House, and also to curtail the liberties of the people I represent."

(Opposition laughter.) Hon. members opposite remain silent. It is quite evident that once more the whip has been cracked over them, and they are prepared to swallow all their principles, and stifle their desires for freedom, in order to satisfy the wishes of the autocrats who lead them. The hon. member for Bowen proceeded to say—

"That is a thing which I must very strongly object to. I do not think members have committed any crime in making unduly long speeches since I have been in the House. As a comparatively new member I, in common with other members, have endeavoured to put my views before the House in a reasonable way, and I do not think any Government should attempt to take away from us the rights and liberties which members of Parliament possess, and have possessed for a number of years. There has been a curtailment, little by little, of the rights of members of Parliament."

I contend that this is not a curtailment little by little, but a curtailment in a wholesale manner of the liberties of the Opposition, and a taking away from them the right of expressing the desires of the electors they represent. Coming from a Government with a majority of one in this Chamber, and a minority of nearly 24,000 people in the electorates, I certainly cannot understand it. It appears to me that the Premier is prepared to flout, not only the will of the people's representatives, but the will of the people themselves. It also appears that this proposal is in keeping with an Administration which is given to victimisation both inside and outside the House, and to depriving people of the right of expressing their opinions. That has been characteristic of many actions of the Government during the

last two years, and particularly the last two months. It appears to me that the Juggernaut of oppression which, whilst boasting of free speech and liberty and of the will of the people, yet grinds the life blood of freedom and liberty from the veins of the public service and the representatives of the people, is now being brought into this House in an endeavour to destroy the will of hon. members. In the division which took place on that motion we find that the following members still in the Chamber voted against the proposed amendment of the Standing Orders:—Messrs. Barber, Collins, Coyne, Ferricks, Land, Mullan, Payne, Theodore, and Winstanley. Yet they condemn other people for rightly changing their opinions—or rather, not for changing their opinions—but for leaving a Government who desert their opinions and their principles.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*): I would like to point out to hon. members that this proposed Standing Order refers only to the debate on the Address in Reply. As a matter of fact, the Address in Reply for years and years has been whittled away, until now it is next to nothing. In no Parliament in the whole world is so much time wasted on the debate as in this, and the intention to curtail it is evidence of a forward movement. Not so many years ago it was the right and privilege of members moving and seconding the Address in Reply to appear in the Chamber in court dress. They have dropped that. The debate which occurred some years ago in this Chamber on the amendment of the Standing Orders took place on proposals which applied, not only to the Address in Reply, but to the whole of the debates, and there was a curtailment then of privileges which hon. members enjoyed; but this applies only to the Address in Reply. Hon. members may be astonished to know that only a few years ago great astonishment was expressed in Great Britain when the debate on the Address in Reply extended from the 9th to the 17th February, and those nine days included a Saturday, a Sunday, and a Monday on which the House did not sit.

The PREMIER: With a House of 700 members.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Yes. Once upon a time it was the privilege of members of the House to talk upon every sentence and paragraph of the Address, but to-day the Address in Reply is in its first paragraph but an expression of the loyalty of the members of the House, and in its second just a pleasant matter-of-fact statement that the matters which His Excellency has placed before us will receive our careful consideration. There is nothing contentious in it, and there is nothing whatever in the curtailment of the Address in Reply debate which curtails the privileges of members of the House. Hon.

members on the other side con- [8.30 p.m.] tend that they now have opportunities of saying things which they would not have if this discussion is curtailed. That is nonsense. If they want to talk upon subjects which arise in connection with other debates, they will be talking upon the same subject on two occasions. For hon. members to say they have not an opportunity of discussing grievances shows they do not know the rules and forms of the House. (Laughter.) They are at liberty to discuss grievances on more than one occasion; there

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are four or five distinct occasions when they can discuss grievances if they know how.

Mr. KING: Provided they are not "gagged."

Mr. F. A. COOPER: You are not "gagged" upon these questions. Every member of the House has the opportunity of speaking upon the second reading of a Bill and of discussing the Bill clause by clause in Committee. He has an opportunity of speaking on the Estimates-in-Chief, and then he has an opportunity of discussing those Estimates separately. If hon. members were keen to do the business of the country, they would not want to waste time in talking about things in the debate on the Address in Reply when they can discuss them on some other occasion. I think we should have a little common sense and make the Address in Reply a purely formal matter. Let us take it on the voices and give it to the Governor before he leaves this Chamber. There would be some decency in that. His Excellency would not have to sit for weeks twiddling his thumbs and wondering if the members of this House are loyal or whether they are going to give consideration to the measures he has asked them to consider. It ought to be the duty of the Premier to stand up as soon as the Governor had delivered his Address and say, "We are loyal. We are glad to know you are still here. We express our appreciation of your efforts on our behalf. You can take our word we will give consideration to the matters you have mentioned. Thank you, very much. Good morning."

Mr. SIZER (*Nundah*): One has to realise that those hon. members who have been in the House for many years, whose names have been freely quoted by members on this side to-night, who have always maintained that the liberties of members of this Chamber should not be invaded, now find themselves in a most difficult situation. They have put up the hon. member for Bremer, who, in his flippant manner, has lightly passed over the big subject in a diatribe on what is or is not contained in the Address in Reply. The hon. member knows very well, and so do the Premier and other Ministers, that the Address in Reply debate is one of the few full-dress debates which we have in this House. It is true that we have, provided the Government allow it, a free discussion on the second reading of Bills. But we know there are many subjects not covered by Bills which should come before Parliament; and, if we lose this one opportunity of bringing those matters forward, we shall be curtailed to a very great extent, and can discuss only the business the Government like to bring forward, irrespective of what individuals desire or what the country needs. We have the Financial Statement; but the debate on that is now curtailed to a great extent. I believe this Standing Order would be essential, provided the policy of the party to which I belong was put into operation; that is, that the members of this Assembly should be reduced to such a number that there would be ample time provided under this Standing Order for each member to speak. Hon. gentlemen opposite do not suggest that. One electorate is not any different from another, and if an hon. member has a desire to air his views after he has received endorsement of the electors, there should be no force in this Chamber—which, we maintain, is a free institution provided by the British Constitution—which should deprive him and the people of his

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electorate of the right to be heard in this debate. The hon. member for Bowen and others fought for freedom of speech long before they came into this Chamber. I appeal to those hon. members to realise that they are deliberately establishing a precedent and overthrowing that for which they fought, and making an innovation which is not advisable or necessary. There might have been some justification previously for a curtailment, because we had a revisory Chamber in which any question could be ventilated. Hon. members must recognise that now this is the only Chamber in existence in Queensland, and that, when a measure passes through here, it becomes law, and there is no time for reflection in another Chamber.

Mr. DASH: Hear, hear!

Mr. SIZER: The hon. member agrees with that. For the safety of the State and of themselves, the Government should not curtail discussion, but should allow the freest discussion. It is not necessary to discuss the Address in Reply on nine consecutive days. Other business may be done in the meantime, and this debate may be turned on at any time during the session. I do not see why any hon. member should be deprived of the opportunity of speaking if he so desires. Probably the reason the hon. member for Bremer was actuated to make the speech he made was that he begins to realise that it would be very useful to burke discussion. The hon. member possibly would like to burke discussion in Ipswich. That should not be allowed in this Chamber. Hon. members on both sides should treat this matter purely on its merits, devoid of any party feeling, having in mind its bearing on the Constitution and on the freedom of Parliament.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): The Premier has not indicated yet whether he is prepared to accept the very reasonable amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition.

The PREMIER: I am sorry. I intended no discourtesy.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I wrongly interpreted the hon. gentleman's attitude. I thought, by his extreme graciousness on the front bench, that he had fully made up his mind to agree to the compromise suggested. Surely, when the Opposition suggest a reasonable proposal to meet the views of the Government on a matter of this kind, by reducing by one-third the time originally allotted in connection with the Address in Reply, the Government might have shown a disposition to meet them. We have to remember that Parliament is differently constituted to what it was in former times. We are sent here to deliberate and to voice our feelings. Formerly, when Bills were sent to the other Chamber, there was opportunity for rediscussion and reconsideration of matters. If we make undue haste first in one direction and then in another, we shall have no end of amendments later on. Half the time in this Chamber has been taken up by moving various amendments to existing legislation. That is going to be multiplied in the future. The Government might well consider the amendment of the leader of the Opposition. The hon. member for Bremer made light of the Address in Reply to the Governor's Speech.

Mr. BRENNAN: What is in the Governor's Speech?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am far from being one of those who say that there is nothing in the Address in Reply to the Governor's Speech. There are very big matters that have a right to be attended to. I listened very attentively the other night to the Premier, but he by no means covered the whole of the matters which should have received his attention. We should have known his mind in connection with them. Look at the matters referred to in connection with the Governor's Speech. Look at the alteration that has been made in the objective of the Government party. Every hon. member is going to vote in connection with the different matters, and we want to know if the Government are ready to abandon their old platform. Why should hon. members not have an opportunity of saying that they are with us or against us? Why should they not have an opportunity of saying "We will abandon once and for ever our old policy; we are appealing to the country; we have altered our tune; we have found we have made a mistake; we are coming out on broader lines in the future, and we are abandoning for ever the policy of nationalisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange"? There is the big matter of that new industry—the cotton industry. If it is what the Government prefers to believe it to be, every man should have an opportunity of discussing it; but, if we are limited to seventeen minutes, how are we going to cover that big and mighty question? No mention has been made of that yet by any hon. member—not even by the Premier. There is the matter of immigration in the forefront of His Excellency's Speech, and we want to know how hon. members opposite are viewing that matter. And we want to know their views on the matter of settlement of the Burnett lands. If they are going to take away the opportunity they have of expressing those views, we are going to leave this Chamber without knowing where individual members stand. There is the big matter of water conservation. We are striking out in new directions. The Government have been wise in striking at the psychological moment by doing certain things in connection with the cotton industry and land settlement. A great opportunity is offering this country, and we should abide and give earnest deliberation to all the affairs, not only those that have been suggested by the Government, but which may be suggested from this side of the Chamber. We, as representatives of the people, have a right to know where we stand in this House individually. Some hon. members who have been somewhat reticent on various occasions in the past have not had an opportunity of expressing themselves, and they are going to have less opportunity in the future of expressing their opinions. I am sure that, in the interests of the country—and the country stands for opportunity—the amendment by the leader of the Opposition should be accepted by the Premier. Nothing will be lost. It will be a means of furnishing an opportunity for expressing, according to the rights of hon. members, their views regarding various matters which may be introduced from time to time by the Government. The only opportunity of fully considering the policy of the Government is at a time like this. I hope the Premier will accept the amendment of the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. FERRICKS (*South Brisbane*): Something has been said about the opposition to a proposal for the curtailment of the limitation of speeches in this Chamber some years ago. I think I am safe in saying that whatever opposition was offered at that time the hon. members who were here then can claim that the Opposition had a bit of kick in it—a kick which is sadly lacking in the opposition advanced to-night.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: There is a lot of kick in your Government this year. You are a very milk-and-water crowd.

Mr. FERRICKS: For many years past the anti-Labour Press, which supports hon. gentlemen opposite and moulds their opinions, has been regularly and almost incessantly advocating the abolition of the Address in Reply debate. They have been saying, and anti-Labourites have said in this Chamber, that the debate on the Address in Reply should be done away with altogether. If we believe for a moment that the statements made by hon. members opposite contain any sincerity, and that they mean what they say, instead of opposing the proposal now before the Committee, one would expect them, not only to heartily fall in behind in support, but to move amendments that would be an improvement upon the limitations that have been proposed, for the reason that they would outdistance the Government in that respect. Speaker after speaker from the Opposition has said that the Government are going to be very shortlived, and will go out almost any day—that the people are waiting for the Government, and that once they go to the people they will not come back as the Government. Do they, then, expect the people will then believe their assurances that they are in earnest both ways? They cannot have it both ways. If they are in earnest about their protestations regarding unfairness, and believe that they are going to come over to this side of the House, they would endeavour further to tighten up the limitations or restrictions. The people will not believe that hon. members opposite would extend much consideration to us if we were on the Opposition side of the Chamber.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: You voted both ways.

Mr. FERRICKS: If hon. members would be honest to themselves, they would admit that the curtailment proposed here, and even a greater curtailment, would be an absolute godsend to three-fourths of hon. members opposite. In previous debates during the last two sessions it has been painful—I speak sympathetically when I say painful—to observe hon. members on the other side endeavouring to string out their speeches to the full time allowed them under the Standing Orders. I say to those hon. members that it is a huge mistake for any man to endeavour to utilise to the full every minute of the time that is at his disposal. That is to say, if a man can use all the meat in his remarks in twenty minutes or thirty minutes, he is making a huge mistake if he tries to string out his remarks for forty-five minutes or sixty minutes. I think it is a wise thing to curtail the debate on the Address in Reply, because this debate of all debates has the least business in it. In the old days, when the Address in Reply debate was strung out for a period of three weeks, the listlessness of the debate was apparent to everyone after the first couple

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of days. It is absolutely a dead debate after it has been going two days. A certain number of hon. members having spoken, every other hon. member feels it incumbent upon him, in the interests of his constituents or his political welfare, that he also should get up and make a speech; and particularly does this apply to hon. members opposite. I would impress upon hon. members opposite the desirableness of endeavouring in their utterances to concentrate their ideas and condense their remarks; and to realise that their ideas would be far more effectively expressed in a speech of forty minutes than in one of sixty minutes, and would be of far more use to their constituents and to the country and to the politicians themselves.

Mr. VOWLES: In 1910 you said there should be no limitation of speech at all.

Mr. FERRICKS: I was more consistent than the hon. member is now, because I opposed any limitation at all; but the hon. member, while he objects to the principle, is trying to get an extension of time. I objected to it and fought against it, which hon. members opposite are not doing to-night, but I have had twelve years more experience in Parliament since that time. If speeches were curtailed, not only would it be of assistance to hon. members in putting their views before their constituents, but it would also popularise "Hansard," and would lead to a greater distribution of "Hansard" and its wider reading. "Hansard" is read in the country to a far greater extent than many people think. As one who used to read "Hansard" a good deal before I came into Parliament, I know that the speeches which are long drawn out, and which are merely a reiteration or rehashing of previous speeches, are a bane to the people who read "Hansard" in search of knowledge. In previous sessions it has been a sad spectacle to listen to the reiteration and rehashing of speeches one after another.

Mr. MORGAN: That is what you are doing now.

Mr. FERRICKS: I venture to say that the sentiments I am expressing now have not been uttered during this debate. During this debate hon. members on the other side of the House have got up, one after another, and reiterated and rehashed the same statement—they are not arguments—in order to get them into "Hansard." The Address in Reply debate is the one concerned in this amendment, and, as pointed out already, there are many opportunities to any hon. member who wishes to speak, or who has any ideas to put into print, in the many other debates which come before the House from time to time.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): There is one matter in connection with this discussion that has been overlooked, and it is this—the Opposition is always at a greater disadvantage in debating or in criticising any legislation than hon. members sitting behind the Government. They are always at a disadvantage in that regard, because there is certain information which the supporters of the Government receive before legislation is introduced into the Chamber which members of the Opposition do not get. Members on the Government side have an opportunity in caucus of discussing and debating the whole of the legislation which is to be introduced by the Government, and, recognising the

disadvantages which the Opposition is under in connection with that matter, I think that special privileges should be given to the Opposition, and I take it this debate on the Address in Reply is one of the special privileges which is more a right of the Opposition than of members sitting on the Government side. Members sitting on the Opposition side are sent here, just the same as members on the Government side, to do certain work, and, not having a previous knowledge of the legislation introduced, they have to take opportunities such as this to discuss matters. We have only one Chamber now in which to discuss the legislation introduced, and in the Governor's Speech we have set out what is practically going to be the programme of the Government for the session. Right at the very commencement of the session the Government say, "There is our programme. We say a little in the Governor's Speech in regard to what we have done during the past year, and now you have an opportunity of discussing what we intend to do in the future." And the discussion should take place at that juncture and not, as has been suggested, at some later date. A discussion at the very time that the programme for the session is placed before us is the proper thing. In previous sessions we have had a fair amount of time to discuss these matters, but now we are going to be cut down to four days. No doubt, it is true that some hon. members can say as much in half an hour as other hon. members can in an hour, but to cut down the time limit by the Standing Orders is a mistake, and, if the Premier is not prepared to give us nine days, let him give us seven days. We claim that four days is not a sufficient time for members of the Opposition, apart altogether from members on the Government side of the House, intelligently to criticise and discuss the matters to be brought forward during the session; and the very shortest time that we should have should be seven days or nine days. Hon. members opposite talk about four or five days being sufficient to get through the Address in Reply. Why, we have been two hours to-night getting through about half a dozen small amendments, and hon. members on both sides have ventilated their opinions.

I must confess my surprise at the change of front of some hon. members on the Government side who claim that they are in favour of and have fought for freedom of speech. To curtail the privileges of hon. members as is proposed to be done by the motion is not, I think, going to be conducive to the best legislation, and will [9. p.m.] not be in the interests either of the present or any succeeding Government. The statement has been made that the debate on the Address in Reply is practically useless but I do not agree with that. The time for the Government to put their programme before Parliament is when the Address in Reply comes before us. I shall be glad if the Premier will extend the time allowed beyond four days, which I consider is quite an inadequate time for discussion.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): Personally, I have always looked upon the debate on the Address in Reply as an opportunity which members on both sides of the House should carefully retain; it is the one opportunity we have for full debate. Some hon. members have referred to the debate on the Financial Statement, but in that discussion members

[*Mr. Ferricks.*]

are supposed to concentrate their remarks more or less on finance, while in the debate on the Address in Reply they are permitted to discuss a wide range of subjects. The debate on the Address in Reply gives new members an opportunity to voice their opinions, and show what originality they possess. I think that there should be no limitation in regard to the debate on the Address in Reply beyond what we already have. We all know that members are kept much nearer to the question now than they were years ago. I contend that the debate on the Address in Reply is the one opportunity we have for full discussion on matters of policy. If a time limit to speeches of forty minutes, with nine days for the debate, is adopted, that will give an opportunity to everyone to get up, if they wish. After all, what are nine days out of 365 days? Hon. members opposite have often said we should sit here for six months, and they now wish to limit us in the most important discussion which Parliament engages in during the session. What surprises me are the utterances of hon. members opposite like the hon. member for South Brisbane. I have here some utterances by hon. members opposite, when a similar question was being discussed in 1910. I would point out, before I quote the Premier on that occasion, that, to his own words, this is what we may call the imposition of an "automatic gag"—that is, when a certain time comes, the question is put automatically. I will quote the hon. gentleman's opinions on the "automatic gag," as reported on page 541 of "Hansard" for 1910—

"While we recognise the reasonableness of having some limitation of speeches, we cannot discover the wisdom of muzzling ourselves by accepting this motion. I must confess that I am not well acquainted with rules of procedure and parliamentary practice. I have been in the House too brief a time to have a thorough knowledge of all the rules governing debate, but still, I know full well the evils of a proposal which will be the means of bringing about an 'automatic gag.'"

If anything further is wanted to illustrate the change of front that has taken place on the part of the hon. gentlemen opposite, it is in this utterance of the Premier, in 1910, and his actions to-day, as the question to-day is identical with the question then. I find that the hon. member for South Brisbane, speaking on that occasion on an amendment, supported by the present Premier, to extend the time to forty-five minutes, said—

"While I intend to support this amendment, I wish to say that I am opposed to any limitation of speeches. I support this amendment as being an improvement on that outlined by the Government in the proposals which they have brought before this House. I contend if there is to be any limitation, the most necessary limitation is a limitation in regard to the six months' recess."

The six months' recess was what the hon. member wanted to limit. He evidently wanted a six months' session—not a session of eight or nine weeks like the last one—

"The amendment will give us at least the opportunity of expressing our opinions with less curtailment. We have

curtailment enough with the six months' recess."

Then, again, I find that the present Secretary for Public Lands said—

"I only approve of it as the lesser of two evils. I am in favour of unlimited time, as I have already said. If a member deliberately attempted to waste time in this House, he would be brought to book by his constituents on the very first opportunity, and by his own party, too. This is one instance of the evils of party government."

Now we come to the division on that occasion on the amendment that the time should be extended to forty-five minutes. Amongst the "Noes" were Messrs. Barber, Collins, Coyne, Ferricks, Mullan, Payne, Theodore, and Winstanley. Surely, on this occasion, the leader of the Opposition can claim the votes of those hon. members. Again, I find that the hon. member for Charters Towers, the present Attorney-General, said—

"I am in favour of the amendment, because I think there is no justification whatever for the Government refusing to concede us an hour and a-half in which to discuss such important questions as a want of confidence motion or an Address in Reply."

The hon. member then thought we ought to have an hour and a-half. Now he is voting for forty minutes. This is very strange; if I may be permitted to say so, there is something sinister in it. Why should those gentlemen who expressed such strong opinions in past years, now that they have the reins of government in their hands, want to curtail debate? I say that the rights and privileges of hon. members have never been so restricted as they have been since a Labour Government came into power. Can we be surprised that people outside wonder why it is? I can understand the temptation there is to the party in power to use that power for their own advantage, but I think that a good example should be set.

It is more essential, now that we have only one House of Parliament, that we should have additional time for each speaker. After all, what are we paid for but to do the work we are sent here for. Even if we do sit here for five months at a time, as has often been advocated by members on the other side, it is only what the electors expect of us. How can this House do its duty when last session we only met for eight weeks? During that time we put through thirty-two Bills, and most of them became Acts. It took seventeen days to pass the Estimates, and then we had the Address in Reply as well, and all in eight weeks. We cannot do our duty under those conditions. The conditions are going to be made worse than they were before by this Standing Order.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Teowong*): Although I am suffering from a cold I am not disposed to give a silent vote on this question. The Premier gave us one reason why this should be introduced, and that was that the Denham Administration, when it occupied the Government benches, introduced a measure such as this. I might refer to a couple of speeches made in this Chamber in 1910. On 23rd August, 1910, the present hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Ferricks, made use of these words—

"Later on it will be seen that this

Mr. Maxwell. }

proposal has been introduced to play into the hands of the Government—that it has been introduced in order to facilitate the passing of certain measures with the aid of the second edition of the gag, in preference to the old-fashioned gag.”

That is undoubtedly the position we find ourselves in to-night. On that occasion the hon. member for Queenton, Mr. Winstanley, took up a sensible and reasonable attitude. Why do they think, because they are supporting a Government now, that they should adopt a different attitude? The Government are in a minority so far as the number of electors is concerned, and hon. members opposite should take up the same attitude that they did in 1910. This is what the hon. member for Queenton said on page 539 of “Hansard” for 1910—

“Whatever members opposite may think about it, the duty of the Opposition is to look after the rights and privileges of this House, and while there may not seem any necessity at the present time for introducing this question, when they are placed in the Standing Orders we want to know that the liberties and privileges which you, Sir, claim for this House at the commencement of each Parliament, are not infringed or curtailed. There is not a member on this side who is desirous of wasting the time of the House, but we think it is our duty and privilege to see that opportunity is given for a full and free discussion on every measure that comes before us, and we want to be quite sure that, not only on ordinary occasions but on extraordinary occasions, these opportunities will not be so curtailed that there will not be free discussion for every member.”

That sums up the situation now. The hon. gentleman should back up that attitude by supporting the amendment on this occasion. It does not make any difference because they happen to be sitting on the Government side. All representatives of the people should object to any curtailment of the privileges of hon. members. It seems to me that members opposite are only consistent in their inconsistency. The hon. member for Warwick pointed out to-night that, if all hon. members spoke, they could only speak for fifteen minutes on such an important subject as the Address in Reply. We had one hon. member opposite ridiculing the Address in Reply. It is not dignified to take up a position like that. He is responsible to his own electors, and we are responsible to our electors. I claim my rights, as a member, to put my views before this House.

Mr. COLLINS: The views of the Employers' Federation.

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. member does not mind belonging to an employees' federation, but he denies to me the right to belong to an employers' federation. The hon. gentleman is inconsistent. In 1910 he wanted to do one thing, and now he wants to do something different. If ever there was a time when the rights and privileges of hon. members should not be curtailed, it is now, because we have only one House. What occurred when the Premier was sticking up for the rights and privileges of members in 1913? Why, the Premier was “named” and turned out of the House for twenty-four

hours. It will be found on page 115 of “Hansard” for that year. I do not regard it as a black mark against any man to be “named” for sticking up for the rights and privileges of others.

Mr. MORGAN: He has turned out hon. members for much less than that.

Mr. MAXWELL: Now he wants to prevent us from enjoying the privileges that he was fighting for when he was “named” and turned out. I will vote for the amendment, although I do not believe in any restrictions at all—even a restriction of nine days. Freedom of speech is due to every Britisher, and in every British Parliament. I hope the Premier will review the position, and realise how important this matter is. I impress upon him the desirability of a compromise on the matter. The hon. member for South Brisbane said that there was a lot of tedious repetition when unlimited time was allowed. That is a direct insult to the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees, because they have the right to pull up any hon. gentleman who indulges in tedious repetition. We do not ask for this as a compliment, but as a right.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): The Government are trying to fritter away the freedom of this House. The Address in Reply is an important matter, and I do not think that even nine days are sufficient. We can refer to many matters concerning our electorates on the Address in Reply. For instance, if something is wrong with a school which interferes with the health of the children, we can bring it up on the Address in Reply, when we might otherwise have to wait for some time before we could bring it before the House. I will give just one instance. I had a case which I intended to bring before the House on the Address in Reply of a school in my electorate where the children are being educated in a bad way.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will deal with the amendment.

Mr. WARREN: I am giving an instance of what can be brought forward on the Address in Reply. These urgent things can be usefully discussed on it. We sat forty days last session, and for every day we sat we had the “gag” applied, and that at the hands of what is called a democratic Government. If these things are going to continue, and we are to be gradually deprived of our rights, we will soon be in the position they are in in Russia to-day. That is not the Australian or the old British spirit that we boast about, but the gradual tightening of the reins of a despotic Government in the name of democracy, and it is time a solid protest was made. We know that this is done to shorten the session. To-day the biggest troubles face this Government that face any Government in the world, and yet we took £500 a year for forty days' actual work last year. It is a disgrace for responsible Ministers to ask us to reduce those forty days. It is not a fair deal, and it is also absolutely useless. There is not an hon. member on either side who will deny that the business of the country should be proceeded with. Why, then, were we not called together a month ago? Then we could have had the Address in Reply debate all finished by now. It is a disgrace to sneer at it. We are supposed to be leading the

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people and expressing the opinions of the people, and the people are interested in this debate, and are anxious to see what is going to come out of it. We look upon the Address in Reply not as lip loyalty but as a very important matter; and, if members of the Chamber receive a very fair allowance, they ought to be able to put in the whole of the year if necessary. When a man fails in his duty to come here and do the work of government, he should go out and make room for somebody else. The Government are doing absolutely wrong in this proposal; it is only a proper thing that we should go more deeply into all matters that we wish to discuss. We should not think it wonderful to put in forty days in legislating for an important State like this. I cannot understand what the reason for this proposal can be, unless the Government are afraid of defeat, and wish to push on as quickly as possible and save their skins. I hope the Premier will not compromise. There is no such thing as compromise in such a matter as this. If he is fair, he will agree to nine days as little enough, and the man who does not take advantage of his right to address this House and the country on the Address in Reply—if there is need for him to do so—is wrongly missing an opportunity.

It has been said that in a previous session we did not have an Address in Reply, and that other Parliaments do not have it. We are a thinking people here, and it is only right that we should have some say in the matter. The hon. member for South Brisbane says that we are not sincere because we say we shall soon be over on the other side. He is looking at the matter through his own spectacles, and not through the spectacles of honesty. We are pleading, not for the Opposition of to-day, but for the principle for the present and for the future.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I think the old idea underlying the Address in Reply must have been something like this—that the Bills were not prepared for presentation to Parliament, and the Address in Reply was always a stalking horse to enable Ministers to get their work ready. But this Ministry are an active body, with their work well in hand, and there is no necessity to waste the time of the House by perpetuating the practice of a long debate on the Address in Reply. As to the question of limitation of speeches, no man on this side stands for it. What we do stand for is the doing away with absolute waste of time on motions that do not count. The business of the House is being pushed on: there is no limitation about that at all. Hon. members opposite talk about the Address in Reply as evidencing our loyalty. We know that when the Bill for the abolition of the Council was passed and went home to the King in Council, and a petition was sent home, too, praying him not to assent to the Bill, his assent was given and our loyalty was taken for granted. (Opposition laughter.) I am just pointing out that the loyalty of hon. members opposite was absolutely denied by the King.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! I ask the hon. member to deal with the amendment.

Mr. BRENNAN: I contend that the limitation is no restriction at all on the liberty of hon. members, because there has only been a waste of time. The year before last we had no Address in Reply, and the year before that the debate lasted only three days, and that without any restriction at all. There have been numerous occasions in days gone by when the debate did not last three days, and I say that, if the Opposition put their best speakers forward for two days, and the Government put their best speakers forward for two days—

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: You would not be called upon.

Mr. BRENNAN: I am not vain enough to imagine that I am one of the best. How nice it would be for the House, [9.30 p.m.] and what pleasant reading it would make for those who follow "Hansard," if only the best speakers were put forward on both sides to speak on the Address in Reply!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): On a previous occasion in a former session I think I have been guilty—if I may so term it—of having said that there was a good deal of time wasted on this Address in Reply.

The PREMIER: I really think you inspired this alteration.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am glad if I have provided some inspiration for the hon. gentleman. If the hon. gentleman listened to me more frequently he would make fewer mistakes. To cut this debate down to four days would be harsh treatment, which is quite unnecessary. If the Premier had approached this matter in a more reasonable spirit, I believe he would have found the Opposition glad to meet him, because they are just as anxious to avoid wasting time in the conduct of the business of the House as he is.

The PREMIER: We yielded one day to the Opposition.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The hon. gentleman put down three, expecting and prepared to give four—like most people do when bargaining. Now, without the slightest desire to meet the Opposition in this reasonable request, the hon. gentleman intends to bludgeon through this four-day limitation. It is indicative of a process which is gradually being introduced into Parliament. When one sees government being carried on by regulation, and the item "Unforeseen Expenditure" appearing very largely in their balance-sheets, it shows clearly that the government of this country is passing from the representatives of the people assembled here and is being concentrated in the hands of a few people. Of late, those few people have been whittled down one by one, one man and another leaving the Treasury benches, until we have one gentleman left who is really the mouthpiece and the dominating factor in the whole of Labour control and government at the present time.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the hon. member connect his remarks with the amendment?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: We see how one gentleman has been disposed of recently by being found a position in London as Agent—

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General. Now we see the whole of the government of this country concentrated in the hands of one gentleman, who is really the head of the future Communistic State of Queensland.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I will not disobey your call to order, Mr. Chairman, but I can connect my remarks lucidly with the point at issue, and say that our privileges in the discussion of measures of great importance are gradually being whittled away until we are really facing a situation where one man is controlling the destinies of this State. I argue, therefore, that for the good of this State and for the retention of democratic control, it is highly necessary that each member should voice his protest at this unnecessary limitation. We quite agree that the time of the House should not be wasted. It has been pointed out that this limitation really means that only twenty hours will be devoted to the expression of our opinions on the foreshadowed legislation. The debate on the Address in Reply, as the hon. member for Windsor has stated, should provide an opportunity for Ministers to listen to the criticisms of hon. members in opposition. To limit the speeches to seventeen minutes each is quite unreasonable. If the Premier is insistent on this point, he should prevent any member sitting on the Government benches from speaking on the Address in Reply, and give the Opposition the opportunity of availing themselves of the twenty hours. Without any condescension, but with really an appeal to reason—if an appeal to reason is of any use in these days—I put it to the Premier that there is room for compromise in this matter. Four days is far too little. Some may argue that nine days is too long. Let the hon. gentleman meet the situation half way and show, at the inception of this important session, that there is being introduced an air of reasonableness so which the Opposition will readily respond.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Vanango*): In supporting the amendment, I think there is one point that has been overlooked by most of the speakers. When the Government go into recess for many months, hon. members travel through various parts of the State. To my mind, the argument of the hon. member for Toowoomba was a foolish one. Each representative has different interests to represent. If the Government are honest and sincerely desirous of doing their best for this country, they should be only too pleased, after submitting their programme, to listen to the arguments of men representing the various interests of the State. In the programme recently submitted there are many things which interest the primary producer that should be discussed from every point by members of the Opposition and listened to carefully by the Government, so that they will be able to legislate intelligently in the interests of the State. That is a very strong reason why this limitation should not be imposed. Proof has been furnished to-night that hon. members on the other side of the House some years ago stood up for their rights and privileges just as we on this side are doing to-night. How they can vote against this amendment beats me. In the interests of the State, and in the interests of fair play and of honest government, the Premier would do well to accept the amendment.

[*Mr. Elphinstone.*

Question—That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 36.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Huxham
.. Bertram	.. Jones, A. J.
.. Brannan	.. Kirwan
.. Bulecock	.. Land
.. Collins	.. Larcombe
.. Conroy	.. McCormack
.. Cooper, F. A.	.. Mullan
.. Cooper, W.	.. Payne
.. Coyne	.. Pease
.. Deah	.. Riordan
.. Dunstan	.. Ryan
.. Ferrieks	.. Smith
.. Foley	.. Stopford
.. Forde	.. Theodore
.. Gilday	.. Weir
.. Gulica	.. Wellington
.. Gleason	.. Wilson
.. Hartley	.. Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. F. A. Cooper and Mr. Ferrieks.

NOES, 34.

Mr. Appel	Mr. King
.. Barnes, G. F.	.. Logan
.. Barnes, W. H.	.. Macgregor
.. Bobbington	.. Maxwell
.. Beil	.. Moore
.. Brand	.. Morgan
.. Cattmull	.. Nott
.. Clayton	.. Peterson
.. Costello	.. Petrie
.. Deacon	.. Roberts, J. H. G.
.. Edwards	.. Roberts, T. R.
.. Elphinstone	.. Sizer
.. Fletcher	.. Swayne
.. Fry	.. Taylor
.. Green	.. Vowles
.. Jones, J.	.. Walker
.. Kerr	.. Warren

Tellers: Mr. Kerr and Mr. Sizer.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. VOWLES: I have another amendment to move. I would like to get an intimation from the Premier as to whether there is any prospect of a compromise between four days and nine days.

The PREMIER: A compromise is a very bad thing.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not want to move an amendment for seven days, then one for six days, and another for five days, and I would like to get some indication from the Premier as to whether he would agree to a compromise.

The PREMIER: No, I am afraid it would not be advisable.

Original question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That the amendment of Standing Order No. 17—*Address presented by Mr. Speaker*—be agreed to.”

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That the following new Standing Order—*Standing Orders Committee*—to follow Standing Order No. 20—

A Committee consisting of six members in addition to Mr. Speaker, who shall be a member ex officio, to be called the Standing Orders Committee, shall be appointed at the commencement of each session, and the functions of such Committee shall not cease until their successors are appointed.

The Standing Orders Committee shall prescribe the arrangements and pro-

gation of Parliament, which arrangements it shall be the duty of the Sergeant-at-Arms to carry into effect under the directions of Mr. Speaker—be agreed to.”

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That the amendments to Standing Orders Nos. 52, 57, 21, and 93—*Majority Leave in lieu of Unanimous Leave*—be agreed to.”

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That the amendment to Standing Order No. 107—*Time Limit of Speeches*—be agreed to.”

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That the amendment of Standing Order No. 140—*Motion may be made That the question be now put*—be agreed to.”

Mr. VOWLES: Under the existing Standing Orders it is, and has been, the privilege of ordinary members on this side of the Chamber to move—“That the question be now put.” If the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees considers that the matter has been sufficiently debated, he will put the question accordingly.

Mr. COLLINS: You moved—“That the question be now put”—this afternoon.

Mr. VOWLES: I moved it this afternoon expressly for the purpose of my argument to-night. It is proposed to limit that privilege, and to deprive ordinary members of it, and the only person in the future who will have a right to move “That the question be now put” will be the Premier or the Minister in charge of a Bill. I claim that there are occasions—and this afternoon was an example—when a person in authority on the Opposition side of the House should have the same privilege as the Premier or Minister in charge of the business. If an amendment directed from this side of the House is being obstructed, as an amendment was being obstructed and talked out this afternoon, I say that the leader of the Opposition—not an ordinary member—should have the same right as a person on the Government side to move—“That the question be now put.”

The HOME SECRETARY: You would not move it without having a reasonable chance of carrying it, would you?

Mr. VOWLES: The Government might hold up the business on account of some of their supporters being away or for other reasons.

The PREMIER: Does the hon. member suggest that the leader of the Opposition should have that right on private members' day only?

Mr. VOWLES: No; on all occasions.

The PREMIER: That would be absurd.

Mr. VOWLES: It would not be absurd. The Minister must have thirty members behind him before he can move—“That the question be now put.” I had thirty members behind me this afternoon. There was a silly motion brought forward in this Chamber this afternoon by the hon. member for Rockhampton, and a seconder could not be found, and, when the hon. member who

moved the motion wanted an extension of time nobody would move it for him. We brought forward an amendment, but, because it did not suit the hon. member's argument or electioneering intentions, his friends came to the rescue and talked the amendment out. Why should that be so? We were simply going to save the time of the House by preventing obstruction going on. The obstruction was very patent to anybody present. Last year I think the hon. member for Port Curtis exercised the right of moving “That the question be now put,” and the Chairman or Speaker, whichever it was, accepted the motion. I remember the hon. member for Toombul some years ago moving—“That the question be now put.” He was a private member, and yet the motion was accepted by the Speaker. The Government now propose to take that right away.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member is opposed to the alteration of the Standing Order, I am prepared to let it stand as it is at present.

Mr. VOWLES: We are dealing with the matter as we find it, and, as this gives me an opportunity of giving information to the Committee, I want to avail myself of it. I can quite understand the desire of the hon. gentleman to withdraw the amendment. Last session the “gag” was applied very frequently. We were told this afternoon that we talked for forty days, and that the “gag” was applied every day. On looking the matter up I find that that is not quite correct, as the “gag” was applied forty-one times. The astonishing thing is that, when you analyse the applications of the “gag,” you will find it was applied forty-one times, and on nineteen occasions there was no debate at all. On four occasions I was the only member of the Opposition who was allowed to speak. On five occasions two members of the Opposition were given the privilege of speaking, and the rest of the Opposition were disfranchised. On three occasions three members were allowed to speak; on two occasions four members were allowed to speak; on two occasions five members were allowed to speak; on five occasions six members were allowed to speak; on three occasions eight members were allowed to speak; and on one occasion eleven members were allowed to speak. That was the way in which the “gag” was applied forty-one times.

Hon. W. BERTRAM: After a very full debate on the second reading of Bills.

Mr. VOWLES: On many occasions members were not allowed to move amendments.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I would remind the leader of the Opposition that the debate is not a debate on the general question of the “gag.” It is a debate on the question of whether only the Premier or another Minister shall be allowed to move the “gag.”

Mr. VOWLES: I do not wish to waste the time of the Chamber over the business. We are dealing with the one question. The other one is established, and it is not the fact of its being established that we are objecting to, but the way in which it is applied.

The PREMIER: Established by the Kidston Government.

Mr. VOWLES: Yes, and on every previous occasion it was carried out equitably

Mr. Vowles.]

by the Kidston Government. The astonishing thing to me is that hon. members opposite do not assert their individuality, and, when an injustice is being inflicted on the Opposition, they have not the manliness to stand up and say so. I remember in 1912, when I was sitting on the other side, Mr. Denham asked the Speaker to apply the "gag" to the hon. gentleman and others who were over here, and I was one of those who got up and walked out of the Chamber and did not vote for it.

The HOME SECRETARY: It went on just the same.

Mr. VOWLES: It does not matter whether it went on or not. We showed the spirit of fair play that was in us, and I have never seen that spirit of fair play exhibited by members sitting on the Government side, because they are like a lot of dumb, driven cattle, and where their leaders direct away they go. There was one man who stood up as a matter of principle. That was the hon. member for Fitzroy. On one occasion he stood up and said, "No, I am not going to allow the 'gag' to be applied." But he has slipped since then, or, at any rate, he has departed from his original practice, and we found him among the dumb, driven cattle on the forty-one occasions when the "gag" was applied last session. I would like to remind the Premier that certain letters appeared in the Press on the subject of the "gag," and he replied to them, and I take this opportunity of saying that the reply which he gave to the Press was not in accordance with fact.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. VOWLES: I have the facts here to prove it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. VOWLES: They appeared in the Press, and they have never been refuted.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I would like to ask your ruling, Mr. Pollock, as to whether there is anything to prevent me from moving a further amendment in the Standing Order if this amendment is carried?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: No.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I would like to say that I am quite in accord with the remarks of the leader of the Opposition. It does not matter really whether the Premier or Minister in charge of a Bill moves—"That the question be now put"—because it rests with the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees whether it shall be put or not. He really decides whether the matter has been sufficiently debated or not, and, therefore, I fail to see where there is any danger, or any principle that the Government are departing from, in allowing the privilege of moving—"That the question be now put"—to be exercised by the leader of the Opposition. Surely the Opposition have some rights and some privileges in this House, and they should certainly be considered in a matter such as this. The fact of the leader of the Opposition moving it does not really mean that the "gag" will be applied. That being so, what are the Government afraid of? The request of the leader of the Opposition is a very reasonable one, and one that the Government should consider favourably.

The PREMIER: I will accept an amendment allowing the leader of the Opposition to move the "gag" on members of the Opposition. (Laughter.)

[*Mr. Vowles.*

Mr. TAYLOR: I am very sorry I cannot accept the suggestion, but I hope the hon. gentleman will accept the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition.

The HOME SECRETARY: All these Standing Orders are based on majority rule. Surely you recognise that?

Mr. TAYLOR: I know that.

The HOME SECRETARY: What is the good of a power that you cannot exercise?

Mr. TAYLOR: But we did exercise it. We exercised it several times during last session, and we kept you hopping all right, and I hope we will keep you hopping all night some time during this session. I support the request of the leader of the Opposition, and hope that the Government will withdraw the amendment.

The PREMIER: It is suggested that I might withdraw the amendment and allow the Standing Order to stand as at present. If hon. members are afraid of curtailment, with the permission of the Committee I will withdraw the amendment.

Mr. VOWLES: I agree to that.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. MORGAN: I have an amendment to move in Standing Order No. 140.

The PREMIER: It is not now before the Committee, as I have withdrawn my amendment.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: When I ruled that the hon. member had power to move a further amendment, it was on the understanding that the original amendment would be carried. As the amendment has been withdrawn, the Standing Order is not now before the Committee.

[10 p.m.]

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

"That Standing Orders Nos. 211, 218, and 219—'Messages to and from Council'—be omitted."

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

"That the amendments to Standing Order No. 240, and Rule of Practice No. 14 be agreed to."

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

"That Standing Order No. 244—'Bills brought from Legislative Council'—be omitted."

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

"That the amendment of Standing Order No. 269—'Amendments or Recommendations on Third Reading'—be agreed to."

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

"That Joint Standing Order No. 16—'Title of Bill'—be transposed to follow Standing Order No. 270."

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

"That Standing Orders Nos. 276—'Bills sent to Council'; 277—'Bills returned from Council with amendments'; and 278—'Amendments by Council to be considered'—be omitted."

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That the amendments to Standing Order No. 279—*Amendments proposed by the Governor*”—be agreed to.”

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That Standing Order No. 280—*When Governor's amendments are agreed to, to be sent to Legislative Council*”—be omitted.”

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That the amendments to Standing Order No. 230A—*Bills brought over from Previous Sessions*”—be agreed to.”

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That the amendments to Joint Standing Orders Nos. 12 to 20 (excluding 16 and 18) be agreed to, and that they be transposed to follow Standing Order No. 280A.”

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That the amendments to Standing Orders Nos. 282 and 283—*Initiation of Private Bills*”—be agreed to.”

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That Standing Orders Nos. 289—*Private Bills coming from Council*, and 300—*Penalties, forfeitures, and fees*”—be omitted.”

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That the following new Standing Order—*Principal Officer of the House*, to follow Standing Order No. 321—be agreed to.”

“324. The Principal Officer of the House shall be known as ‘The Clerk of the Parliament.’”

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That the amendments to Joint Standing Orders Nos. 8—*Joint Committees*’—and 22—*Clerical Errors discovered in any Bill*”—be agreed to, and that they be transposed to follow Standing Order No. 327.”

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That the amendments to Standing Order Nos. 328—*Suspension of Standing Orders*’—and 330—*Repeal of Standing Orders*’—be agreed to.”

Mr. MORGAN: I have a great objection to the insertion of the words “majority of the” and especially to the omission of the words “leave shall not be granted if six members dissent therefrom.”

The PREMIER: I do not think that the hon. member sees the full purport of the proposed amendment. The part of the Standing Orders to be amended reads—

“But a motion shall not be made to suspend or dispense with any such Rules or Orders without due notice thereof; except by leave of the House, which leave shall not be granted if six members dissent therefrom.”

The question of whether leave shall be granted is to be decided without amendment or debate—not the question of the suspension of the Standing Orders themselves.

Mr. MORGAN: That is not the point I wish to bring before the Committee. At present no Standing Order can be suspended without notice being given, if six members object. I say that six members should have the right to object to the suspension of any Standing Order if notice has not been given. There is nothing to prevent the Government at any time, simply because they have a majority, from springing a surprise on the Opposition. The Government know beforehand what they are going to do: they move the suspension of the Standing Orders and spring it on the Opposition, who do not know what is going to happen. With the present protection, six members of the Opposition can delay the matter for one day.

The PREMIER: That has always happened under the Standing Orders, and, when a Government has submitted a proposal of that kind, it has been usually agreed to.

Mr. MORGAN: Simply because an agreement has generally been made between the Premier and the leader of the Opposition; but, if this protection is taken away, the Premier, if he so desires, need not consult the leader of the Opposition at all. He can come into the House and move the suspension of the Standing Orders without letting the leader of the Opposition or anyone else know that he is going to do it. This is most vital, and we should fight it to the bitter end. Under the present circumstances, the Premier will generally consult the leader of the Opposition, who, if he thinks it right to do so, will agree to the Standing Orders being suspended, so that the business can be proceeded with forthwith; but, if this amendment is made, the leader of the Opposition will have no power. It would be a dangerous innovation, and would take away from the Opposition the power they now possess of preventing the Premier from doing what he likes with the Standing Orders on the spur of the moment. Under the present conditions, the Premier can move the suspension of the Standing Orders, and the leader of the Opposition will ask him for and obtain information; but, if the Premier so desires, he can, under the proposed alteration, refuse to disclose any information, and can carry the motion for suspension of the Standing Orders with his majority.

The PREMIER: Leave must first be granted before we reach that stage.

Mr. MORGAN: If the hon. gentleman alters the Standing Order as he desires, he has power to suspend the Standing Orders without notice, by a motion in the House, which he can carry with his majority.

The PREMIER: We have never resorted to that on any contentious matter.

Mr. MORGAN: The Standing Order reads—

“Any of the foregoing Standing Rules and Orders may be suspended or dispensed with by the House; but a motion shall not be made to suspend or dispense with any such Rules or Orders without due notice thereof, except by leave of the House, which leave shall not be granted if six members dissent therefrom.”

If you delete the words relating to six members dissenting therefrom, it means that the Opposition are at the mercy of the Premier. We may as well have no Standing

Mr. Morgan.]

Orders at all if we agree to this amendment. The Government will know what they are going to do, and will come here prepared and with the numbers up, and they can spring a surprise on the Opposition. I can tell Government members that this Standing Order will have a boomerang effect, and I advise them to give it further consideration.

The PREMIER: You can go back a good many years and you will not find one occasion where the Government have attempted to get leave to suspend the Standing Orders without giving notice. It has certainly never been done by this Government. Whenever the Standing Orders have been suspended it has been done by arrangement with the leader of the Opposition. There is nothing in it, but, if hon. members opposite think that the Standing Order should remain as it is, I have no objection. The matter came before the Standing Orders Committee, and the point was raised by the leader of the Opposition. After some talk it was agreed to allow the amendment to go in; but, if there is any serious objection to it, I do not mind withdrawing it. The Government are not going to ask leave to suspend the Standing Orders in order to get contentious legislation through the House. We have never asked for that kind of thing without giving due notice. We know that it would only provoke the resentment and ire of the Opposition. However, if members wish it, I will withdraw the amendment.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MORGAN: I would point out that it is owing to the safeguard which exists in the Standing Orders at present that the Premier consults the leader of the Opposition when he wishes to get leave to suspend the Standing Orders; but, if the amendment is agreed to, the Premier need not consult the leader of the Opposition at all. The time may come when it will prove a useful safeguard to have. I will accept the Premier's suggestion to leave the Standing Order as it is.

The PREMIER: With the leave of the Committee, I will withdraw the amendment relating to the omission of the words "which leave shall not be granted if six members dissent therefrom."

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The PREMIER then moved the insertion of the words "majority of the" before the word "House" in line 3.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved the omission from Standing Order No. 330—"Repeal of Standing Orders"—of the words "of the Legislative Assembly."

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to certain amendments in the Standing Orders and Rules of Practice, and to certain new Standing Orders.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the report was agreed to

The PREMIER moved—

"That the amendments in the Standing Orders, Rules of Practice, and new Standing Orders be presented to His Excellency the Governor for the Royal assent.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 10.15 p.m.

[*Mr. Morgan.*