

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 16 AUGUST 1923**

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THURSDAY, 16 AUGUST, 1923.

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

QUESTIONS.

RELEASE OF INMATES OF MENTAL ASYLUMS  
DURING REMISSION OF MALADY.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*) asked the Home Secretary—

“1. How many inmates of mental asylums have had their liberty restored during periods of remission of their malady during the last five years—(a) males; (b) females?”

“2. Do the re-admission sheets or the records of the mental institutions testify in any case that on re-admission females have during the remission period become pregnant?”

“3. How many births have occurred in such institutions during the last five years?”

“4. For how long were each of the mothers in Question No. 3 inmates of such institutions?”

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*) replied—

“1. During the period 1st August, 1918,

to 1st August, 1923, 100 male and 71 female patients were discharged who have since been re-admitted.

"2. So far as re-admission papers are concerned, only if the patient returned in a puerperal condition. But all female patients are examined and results relative to patients being pregnant are recorded at time of re-admission, or later on as soon as symptoms of pregnancy show themselves.

"3. Fourteen.

"4.—

Under 1 month	3
Over 1 month and under 3 months	5
Over 3 months and under 6 months	1
Over 6 months and under 9 months	3
Over 3 years and under 4 years	1
Over 4 years and under 5 years	1

(The two last-mentioned mothers had been out in the care of their husbands at different periods, and in both cases the husband claimed the child)."

#### SUBDIVISION OF STATE STATIONS FOR CLOSER SETTLEMENT.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"1. In view of the existing keen demand for grazing selections, is it the intention of the Government to subdivide any of the State stations for closer settlement in the near future?

"2. Is it a fact that prior to the acquisition by the Government of Dillalah Station this holding had been designed or surveyed for closer settlement purposes?

"3. In view of the continuous complaints that Dillalah Station is a breeding ground for dingoes and a source of considerable loss to surrounding settlers, will he make this station at any rate available for closer settlement, thus assisting the Secretary for Public Lands in his efforts to meet the demands of the thousands of persons who are unable to secure grazing land in Queensland at the present time?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Markay*) replied—

"1. The intentions of the Government will be disclosed at the proper time.

"2. Yes.

"3. See answer to No. 1. The complaint that Dillalah State Station is a breeding ground for dingoes is entirely without foundation, and is merely a phase of the propaganda indulged in by people having certain interests to serve."

#### JURY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### INITIATION.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I beg to move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirability of introducing a Bill to amend the Jury Acts, 1867 to 1898, in certain particulars."

Question put and passed.

#### PETROLEUM BILL.

##### INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): I beg to move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirability of introducing a Bill to make better provision for encouraging and regulating the mining for petroleum and natural gas within the State of Queensland."

Question put and passed.

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF CO-OPERATIVE AGENCIES BY PRIMARY PRODUCERS.

##### RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day being called for the resumption of the debate on Mr. Corser's motion—

"That in order to assure to primary producers the possibility of controlling the marketing of their produce, legislative provision be made and loan moneys be made available for the establishment of co-operative produce agencies, to be controlled by the primary producers themselves through a properly constituted directorate elected by subscribing shareholders,"

on which Mr. Gledson had moved—

"That the question be amended by the omission of all words after the word 'produce' on line 3, with a view to the insertion, in their place, of the words 'all primary producers be advised to take advantage of the Primary Producers' Organisation Act provided by the Government, and also the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, to enable them to obtain their necessities at reasonable rates through co-operation.'"

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Vowles.

Mr. BELL (*Fassifern*): The amendment which has been moved on the motion of the hon. member for Burnett largely stultifies the original motion. I do not think it will be advisable to do anything in the nature of compelling the primary producers to link up with an organisation which they are not sure will be of any advantage to them. We know that the organisation which has been started has cost quite a mint of money, and the primary producers are being asked to link up with it and subscribe to it—that is, subscribe to an organisation which they feel perhaps is not going to do them much good. In other parts of the world the organisation of primary industries has been carried out on sectional lines. Each industry is organised separately, and I do not think we should advise the primary producers to link up with an organisation which is designed to control the primary industries as a whole.

The Primary Producers' Organisation scheme has been started by the Government at the wrong end. If the original motion, which expresses the idea expounded by those on this side of the House, is carried, we shall help the producers to obtain control of co-operative organisation. It is necessary that that should be so. We want to have an organisation built up which will be free from any Government interference or control.

That is the danger and weakness of the present organisation by the Government. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed to enable the farmers to grasp the true import of that scheme. As time goes on we shall be asked to subscribe to this very expensive machine, and I do not think it will bring to the farmers and producers that benefit which is claimed for it. We should have that co-operative effort which will enable the farmers to bring such a scheme to a successful conclusion. The farmers and producers and those engaged in the business are best fitted to say what is best for the industry.

Mr. FOLEY: Why did they not co-operate years ago?

Mr. BELL: We are not asking too much by this motion. The producers have asked to be allowed sufficient money to enable them to establish their own agencies. That is absolutely necessary because of the high cost of distribution. The cost of bringing the product from the farmer to the consumer is too great, and any organisation which can eliminate those excessive costs will be doing a service not only to the primary industries but also to the consumers of Queensland. The amendment to this motion will largely nullify that chance, because I do not think that the present organisation will achieve that end. Let me take some of the co-operative enterprises that have been successfully launched. I refer first of all to the co-operative butter factories. Look at the splendid co-operative companies that have been built up in Queensland. That has largely been done through the co-operative methods of the farmers, who have laboured together, many of the farmers giving their time, energy, and ability entirely free, successfully to carry out that movement. They are quite prepared to carry on that organisation. Let me now refer to the co-operative bacon companies. We know of the tremendous difficulties that were placed in the way of those companies when they first started. There was a lot of hard work done, but they have finally achieved success. Why should those organisations have their co-operative efforts nullified to a great extent by handing over their concerns to the organisation which has just been set on foot by the Government? We very much doubt whether the Government are sincere. Their scheme is very much like a sop to the farmer. Those co-operative efforts have cost the farmers a good deal of money, and why should they be handed over to the Government when there is considerable doubt as to whether they will obtain any great benefit from doing so? I am not going to support the amendment, and I hope the House will vote against it and vote for the original motion.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): It is rather a pity that an important motion such as this should be side-tracked by an amendment. There is not much business in advising primary producers to take greater advantage of legislation unless you are going to ascertain their opinions after they have considered the matter. There is a lot of business in the motion, and the principle it contains has been of very great use to Queensland in the past in building up many of its industries. What we desire to do is to extend that principle in other directions so that advantage can be taken of it to push Queensland ahead. When the Opposition bring forward a motion and it is merely side-tracked and made little

of by an amendment telling us that we should not discuss the principle at all, but that we should advise the people that certain legislation exists and ask them to take advantage of it, there is no business in it. I propose to move a further amendment.

Mr. FOLEY: More camouflage?

Mr. VOWLES: It is not camouflage. It we are going to advise these people to read certain Acts of Parliament to ascertain the principles contained in them, we should give them an opportunity of expressing an opinion as to whether they believe in the principles contained in the motion, or whether they believe in the legislation mentioned in the amendment. It is with that end in view that I propose to move a further amendment.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has forfeited the right to speak, as he rose and addressed the Chair before the hon. member for Fassifern spoke.

Mr. VOWLES: Do I understand I have lost my right to speak?

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. VOWLES: Do I understand I have to sit down?

The SPEAKER: Yes; the hon. member has lost his right to speak.

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): I desire to offer a few remarks in regard to the amendment that has been moved by the hon. member for Ipswich. One of the reasons why I am not prepared to support that amendment is because I consider that it is an amendment which prevents individuals from continuing in a purely straightforward co-operative spirit. It is an endeavour to compel co-operative companies to come under the control of the Primary Producers' Organisation. When the Primary Producers' Organisation Bill was going through this House I stated that I was afraid that the Bill might create a bureaucracy, which would enable things to be held up and delayed. So far as we have gone at the present time, I am afraid that phase may now be more than on the way. I hope the various Local Producers' Associations in existence at the present time will do their utmost to stop that phase becoming a custom under the Primary Producers' Organisation Act. Instead of supporting this amendment I have a further amendment which I have very much pleasure in moving. I move the addition to the amendment, after the word "co-operation," of the words—

"and that an expression of opinion be obtained from the Local Producers' Associations throughout Queensland as to whether the members of those associations favour the principle contained in the above motion or the principle contained in the amendment."

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The reason why I am submitting this amendment is to assist to prevent the Local Producers' Associations from becoming in any way bureaucratic. I hope that the amendment will stimulate the various Local Producers' Associations in existence throughout Queensland into taking an active interest in the matter, and of stating whether they have the principle of co-operative companies controlling their own businesses uppermost in their minds, or whether they are prepared to allow the Primary Producers' Organisation to control the co-operative industries which are about to be formed in the

Mr. Nott.]

future, and, perhaps, those which have been formed in the past. Those co-operative companies have done very good service in promoting the development of Queensland to the extent to which we have seen it progress during the last ten or fifteen years.

There is another phase of the question I would like to mention. It seems to me that the present Government are by no means in favour of supporting and encouraging co-operative companies being formed unless they more or less control those companies, and for that reason they evidently have the Primary Producers' Organisation well in hand, and hope to be able to use the co-operative companies which are already formed in Queensland as a stepping stone to socialisation.

Mr. FOLEY: What is wrong with that?

Mr. NOTT: I do not know that it is necessary for me to speak any longer on this amendment, but I hope the House will pass it. In so doing, they will give the people concerned a chance to say what principle or system they prefer—straight-out, purely co-operative companies, or companies which may be more or less State controlled.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): I have much pleasure in seconding the amendment. I was very sorry to see the amendment moved on the original motion by the hon. member for Ipswich; and I think that the amendment just submitted by the hon. member for Stanley on that amendment will probably clear the air to a very considerable extent. There seems a tendency in all agricultural matters to have everything naturally referred to the Council of Agriculture. At the time the Council of Agriculture was formed I had the pleasure of being a delegate to the conference which was held in Brisbane, and there I distinctly remember that the Premier urged upon the representatives present that they should keep this industry in their own hands. He said: "Whatever you do, keep this industry in your own hands, and do not allow it to be controlled by politicians." The history of the Council of Agriculture, unfortunately, shows that it has allowed politics to enter into it, and to a certain extent it is now being controlled by politicians. Personally, I believe that the organisation in connection with the Council of Agriculture was used during the elections as it ought not to have been used. There is no doubt that the Premier in his tour helped at least one candidate who up till that time had been an organiser for the Primary Producers' Association. Why did the Premier at that conference urge upon the farmers and producers that they should manage their own business? Did he really mean that, or did he wish that this organisation should be built up to be used in some insidious way for political purposes? I am perfectly certain that it has been so used. I come in contact with members of Local Producers' Associations—those men who on some occasions have been contemptuously referred to by hon. members on the other side as "cockies," with the accent on the word "cocky"—and these men are beginning to think, and, if it takes them a little longer to think than the people who live in the towns, at any rate they are thinking.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They have more intelligence than you have.

[*Mr. Nott.*]

Mr. KELSO: I do not deny their intelligence, but I say their environment is such that they may not be able to take up things as quickly as the people in the town, and the Minister knows that perfectly well. We know perfectly well that the farmer has a good head on him, and we know perfectly well that, when the farmer gets a grip of things and makes up his mind on any subject, he expresses himself in no uncertain terms. The Council of Agriculture has been in existence for some time, and many of the farmers are beginning to ask what practical good work has been done that was not previously done by the farmers themselves voluntarily. Take as an example the dairying industry. At the time this conference was held, it was said by the Premier—I do not suppose he said it intentionally, as perhaps he did not know—that there had been no organisation on the part of the dairymen of Queensland. As a matter of fact, the voluntary organisation on the part of the dairymen of Queensland was absolutely the best organisation of its kind in Australia; and it is admitted now, and has been admitted all along, that the work which the dairy farmers did by voluntary co-operation was an example to the whole of the people of Australia. I am in a position to say that the Southern States have been working for the last two years organising slowly on similar lines. These men give of their time and of their intelligence. Notwithstanding what the Minister said, I never for a moment doubted that the farmer has intelligence. He has intelligence of the highest kind, but he works slowly, and when he arrives at a conviction on any subject, he is quite certain that he is on the right track. These men have organised voluntarily in the South, and they are copying the methods adopted by the Queensland dairy farmers. Correspondence has taken place with the South—it is a fact, because I have seen the correspondence—which shows that they are absolutely surprised at the high state of efficiency which has been obtained by the voluntary co-operative efforts of the dairy farmers of Queensland. When the Council of Agriculture was formed, whether they liked it or not, they had to join. It is all very well for the Minister to say how many thousand farmers have joined. I think the number is something like 20,000; but, surely, he must see that, whether they liked it or not, they had to join these associations because it was necessary that they should have a say as to what was to be done in connection with the various matters dealt with. But I very much doubt whether they are as enamoured with the scheme of the Council of Agriculture to-day as they were when it started a year ago. They are beginning to recognise that the Council of Agriculture combined together in connection with the different branches of production as one big council is really top-heavy. There is such a thing as over-organisation. There is such a thing as cracking a walnut with a steam hammer. I believe—and it was so stated at the time, and it has not been denied—that the whole germ of this scheme originated in an article which appeared in an American magazine, giving the organisation in full detail, and that this was adapted to the needs of Queensland by a very capable public servant, Mr. Story. That organisation was designed to suit the American nation, with a population of over 100,000,000 people.

Mr. W. COOPER: I think you are wrong.

Mr. KELSO: I think I am right. That is what I read at the time. I think it is impossible to carry on a huge organisation like the Council of Agriculture, with a tremendous committee running to about thirty members and taking in five branches of agriculture, holding meetings to which

delegates come from time to time [4 p.m.] from all over Queensland, and incurring a tremendous expense, and in certain directions not making any progress. It seems to me that the voluntary efforts of the different branches of agriculture should have been encouraged. These men are willing to give their time and talents towards the development of their particular industry. The only way to organise an industry effectively is for the men who are experts in that particular industry, through having gone through the mill themselves, to develop their branch of the industry, and concentrate all their efforts until they bring it to a high standard of efficiency. Some years later, perhaps, it may be desirable to have co-ordination of the different branches of industry, but at the present time it is possible for the committee of the Council of Agriculture to meet and have their time taken up in considering questions, say, in connection with sugar-cane. The members representing the other four branches of primary production are not directly interested in sugar-cane; yet they are brought down to these meetings at great cost, and have to listen to a discussion in which they are not interested in any way. I do not think that the ideals which have been set up by the Minister in forming this huge organising scheme are likely to be attained. The farmer was told at the time the Council of Agriculture was formed that the Government for the first twelve months would bear the whole cost of organisation, which, according to the answer given to a question asked in the House, will run into £30,000 a year. For two years from 1st July, 1923, the farming industry will have to bear one-half and the Government the other half of the cost of the scheme, and after those two years have expired the farming industry will have to shoulder the whole of the cost. I have asked some of the producers their opinion on the matter. They have had a fair time to consider the question, and the majority of those to whom I have spoken say that they cannot see that the Council of Agriculture has done any better than was done under the old voluntary associations. The Council of Agriculture was not brought into being by the voluntary co-operation of those who are engaged in the industry, and, when a levy is imposed on the individual farmer and he has to pay it whether he likes it or not, he will begin to put his thinking cap on, and ask whether the Council of Agriculture is worth the money he has to pay for it. I think this motion, with the further amendment added—that an expression of opinion be obtained from the Local Producers' Associations throughout Queensland as to whether the members of the associations favour the principle contained in the motion or that contained in the amendment—is a very good thing to place before the farmers. It is the principle of the referendum, which hon. members opposite are always in favour of when it suits their own purpose, but in this particular case the primary producers, now that the agricultural scheme has gone on for a certain time, should have the right to say whether these conditions should continue or not, and for that

reason I am in favour of the motion as amended by the amendment of the hon. member for Stanley.

Mr. W. COOPER (*Rosewood*): I have listened to the remarks of the hon. member for Nundah in connection with this scheme of the Primary Producers' Organisation being political, and I regret that the Premier is not present to defend himself against the hon. member's statement. I am quite sure that I represent far more farmers than the hon. member for Nundah, and I have had a reasonable opportunity of getting to know the attitude which the farmers in the Rosewood electorate, at all events, have taken up towards the organisation. The farmers know that no previous Government has given them anything like the encouragement to control their own products that the present Government has given them. For instance, the Co-operative Agricultural Production and Advances to Farmers Acts provide for an advance by the Government of 66½ per cent. upon the whole cost of the erection of any co-operative factory or industry that they may embark upon. Again, we find that previous Governments refused point blank to advance any money at all to the Murarrie Bacon Factory.

Mr. KELSO: We have not had a chance for eight years.

Mr. W. COOPER: The hon. member has been sleeping, like Rip Van Winkle. If he had taken the trouble to find out what has been done by this Government for the primary producers in comparison with what has been done by previous Governments, he would never stand up in the House and make the assertions he has made this afternoon, particularly so far as the political side of the question is concerned.

Mr. EDWARDS: You kept quiet when the Government stole the farmers' butter.

Mr. W. COOPER: I certainly am quiet when it is necessary to be quiet. Unfortunately for the hon. member, he is not quiet when it is absolutely necessary that he should be quiet. I say without fear of contradiction that, so far as I know, no politics entered into the Primary Producers' Organisation scheme in my electorate other than Nationalist politics, and hon. members opposite are endeavouring to injure this scheme or anything else from the middleman's point of view. It is a matter of endeavouring, for no other reason than politics, to induce the farmer to reject something that the Government have done. The Local Producers' Associations established in my electorate have done some wonderfully good work, and I am in the position to know.

Mr. KELSO: Are not some of the Local Primary Producers' Associations withdrawing from the Council of Agriculture?

Mr. W. COOPER: They may be. Many bank managers have embezzled funds of the banks, but that does not make the whole of the banks responsible for one. We hear this sort of piffle from members opposite on account of one man withdrawing from the scheme.

Mr. KELSO: I did not say one man. I said Local Producers' Associations.

Mr. W. COOPER: That may be so. I am not here to advocate withdrawal from this system, but the continuance of an organisation which will place the farmer beyond the

*Mr. W. Cooper.]*

control of any outside influence in his business.

Mr. COSTELLO: Does not the motion extend the organisation?

Mr. W. COOPER: No. Ample provision is made in the Act passed by this Government to give the farmer all the opportunity necessary at the present time, and, unless hon. members who are supposed to represent farming constituencies alter their tactics towards the farmer and cease to endeavour to persuade him that no good will come out of this organisation, it is possible that the farmer will find himself in the same position as he was before the Act was passed. The hon. member for Nundah a few moments ago said that it was essential that the farmer should get every facility for marketing his produce. I quite agree with him, and I say that the only way in which he can get it is by organisation.

Mr. KELSO: He has been doing that all along.

Mr. W. COOPER: The opportunity to organise has been given to him by this Government. Hon. members have condemned the scheme, which is purely and simply co-operation on a large scale—co-operation enabling the farmers to control every farming industry. I remember the advent of co-operation in New South Wales and the establishment of the first co-operative butter factory on the Richmond River. The same attitude was taken up by the private companies towards the farmer then which hon. members opposite are adopting towards the Primary Producers' Organisation. On the Richmond River a co-operative factory was started in a small place, and the New South Wales Butter Company and several other private concerns went to the farmer and said, "We will give you 1d. a gallon more for your milk than the co-operative factory if you will sacrifice your own factory and send your milk to us," and they predicted that the machinery of the co-operative factory would run down. Eventually it did run down, but the Alcott Brothers, who saw the attitude of those companies—which is the attitude of hon. members opposite towards the Primary Producers' Organisation—put their money into the largest butter and bacon-curing factory in the world—that is, the Byron Bay Factory. It is useless for hon. members on the other side to try to camouflage the issue by endeavouring to throw the onus on the Government of making the organisation political. Every word uttered by hon. members opposite has been prompted purely and simply by political feeling, and the farmers will be well advised to remember that these very gentlemen were compelled under pressure to vote for the Primary Producers' Organisation Bill when it was passing through this Chamber.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): It is surprising to hear the expressions of hon. members opposite. They had before them a direct motion for the provision of co-operative markets and they side-stepped it by moving an amendment asking the primary producers to take advantage of the Primary Producers' Organisation Act. Surely to goodness, if that Act is so good, the farmers will join the organisation under it.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must confine his remarks to the amendment.

[*Mr. W. Cooper.*]

Mr. CORSER: The second amendment provides an opportunity for members of the organisation to express themselves on the motion and the amendment. It gives to them the opportunity of saying what they really require, for the guidance of hon. members in this Chamber. We merely ask that the individual members of the organisation have both matters placed before them, and because we are doing that we hear hon. members on the other side say that we are endeavouring to put some obstacle in the way of the successful organisation of the farmers, and that we are against the organisation.

Mr. FOLEY: Of course, you arc.

Mr. CORSER: That is ridiculous, and no sound argument on the Government side can be advanced to show that the Opposition are not taking the lead in the matter of improving the market conditions of the primary producers. All that the members of the organisation have been promised—the individuals to whom we wish to submit these points—all that they wish for, for the consummation of their ideals, is the establishment of what the motion provides for—that is, co-operative markets. Since the Government do not wish to give them that, and since the Government's amendment endeavours to side-track the motion, we ask that the House shall show sufficient confidence in the farmers to give them an opportunity of expressing their views.

Mr. FOLEY: The Primary Producers' Organisation needs no encouragement.

Mr. CORSER: I am not going to be led aside by the hon. member. I would like very much to have the opportunity of dealing with the whole thing at once, but I am going to keep myself absolutely to the amendment submitted by the hon. member for Stanley.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member, having moved the motion, has the right of reply.

Mr. CORSER: Since Government members have made so much of what this organisation was going to be, they should not let pass the first opportunity of allowing it to direct us in the handling of its industrial matters, and they should not try to prevent a division on this matter, but should allow it to go to a vote. I am not going to deal at any length with the amendment, because I am desirous of securing an expression of opinion, and I challenge the Minister to let it go to a vote.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He takes no notice of your tactics.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman takes enough notice to be very concerned when the second amendment was moved, because it is going to show whether or not he is willing to entrust to the organisation which he has established that influence which he asserted it would have, and whether he is prepared to extend to it the power which he claims the Act gives it. Let us take a division on the question, so that we may have an expression of opinion from hon. members opposite and an indication of their sincerity on the matter.

Mr. BULCOCK (*Barcoo*): The hon. member for Nundah made some reference to a statement which he had read since the Council of Agriculture was established—that our Primary Producers' Organisation was an adaptation of an American scheme. That is not correct. The hon. gentleman goes on to characterise the conduct of the Council of Agriculture as neglectful in so far as progress has not been made in the solution of many

of the problems that confront the agriculturists of this State. Of course, the hon. gentleman's knowledge of Queen street farmers might lead him to that conclusion, but it is abundantly obvious that, so far as this organisation and its activities during the past eighteen months or so are concerned, it has amply justified its existence up to the present time.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BULCOCK: As that is so, one has no alternative but to support the amendment in opposition to the motion moved by the hon. member for Burnett. The hon. gentleman referred to certain American institutions upon which he claimed we had founded our organisation. I would like to point out to the hon. member and other hon. members opposite that the organisation to which he probably refers is the vast organisation that exists in every agricultural centre of the United States or America, and which is known as the Non-partisan League. I take it the Council of Agriculture should be non-partisan so far as agricultural activities are concerned. But, unfortunately, hon. gentlemen opposite have sought to take advantage of this discussion to make the whole thing a partisan display of feeling against the Council of Agriculture.

Mr. KELSO: It contains too many public servants.

Mr. BULCOCK: One or two very significant things have arisen out of this debate. I ask hon. members to cast their minds back to the time when the Primary Producers' Organisation Act was going through this House. After the Bill had passed through its third reading stage, hon. members opposite threw out their chests and said, "We have made this a magnificent Bill; we have made this a workable Bill." Assuming that their statement was sincere, and assuming that they were actuated by sincere motives when they said, "We have made this Bill a success"—it is only assumption; we know that it is not a fact—what has come over them now that they are not prepared to adopt this magnificent scheme as they claimed it to be? If they believed that then, why do they not adopt the scheme now for the furtherance and wellbeing of the agricultural industry of our State?

Mr. KELSO: We have not had control of it.

Mr. BULCOCK: The Opposition do not have control of these things. This fact is established that the majority of those on the Council of Agriculture are the practical representatives of the agriculturists elected on a franchise basis, and those elected gentlemen preponderate to such an extent that they can sway the decisions of the Council in any direction that the majority of the primary producers affiliated with the Council desire. The hon. gentleman says that they have not had an opportunity. He talks about slow progress. Civilisation is the result of organic evolution, the same as agricultural evolution must be. We start on the groundwork of agriculture and we work up to a complex system. With the passage of the Primary Producers' Organisation Act we embarked on the establishment of a yet more complex system in our agricultural life, the result of which has been to give to the primary producers a better return for their labour.

Mr. KELSO: The trouble is that it is too complex.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. gentleman quoted America. The most complex agri-

cultural system in the world is the American system. Let us see some of the things they have done there. The same charge was made against that organisation—that their activities were too slow. One of the biggest things that they have attacked in America, in so far as cereals are concerned, is the question of sterility in oats. A commission was appointed. I am merely quoting this in passing to show how progress must necessarily be slow. A commission was appointed to inquire into this question of the sterility in oats, and it was five years and seven months from the day on which it was appointed to the day it was able to issue its finding, but its finding solved the problem. The same thing applies in relation to the tomato industry in California, where a very serious disease attacked that industry and threatened to obliterate it, even as the cotton industry is threatened with extinction in America at the present time. A commission was appointed consisting of two qualified scientists and field assistants, and for six years they investigated this question and ultimately arrived at a solution of the trouble. Shall we say, therefore, that an expenditure of £30,000 per annum is not justified even if we can achieve results along the lines that have been achieved by the Non-partisan League acting in conjunction with the Bureau of Agricultural Experiment and Science in the United States of America? The motion submitted by the hon. member for Burnett provides, in effect, for the setting up of further organisations. The hon. member for Nundah threw out an interjection a moment or two ago in which he said that the agricultural system was becoming somewhat complex, and, in effect, that that was the trouble. If that is the trouble with the existing system, would the hon. gentleman suggest that yet further systems should be set up to make it more complex for the farmer, who, after all, must necessarily devote the main portion of his attention, not to the marketing of the crops, but to the growing of those crops so as to place the best products on the market of which he is capable? There is no question that the agricultural legislation passed by this Government has attracted attention not only within the State, not only within the Commonwealth, but it has attracted attention throughout the world. Only the other day the Secretary for Agriculture informed me that he had inquiries from the Canadian Bureau of Agriculture asking him to submit to that bureau some particulars and some details of the organisation that we have set up in Queensland. I have an extract from the official organ of the Primary Producers' Union—"The Producers' News"—dated 28th March, 1923, which says—

"The following is an extract from the report of the annual meeting of the Central Executive of the Primary Producers' Union, held at their headquarters, 30 Bridge street, Sydney, on Wednesday, 21st March.

"The discussion is reported in the official organ of the Primary Producers' Union, 'The Producers' News,' of 28th March, and it arose out of the following recommendation from the Tamworth (N.S.W.) Council:—

That the executive discuss the advisability of advocating the passing of legislation similar to the Queensland Primary Products Pools Act of 1922.

"G. W. Gordon, who represented the

*Mr. Bulcock.]*

Raleigh district (N.S.W.), is reported in the following terms:—

There was no doubt that the Queensland Government had made a resolute and honest effort to assist the farmers; and as the result had proved so successful, it would be worth while obtaining copies of the Act, and then endeavouring to interest the New South Wales Government to enact something similar. He moved that the Butter Stabilisation Committee and Mr. McRitchie be asked to consider the matter carefully, and make a report thereon to next Conference.

"The motion was seconded by Mr. Tonkin and carried unanimously."

Mr. KELSO: That has nothing to do with the Council of Agriculture.

Mr. BULCOCK: It has a good deal to do with the Council of Agriculture by virtue of the fact that there are farmers in New South Wales who are not able to participate in conditions such as have been created by this Act here, and who desire that those conditions shall be set up in their State so that they may have an opportunity of participating in whatever benefits are offering under the scheme of organisation that we have adopted in Queensland. I think it has been purposely overlooked in this discussion by hon. members opposite that, when the Primary Producers' Organisation Act was going through this House its purpose was to give the farmer for the first time in history control over his products from the time the seed was sown until the crop was ultimately marketed. If that was the object of the Act and is the manner in which investigation is being pursued for the safe conduct of that measure, and for the safe marketing of the farmers' produce, it naturally follows that there is already power possessed by the Council of Agriculture through its officers to set up an organisation or institution similar to that which the hon. member for Burnett desires to have set up. It brings us back to the question of whether we are going to have

[4.30 p.m.] two authorities or one authority.

Most of the people who have come into the organisation realise, without any political feeling in the matter, that one central executive, one form of control, evolves better control and better results than could be secured by numerous smaller bodies.

Mr. KELSO: Not necessarily.

Mr. BULCOCK: The whole experience of industrialism shows that to be so. I will quote one instance in support of my argument. The largest manufacturer of motor-cars in the world to-day is Henry Ford. He has acquired that position because he has brought all the conflicting interests from coal and steel to the mechanical construction and assembling of the cars under one executive and direction. As a result, that man stands out to-day as a monument to "big business." The same principle applies to the farmer and every other enterprise in the world, provided you have the right man at the helm. The hon. member has attempted to cast some aspersion on the Council of Agriculture. Is it not significant that not long ago certain members of the Council asked that Mr. Story, who was responsible for the establishment of the agricultural system and marketing, and who has displayed such keen and satisfactory interest in the development of agriculture, be recommended by the Government, if possible, for knight-

hood in view of what he has done in the interests of agriculture in Queensland? Does not that indicate that the gentlemen who are most closely associated with the Council of Agriculture, who derive their living from the soil, were so enamoured with this system of organisation which we have introduced that they desired to give the chief organiser some State-wide recognition of the fact that he had accomplished something worth accomplishing in the interests of the primary producers of this State? It is to be regretted that hon. members opposite seek to cast aspersions on the Council of Agriculture. The Council of Agriculture has been loyal to the interests of the farmers. At times the Council of Agriculture has done things which I personally felt would have been better left undone, and has said things which I have thought would have been better left unsaid, but the fact must be recognised that it is fast becoming recognised as the authority to make agricultural pronouncements in this State. The Council has resources, a big membership, its own journal, and a keen business man at the head, and, given these conditions, which no man can deny exist, is it not logical that it should be availed of to set up the co-operative distribution and marketing of agricultural products as provided for in the Bill which brought it into being, or would you create loopholes so that the Act can be sidetracked? You have to concentrate the whole of the business of the farmer under one constructive head.

Mr. KELSO: Its trouble is that it is top-heavy.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. member possibly means that it is composed of too many members.

Mr. SWAYNE: The motion does not refer to the Council of Agriculture in any shape or form.

Mr. KIRWAN: Your members dragged it in.

Mr. BULCOCK: The discussion throughout the whole afternoon has surrounded the Council of Agriculture, and as one who takes a keen interest in agriculture I feel justified in replying to some of the interjections. I say without fear of contradiction that the Council of Agriculture has more than justified its existence. It can even create the machinery which the hon. member for Burnett seeks to create. The hon. member for Nundah says that it is top-heavy. Would he have it composed of one member representing the butter industry, another representing the fruit industry, another representing the sugar industry, another the wheat, and others representing other industries? Would he subject the Council of Agriculture to the charge—and it is a charge that could be laid against it—that it should become an oligarchy with one man only at the head endeavouring to determine the conditions under which that industry can be worked?

Mr. EDWARDS: That is absurd.

Mr. BULCOCK: It is the logical sequence to the arguments of hon. members on the other side. Is it not far wiser to have two or three representatives, because there is wisdom in the multitude of counsellors? If you restricted the number of members of the Council, you would restrict its usefulness and detract from the work it is doing. The hon. member in saying it is too top-heavy

[*Mr. Bulcock.*]

might say there are too many members belonging to the organisation. The organisation is the logical outcome of the members who subscribe to it. The question has been raised that in the future they may be required to contribute towards the cost of its upkeep. I do not see eye to eye with the hon. member on that particular question, because I am of the opinion that its results will prove to be the soundest investment that the farmer has ever made. Would they not object if they had to find the capital for a co-operative company? Does a co-operative company not make an initial demand on their capital? The farmers would have to find their proportion of the capital required for the establishment of a co-operative society.

Mr. KELSO: They would have control of their own affairs.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. member was not in the House when the Primary Producers' Organisation Bill was passed, and it is obvious he has not taken advantage of his opportunity to study the objects of the Bill, as otherwise he would have discovered that the principle of that Bill is that the farmer should have charge of his own affairs. Let us take the conference held in connection with the fruit industry the other day. The hon. member will find a report of it in the "Queenland Producer" of the 11th August, 1925. He will see there that the farmer is being given control of his own produce.

Mr. KELSO: Was that not done before the Council of Agriculture came into operation?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. member probably has not the knowledge that every one of the States of the Commonwealth had the opportunity to bring in legislation similar to that passed in Queensland which brought into being the Council of Agriculture. Queensland was the only State which availed itself of that opportunity, and we find now that the farmers of the Southern States and countries overseas are interesting themselves in this matter, and asking that they be given similar conditions and opportunities. That is a complete answer to the question raised by the hon. member. The farmer has not been discouraged by the creation of the Council; he is confidently looking to it to solve his problems. The farmer is going to make the Council the Mecca to which he will bring all his troubles.

Mr. WARREN: Will he fetch his prayer mat?

Mr. BULCOCK: It is possible that some farmers in Queensland are even praying to the Council to try and solve their problems. Their prayers were answered in the past, when this Government introduced the Primary Producers' Organisation Bill as the first step to take them out of the hands of the middlemen.

Mr. WARREN: Have you got them out of their hands?

Mr. BULCOCK: The logical outcome of this organisation is that they will be taken out of their hands. That brings me to the crux of my argument in this matter. There have been nasty insinuations and sinister suggestions about the Council of Agriculture for some time past. That is explained by the fact that hon. members opposite are

beginning to realise that the Council of Agriculture is going to be a potent factor in our agricultural life, and is going to do away with a lot of exploitation. What concerns the farmer most is to get the utmost value for his produce; to do that he has to take care that the middleman gets less. The president of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, when hearing the case of the fruitworkers in Victoria for increased wages, awarded £3 17s. odd per week for those workers. As usual, the employers said that they could not afford that wage, and I believe there was something in the contention, but Mr. Justice Powers struck the nail on the head when he said, "You people have got to get more for your product, and let the middleman get less."

Mr. KELSO: Why don't you do it for them?

Mr. BULCOCK: The activities of the Council of Agriculture will do it. They are doing it by laying down certain lines of action, by studying the conditions of our markets, by collaboration with the other States, by a scientific study of marketing problems, and by a distinct understanding of the interlocking nature of every branch of agriculture. They are steadfastly facing a problem that other Governments are not game to face. We are the only Government facing this problem and giving the primary producers an opportunity of securing the best results for their labour, to which they are entitled.

Mr. KELSO: Do you mean to say co-operation was not in force before the passage of the Primary Producers' Organisation Act?

Mr. BULCOCK: I mean to say that the Primary Producers' Organisation gives the farmers themselves the power to co-operate. I, therefore, consider that the amendment is redundant, and that there is no need for it to be carried by this Chamber.

Mr. KELSO: You are afraid to trust the farmers in this matter.

Mr. BULCOCK: There has been no stronger friend to the farmers than myself. I have advocated at all times in this Chamber the interests of the farmers.

Mr. KELSO: Why not give them a chance of getting something?

Mr. BULCOCK: I believe they already have that opportunity through the Primary Producers' Organisation. I am not going to support a redundant motion, which seeks to create an organisation that is not necessary, and which will clash with the Primary Producers' Organisation. The Primary Producers' Organisation has solved the farmers' difficulty of marketing crops on a co-operative basis.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): It seems to me that the added words contained in the amendment are merely asking the people interested their opinion as to whether the motion submitted by the hon. member for Burnett is right or wrong. Speaking as a member of a Local Producers' Association, I cannot see any harm in the amendment. The weak point of the organisation—I am speaking absolutely in sympathy with the organisation, and no one can infer that I am unfriendly to it—is the local branches. The local branches have not the voice that they should have in building up the structure.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How is that?

Mr. Warren.]

Mr. WARREN: The trouble is that the branches very rarely meet, and, when they do, they seldom have sufficient representatives to hold a meeting.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Whose fault is that?

Mr. WARREN: It is the weak point of the whole structure, and, unless we get the voice of the individual, no such top-heavy structure is going to be sufficient to carry out the wishes of the Government or of those interested in the producer.

It is well known that the farmer is the hardest man of any class of worker to organise. If this is the weak part of the organisation, surely it is wise to try and strengthen it. A lot has been said this afternoon as to where this organisation originated, and whether it is beneficial or not in other parts of the world. I am going to read a little extract from the "Producers' Review." It says that the American system is the system for the farmer. I have held ever since the introduction of the Bill that the American system is not the system for the producer—that we should build our system on totally different lines to the American system. Our system should be one that will organise the fruit industry as a fruit industry. How is the fruitgrower going to assist the sugargrower, the woolgrower, or the cattle man? As a matter of fact, the fruitgrowers have not sufficient members on the Council of Agriculture; they have to get the assistance of two dairymen. How are dairymen going to assist the fruitgrowers? The scheme of organisation originated and planned by the fruitgrowers was ideal. The scheme advocated in America and partially accepted—the scheme advocated by the Downs producers for the last fifteen years—has separate organisations. During the passage of the Bill an amendment was moved to make our system conform with that ideal. Some hon. members said that we threw out our chests because we had nineteen amendments accepted. But three very vital amendments we did not succeed in getting into the Bill. The loss of those three vital amendments is the cause of the damage to the system to-day. I do not wish to advocate the killing of this machine;—(laughter)—I wish to perfect it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You do not kill machines.

Mr. WARREN: I stand corrected—I meant the organisation. I said on practically every platform of the Murrumba electorate, and I say so to-day, that the farmer must embrace this organisation; it is his duty and the duty of all those interested in the scheme to see where the weak spots are and to eliminate them. In America to-day there are no people worse off than the farmers. The extract I am going to read is the catechism of the Government, or it was last session. This is what it contains—

At 4.50 p.m.,

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

Mr. WARREN: The "Producers' Review," in an article headed "Will the Farmer Continue to Starve?" says—

"American agriculture produces £3,000,000 per annum. However, John F. Sinclair, a Minneapolis banker in close touch with the economic conditions of the farmers, estimates that 388,482 farmers in the North-West—one of the

finest belts in the Union—have increased their indebtedness in ten years by £2,000,000. He says, 'The farmers of the North-West are bankrupt. Foreclosures are everywhere, suicides are common, farmers and their families are giving up by hundreds and packing up a few old pieces of furniture in their old wagons and starting out, God knows where.'"

We are practically faced with the same thing here, because the city has been made so attractive and the conditions have been made so absolutely safe for the worker, while the conditions of the man on the land are very harsh and his returns are very small. Take the Tara district as an example. For practically 200 miles around that district you have bankrupt farmers. Take your coastal districts, and you will find that, even with their wonderful rainfall, the greater proportion of the farmers in those districts are being carried on either by the Department of Agriculture or by some banking institution. It is the duty of the individual, and particularly it is the duty of the farmer himself, to get out of the hands as far as possible, not only of the banking institutions but also of middlemen. In saying that I do not wish to cast any aspersions on middlemen.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Don't apologise for it.

Mr. WARREN: I am not going to apologise. We must grip this situation as producers. I am a producer, and I am in no less than seven co-operative concerns at the present moment, and I have done all that is possible to assist co-operative enterprise; and I feel sure that it is co-operation and co-operation only that is going to save the situation so far as the primary producers are concerned. The hon. member for Barcoo said that this organisation was evolutionary. We all know that. If any movement is revolutionary, whether it is industrial or otherwise, it is not going to be of the same benefit as if it were evolutionary. We find that, after the expenditure of a vast sum of money, absolutely nothing has been done. We do not get a farthing per lb. more for our butter, and we do not get a farthing per lb. more for any produce dealt with under the scheme.

Mr. BULCOCK: Supposing the scheme results in more butter or more of any other commodity being put on the market, if you do not get more for it?

Mr. WARREN: I say not one ton more of produce has been put on the market.

Mr. BULCOCK: Has not more cotton been put on the market as a result of the formation of the Council of Agriculture?

Mr. WARREN: It has not resulted in one additional cotton seed being put on the market, much less a boll of cotton. It has not put anything on the market. It is no use being false to ourselves and claiming things that are not true. It has not done one tap up to the present so far as increasing production is concerned, nor do we expect it.

Mr. BULCOCK: It has increased production. Don't you think the Council of Agriculture has stimulated cotton production in the State?

Mr. WARREN: I do not.

Mr. BULCOCK: Then we do not see eye to eye.

[Mr. Warren.

Mr. WARREN: We do not see eye to eye, but I believe the hon. member is conscientious in his statement. At the same time, I do not think that up to the present juncture the Council of Agriculture has been the means of increasing the production of cotton in Queensland; but I do think that the extra money offered by the State Government has been the means of increasing the production of cotton, and I believe production will go on increasing so long as that extra price is maintained. It is money we are after. The only thing that is going to save Queensland in the future is that we get more for our produce and that we get a better deal in every way. While I criticise, and while I will do all I can to build up this scheme, I am going to be fair, and I am not going to have my leg pulled by humbug and nonsense about something being done. Up to the present nothing has been done, and we can expect nothing. We have been gradually going back as producers. I believe that the Council of Agriculture has done its best, and has made an honest attempt to do all it could to advance the interests of the producers.

Mr. BULCOCK: Do you know that production was at its lowest in Queensland when this Council of Agriculture was formed, and since then there has been an upward tendency?

Mr. WARREN: I have travelled over a good area of Queensland during the last fortnight, and I say production is in a most deplorable condition. Only one branch of industry is increasing in production; that is the fruit industry. I believe fruit is increasing in production—unfortunately for the producers themselves. It is a case of over-production and not sufficient distribution. I want to be quite clear on this matter. I say without any fear of contradiction that, while the Council of Agriculture has made an honest attempt, yet, unfortunately, nothing has been done, and it is better to take the farmers into their confidence. We do not want to stuff something down their throats. We want to get in touch with the individual producer. It is all nonsense to say that the producer is a man with less intelligence than the average person. The producer has to be more versatile than the workers in other industries. We look on some of our city friends as being exceedingly clever. I am game to say that, if you put these exceedingly clever people on a farm, they would look a lot of "mugs." A man must be fairly smart to run a farm and make it pay these times, I do not care what the nature of the farm may be. Instead of one section trying to browbeat other sections about method and about who is going to father the scheme, it would be far better if they met and got in touch with the individuals who are going to benefit, and who are going to fail if this scheme is not a success.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): I have been endeavouring to ascertain what is behind the Country party in moving the further amendment that they have moved. The hon. member for Stanley moved this further amendment, which is no amendment at all and should not have been accepted. However, the Speaker has accepted it and has allowed the matter to be debated. What would it mean if this further amendment were carried? It would mean the addition of the words proposed by the hon. member for Stanley, that an expression of opinion be

obtained from the farmers. What on? The previous amendment reads—

"All primary producers be advised to take advantage of the Primary Producers' Organisation Act provided by the Government, and also the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, to enable them to obtain their necessities at reasonable rates through co-operation.

Fancy a member of the Country party getting up and moving an amendment that the opinion of the farmers be obtained as to whether this matter should be brought before their notice or not! There was

[5 p.m.] never a sillier resolution moved in this House by hon. members who call themselves members of Parliament. Can we wonder that their own paper writes about them in this matter. This is "The Co-operative Bulletin," volume 1, No. 1. In dealing with the Country party, it said—

"Organisation went on apace, and at the 1920 elections twenty-one candidates were selected and contested seats, out of which nineteen were returned to form a separate 'Country party.'

"Then the intriguers and wire-pullers commenced. The party had achieved the position of official Opposition, and was worth while. Those who were always willing to follow the strongest lead attached themselves to the party. Mr. Vowles, solicitor, who had been leader of the so-called Nationalists, transferred his attention to the rising party, which meekly accepted him. Those in control of the organisation, flushed with the thought of executive power in the near future, proceeded, against the rules of the organisation, to enrol all and sundry into the Primary Producers' Union, admitting old-time National Democratic men, the while they lost half a dozen of the genuine supporters to one of these enrolled, and at the annual general meeting of the Primary Producers' Union, following that election, the delegates from the Queensland Farmers' Union and the United Cane Growers' Association, who with the delegates of the Graziers' Association should have had control of the organisation, found that they were outvoted by delegates who represented no organisation at all, and, as a consequence reported to their organisations which, in each case, almost unanimously withdrew from the Primary Producers' Union, leaving that institution the miserable fiasco it remained at the time of the recent election, when, owing to the collapse and intriguing and coalescing with another party, the party retreated to half what it was at the last election, and at present represents country interests as much as the Nationalists, United party, or Labour"—

That is the opinion expressed with regard to hon. members opposite by their own paper. This is a nice titbit—

"and is a medley of hop-scotch, mediocre politicians, who will dive into any port for safety, incapable and futile, and having no object in life except to draw their salary, retain their seats, and in some indefinite way hope to defeat the present Government, when they are now in almost as bad a minority as in 1915, and could achieve nothing in the last session with almost an equal number of

*Mr. Gledson.]*

members in opposition, and on one occasion had the Government in their hands and could not hold it, and they are just as likely to defeat the present Government as they would be likely to achieve any good to the State if they did.

"It has been suggested that without co-operation of the forces in opposition nothing can be achieved.

"Less than nothing was achieved when conditions were almost equal, as mentioned above, so what can be achieved by co-operation in the present session is difficult to conceive, although it is quite conceivable that if the whole of the Opposition resigned their seats on the grounds that their presence in the House was useless and futile, they might achieve more than by retaining their seats."

Mr. EDWARDS: Where did you get that paper from?

Mr. GLEDSON: If the hon. member looks in his box he will find one. This is the "Co-operative Bulletin," which is supporting the Country party and the Primary Producers' Organisation. It is incorporated with the "Farmers' Advocate" of the present month.

Mr. CORSER: Who is the editor?

Mr. GLEDSON: It is stated at the end of the paper—

"Wholly set up and printed in Australia by William Brooks and Company (Queensland) Limited, Fortitude Valley, Brisbane, for the publishers and proprietors, 'The Co-operative Bulletin' (Queensland) Limited, Brisbane."

It is no wonder that their own paper talks of them in this way. They are a "medley of hop-scotch, mediocre politicians" when they get up and move an amendment of this kind, written out, I believe, by the hon. member for Burnett, because I saw the hon. member hand it over to the hon. member for Stanley. The hon. member for Burnett is, I understand, the No. 2 deputy leader of the Opposition, so he ought to have some standing in the Country party, which is so aptly described by "The Co-operative Bulletin." The amendment means that the farmers should be consulted, so that they will be able to say whether they want the Parliament of Queensland to bring before their notice the Primary Producers' Organisation scheme. It is a most silly amendment, and one which no politician, if he knew anything about the business at all, would move in the House.

Mr. CORSER: Put it to a vote.

Mr. GLEDSON: I suppose the hon. member is very anxious to put it to a vote now, but a week or two ago he was asking hon. members on his own side to speak in order to prevent the question going to a vote. He now wants an amendment to go to a vote which he knows is silly and will bring ridicule on the House. We had the hon. member for Murrumba getting up this afternoon and saying that the Council of Agriculture had achieved nothing at all. We find that the hon. member, with his friends the Nationalists, whom he sits alongside of just now and is supporting, for 100 years previous to the establishment of the Council of Agriculture have had the whole matter in their hands of bringing about a better system of organisation of the farming interest, so that the farmers would be able to market their produce co-operatively and get the full results

of their labour. What have they done in those 100 years? They have done nothing whatever to improve the lot of the farmers.

Mr. EDWARDS: We have established co-operative butter factories.

Mr. GLEDSON: Directly the Government pass legislation to enable farmers to organise themselves for the purpose of co-operatively marketing their goods, they say the Council of Agriculture has done no good to the farmers of Queensland.

Mr. WARREN: Tell us what the Council of Agriculture has done?

Mr. GLEDSON: They say that nothing has been done by the Council of Agriculture to improve conditions in Queensland. Let me read again from their own paper, which, by the way, is running down the Government in a most unfair article here.

Mr. EDWARDS: Read that, too. What a one-sided man you are!

Mr. GLEDSON: I am going to leave it to members of the Opposition to read, because, if I use their thunder, they will have nothing to talk about. Dealing with dairying in connection with the co-operative movement, it states—

"It is a matter for surprise that dairymen, and particularly the directors of co-operative factories, do not seem to realise, seeing the good work already accomplished in their own particular industry, the value, to them, of successful co-operation in other phases of agriculture. The fruit industry at present is particularly in need of co-operative effort to establish co-operative fruit preserving works. As many fruitgrowers do not keep cows, it is obvious that, with this industry prosperous, the fruitgrowers generally would assist the dairyman by purchasing more butter. Moreover, increased prosperity of the fruit-grower results in the distribution of more money to the masses, encouraging the purchase of more butter by them. The same may also be quoted of poultry men and apiarists. This phase of economy rarely, if ever, induces those in control of co-operative dairy factories to assist in any way the efforts of other branches to achieve what has already been accomplished in their own particular line of agriculture. Indeed, on occasions it has seemed that, if not active, passive antagonism has been displayed by co-operative directors to any attempts at co-operation which they consider they are not particularly connected with."

That is from their own paper, and shows the attitude which those gentlemen are taking up. I understand that the hon. member for Stanley is connected with a business which is being carried on in Queensland, and he gets up and moves an amendment for the purpose of keeping this motion back and not allowing it to go before the primary producers.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is just what is asked by the amendment.

Mr. GLEDSON: The amendment asks for a referendum of farmers on the question whether they will have brought before their notice the advantages of co-operation. What a silly thing to do! If that is the extent of the ability of hon. members opposite on a Thursday afternoon, when they have the

[*Mr. Gledson.*

opportunity of bringing forward anything for the benefit of their constituents, it shows that this paper is correct in its summing up of the Country party.

The hon. member for Murrumba said that the Council of Agriculture had done nothing to assist production in Queensland. At the present time the Council has taken control and helped to assist in connection with the sugar industry, and is working on a scheme to stabilise the sugar industry in Queensland which will save to the State thousands of pounds.

Mr. WARREN: That is not correct.

Mr. GLEDSON: It is correct. They are working on that scheme.

Mr. BRAND: The Sugar Board is doing that.

Mr. GLEDSON: And the Sugar Board is under the direction of the Council of Agriculture, and the Council of Agriculture is working through the Sugar Board.

Mr. SWAYNE: The board is a Commonwealth affair.

Mr. GLEDSON: It is not a question for the Commonwealth; it is a question which largely concerns Queensland. It does not affect the Commonwealth so much as it affects Queensland in particular. The Council has also taken action in the cotton industry, and is working along the lines of seeing that it is established on a basis that will be payable to the producers. It has established a voluntary pool for the sale of butter.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: That broke down.

Mr. GLEDSON: The voluntary pool did break down, because it was a voluntary scheme; but the Council has asked the Government to assist it to form a compulsory pool, so that it will be able to prevent private companies from defeating the co-operative movement. The Council is there for the protection of the dairyman. If there had been no Council of Agriculture, and no organisation of the farmers, the butter market could have been cornered, as it was some years ago, when the same factory took the same action. The butter producers would have been left to the mercy of the brokers and the middlemen, and would have got nothing for their butter.

Mr. WARREN: They are still at their mercy.

Mr. GLEDSON: I say they are not. They are getting a fair local price for their butter. It is just as good as they can expect to get, or could get, and it has only been got through the organisation of farmers under the Council of Agriculture. So we could go on right along the line. The Council is now organising the milling industry—that is to be put on a basis so that the producers will be able to do something for themselves. The idea of the Council is that these people shall control their own business in their own way, and not be dictated to by members of the Opposition, who tell them that organisation is no good. Members opposite say, "Do not go in for any organisation, because it is no good to you at all. Keep out of it, because, if you organise, we shall not be elected. You will get men who know the business, men who are efficient, to represent you. You will send men to Parliament who will sit behind the Government and look after the interests of the primary producers

of Queensland." That is the reason why hon. members opposite tell the producers not to organise. Directly anybody becomes organised and educated he gets behind the great Labour movement, and so the farmers, when they become thoroughly organised, will see that there is only one movement for them, and that is the Labour movement. They will then sit behind this Government, and not send men to this House who are merely in politics for the purpose of drawing their pay. The Government then will have behind them farmers who do their own farming, dairymen who conduct their own dairying, fruitgrowers who are growing their own fruit, agriculturists who are themselves performing the agricultural work of this State. All those people will be here to see that the men whom they represent get a fair deal, and they will be able to get it only by thorough organisation and by getting behind the Government which is helping them. I hope that this amendment will not be put to a vote, but that members of the Country party will see the silliness of it and withdraw it, and allow a motion which is going to do some good for the primary producers of this State to be carried, in order that some good work may be done. I hope that hon. members opposite will not allow the people of Queensland to see that they have in Parliament representatives who will propose such a silly amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I hardly think that the Council of Agriculture requires a champion in this House, but, nevertheless, it has several on this side. Hon. members on the other side, on the other hand, are merely famous for their campaign of whispering against it. The hon. member for Nundah says that the Council of Agriculture is doing nothing. Of course, the wish is father to the thought. Because the Council of Agriculture was set up by a Labour Government, every effort must be made to condemn it. I feel sure that the Council of Agriculture will go forward steadily. It is not going to accomplish great things in a day, or a week, or a year, but the work of the provisional Council of Agriculture and the permanent Council of Agriculture already deserves the gratitude not only of the farmers but also of all members on both sides of the House who are Queenslanders.

At 5.20 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is an old Scotch saying that I used to hear my mother repeat when I was quite young, and which my colleague the Secretary for Public Works brings back to my memory—namely, "Fools and bairns should not see a job when it is half done." There is another saying that can be applied very strongly to the Opposition, and that is, "There are two classes of people in the world—those who do things and those who criticise." It is the function of the Opposition to criticise. I do not object to them having that privilege if it gives them any satisfaction, but I do strongly object, as a Queenslanders and as one who desires to see agriculture placed on a sound footing, to those attempts to belittle and discredit the Council of Agriculture in connection with the good work it is doing. I particularly object to the insinuations made from time to time on the five Government representatives who are

*Hon. W. N. Gillies.]*

doing particularly good work on that Council. The hon. member for Barcoo this afternoon mentioned the work that Mr. Story has done for the Council of Agriculture. I venture to say that, if Mr. Story was pensioned off to-morrow on a pension of £1,000 per annum from now until the time of his death, the taxpayers in Queensland, particularly the primary producers, would still be indebted to him for the good work he has done in laying the foundation of this great scheme of agricultural organisation. Then, we have the Railway Commissioner, Mr. Davidson, who makes it his business to be present at the Council meetings. I am particularly pleased and gratified with the attitude that Mr. Davidson takes up. When the representatives of the farmers get up at the Council meetings and ask for some consideration with regard to refrigerating cars, concessions on freights, wayside stations, etc., better facilities for the carriage of cream, Mr. Davidson makes a note of it, and usually those concessions are granted. I am informed by the Secretary for Railways that the concessions granted to farmers in Queensland last year amounted to over £200,000. Then we have Mr. Short, the general manager of Central Sugar Mills, who is an honorary member of the Council. His knowledge is very valuable in assisting in the work of the Council. He attends the Council meetings at very considerable inconvenience to himself, because at the present time, being the chairman of the Sugar Board, there is a considerable tax on his time. Then we have Mr. Graham. There is not a man in the service of Queensland held in higher esteem by the farmers, particularly the dairy farmers, than Mr. Graham. He attends those meetings at all times. He attends as chairman of the Dairy Committee, which is one of the standing committees of the Council. He is kept particularly busy in framing schemes for the stabilisation of butter prices and for herd testing, and all manner of things connected with the dairy industry. Mr. Quodling, likewise, at very great personal inconvenience attends to give expert advice. The State of Queensland should be grateful to those public servants who form part of the Council of Agriculture.

Mr. CONSER: What about the farmers' representatives?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am coming to that—the farmers' representatives dominate the position. They represent nineteen District Councils, and they are doing good work likewise—they are giving of their best to the farmers' cause. It does not become hon. members opposite who claim to be the friends of the farmer and who represent farming constituencies to take advantage of Thursday afternoon to move a motion and suggest that the Council of Agriculture has done nothing. I want to tell the House a few things that the Council of Agriculture has done, and what it has endeavoured to do. Let me remind hon. members again that the Council of Agriculture cannot bring heaven upon earth in one short year or in two short years. These old institutions have grown up, the old habits have been formed, and they have to be broken down and a new system brought into existence, and it is impossible for any body of human beings to bring about the reform that we desire in the short space of one or two years. Mr. Macgregor is at present preparing his annual report. I rang him up this afternoon and told him that

there was an hon. member in this Chamber criticising the Council of Agriculture, and I asked him to send down a list of the things that the Council has done. I think the list which he has supplied to me is considerably out of date, because all the up-to-date information will be contained in his report, which I hope to table in a few days. I want to remind the Opposition of some things that the Council has done or has attempted to do. Because it has failed to bring about those things which the farmers of Queensland would like, which the Government would like, and which the Opposition would like, is that any reason why it should be condemned, criticised, or discouraged in the good work it is doing? Let me run over this list of the undertakings which the Council has attempted. I will come back and deal with each item separately. In some of the things it has played a very important part. This is some of the work it has attempted—

" 1. Support of continuance of the sugar agreement and newspaper propaganda to this end.

" 2. A scheme for handling and marketing of maize about to be reported on by an engineering expert.

" 3. Scheme of fodder conservation.

" 4. Stabilisation of butter prices and offer to Victoria to co-operate by the sending of Queensland representatives.

" 5. Advocacy of co-operative legislation.

" 6. Uniform system of accountancy in dairy factories.

" 7. Uniform system of payment by dairy factories.

" 8. A producers' scheme for metropolitan milk supply.

" 9. Scheme for tomato pool.

" 10. Scheme for arrowroot pool.

" 11. Advocacy of increased tariff duty on South African maize.

" 12. Consideration of proposals for extension of the provisions of the Co-operative Agricultural Production and Advances to Farmers Acts, and evolving of a scheme of rural credit.

" 13. A campaign to demonstrate the efficiency of advertising to create a stronger demand for local products.

" 14. Encouragement of the use of Fertilisers and Fertilisers Act regulations.

" 15. The purchase of fertilisers and farm implements through co-operative channels.

" 16. Publicity and propaganda activities re herd testing.

" 17. Relief of farmers from income tax.

" 18. Advocacy of preparation of plans for dairy buildings.

" 19. Investigating improved cream container.

" 20. Investigating the export trade in eggs.

" 21. Suggesting improvements in horse-breeding.

" 22. Co-operative purchase of stallions and bulls.

" 23. Suggesting improvements in the beef trade.

" 24. Suggestions re combat of fruit fly in Stanthorpe district.

[Hon. W. N. Gillies.]

" 25. Recommendation of regulations under the Fruit Cases Act.

" 26. Protection of insectivorous birds.

" 27. Scheme for supply and distribution of bags.

" 28. Recommendation of marketing standards of various fruits.

" 29. Hail and frost insurance.

" 30. Advocacy of reduced freights on fruit consignments.

" 31. Advocacy for the appointment of additional entomologists and a vegetable pathologist.

" 32. Action to keep young fruit trees true to name and type.

" 33. Publication of official organ for the Council."

Mr. BRAND: All those questions were promulgated in another place.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That does not matter. The Council of Agriculture has made a very important start in forwarding this movement. With regard to the sugar agreement, I sincerely regret to say that the Council has gone down on that. Mr. Forde, M.H.R., speaking in the Federal Parliament, pointed out that the Council of Agriculture recommended that there should be a five years' agreement, but that has not been agreed to by the Commonwealth Government, thanks to the Country party and the National party in the Federal Parliament, who could have procured a five years' agreement if they had so wished. The failure to secure that agreement is no fault of the Council. It has continuously advocated the principle of a white Australia, the principle of a white sugar industry, and the operation of a sugar agreement extending over a term of five years.

Let me now deal with the question of marketing maize. I am pleased to be able to tell this House that the Government have now in hand a very beneficial scheme. We have practically accepted a contract for the erection of maize silos on the Atherton Tableland—which is the largest maize-growing district in the Commonwealth—costing about £60,000 to £70,000. We have agreed to the creation of a maize pool for a term of ten years. The soldier settlement there will, in my opinion, be an absolute success and an object lesson to other parts of Australia as to what can be done by a maize pool and a proper system of handling and storing maize. The Council of Agriculture has advocated that scheme, and, indeed, it was on Mr. Macgregor's advice that the Government adopted the scheme. Mr. Macgregor, as Director of the Council of Agriculture, is second to none in Australia as an authority on bulk handling of grain. He has had very wide experience in that particular phase of the industry, and his advice has been useful, and the Government, acting on his advice, have decided to approve of a ten years' maize pool in the Atherton district, and a scheme for the proper handling, drying, and marketing of maize.

A very comprehensive scheme was placed before the Government with regard to fodder conservation. Indeed nothing is more important than water and fodder conservation. Those two things have been concentrated on by the Council; and yet we have an hon

gentleman who has been five minutes in this Chamber getting up in his place and saying that "there is a feeling that the Council of Agriculture is doing nothing!" That feeling he would like to spread, and cause dissension and possibly make this scheme fail, notwithstanding that the Country party are claiming that it is a plank of their platform and are alleging that the Government stole a plank of their platform. Last session the then leader of the Opposition said, amongst other things, that it was a plank of the Country party platform. He said many other things as well, but he said that.

Let me deal with the advocacy of co-operative legislation which has been dealt with by the Council of Agriculture. The Council has given a lot of assistance in framing a Bill which I hope will be introduced into this House in the course of the next two or three weeks to give power—as I said the other night—to do all and more than is intended in the motion submitted by the hon. member for Burnett. That is the power to form co-operative associations or co-operative companies with or without share capital to deal with the manufacture, marketing, buying, and selling of their requirements. I do not think anything will be more complete than the attempt at co-operative legislation as provided in that Bill. The Council of Agriculture has played a very important part in assisting me in promulgating that scheme, yet we hear statements made that it is doing nothing.

Mr. LOGAN: You would not take those suggestions from us when we made them to you.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Not when hon. members had no concise idea of what they required or of economics. A uniform system of accountancy and book-keeping for dairy factories is also being considered and nearing completion. I do not know whether the hon. member for Cooroora is present, but few hon. members have a better knowledge of the dairying industry than that hon. member. This scheme is just about to be accepted by the butter factories, and it must [5.30 p.m.] appeal to him and to any other practical man engaged in the work of co-operative factories. Having managed a co-operative creamery in New South Wales at one time, it appeals to me personally as a very important matter. The Council has also considered the matter of a uniform system of payment by dairy factories; a scheme for the metropolitan milk supply; a scheme for a tomato pool and an arrow-root pool, besides many other things which have been brought into existence by it. The Council has also played a very important part in the advocacy of increased tariff duty on maize imported from South Africa. As the representative of an electorate in which a large quantity of maize is produced, I want to thank the Council on the measure of success it has achieved as a result of its advocacy. It has also had under consideration proposals for the extension of the provisions of the Co-operative Agricultural Production and Advances to Farmers Act and for evolving a scheme of rural credits.

Mr. CORSER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Is the Secretary for Agriculture in order in dealing with the Co-operative Agricultural Production and

*Mr. Corser.]*

Advances to Farmers Act and other matters irrelevant to the motion in view of the fact that he has already spoken twice previously on this motion, and is defending something we have not abused?

The SPEAKER: The Secretary for Agriculture has not previously spoken to the motion. He is at liberty to deal either with the motion or the amendment. The Minister has not previously spoken, so far as my record shows.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I have not spoken on the amendment.

The SPEAKER: The Secretary for Agriculture has not spoken on the original motion.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I have not spoken on the amendment.

Mr. CORSER: Have you not spoken on the original motion?

Mr. ROBERTS: The Minister has spoken on the motion.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am going to accept the Speaker's dictum and not that of members of the Opposition. I will, however, confine my remarks to the amendment.

The SPEAKER: The Secretary for Agriculture is at liberty to speak on either the motion or the amendment, as he has not already spoken on them.

Mr. EDWARDS: I rise to a point of order. You yourself, Mr. Speaker, admitted, when the Minister spoke on the amendment on the last occasion, that you had not known previously that he had spoken on the original motion.

Mr. CORSER: I raised the point. The Minister knows it.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: He has not spoken on this amendment.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I will confine my remarks to the amendment.

Mr. ROBERTS: Look at "Hansard," page 365, and you will find that the Minister spoke previously.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I rose particularly to defend the Council of Agriculture, of which I have the honour to be chairman, and which I have taken a prominent part in bringing into existence, and to refute the suggestion that the Council is doing nothing. I have read a list of some things it has done, in support of my contention, and I am not going to labour that question. I just want to give a few testimonies received from outside Queensland to show that the Council of Agriculture is exciting attention in other parts of the world.

Mr. NORT: You have taken the advice of the Council of Agriculture on all matters except their advice on the amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Act.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I will debate that question with the hon. member on any platform, preferably on a platform in the hon. member's electorate. Mr. B. Marsh, managing director, Farmers' National Council, Bliss Buildings, Washington, United States of America, wrote to the

Department of Agriculture on the 4th January last—

"Mr. M. R. Harrison, Editor of the 'Producers' Review,' suggested to me that I write you requesting from you information as to what is being done by the Government of Australia to help the farmers. He says that the Labour Government has adopted the policy of the 'Producers' Review.'"

The desired information and literature was sent on 14th February, and Mr. Marsh acknowledged as follows:—

"I acknowledge with thanks your letter of 14th February and the information therein contained.

"We have been very fortunate in having Mr. M. R. Harrison in the city for a few days and he has given us a vast amount of information as to the Government control of sugar and your compulsory wheat pool."

Another gentleman, the Hon. J. W. Pennington, Assistant Minister of Agriculture, Melbourne, wrote to me on 6th June asking—

"I am given to understand that the Queensland Government has made a grant of something like £25,000 to the Agricultural Council, and that this covers, inter alia, the expenditure incurred in the functioning of your State Advisory Dairy Board.

"I shall be glad if you will advise me how the Council was constituted. If by Act of Parliament, I shall be pleased to receive a copy of the Act together with any other information you can give me on the subject."

I supplied the information, and received the following letter in reply:—

"I desire to acknowledge receipt of yours of 11th instant together with the literature forwarded under cover, relative to the origin and present position of the Queensland Council of Agriculture, and wish to thank you for the very full manner in which you have explained the subject.

"The information which you have been good enough to furnish is most informative and will prove very useful to me."

Mr. J. H. Hay, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Agriculture, State of Minnesota, also wrote from the State capital, St. Paul, congratulating us on what we have done in organising the farmers.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I find that the hon. gentleman has already spoken to the motion.

Mr. CORSER: And also to the amendment.

The SPEAKER: If I made an error previously, I regret it. (Hear, hear!)

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I will confine my remarks to the amendment. Mr. F. H. Bartlett, "Fairleigh," Rous, New South Wales, wrote on the 26th June, 1923—

"Hearing so much in favour of the Queensland Primary Products Pools Act, I am writing to ask if you would kindly send me a copy. I am told it will materially assist in stabilising the Commonwealth butter prices."

[Mr. Corser.

The following letter, dated the 11th July, has now been received from Mr. Bartlett—

"I sincerely thank you for so kindly forwarding such a lot of useful informative literature."

Mr. Frank S. Swain, who is a brother of the present Director of Forests and a retired English farmer, wrote a letter to the Brisbane "Courier" on 7th July, 1923—

Mr. SIZER: What has that to do with the amendment?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: In this letter he stated—

"I am satisfied that the Premier, who accorded me a most patient hearing, is in sympathy with my views, as are also the Minister of Agriculture and other Ministers with whom I came in touch. Their agricultural policy is a revelation to me."

"The Council of Agriculture, the pool system, and the perpetual lease system are novelties to me, but all seem to further the interests of the man on the land."

There is no further need for me to quote testimonies in support of what the Council of Agriculture has done. The hon. member for Murrumba stated this afternoon that agriculture has not progressed in Queensland during the last few years. I do not want to weary the Chamber with many details, but I just want to get these figures into "Hansard" to show what progress agriculture has really made since the advent to power in this State of the Labour party.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is not in order in discussing that matter. He must confine his remarks to the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I want to get the figures into "Hansard."

The SPEAKER: The hon. member for Murrumba has not spoken on this amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I bow to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, but I will certainly take the very first opportunity of refuting the statement made by the hon. member for Murrumba that agriculture has not progressed in Queensland; and that statement will be supported by the figures which I will produce. I will furnish evidence to prove that the production of butter, sugar, meat, wheat, wool, and almost every agricultural commodity has progressed, in some cases more than twofold, both in price and volume, since the Labour party came into power in Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question—That the words proposed to be added (*Mr. Nott's amendment*) be so added—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 22.

Mr. Appel	Mr. King
" Barnes, G. P.	" Logan
" Barnes, W. H.	" Maxwell
" Brand	" Moore
" Clayton	" Nott
" Corser	" Roberts
" Costello	" Sizer
" Deacon	" Swayne
" Edwards	" Taylor
" Kelso	" Vowles
" Kerr	" Warren

Tellers: Mr. Clayton and Mr. Logan.

NOES, 35.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Land
" Brennan	" Larcombe
" Bruce	" Lloyd
" Bulcock	" McCormack
" Collins	" McLachlan
" Conroy	" Mullan
" Cooper, F. A.	" Payne
" Cooper, W.	" Pease
" Dash	" Pollock
" Dunstan	" Riordan
" Foley	" Smith
" Gillies	" Theodore
" Gledson	" Weir
" Hartley	" Wellington
" Huxham	" Wilson
" Hynes	" Winstanley
" Jones	" Wright
" Kirwan	

Tellers: Mr. Bruce and Mr. Pease.

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Petrie. No—Mr. Gilday.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): I cannot understand why the hon. member for Ipswich has attempted to move an amendment on the magnificent motion submitted by the hon. member for Burnett. The motion is very far-reaching, and is just what the farmers are looking for and asking the Council of Agriculture to give them. I think the hon. member's attitude is somewhat similar to that taken up by him last session when he got up and talked for about an hour on the eradication of prickly-pear. He knew just about as much on that question as he knows about the scheme that the Government have introduced. It does not reflect very much credit on the Government to select such a representative to move this amendment. Evidently they could not secure a man who actually represented agricultural interests. What is the idea of seeking to divert the motion of the hon. member for Burnett? The Government have already got nineteen paid organisers working among the producers and telling the farmers all about this good Act of the present Labour Government.

Mr. PEASE: What do you think of it?

Mr. COSTELLO: I think it is a great piece of impudence on the part of the mover of the amendment to suggest that it is required. The Government say that these nineteen organisers are paid by them, but, after all, the taxpayers are the ones who are paying.

It is due to the House to reject the amendment. I am sure it is not desired by the producers themselves. It is introduced merely to destroy the meaning of the motion of the hon. member for Burnett. A good deal has been said as to what the Council of Agriculture has really done towards helping the producers and helping co-operation, and this afternoon we had an hon. member on the Government side quoting from a new publication called the "Co-operative Bulletin." There is a little article in that paper, on page 8, headed "Theodore's Organising Joke," and it may be of interest to hon. members if I quote a short extract from that article. It says—

"Premier Theodore says that he is going to reduce the costs between the producer and consumer."

That is what he told the farmers all through the political campaign. (Government interjections.) They do not like to hear about "Theodore's Organising Joke." The article continues—

"Let us see how it works out. Up to the present some £30,000 has been

*Mr. Costello.]*

expended in providing an additional host of intermediaries, superfluous and duplicated literature, and the higher price to the producer and the lower cost to the consumer, is still a dream, to be foretold by the numerous paid agents created by the organising hoax."

I think this article is quite right. It is a hoax. A reduced price between the consumer and the producer, so far as Queensland is concerned, is a hoax. We have paid away £30,000—I am not complaining about that; £30,000 would be nothing if we had accomplished something—we have paid away £30,000, and we have accomplished nothing.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. Ranger will get your scalp next time.

Mr. COSTELLO: The hon. gentleman had better be careful or somebody will get his scalp next time.

THE SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member may quote from an article which is relevant to his argument, but he must not interpolate as he is doing.

Mr. COSTELLO: We must oppose the amendment moved by the hon. member for Ipswich, as it is ridiculous. Fancy this going out to the farmer! The farmers have very little time to study these things. When hon. members on this side, who represent the farmers, introduce something which will be of benefit to the primary producers we have it spoilt by a member who represents a few industries in the suburbs of Ipswich—I was going to say in the slums of Ipswich, but I would not refer to Ipswich in such a disrespectful way. What objection can there be to referring the matter to the local producers so that they may have an opportunity of saying what they think about the whole thing? Why not trust the producers?

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Are you talking to the amendment or the motion?

Mr. COSTELLO: I am talking to the amendment.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COSTELLO: I have a right to speak to the amendment.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COSTELLO: I wish to voice my objection to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Ipswich, which really ridicules the farmers and makes them look as if they were more "kids." We have nineteen paid organisers going round the country advising the producers; yet Government members want to pass a resolution through Parliament advising the producers to join this organisation. Members of the Country party in this House have advised them, and I have advised them on the public platform, to get into the Primary Producers' Organisation. That is more than the hon. member for Rosewood is game to do. He was not game to get up and advise the farmers of Rosewood to get into the organisation. I told them that the Primary Producers' Organisation was the best thing for them, and as the farmers have asked us to make the organisation a workable one, why should we spoil the motion moved by the hon. member for Burnett by an amendment such as has been proposed when we already have organisers going round pointing out the necessity of joining up with the organisation? As representing the farming interests hon. members on this side have advised the farmers to join up. This amendment is

[*Mr. Costello.*

ridiculous and I am going to oppose it, and I think every fair-minded man in this House who has the interests of the agricultural industry at heart will also oppose it to the utmost. Do not try to ridicule the farmers, as is being done in this amendment. The hon. member for Rosewood may smile, but he is not in a position to know the condition of the farmers to-day. Many of them are not in a position to meet their liabilities, and why should they worry about this tinpot amendment which the Government have added to the motion? If hon. members on this side who represent the agricultural industry do not bring this matter before the farmers, who will bring it forward? I ask hon. members to join with the Country party in opposing the amendment. When the Premier called the conference some eighteen months ago he promised the farmers that he would reduce the costs between the producer and the consumer, and this organisation was supposed to bring that about. I ask, in the name of justice, if there is anything that the Government can point to which shows that they have reduced the costs between the producer and the consumer? Nothing at all!

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

#### INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### THIRD READING.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay): I beg to move—

"That the Bill be now read a third time."

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I called "Not formal" to this Bill this afternoon, because I desire to record an emphatic protest against the portion of the Bill which includes those persons engaged in domestic service and persons employed in work such as is usually carried on in farming operations on dairy farms, fruit farms, or agricultural farms. Believing as I do that the present conditions obtaining in those industries do not enable those engaged in them to bear a heavier burden than they now carry, and believing that it will cause a considerable increase in periodical unemployment, and will also mean a considerable decrease in production, besides seriously militating against the closer settlement of our lands, and an increase in country population, which is so urgently required, I intend to vote against the third reading. I have received letters from thirty-five Local Producers' Associations in various parts of the Downs and below the range—

Mr. COLLINS: Inspired by your party.

Mr. MOORE: I desire to say that none of them has been inspired at all. They were sent to me quite spontaneously. The Local Producers' Associations have met—

THE HOME SECRETARY: A very fine tribute to the Primary Producers' Organisation scheme of the Government.

Mr. MOORE: They have passed resolutions at their meetings, which they have forwarded to me, and asked me to protest against this Bill being passed. The conditions of the farming community are such that they are unable to bear the burden of the Industrial Arbitration Act.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You desire a large section of the population to be industrially outlawed. That is your proposition.

Mr. MOORE: I am quite entitled to make a protest against the passage of this Bill. Irrespective of what the Minister's opinion may be, we have our own opinion. An organisation has been formed, organised as the Minister said, by the Premier. The Local Producers' Associations have held meetings and passed resolutions, which they have sent down to me. One of the communications states, "Be firm; stop the Bill at all costs." I am endeavouring to enter a protest against this Bill being passed. We intend to vote against it. I realise that numbers are against us, and that we have no chance of stopping it if the Minister desires to put it through; but the Bill will not be for the benefit of the State. It will press too hardly upon those engaged in these industries who have at the present time so much to bear. I wish the Minister would defer the passage of the measure until he can get further information with regard to the condition of these industries to-day, and as to whether they can bear the conditions which will be imposed upon them under this measure.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Vanango*): I desire to support the hon. member for Aubigny in his protest against the forcing of this measure upon the primary producers at this stage. As I said the other night in connection with this matter, this is not a time to pass such legislation in this State. If the Minister realised what is happening in many country districts in Queensland, he would be making every effort to assist these people, instead of trying to impose heavier burdens on them at the present time. Considering their present difficulties, I maintain that it is bound to have a bad effect on primary production, and therefore I think the leader of the Country party is justified in making a definite protest against this measure going through the House. The Government state that they are going to do everything they can in the interests of the primary producers. If anybody will tell me that this Bill is going to do anything in the interests of the primary producers, all I can say is that he does not know anything about it.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in making a second reading speech. He will be in order in protesting and voting against the third reading.

Mr. EDWARDS: I desire to protest against this measure as doing something which is not in the best interests of the primary producers of this State.

Mr. COLLINS: We represent them over here.

Mr. EDWARDS: I am satisfied that the hon. member has deceived them up to this time—not represented them. I think the Minister will be well advised in reconsidering the matter and placing it before the primary producers and letting them decide whether the Bill will be in the interests of primary production and the welfare of the State of Queensland.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I wish to make my protest against the application of this Bill to the farming industries, and particularly to the Downs and my own district. Before introducing such a measure, the Government should make sure that the people concerned had asked for it and that it was

going to affect the primary industries to a greater extent than they could bear. Two classes are going to be affected, the farmer and the working man, and I am quite sure it will work more harshly against the working man than against the farmer, both at the present time and for some time to come. There is a scarcity of work now. Men are being kept on at the present time, although the industries cannot keep going and it does not pay to retain them; but, when a farmer has to find work at a high rate of wage, then he will certainly pay off such a man right away.

Mr. COLLINS: You are on the side of slavery on that side of the House.

Mr. DEACON: We are not. There is no greater slavery than putting the working man in the position of having to ask for rations in order to keep himself and his family alive.

Mr. MORGAN: That is slavery.

Mr. KERR: Worse than slavery.

Mr. DEACON: I am quite sure that the Bill will do a great deal more injury to the farming industry than any good it will do to any class engaged in it.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): I wish to enter my protest against the third reading of this Bill. The rural industries of Queensland to-day—

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot allow the hon. member to make a second reading speech.

Mr. COSTELLO: I enter a protest—an emphatic protest—against the third reading of the Bill. I appeal to the Minister—I appeal to the Government—to consider the position of the unfortunate people who will be affected, both farmer and farm employee. They are going to be deprived of their livelihood by the introduction of this legislation.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: How will it affect them?

Mr. COSTELLO: I ask the Minister to be fair and to be just. The Government have already created a Primary Producers' Organisation, and I ask why do they not refer this matter to that body? They should ask that organisation if the industries are in such a position that they can stand being brought under the Industrial Arbitration Act. The Primary Producers' Organisation is the only one in Queensland to-day. The farmers have disbanded all their other organisations and they have grasped this one which the Government have promised them. They have spent a good deal of money in connection with it. I ask the Government to withhold the third reading of this Bill until a decision has been obtained from that organisation.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I intend to vote against the third reading of this Bill, not because I am opposed to the principle of arbitration so far as it concerns bona fide trade unions, but because I object to the tyranny of being compelled to join a political association as the price of earning one's livelihood. I have here the rules of the Australian Workers' Union.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman had ample opportunity to speak on this Bill during the second reading and Committee stages. He can protest against the third reading of the Bill, but I cannot allow him to make a second reading speech.

Mr. SWAYNE: I do not consider that I am making a second reading speech. It is only fair that I should be permitted to give

*Mr. Swayne.]*

my reasons for voting against the third reading of this Bill. I find, according to the rules of some of those union bodies, that the employees in the industry will be compelled to join unions which are political in their objective. I have the rules here which say that their objective is "the collective ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange." I do not think it is a fair thing that, before a man can accept a job, he must belong to such a socialistic body, that is, if he conscientiously believes it to be wrong. I also see that, according to the rules, he can be compelled to subscribe to the expenses of political candidates. Surely a man should be allowed to take a job without being compelled to subscribe to the political expenses of any party or any candidate whose views he disagrees with. The grossest tyranny is to compel a man, before he is allowed to work, to subscribe to the expenses of a party or support a candidate with whom he does not agree, or to support a newspaper the policy of which he does not approve. This Bill will extend that vicious principle, and I object to its extension to another body of workers, and therefore I oppose the third reading of this Bill.

Mr. LOGAN (*Lockyer*): As the representative of a farming district, I desire to join with my colleagues in protesting against the third reading of this Bill. The leader of the Country party has already stated that he has received numerous letters—I have also received numerous letters—from the various Local Producers' Associations requesting us to protest against this measure going through the House. I hope the Government will give hon. members on this side of the House who are voicing their protest the credit of being sincere on this particular matter. We are here to voice the opinions of our constituents, and, if we do not do so, who is there to do it? I hope the Minister will defer the third reading of this Bill until he communicates with, and obtains replies from, the various organisations, who have the right to a voice on this matter. I have in my possession a letter from one Local Producers' Association. It is only one of many others I have received. It is from the Gatton Local Producers' Association, and reads—

"I have been instructed to forward you the following resolution which was passed at a meeting on the 28th instant:—

That this Branch views with alarm and respectfully but emphatically protests against any proposed amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Act in so far as it relates to bringing the primary rural industries within the ambit of the Act.

"Will you kindly take the necessary action to bring it before the Premier?"

"I am, etc.,

"W. BARRON, Secretary."

The leader of the Country party has pointed out that he has received numerous letters similar to this one. This should be sufficient evidence that the farmers at least do not desire to come within the ambit of this measure. I hope that even at this stage the Minister will refer the matter to the Local Producers' Associations and get their opinion on the matter.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I do not apologise in any way for rising to enter my

[*Mr. Swayne.*

protest against the third reading of this Bill. If hon. members who are responsible for this measure were to pass through a great extent of this country at the present time they would see for themselves that the placing of this measure on the statute-book will be doing Queensland an injury. Every centre where a branch of this machine which has been created by the Government exists, almost without exception, is opposed to this measure. Yet the Government have created this organisation and profess to follow the advice it tenders in all matters for the good of the industry. Although this is a matter which vitally affects the producer, the Minister responsible for the Bill absolutely refuses to take any cognisance of the views of the organisation. In the interests of the organisation and in the interests of the farmers of Queensland, and of the workers, who will naturally be thrown out of work as a result, I protest against the third reading of the Bill.

Mr. DASH: The workers have not asked you to protest.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I would also like to enter a protest against the third reading of this Bill. The East Toowoomba electorate now has within its area a large number of men who are interested in agriculture and dairying, and, with the leader of the Country party, I quite agree they are very much concerned at this moment as to the effect this Bill is going to have. I have had occasion to visit my electorate since the Bill passed through the Committee stage, and I found a number of men dreading the position. I would like to remind this House that it is only within the last few weeks that this Government have offered assistance to these very men. That is evidence of the very serious position the industry is in by reason of our unsettled climatic conditions. The Government must recognise that, whilst arbitration and the fixation of wages can be worked so far as the artisan in the city is concerned, yet, so far as agriculture and dairying are concerned, it is next to an impossibility. We have to recognise that we are but one State of this Commonwealth, and that this Bill can only affect the men engaged in dairying in this State. In their interests, I certainly protest against the third reading of this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I think I should say a few words in reply to the remarks that have been made by several hon. members opposite. The main thing they have confined themselves to is to say that this Bill should be withdrawn and submitted to the Primary Producers' Organisation. If there was anything at all in their protests and speeches, it was a recommendation to that effect.

In connection with that, it is well known that anybody interested in legislation pending or before the House has a right to make representations and set their views before the Government. That is an undoubted right in any free country or democracy, and the bodies to which hon. members opposite have alluded have had ample opportunity, since the delivery of the Governor's Speech, to make such representations had they felt so disposed. The leader of the Country party claims that he has received thirty-five letters from the Local Producers' Associations protesting against the Bill. Those associations represent

the employing section engaged in the industry, and, naturally, employers in many cases are opposed to arbitration. I am quite satisfied that, if the principal Act, as well as the Bill itself, were submitted to the Employers' Federation, they also would oppose the passing of the measure, and would ask hon. members opposite strenuously to oppose it. There is nothing in this measure which imposes hardship on anyone. The speeches that have been made on the third reading to-night are speeches made by people who fear all forms of change and progress. Why, when adult suffrage was carried, certain organisations protested against it; but where is the organisation game to come out in the open and protest against that to-day? Every measure of industrial reform placed on the statute-book in this or any other country has been bitterly opposed at its inception. This Bill removes a fault that exists in the principal Act. It affords people engaged in rural industries an opportunity to appeal to the Arbitration Court and to have their wages and conditions fixed by that court. It is part of the industrial system of this State that wage-earners should have access to the Arbitration Court and that they shall have the protection of the arbitration laws and of the Department of Labour. The leader of the Country party wishes to exclude them from that protection, and, as a consequence, he is resisting this amendment. That is the position, if there is anything in the case at all. I am quite satisfied that when the third reading is carried, and when the Bill becomes law and is in operation, those who are alleged to have forwarded those resolutions will be surprised that they opposed the Bill. In many cases their fears have been played upon by the Tory party and by the misstatements that have been made by the opponents of arbitration. We are not imposing any hardship on anyone—

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! The Minister must not make a second reading speech.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Rural workers and others are given certain rights under this Bill, which we consider they should have in common with the rest of the community, and on those grounds I have no hesitation in saying that the Bill should pass its third reading. When it becomes law it will remedy an injustice under which many wage-earners are labouring at the present time.

Question—That the Bill be now read a third time—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 39.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Land
„ Brennan	„ Larocombe
„ Bruce	„ Lloyd
„ Bulcock	„ McCormack
„ Collins	„ McLachlan
„ Conroy	„ Mullan
„ Cooper, F. A.	„ Payne
„ Cooper, W.	„ Pease
„ Dash	„ Pollock
„ Dunstan	„ Riordan
„ Farrell	„ Ryan
„ Ferricks	„ Smith
„ Foley	„ Stopford
„ Gillies	„ Theodore
„ Gledson	„ Weir
„ Hartley	„ Wellington
„ Huxham	„ Wilson
„ Hynes	„ Winstanley
„ Jones	„ Wright
„ Kirwan	

Tellers: Mr. Farrell and Mr. Riordan.

NOES, 25.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Logan
„ Barnes, G. P.	„ Maxwell
„ Barnes, W. H.	„ Moore
„ Brand	„ Morgan
„ Clayton	„ Nott
„ Corser	„ Peterson
„ Costello	„ Roberts
„ Deacon	„ Swayne
„ Edwards	„ Taylor
„ Elphinstone	„ Vowles
„ Kelso	„ Walker
„ Kerr	„ Warren
„ King	

Tellers: Mr. Edwards and Mr. Logan.

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Gilday. No—Mr. Petrie.

Resolved in the affirmative.

## STALLIONS REGISTRATION BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, Eucham): I beg to move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to improve the breed of horses, and for other incidental purposes.”

I think that the need for this measure is obvious. There is a necessity for improving the breed of horses in Queensland, particularly draught horses, and that necessity becomes more obvious in view of [7.30 p.m.] the tremendous development which has taken place with regard to the cultivation of cotton. There is a possibility of a great industry being established in Queensland in that regard. Notwithstanding the strides that have been made in motor traction, the horse is still of great value in this State. The Council of Agriculture has had this matter under consideration, and here again will be recognised the importance of the work of the Council. It has recommended that this measure be passed. The measure does not provide for a stallion tax, such as has been talked about for many years in Queensland. I do not believe in imposing small irritating taxes on the primary producers. (Opposition laughter.) In 1903 the late Hon. J. T. Bell secured the appointment of a Select Committee to report on this question, and that Committee recommended the imposition of an annual tax upon all stallions over twenty months old, but the day has gone by for a stallion tax. I think I can take credit for opposing the Bill prepared by my predecessor, Mr. Lennon—I was chairman of the Agricultural Committee of the Labour party at the time—in connection with which, although there were some good points in it, we condemned the stallion tax. The proposal in this measure is not to tax stallions, but to set up a board nominated by the Council of Agriculture with a veterinary surgeon as the chairman, who shall be nominated by the Minister. The Act will not apply to the whole of the State, but districts will be proclaimed, and, when they are proclaimed, a board will be appointed by the Secretary for Agriculture, and annual examinations of stallions will take place. Certificates will be issued with regard to soundness and type of stallions, as will, in the opinion of the board, improve the breed of horses in Queensland. After the measure has been in operation for two years it is proposed that no stallions shall be used in Queensland for stud purposes unless they

Hon. W. N. Gillies.]

have a certificate. The idea of allowing two years is to enable breeders of horses to become familiar with the provisions of the measure. I think that the explanation I have given is quite sufficient at this stage. The Bill is a short one, and the necessity for it is obvious to anyone who takes an interest in the welfare of the rural industry.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I would like to know whether this measure will apply to all breeds of horses?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: All horses, when a district is proclaimed, and all breeders.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I should be glad if the Minister would explain how the Government intend to finance this scheme.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The regulations will give power to charge fees for registration. Those fees will cover the cost. We do not want to impose a tax.

Mr. MORGAN: The Minister said he did not believe in a stallion tax—that he did not believe in placing small, irritating taxes on the farmers—yet he now says that it is proposed to finance the scheme from the men who possess the stallions, which would more or less come out of the pockets of the people who own the mares, so that it is really the horseowners who will be responsible for the financing of the whole of the scheme. I am sorry the Minister did not tell us a little more about the movement now put on foot by the Government to purchase certain stallions.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I will deal with that on the second reading.

Mr. MORGAN: The Minister will also be well advised if he will let us know whether the Bill applies to the breeding of thoroughbred racehorses. If so, he must compel those who have control of racing to-day so to fix the weights of horses and the distances that horses will be bred which are not purely and simply racing squibs, but something that will be useful for remount purposes.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Personally I am not very much concerned about racehorses.

Mr. MORGAN: You will never improve the draught stallion unless you improve the thoroughbred.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member is not going into details.

Mr. MORGAN: No; but I want to know what the Bill contains before I move an amendment to broaden its scope. This is the time it should be done.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is entitled to ask for information.

Mr. MORGAN: That is what I am doing. I want to know from the Minister why, when he is introducing a Bill to improve the breed of horses, he does not go into the matter thoroughly.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I think the Bill is broad enough.

Mr. MORGAN: It is just as important to improve the breed of thoroughbred horses. The Minister has told us by interjection that the Bill provides for the improvement of the breed of horses in certain directions, but that appears to concern only draught horses.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: All horses.

[*Hon. W. N. Gillies.*]

Mr. MORGAN: The Minister's description of the Bill shows that he does not intend seriously to tackle the improvement of the thoroughbred. To my mind it is more important that we should improve the class of horse fitted for remount and defence purposes and backs generally throughout the State than draught horses. The latter are important, but so are the other horses. While the Minister is dealing with this question, he should deal with it properly. It is not a bit of good doing it half-heartedly.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If you can improve the Bill in Committee I shall be pleased.

Mr. MORGAN: This is a matter that affects every man in the State, and we should all endeavour to do our best in the direction the Minister has indicated. I shall wait until I see the Bill; but, as one who takes a keen interest in the improvement of both the thoroughbred and the draught horse—I breed both—I am pleased to find that something is to be done, and I hope that the measure will be comprehensive and one that we can be proud of. I hope that the Minister will be game enough, independent of what may be said outside, to accept amendments to improve the breed, not only of one class of horse, but also of other classes, even though it may interfere with what may be termed the privileges possessed by certain people, provided that it will bring about what we desire.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I understood the Minister to say that for two years the use of all stallions would be permitted, but that after that time the permission would come to an end unless they were registered. To-day there are hundreds—I suppose I would be correct in saying thousands—of stallions of what might be called "brumby" types, working in teams and otherwise, and probably it would, to a great extent, militate against the improvement of the breed of horses if that condition of affairs continues.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Standing Orders do not allow me to give details of the Bill at this juncture.

Mr. WARREN: I think that is very necessary information, and the Minister could easily give it. The public would like to know.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I would like to know from the Minister whether it is proposed to give a premium on approved stallions?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

#### FIRST READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE presented the Bill, and moved—

"That the Bill be now read a first time."

Question put and passed.

The second reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

## LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

## COMMITTEE.

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

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

Clause 3—“*Amendment of section 12—Poll of electors on certain questions.*”

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I would like to ask the Minister why he has specified 35 per cent. of the electors as the percentage who shall vote at a poll under this section. It seems to me a rather small percentage. I know that in the Act no percentage is mentioned, but the section applies to polls on rather contentious matters, such as alteration of the boundaries of the local authority and the removal of the office. If he had fixed 55 per cent.—or over half the electors—I could understand it. The removal of the shire office is very often a very contentious matter, affecting the convenience of people in certain portions of the area, and before it is decided upon we should have a proper poll which will really give an effective expression of opinion. If the poll is taken at a time when the people are busy, they may not bother to vote, and it seems rather unreasonable that a majority from among 35 per cent. of the people should have the power to move the office or alter the boundaries. Does the Minister think 35 per cent. is sufficient for a poll on a very vital matter?

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I think this clause has been inserted at the request of the Maryborough Council. It may happen that only 15 per cent. of the people may vote, and we have decided to fix a reasonable percentage. That is why we have fixed 35 per cent. The matter may be contentious from some people's point of view, and it may not be contentious from the point of view of other people.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I would like to ask the honorary Minister to give us an idea of the average percentage of voters at local authority elections.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: I understand it is under 50 per cent.

Clause 3 put and passed.

Clause 4—“*Amendment of section 13—Constitution of local authorities*”—put and passed.

Clause 5—“*Amendment of section 15—Qualification of member*”.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I beg to move the omission, on line 7, of the word “Queensland,” with a view to inserting the words—  
“but only so long as he continues to hold such qualification.”

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I beg to move the omission, on line 10, of the word “not.”

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): The amendment will lead to complications. It will mean that in a divided area a man will be entitled to stand for election as mayor and alderman as well. As mayor he will be elected by the whole area, and as alderman he will be representing a particular part of it.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I omitted to give my reasons for moving the amend-

ment. If the amendment is agreed to, I intend to follow it up by moving the insertion, after the word “member,” on line 13, of the words—

“and every person nominating as a candidate for the position of alderman or councillor may also nominate for the position of mayor or chairman.

“Every elector, when voting for the election of an alderman or councillor, shall give his vote for the election of the mayor or chairman by placing a cross in the prescribed place at the right hand side of the candidate's name.

“The fact of a candidate being defeated for the position of mayor or chairman shall not debar him from being elected as alderman or councillor.”

At 7.55 p.m.,

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: Supposing that he was successful as alderman and mayor?

Mr. DEACON: He could only hold the one position.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: No; this clause applies to divided areas.

Mr. DEACON: He would be nominated for the position of mayor or councillor. He could only hold the one position.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: Then you would have a by-election straight away.

Mr. DEACON: Supposing that twelve men nominated, and only nine were required. You could elect the chairman, and elect nine councillors from the remainder. The chairman in the divided area would be elected by the people in the same way as the chairman in an undivided area. This will obviate the necessity of a double election. I think the matter is well worth consideration.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): The difficulty does not arise with regard to the election of chairman. He will be nominated for both positions, and the people will be entitled to vote for him as mayor or chairman. If he is elected as chairman of the shire, and is also elected as member of one of the areas, I assume that, by virtue of his election as chairman, there will be a vacancy on the council. I would suggest that the hon. member for Cunningham move an amendment permitting the elected councillors to elect a person to fill that vacancy the same as the aldermen in the city are elected. If that provision is good enough in the city, it should be satisfactory in the divided areas. I have in mind what has just occurred at Coorparoo, where the chairman of the council resigned, and the existing councillors have elected one of their number as chairman. The people may decide that the councillor so elected shall not be the chairman in the future. He may be prepared to take that risk. I think the Minister should agree to the insertion of some provision for the election of a member, the same as appertains in connection with undivided areas.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): If the hon. member had given notice of his amendment earlier, there might have been some chance of considering it, but I think it will mean a number of consequential amendments. It is proposed—perhaps next year—to consolidate the Local Authorities Acts, and

Hon. F. T. Brennan.]

then something may be done in the direction indicated by the hon. member for Cunningham. There seems to be something in his argument; but I do not think that it would be a good thing to accept his amendment without very carefully considering it.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I would like to ask the honorary Minister if we are not going to do in another part of this Bill precisely what is suggested by the hon. member for East Toowoomba? I think the hon. member for East Toowoomba will find that, when a resignation takes place, after a certain period the members of the council will have an opportunity of electing someone else to the place.

MR. T. R. ROBERTS: That is so.

HON. W. H. BARNES: If that is so, then why not allow the amendment to go in?

THE HOME SECRETARY: There are many reasons against that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: If the Bill provides that under some circumstances it is necessary to give the local authorities that necessary power—

THE HOME SECRETARY: That is only for a limited time after the election of chairman takes place.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I grant you that; it is less than twelve months. All the same, it is not consistent to argue that, if it is a right thing to do in one place, it is a right thing to do in another?

THE HOME SECRETARY: Assuming that the parties are equally divided, and one person is elected to the position of mayor, and they decide to elect one of their own political party to the vacancy, there would probably be three votes from one party and four votes from the other. There would be a voter absent from one party.

[8 p.m.]

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Minister is evidently out to make local authorities partisan.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Are they not?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman wants to make them so.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Your party runs candidates openly.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Now is not the time to go into that. It can be easily explained why that was done at the last election; but it would be found in some cases that there are men who will not be influenced by what you call party consideration.

THE HOME SECRETARY: No; it need not be political consideration, but local division might influence them.

HON. W. H. BARNES: To insist on the election, if a man stood as suggested by the hon. member for East Toowoomba, simply means that the local authority will be put to the expense of having to hold another election, the expense of which could be spent to great advantage in the area. The Minister could meet the case by accepting the suggestion made by the hon. member for East Toowoomba.

MR. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): The Minister has taken the only course he could possibly have taken. If he accepted such an amendment as this, the whole intention of the Bill

would be defeated. For that very reason the Minister should not accept the amendment. The amendment has for its object the appointment by the council of a man to represent the electors of a division for three years. A man could stand at the election for, say, No. 1 Division as well as for the position of chairman for the whole area. It is possible for him to be elected to the two positions. A vacancy would then be created in No. 1 Division, which the remaining members of the Council could fill, and the man chosen would represent that division for three years. The idea of this Bill is to allow the electors to appoint their own representatives, and, failing that, they can be appointed by the council or nominated by the Governor in Council. The Bill as it stands provides that a man can run for either of the two positions, but he cannot run for the two in a divided area. The Bill should be left as it is, otherwise the whole issue will be confused.

MR. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I would like to see the Minister accept this amendment. If he does not intend to accept the amendment moved by the hon. member for Cunningham, I have an amendment to move which will enable the councillors or aldermen to elect their own chairman or mayor.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: I am not going to accept that either.

MR. MOORE: I want to point out that the Minister has accepted the position as regards an undivided area. He has accepted it in the case where there is a by-election and the chairman resigns, and I cannot see why he should not have accepted the principle straight out in the Bill. After all, what we are aiming at is the efficient working of the councils.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MOORE: We do not want to have a person placed in the position of mayor or chairman who does not possess the requisite qualifications, although he may be able to get the largest number of votes. This is not a question of party politics. It is a question of selecting the best man and the man most suited for the position, and the men best qualified to judge that are the men in the council. The duties of a mayor or a chairman are very wide. If you read through the clauses at the end of the Local Authorities Act you will see the very wide powers which are imposed on him in order to carry out the provisions of the Act, and we should all recognise that it ought to be within the province of the council to get the best man for that purpose. In certain circumstances outside influences operate very largely as to a number of the votes a certain individual gets. It cannot be said that, because that man is an efficient councillor, he will be an efficient chairman or mayor. He may not have the requisite qualifications. The principle the Government lay down in the Bill does not exist in parliamentary procedure. No Government holds that the man who gets the largest number of votes should be the Premier and that the man who gets the next largest number should be Treasurer. The party that is returned with the largest following selects the best men from its ranks to carry on the business of the country. Why should not the councillors have the same privilege and opportunity of selecting the best man to fill the chair? It is only a reasonable proposition. I cannot see how the

[*Hon. F. T. Brennan.*]

amendment would interfere with the usefulness of the Bill.

The HOME SECRETARY: It could be used in a most corrupt manner.

Mr. MOORE: I quite agree with that. On one or two occasions there may have been squabbles and wirepulling to enable one individual to get into the chair. That does not follow as a general practice. We know it is not so. The choice in most cases is a wise and good one. The Minister would be well advised if he took this into consideration. This is not a matter affecting the policy of the Government. The Minister recognises the value of the principle, because in another connection he provides that, when the man who receives the largest number of votes declines to accept office and resigns, the council shall have power to elect the chairman.

Mr. WILSON: That is to save expense.

Mr. MOORE: If the principle is good in one case, why not give to the councils the power to elect the chairman in every case?

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: We are not saying the principle is a bad one, but certain anomalies will arise if we accept this amendment.

Mr. MOORE: I cannot see how anomalies will arise. What we are endeavouring to argue is that the men best qualified to judge should have the power. The shareholders of a co-operative company do not select the chairman. He is selected by the directors, who choose the most qualified man to conduct the operations of the company. The Government will not run any risk by accepting the amendment.

Mr. GLEDSON: That is not the amendment you are speaking on.

Mr. MOORE: I am speaking on the amendment moved by the hon. member for Cunningham, which the Minister said that he was not going to accept. The same position will arise in my amendment.

Mr. GLEDSON: You are talking of your own amendment.

Mr. MOORE: It is the same thing. The word "not" is to be omitted in exactly the same way. I again appeal to the Minister to accept the amendment.

Mr. WILSON (*Fortitude Valley*): I am surprised at hon. members, especially those who have had experience in local authority work, objecting to the method proposed in the Bill. It is to cheapen matters. We know there is not so much trouble where the area is not divided and the mayor or chairman is elected by the people. I do not think there is anything in the contention of the hon. members opposite. We have had one election under the broad franchise, and I have not heard any complaint with regard to any mayor or chairman elected throughout the State. Can hon. members opposite bring forward a case where a mayor or chairman of a shire council is not qualified to fill the position? They cannot.

Mr. MOORE: We cannot get up while you are speaking.

Mr. WILSON: The hon. member would admit it if anything was wrong and a man

was put into a position for which he was unfitted. Can any hon. member opposite name one who is unfitted for his position?

Mr. MOORE: I could, but I will not.

Mr. WILSON: I sincerely hope that this amendment will not be accepted. It is going to destroy the whole principle of the Bill.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I desire to support the amendment submitted by the hon. member for Cunningham. I think the Government should step in and give one instance. Take the case of Toowong, Balmoral, and Coorparac, which are divided. You would have one procedure for those particular shires and towns, and another set of regulations for undivided areas such as Hamilton, Sandgate, and Belmont.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: The Greater Brisbane scheme will cover it all.

Mr. KERR: Here we have two entirely different principles for shire councils adjoining one another. The amendment would get over the difficulty. Had the hon. gentleman given due consideration to this question instead of introducing this piecemeal legislation, he would prepare a small clause to cut out divisions or make provision for a council to be divided. Instead of that, we are having piecemeal and separate legislation. The Government have recognised this principle, and I say that the Minister should accept the amendment. In regard to the resignation of any particular chairman—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KERR: The principle involved is recognised, and the Minister himself proposes to move an amendment later on.

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

Mr. KERR: The amendment proposes to remove the discrimination between councils.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has not read the amendment.

Mr. KERR: I will read it again for your information; it has been added to, I understand, by the hon. member for Cunningham.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: For the information of the hon. member, I will read the amendment. It is to omit the word "not" on line 11.

Mr. KERR: You must go into the question of what it is going to mean to delete the word "not," and that is the information I am giving the Committee now. I think the Minister will agree that discrimination is being made by the clause as it stands. If the word "not" is omitted, the difficulty will be overcome, and I suggest that the hon. gentleman accept the amendment.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): The Minister has not given us any definite reason why he will not accept this amendment other than that it involves a number of consequential amendments. It would be only a matter of a few minutes to frame those consequential amendments. If the hon. gentleman would give us some definite reason for his stand, I could understand it; but, as pointed out by the leader of the County

Mr. T. R. Roberts }

party, if the chairman should resign, immediately after an election, there would be a vacancy and this is what the Minister has taken exception to. Under subsection (1) of section 24 of the principal Act, as it is to be amended by clause 10 of this Bill, they would have the right of doing what we are asking should be done, as the hon. member for Aubigny pointed out, almost the next day after the election for councillors or chairmen of the various shire councils. I quite understand the position the Minister is in. He has a long list of amendments, and I understand that he wishes to move along quickly. He will do that if he accepts this amendment. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley has asked us if we know of any instances where things have gone wrong since the first election under the amending Act. He must know himself of many instances where pressure has been brought to bear on men who ought to have resigned, and would have if there had been an easy method of filling the vacancy.

Mr. WILSON: Did that not occur before the amending Act was passed?

Mr. ROBERTS: It is a totally different thing to take an election for the whole area, and I think for that reason, if the hon. gentleman gives the matter consideration, he will accept the amendment.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I do not think the leader of the Country party or members of the Opposition have any cause for complaint. They have been reasonably treated. They have had the Bill in their possession and the matter before them for three weeks. I have this amendment to insert in clause 7—

“ If a member who receives the greatest number of votes before acting as chairman, resigns that office without resigning the office of member, or if no poll was required to be taken, the local authority shall, at its first meeting or some adjournment thereof, appoint a member to be chairman.”

I take it that in a division of a shire, if a member stands for that division and also stands for the chairmanship and succeeds in winning the chairmanship, there immediately is a vacancy, and the council then have a right to elect a member for that division before any of them take their seats. You see, therefore, that the people would be deprived of the right to elect their representative. If you allow members inside to elect members, you give them the double-barrelled privilege of standing as members and also as mayor or chairman. In a single electorate a man stands his chance for the highest number of votes, and the member who receives the highest number of votes will be elected, but in this case there will be one short, and a serious anomaly will arise. Therefore, I cannot accept the amendment.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): The hon. member has just said that in such a case there will be one short, but later on he provides that, if a chairman resigns, the council shall elect a member out of the council to be mayor, or may elect someone from outside. There will then be one member short.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: No, the full members are inside.

[*Mr. T. R. Roberts.*]

Mr. MOORE: No, there will be one short. They will have nine, including the chairman or the mayor, and the chairman or mayor resigns.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: He will remain an alderman.

Mr. MOORE: No; then the council have power to select one from their number or one from outside to be chairman. This might happen five minutes after the first meeting. Then there is one short, and the council have the power to elect another man outside their own body. It does not come before the electors at all.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: That is an extreme case.

Mr. MOORE: It may be an extreme case, but the very position the Minister is arguing against is provided for in the Bill, and, consequently, I cannot understand why he cannot accept the amendment. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley may be a very prominent local authority man, but I do not want the Minister to accept dictation from him as to whether he should accept an amendment or not. I want him to use his own judgment, and if he recognises that it is a good principle, he should extend the principle right throughout.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: It will create an anomaly.

Mr. MOORE: It will not create an anomaly at all. It will create a position which will make for better working and better efficiency in the council.

Mr. WILSON: You are destroying the principle which was accepted in a previous Bill.

Mr. MOORE: We did not accept the principle at all. It was forced on us.

Mr. WILSON: You should mention a case in point.

Mr. MOORE: I do not want to reflect on any individual, and I do not see why the hon. member for Fortitude Valley should ask me to mention a man who may be doing useful work outside. I do not say he may be the most useful, but I am not going to mention names of those who I may think are unsuitable.

Mr. WILSON: Ask the hon. member for Toowong; he will tell you of one.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member wants to take an isolated case and make it the general rule. That is the very position we are trying to avoid. If the principle is a good one in Parliament, it should also be a good one in connection with local authorities. If it is not a good one, why not change the position so far as Parliament is concerned, and have those who receive the greatest number of votes elected to the Ministry? No doubt that would receive very enthusiastic support from some members on the Government benches. I suggest that the Minister should look at this from a reasonable point of view. It is far better to have one principle throughout than have two principles in connection with local authorities.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Let the councils amalgamate.

Mr. MOORE: It is a difficult thing to get councils to amalgamate. In some cases it is almost impossible. I do not know that it is

always satisfactory to have one area in a shire. In large areas it is sometimes necessary to have separate divisions.

Mr. WRIGHT (*Bulimba*): I hope the Minister will not accept the amendment. I would like to point out that the word "not" in this clause saves the situation mentioned by the hon. member for Aubigny. If that word is deleted, it would probably mean in a majority of local authority elections that this situation would arise. If a candidate were allowed to nominate for the position of chairman and also for the position of councillor, and he were elected to the position of mayor or chairman, it would mean that he was popular with the electors, and in almost every case he would be elected a councillor or alderman also. It would create a ridiculous situation.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): The principle contained in the amendment does not affect the election of a mayor by direct vote. All the candidates would stand, and if anyone was defeated for the position of mayor, he might be the second best man as a councillor. If two stand for the position of mayor, one is elected and the other is right out of the council. I want to have the mayor elected by a direct vote and still retain the services of the man who was defeated for the position of mayor. I am sorry I could not give notice of the amendment to the Minister. I understood it was already provided for in another form, but found it was not. The amendment puts the election of a mayor or chairman in a divided area or undivided area on the same footing. We do not want two methods of choosing the chairman of a local authority.

Amendment (*Mr. Deacon*) negatived.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 6—"Amendment of section 17—*Tenure of office of chairman or members*"—put and passed.

Clause 7—"Amendment of section 19—*Extraordinary vacancies*"—

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: I beg to move the insertion, after the word "Chairman" on line 20, of the words—

"If the member who receives the greatest number of votes before acting as chairman resigns that office without resigning the office of member, or if no poll was required to be taken, the local authority shall, at its first meeting or some adjournment thereof, appoint a member to be chairman."

This is to meet the position in the event of the person who receives the highest number of votes declining to act.

Amendment agreed to.

[8.30 p.m.]

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 8—"Amendment of section 21—*New elections on change in number of members or boundaries*"—

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): There has been a lot of discussion about the word "not"; but there is one undesirable "knot" that we do not agree with, and that is the financial "knot" that is being created by the Government. (Laughter.) I move the insertion, after line 55, of the following:—

"Provided further that the returning officer may make such erasures and

alterations in any such roll as may be necessary for the purpose of ensuring the accuracy of the particulars contained therein, and that only the names of qualified persons residing within the area shall be retained on such roll; also, that an owner of rateable property shall have the option of being enrolled for any area in which such property is situated, but shall not be entitled to be enrolled for more than one division or area. Such option may be exercised by notification to the clerk of the area concerned."

The wording of the amendment is clear and self-explanatory. In Queensland we have a moving population, and in order to have up-to-date and clean rolls it is necessary to give the returning officer the power sought by the amendment. I think it is only right, as provided in the second portion of the amendment, that the owner of valuable property should have the right to vote in the area in which it is situated, as he will naturally be more interested in that area than in the one in which he only resides. He may, perhaps, be boarding at an hotel or boarding-house or in a private residence, while his business premises are situated in an area in which he will not have a vote. I hope that the Minister will accept the amendment.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): The first part of the amendment seeks to give the returning officer power to erase names from the roll. Under this Bill a person is only entitled to be on the roll provided he resides in the electorate in the November preceding the election in the following year. If he is absent from the locality on the day of the election, he will not have a vote, as there are no absent or postal voting facilities. The second part of the amendment seeks to enable an owner of land to vote in the place where his property is situated, although he lives in a different area, but the property franchise is now wiped out. There is, therefore, no need for the amendment.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I desire to support the amendment. As the Minister practically said, the same opportunities do not occur in local authority elections for malpractice as in State elections, as, if a man is out of the area on polling day, there are no postal or absent voting facilities. The amendment, however, may have a good effect, because it will be a check on the electoral roll to a great extent. With regard to the second part of the amendment, if we are going to have one man one vote, a man should have the right to elect to vote where his property is situated.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: The Greater Brisbane scheme will alter all that.

Mr. VOWLES: We have heard a lot about the Greater Brisbane scheme. It looms on the horizon now and then, but it is something which is always in the distant future. We have to deal with the situation as we find it from time to time. Until such time as the Greater Brisbane scheme comes into operation, we should remedy the present position, which is bad. A man may have a valuable property subject to management by local authorities, yet by force of circumstances, not being resident in the area where it is situated, he is deprived of the right of representation on the local authority. There is no justification for a man voting more than once, but he should have the right to exercise his vote where his property is situated.

*Mr. Vowles.]*

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I hope the Minister will accept the amendment, which is certainly a reasonable one. At present a ratepayer who is responsible for the finding of the money for local authority work may be precluded from voting in the area where his property is situated. I do not think that is a fair proposition. I think that a ratepayer should have the right to have his name on the roll for the area where his biggest interests are situated. The amendment does not infringe the principle of the adult franchise, as it only gives a ratepayer the opportunity of having his name on the roll of the area where his property may be situated if he wishes, instead of exercising it for the place where he resides.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I would also like to ask the Minister to accept the amendment, the first part of which gives power to the returning officer to delete names from the roll, and the second part the right to the ratepayer to vote in respect of either his property or his residential qualification. I would like to point out that under the regulations the returning officer is the shire or town clerk, who is in touch in the small shires with everything that goes on. He knows almost every resident personally; he knows if a person leaves a district, and he knows if a person dies. In the case of the death of a person whose name is on the roll, surely the Minister would concede to the returning officer the right to strike that name off the roll? And there are other matters in regard to which he could make use of his personal knowledge, as, for instance, that an elector had left the district or had left Queensland or even Australia, and where it was absolutely manifest that the person was an elector no longer. The returning officer has no right to use the supplementary roll which is compiled for parliamentary elections. He has to use the roll as at the 31st December previous to the election, and in the months intervening between then and the election he might know of many cases where persons had ceased to be electors.

As to the second part of the amendment, it is true that there is no property qualification in the Act, but the amendment would not give him a property vote. It would merely give him the right to exercise his vote where his property was situated instead of where he lived. That would not interfere with the principle of adult franchise in the principal Act. It is conceivable that many taxpayers or ratepayers would like to exercise their votes so that they might have a voice in the disposition of their rates. A man might be living in a rented house at Toowong or Cooparoo, but might have thousands of pounds worth of property in Queen street. He would have no right to vote in respect of his Queen-street qualification, but he would have a residential vote for Toowong or Cooparoo. Yet he might not want to exercise a vote there. Perhaps he would prefer to have some voice as to the taxation of his city property. He should have the option of exercising it where he pleases.

Mr. WILSON (*Fortitude Valley*): I agree with the Minister that the amendment is not acceptable. A returning officer in a local authority election is not in a position to be able to strike names off the roll. I think there are many instances where people are removed from the parliamentary rolls wrongly. At the last Federal election scores of them were wrongly removed. To my own

[*Mr. Taylor.*

knowledge there were families who had lived in the same houses for twenty or twenty-five years, half of whom were struck off the roll without cause. They could not find out why it was, although the supposition is that the postmen collected the names for the roll while they were at the seaside or somewhere else. I understand they get something for collecting names in that way, but I do not know whether they get anything for having them struck off the roll. It is only when we get to the State rolls that we get anything like clean rolls. (Opposition laughter.) Arguments were advanced by hon. members opposite that duplication of names would occur; but I do not know that any instances were ever proved in respect of the last State election. It seems to me that, if the amendment were accepted, there would be every provision for striking names off the roll, but not for putting them on.

With regard to the second portion of the amendment, I would like to point out that a very heavy expense would be incurred in compiling the rolls if it were adopted. A man might be living in New Farm with property in the city of Brisbane, and, if he gave notice, he would have to be removed from one roll and placed on another. A man might live at Rockhampton and have property here in Brisbane, and he would have the right, under the amendment, to vote for Brisbane.

Mr. MOORE: Why should he not, if he wanted to? He has a bigger right to vote here than in Rockhampton, if he pays no rates there.

Mr. WILSON: There is no postal vote and no absent vote, and there would be no facility for a resident of Rockhampton to vote in Brisbane. I do not see that anything would be gained by the amendment, but expensive machinery would have to be brought into existence to make the second portion of the amendment workable. Take members of this House. I suppose that three-quarters of us did not have a vote at the last local authority election on account of the residential qualification.

Mr. TAYLOR: Members of Parliament vote for electorates where they do not reside.

Mr. WILSON: That is under a special section of the Elections Act. My experience is that there is no reasonable argument for the amendment. Nobody would suffer injustice if names were left on the roll, and there is no possible chance of the duplication of votes.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): The hon. member for Fortitude Valley referred to the rolls used for parliamentary electoral purposes. Dealing with the first portion of the amendment, it would be a good thing in the interests of the electors who vote at general elections—quite apart from local authority elections—to have the pruning knife legitimately put in to cleanse the rolls. Take the Wynnum roll. There is on that roll the name of Mr. A. C. Jeffries, who left Queensland ten years ago, and who communicates with me from England. His name is still there, and has been there for ten years.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Did he vote?

HON. W. H. BARNES: No. The suggestion made by the hon. member may be one that he might practise, but it is one that hon. members on this side would never practise. I take it that our anxiety should be to get

the rolls as pure as possible. It would be a distinct advantage to accept, at any rate, the first portion of the amendment. It would be helpful in making the rolls what they ought to be. I challenge the hon. member for Fortitude Valley to prove his statement that the rolls are such that we ought to appreciate them because there has been no overlapping.

Mr. WILSON: The State roll is clean, and the Federal roll was not.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I must differ with the hon. member. The State roll is not clean. I can take the hon. member again to my own roll, on which are the names of people of my own name who have been in Victoria for five years.

Mr. DASH: Why didn't you notify the electoral registrar?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The police go round attending to the matter. We are told that the rolls are pure, but they are not. If the local authorities had an opportunity of cleansing them, the chances are that they would be able to purify them.

Let me now come to the second portion of the amendment. Take my own case. I am on the roll of Coorparoo, and I represent Wynnum. If I wanted to vote for Wynnum, I could not qualify, simply because I am on the roll in another municipality. We are dealing largely by analogy in discussing this Bill.

Mr. WILSON: Could the hon. gentleman not also vote for Roma street?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am not dealing with Roma street.

Mr. WILSON: You have property there.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Yes. Surely a person who finds the income—provided he is not going to have two votes—should be able to vote in the area in which that income is made.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: You desire to have a vote in every area where you have property?

HON. W. H. BARNES: No; that would be an offence against the law. If the honorary Minister is correct, what would there be to prevent me in connection with the Elections Act from getting on the roll for Coorparoo or Bulimba? If I did that I would be committing a breach of the law. The hon. gentleman has not looked at this matter seriously. He should give this matter more consideration.

The HOME SECRETARY: Assuming that I am on the roll for Sandgate on a residential qualification and I voted at an election, how long under this Bill would I have to wait before I could then have a vote in the city on a property qualification?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not know. Surely no one would suggest that anybody would do a thing of that kind?

The HOME SECRETARY: It was done at the elections.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Then it was done by supporters of hon. members opposite.

The HOME SECRETARY: There have been no property votes by this party since I have been in office.

HON. W. H. BARNES: There are other things besides property votes. I am not advocating the property vote.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is what the amendment means.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It does not. It is only giving to the elector the right to say where he shall vote.

The HOME SECRETARY: On a property qualification.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Yes, to some extent. Why should there be any more exception taken to that than to a member of Parliament having the right to vote for the electorate which he represents?

At. 8.55 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kirwan, *Brisbane*) resumed the chair.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There is no analogy at all.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman knows that there is an analogy.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Then demonstrate it.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am sorry that the hon. gentleman is so dense. I have been demonstrating it all along, but he cannot take it in.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I would be very bad if I were as dense as the hon. member.

HON. W. H. BARNES: By that statement the hon. gentleman indicates that he is dense.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope that this interchange of compliments will cease.

HON. W. H. BARNES: You know, Mr. Kirwan, that it is very unruly for an hon. member, especially a Minister, to interrupt anyone in a debate on a subject outside his own department. I am agreeable to comply with your wish that these interchanges shall cease.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You are an adult with a juvenile mind.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I hope the hon. Minister will accept the amendment.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I would like to deal with the point raised by the hon. member for Wynnum just now. He was illustrating that he lives at Coorparoo and represents Wynnum, and under the Elections Act he has the right to be on the Wynnum electoral roll.

The PREMIER: So that he can vote for himself.

Mr. KING: Could he possibly get on the shire roll for Coorparoo? Would not the returning officer have the right in such a case to strike him off the roll at Coorparoo?

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: He could do that for the time being. Just before the elections he could get his name on again.

Mr. KING: We have to face this position. I know the question arose at the last elections with respect to Mr. J. A. Fihelly. I would like the honorary Minister to say if there is a provision to deal with that.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: He can protect himself.

Mr. KING: Then he has two votes?

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I suggest that the honorary Minister give this matter greater consideration, as it is a very important matter. We are still adhering to the principle of one man one vote. If a man pays rates on property in a certain area, he

*Mr Moore.]*

should have a vote in that area, and thus indirectly say how the rates are to be spent. A man may reside in a centre where he has very little interest, and he should have an opportunity to qualify as a voter in an area where he has the greater part of his interest. A person may prefer to vote in the area in which he pays his rates rather than in the area in which he lives. There is no expense incurred in putting his name on the one roll and taking his name off the other. Has not the man with property, say in Brisbane, as much concern in the health conditions as in the place where he lives?

The HOME SECRETARY: What if he resides in Rockhampton?

Mr. MOORE: If he resides in Rockhampton, and has property in Brisbane, is he to be such a blithering idiot as to transfer to the Brisbane roll? He wants to have [9 p.m.] the opportunity to vote where he pays his rates, because he wants to have some say as to the manner in which the money is to be spent.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: You would want to prepare another roll to do that; you would want two rolls.

Mr. MOORE: No. The individual must notify the returning officer before 31st December that he requires to be on that roll instead of where he is living. Then all the returning officer does is to place him on that roll and take him off the other. It does not only apply to Brisbane, but to hundreds of places in the country.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Will it apply to a State election in the same way as this?

Mr. MOORE: There is no occasion for it in a State election. In a State election the money is being spent over the whole of Queensland. In this case it is being spent to the advantage of a particular area.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: You would want a special municipal roll for the particular area.

Mr. MOORE: We do not want two rolls at all. If a man notifies before 31st December that he wants to be put on the roll where his money is to be spent, for the benefit of his employees possibly, or to help the district and his own property, why should he not have that opportunity?

Mr. PAYNE: If he has property in half a dozen shires, he would want half a dozen votes?

Mr. MOORE: No; if the hon. member reads the amendment, he will see that no such principle is asked for. He is to be allowed to choose where he considers that he will get the most value for his vote.

Mr. KING: In no case is he to get more than one vote?

Mr. MOORE: No. I can see no reason to be advanced against the amendment. Do you think a man will vote against his own interests? Why should he not have an opportunity, in a vote in respect of a loan, of saying whether a mortgage is to be placed on his property instead of being compelled to vote where he lives? It cannot make any difference to the principle of the measure. You are only giving him one vote, and allowing him to exercise that vote where he thinks he can do the most good for himself. I do not suppose it could be exercised in a large number of cases. If the individual did not notify the returning officer before 31st

December of his desire, nothing happens. There is nothing unreasonable in it. We are not suggesting that he should have two or three votes, but that he should have the opportunity of choosing where he shall vote. You can hardly call it a property vote, because he will only have one vote.

Mr. WILSON: That will be a residential vote.

Mr. MOORE: It is just as important, if a man has a farm or business place in a certain area, that he should have the opportunity of voting to see that the money to be expended in that area is spent wisely and that the services are rendered efficiently.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you think many would avail themselves of it?

Mr. MOORE: Yes.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not enough to influence an election?

Mr. MOORE: The point of view I am looking at it from is in the case of a loan. Why should not a man who has to foot the bill and shoulder the burden vote in the area where his interests are, provided he asks for it and goes off the roll where he resides? He should not be debarred from having a voice in the expenditure of his own money and in the selection of the people who are to carry on the useful work in that area.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Do you also consider that the lessor and the lessee should have a vote for the same place?

Mr. MOORE: If they are living in the one area and pay rates, let them have a vote in the area where they are paying the rates. I do not care whether it is the lessor or the lessee who votes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Then you will have them both voting for the same place?

Mr. KING: Probably the lessee has not the residential qualification there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Under your proposal the lessee and the lessor could both vote for the same place.

Mr. KING: No.

Mr. MOORE: All I want to accomplish is that the individual should be allowed a choice. The Minister in accepting the amendment will not be giving a concession, and I therefore ask him to give further consideration to it, and not deprive these people of their just right to have a voice in seeing that in the expenditure of their money they get the most out of it.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): This is a double-barrelled amendment. The first part is desirous of giving to the town clerk or shire clerk the power of taking off the roll persons who are entitled to vote.

Mr. MOORE: You have the power to put them on.

Mr. GLEDSON: The amendment gives that power to the town or shire clerk.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No!

Mr. GLEDSON: When a man or woman attends at the polling-booth on polling day it can be said, if their names are not on the roll, "We have the power to take your names off the roll; the Labour Government gave us the power, and we are using it." The men who would use that power are trying to induce the Minister to do that. The

[Mr. Moore.

next part of the amendment deals with the power or the right of a person to transfer his vote from where he is residing to where his property is. We all remember what we had to put up with when we had the property qualification vote before. We found not only property owners but leaseholders and partners in firms transferring their names hohu bolus to the constituency where the chances of the Labour candidate were doubtful for the purpose of defeating him. I know what I am speaking about; I contested an election, and I was defeated by twenty-one votes. There was an election twelve months afterwards, and it was found that dozens of persons had transferred their names on their property qualification to the electorate I was contesting for the purpose of defeating me.

Mr. COSTELLO: Intelligent people.

Mr. GLEDSON: If they were, they were not like the hon. member opposite. I do not want to waste much time in useless debate. The Minister has definitely stated that there is not going to be any property vote under the Bill. This would mean two rolls. At the present time we have the power under this Act to allow the clerk to take the electoral roll, if it is suitable, and use it for the purposes of his shire or town council election. Under this amendment he could not do so. A special roll would have to be constructed. This would have to be reprinted, and would cost a lot of money, which would have to be borne by the shire or town council. This expense would be for the sake of probably about half a dozen who were desirous of transferring their names.

There is another point which arises in connection with this matter. The hon. member for Aubigny asks if the amendment introduces a new principle. It does, because a person has the right under the parliamentary electoral qualification to vote for a member for the place in which he resides. You would have two different systems, one for the election of a parliamentary representative—for instance, the hon. member for Bulimba would be able to vote for Wynnum, and at the same time could exercise his vote in Fortitude Valley to prevent the election of the Labour member there.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: That would be the only vote he had.

Mr. GLEDSON: Why should he have the opportunity of coming in and swamping one area or division? It is leading to corruption of the worst sort. I am sure that the hon. member for Aubigny is one man who will stand against corruption, which is a thing we should all strive against. Another point is that in one local authority area the roll would be inflated and in another it would be reduced, and the matter becomes absurd. I hope that hon. members opposite will refrain from persisting in this senseless amendment and will get on to something for the improvement of the Act.

Mr. LOGAN (*Lockyer*): I support this amendment because I see its wisdom. There are many persons to-day living in areas in which they have not much property, and it would be very much to their benefit to exercise their votes in the places where their interests were greatest. I find myself in that position, and would much rather vote where my interests are than in the particular town in which I am living. I hope the Minister will give the measure his serious considera-

tion. According to the statements made by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, one would imagine that we are looking for more than one vote. I think the amendment is a reasonable one.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted in clause 8 (*Mr. Nott's amendment*) be so inserted—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 24.

Mr. Appel	Mr. King
" Barnes, G. P.	" Logan
" Barnes, W. H.	" Maxwell
" Bell	" Moore
" Brand	" Morgan
" Costello	" Nott
" Deacon	" Peterson
" Edwards	" Roberts
" Elphinstone	" Swayne
" Fry	" Taylor
" Kelso	" Vowles
" Kerr	" Warren

Tellers: Mr. Costello and Mr. Logan.

NOES, 37.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Jones
" Bertram	" Land
" Brennan	" Larcombe
" Bruce	" Lloyd
" Bulcock	" McCormack
" Collins	" Mullan
" Conroy	" Payne
" Cooper, F. A.	" Pease
" Cooper, W.	" Pollock
" Dash	" Riordan
" Dunstan	" Ryan
" Farrell	" Smith
" Ferricks	" Stopford
" Foley	" Theodores
" Gillies	" Wellington
" Gledson	" Wilson
" Hartley	" Winstanley
" Huxham	" Wright
" Hynes	

Tellers: Mr. W. Cooper and Mr. Hartley.

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Petrie. No—Mr. Gilday.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I want to raise the point as to the large number of electors who, under this amending Bill, will be disfranchised. We hear a lot from members on the Government side about every adult person in Queensland having the right to a vote. This clause provides—

"(i.) The voters' roll shall consist of the names of all electors enrolled up to the immediately preceding thirty-first day of December on the electoral roll or rolls of the electoral district or districts comprised within the area or division, as the case may be."

That means that the printed roll as at the end of December will be the roll, and the Bill makes no provision for anyone voting except on the day of the election by ballot. The provision as set out for a Parliamentary election, which allows an elector if going out of the State to vote after the writ is issued and at any polling-booth within the State on the day of election, does not apply to municipal and shire elections. Let me cite the last electoral roll for 1923. What was the position of the Toowoomba electorate, which is represented by the Minister in charge of this Bill? The election was held on 12th May, and it was found that between 31st December, 1922, and April last over 700 adjustments had to be made. That is the number of new electors who were entitled to vote in the city of Toowoomba. So far as East Toowoomba, which is my electorate, is concerned, in that municipal area there would probably be another 500 voters who became entitled to

Mr. Roberts.]

vote between 31st December, 1922, and 6th April, 1923, when the rolls closed. This Bill provides that the elections shall be held in April. Assuming that a person enrolled for the electorate of East Toowoomba is, in December, transferred to Brisbane, he will be entitled to become enrolled at the end of January, and we assume that he becomes enrolled. The election will be held in April, as provided in this Bill, and he will not be entitled to vote unless he goes to Toowoomba, where his name was enrolled in the December previous. That is not right. I want to see every facility provided so that every adult shall have the right to vote.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You voted against the adult franchise.

Mr. ROBERTS: When did I vote against the adult franchise?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: When I introduced it in the Act of 1920.

Mr. ROBERTS: That is a different matter altogether. To-day every adult has the right to vote in local authority elections, and under those conditions we should give it the very widest application. The Minister was asked by one hon. member what was the percentage of electors who went to the poll, and he said it was less than 50 per cent. Is it any wonder that it is less than 50 per cent. when in the city of Toowoomba alone, under this method, there will be at least 1,200 voters who will be disqualified?

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: That did not apply to the last election.

Mr. ROBERTS: I am showing that the State election was held this year on 12th May; the rolls were closed on 6th April, and between 31st December and 6th April, outside any question of erasures, there were 700 odd new applications. That meant people who were then in the city of Toowoomba and were entitled to vote in that municipal area. Under this system they will not be permitted to vote, and they cannot vote for the area for which they were enrolled in the December previous.

The HOME SECRETARY: A large number of these people may be in East Toowoomba.

Mr. ROBERTS: If I include East Toowoomba, the number is over 1,200. I think some consideration should be given to this matter, so that every person who is entitled shall be able to vote.

[9.30 p.m.]

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you remember the discussion on the nomadic workers?

Mr. ROBERTS: I am concerned about giving every elector in Queensland the opportunity of recording his vote.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 9—"Amendment of section 22—Date of election."

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): This clause deals with the date of election. I would like to know what has induced the Minister to alter the date from March to April. The disadvantages of the later date should be taken into consideration. The hon. member for East Toowoomba stated that a certain number of voters are disfranchised. I would point out that the ways and means of local authorities are prepared by the incoming council, and it will be well after June before the ways and means for the year in which they are elected are prepared. The overdraft is usually absorbed by the outgoing council.

[*Mr. Roberts.*]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are all twelve months behind.

Mr. KERR: As the overdraft is absorbed before the rates start to come in for that year, the workmen will have to be put off, because there will be no revenue to pay them with. I think it is better for the Minister to consider that point rather than the question of getting names on the roll. There is no reason why the election should not be held in February. The incoming council could then prepare their ways and means for that year, and there would not be the danger of the workmen being put off for a month, as might otherwise happen. Does the Minister not think it better to obviate the danger of having men unemployed for a month and let the council be elected earlier so as to enable the ways and means to be prepared? The hon. gentleman stated on the second reading that the reason why the date had been altered from March to April was to allow of the preparation of the rolls. There is no reason why those rolls could not be prepared by the end of February or the beginning of March, so as to allow the incoming council scope to prepare their ways and means for the year. This matter was explained to me by the various councils in my electorate. The point was raised in the first instance by one of the councils, and I made inquiries from other councils, and they all agreed on the matter.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): The last election took place in July. It has been ascertained that it would take a considerable time to get the rolls ready by March. As the rolls as they stand on 31st December will be used for municipal elections earlier in the year, the rolls could not possibly be got ready by March.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 10—"Amendment of section 24—Extraordinary vacancy"—put and passed.

Clause 11—"Amendment of section 27—Power to dissolve a council"—put and passed.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: I beg to move the insertion of the following new clause to follow clause 11:—

"In section thirty-two of the principal Act, after the words 'local authority,' the words 'or joint local authority' are inserted; and after the words 'local fund' the words 'or common fund' are inserted."

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I would like to know exactly what is meant by "joint local authority." Does it mean such boards as the Joint Health Board? There is no definition in the interpretation clause.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): The Joint Health Board is constituted under the Health Act, and could not be affected by this Bill.

New clause (*Mr. Brennan*) agreed to.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): I move the insertion of the following new clause to follow the clause just inserted—

"The following provision is added to section forty-four of the principal Act—

From and after a date to be fixed in that behalf by the Governor in Council, by Order in Council published in the 'Gazette,' it shall not be competent for any local authority to appoint as

clerk any person who is not the holder of a certificate granted under the foregoing regulations: Provided that nothing in this provision shall apply to the continuance in office as clerk by a local authority of any person who is not the holder of such certificate."

The clause gives the right to those already employed to remain in office.

New clause (*Mr. Gledson*) agreed to.

Clause 12—"Amendment of section 57—Control, etc., of necessary public works in area"—put and passed.

Clause 13—"Classification of roads"—

*Mr. MOORE (Aubigny)*: I move the insertion, after the word "increase," in line 33, page 6, of the words "or decrease." There is no provision in the Bill to allow for a decrease of the width of a road. In very many cases there are towns with roads 3 chains in width, and it is a very great hardship upon the local authority to keep them in order. I know instances not very far from Toowoomba—Oakley is a case in point—where it has been enormously difficult to make good roads between the shops on each side, and all sorts of schemes have been devised to get over the difficulty. This Bill is designed solely to increase the width of roads and not to decrease them.

*HON. F. T. BRENNAN (Toowoomba)*: It is impossible for me to accept the amendment. I would point out to the hon. member that the amendment would conflict with the policy of the Land Act.

*Mr. MOORE*: Later on in this Bill power is given to a local authority, where a road is exchanged, to sell the land acquired and pay the proceeds into the local fund. If the Land Act is going to affect one case it should affect the other. The case is different where land is disposed of by the Lands Department. The road belongs to the Department of Public Lands, and the money does not go to the local authorities but goes to the department.

*HON. F. T. BRENNAN*: A council might want to decrease the width of a stock route.

*Mr. MOORE*: I do not suggest that the money received from a stock route should go into the coffers of the local authorities. We want to be able to lease the land to the people alongside. There is no provision in the Bill for decreasing the width of a road.

*Mr. GLEDSON*: The land could revert to the department, and they could decrease the width of it.

*Mr. MOORE*: I would like the Minister to give the local authorities power to decrease the width of a road.

Amendment (*Mr. Moore*) negatived.

Clause 13 put and passed.

Clause 14—"Amendment of section 59—Land and buildings for public purposes"—

*HON. F. T. BRENNAN (Toowoomba)*: I beg to move the insertion, after the word "inserted," in line 10, of the words—

"also after the words 'rubbish depôts' the words 'sale yards for the sale of animals' are inserted."

*Mr. MOORE (Aubigny)*: I would like the Minister to say whether he has received any request from the local authorities in connection with this matter. They can now sell impounded stock anywhere they like. What

is the object of the amendment? Why should the local authorities be placed in the position of having that power?

*HON. F. T. BRENNAN (Toowoomba)*: It is only giving to the local authorities additional power which they may require from time to time.

Amendment (*Mr. Brennan*) agreed to.

Clause 14, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 15—"Resumption agreements to be approved by Minister"—

*Mr. KERR (Enoggera)*: I beg to move the omission of lines 21 to 44, reading—

"of five hundred pounds or upwards, no such agreement shall have any force or effect or be binding upon the parties until the same, setting forth the true and full compensation which has been made or is agreed to be made to such person in respect of such taking or acquirement, has first been submitted to the Minister for his approval, and the Minister, notwithstanding any such agreement or that the compensation agreed upon has been made by the local authority to such person, may, in his discretion, require that the compensation to be made for such taking or acquirement shall be left to be determined under the Public Works Land Resumption Acts, 1906 to 1917, and upon such requirement such compensation shall be determined accordingly, and may be determined at an amount or value less than five hundred pounds, and the compensation so determined shall be the compensation to be made for such taking or acquirement; and if compensation has already been made pursuant to any such agreement and is less than the compensation so determined, the local authority shall pay over the balance due to such person, and if the compensation so made is more than the compensation so determined, such person shall refund the excess to the local authority,"

with a view to inserting the words—

"of one thousand pounds or upwards. The Minister may, where he has had satisfactory evidence submitted to him that the transaction has not been entered into in good faith or is not in the best interests of the local authority, cause an inquiry into the matter to be made by some person appointed by him in that behalf, who shall have all the powers of a commission appointed under the Official Inquiries Evidence Act of 1910, and upon receipt of the report of such person the Minister may rescind any such agreement, and thereupon such agreement shall be null and void and any moneys paid by the local authority thereunder shall be recoverable by it from the person to whom the same were paid."

The object of this clause is to deal with unscrupulous persons, or to prevent unscrupulous dealings. The clause as it stands goes a good deal beyond that. It lays down definitely in regard to the sale of any property or any purchase over £500, where a local authority in connection has entered into an agreement to take or acquire any estate or interest of any person, that no such agreement shall have any force, or be effective or binding, until it has first been submitted to the

*Mr. Kerr.]*

Minister. The intention of the Local Authorities Act to-day is to entrust the authorities with matters of local government. This clause takes the power of local government out of their hands, and is going to act detrimentally to the interests of the district and ratepayers. Very often a local authority may enter into an agreement by various means rather than advertise the fact that the local authority is the purchaser. They can very often come to an understanding by devious means with benefit to the ratepayers. Under the present proposal, when people know that every such transaction has to be submitted to the Land Court, they will be rather careful about coming to an agreement because of the legal expenses involved. I ask the Minister not to limit the scope of the powers of local authorities with respect to making any arrangement or agreement involving the sum of more than £500. My amendment does not depart from the principle which the Minister has decided to bring in. He will find the amount is raised by my amendment from £500 to £1,000, and that the matter will not come before the Minister unless on a complaint by some person. The amendment also deals with the powers of the person to be appointed, who shall have all the powers of a Commission appointed under the Official Inquiries Evidence Act of 1910. The local authorities are very much concerned. They are composed of men elected on an adult franchise and are returned every three years. Under these circumstances they should be trusted to carry out all dealings decided upon by the council. They should not be restricted or hampered by having to submit to the Minister all such transactions involving over £500.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I cannot accept the amendment. The clause as it stands certainly gives the Minister great powers, but in most of these cases the councils have to submit transactions involving large expenditure to the Land Court for determination. I have seen several aldermen of the Cities of Brisbane and Toowoomba, and they explained that the reason why these transactions do not go to the Appeal Court is because of the heavy expense. I find that the Government four or five years ago made provision for appeal to the Land Court. For the protection of aldermen against the attacks of the public, I think that there should be some provision of this kind, so that there may be no necessity to go to the Land Court. The clause is there for the protection of the aldermen themselves as well as for the protection of the electors. The provision for the appeal against the valuation will tend to ensure the bona fides of the deal.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I hope the Minister will not persist in his attitude. All that is being asked for is that the amount be increased to £1,000.

Mr. FOLEY: There is more than that in the amendment.

Mr. TAYLOR: I know one local authority which, a year or two ago, had to purchase a property comprising several allotments of land and a house. The local authority was desirous of making a blind road through the property. The property had been placed for sale for something like £1,200 to £1,500. The local authority bought the property and made the road through it. They got the road for practically nothing at all, and they were able to sell one or two allotments of the land and the house. Had they been restricted by the limit of £500, they could not have done this.

[*Mr. Kerr.*

I do not think there have been complaints where aldermen and councillors have failed in their duty with regard to the expenditure of money over £500 for the acquirement of land for the improvement of their areas. Notwithstanding the fact that we have the Land Court to go to with regard to resumptions, there have been times when the councils wished to be in a position to buy quickly and without any delay. No matter what the Minister may say in regard to resumptions being dealt with by the Land Court, I think it will be admitted that they are generally costly. Counsel are engaged by both sides, and very often £200 or £300 are expended in legal costs which would otherwise be saved, because aldermen generally are out for the benefit of the area they represent. Quite a lot of land is being cut up, particularly in the metropolitan area, and it has been found necessary, as settlement grows, to resume certain land to make roads to round off ugly corners. You see that in the metropolitan area in Brunswick street. I do not know what the city council paid for rounding off that area but you cannot buy these corner allotments for £400 or £500. You have to pay a fair amount for them, and I do not see that there is going to be any hardship involved by making the amount £1,000 instead of £500.

I hope that the Minister will be prepared to accept the amendment. It is not going to alter the principle of the Bill or the idea he wishes to carry out. I take it that his main idea is to see, when these purchases are made, that they are fair and square.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: I will accept the alteration to £1,000, but not the rest of the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: Might I suggest to the hon. member for Enoggera that he withdraw his amendment, and then, if he wishes to do so, he may move a further amendment.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): As the Minister is not likely to accept the whole of the amendment—unfortunately, in my opinion—I ask leave to withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. KERR: I beg to move the omission of the words "five hundred," on line 21, with a view to inserting the words "one thousand."

Amendment agreed to, together with a consequential amendment on line 36.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 16—"Widening of roads"—

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): This clause deals with the realignment of roads and gives power to the local authority to acquire the necessary land by purchase or to acquire it in a particular way, which, to my mind, is a novelty. The procedure adopted here is not the procedure adopted under the Railways Act. Certainly notice is given to the owner telling him that his land is to be resumed or acquired for the purposes of realignment. After that notice is given he is not allowed to erect any buildings without a permit. I am not dealing with land where buildings are erected temporarily, but with lands acquired for the purpose of realignment on which buildings exist. It seems to me that we are going behind the whole basis of compensation as we have understood it in the past. In the Public Works Land Resumption Act certain well-defined principles are laid down. If you look at

the principles which are contained in this Bill, you will find there is a very big difference, and a difference which is not equitable. If you look up the dictionary, you will find that "compensation" means "That which constitutes, or is regarded as, an equivalent; that which compensates for loss or privation." The portion of the clause I am dealing with reads—

"The land between the old alignment and the new shall not be taken by the local authority or form part of the road unless or until such land has been cleared of buildings and structures and the local authority has compensated the owners and occupiers, as next hereinafter provided, but upon making such compensation the land in respect of which it has been made shall forthwith be deemed to be dedicated as part of the road."

Then it goes on to say how compensation is to be estimated—

"Compensation for any injurious effects suffered by reason of the realignment may be claimed, but shall be limited to payment of the value of the land taken by reason of the realignment."

I am at a loss to know what the effect of this is going to be. If it be that a person whose property is required for the purposes of the realignment of the road has, first of all, to remove that portion of his property on which buildings are situated before

[10 p.m.] compensation is to be estimated, and compensation is to be given merely for the land value, he will be suffering an injustice. If buildings exist on the land and have to be removed, the owner affected by a notice should receive by way of compensation the cost of the removal of those buildings, because he might have to go to the cost of taking out the side of a building and restoring it again. There is also the question of severance, which is always taken into consideration in cases of this sort. In order to put the question of an owner affected by realignment in cases such as this in the position he would be in under the Public Works Land Resumption Act, and even under the Railway Act to a great extent, I move the omission of the following words after the word "claimed" on line 50, page 8, to the end of the paragraph—

"but shall be limited to payment of the value of the land taken by reason of the realignment, and such value shall be ascertained and such compensation shall be payable as of the date when such land is cleared of buildings and structures by the owner or occupier, whether for the purpose of rebuilding to the new alignment or not,"

with a view to inserting the words—

"and in estimating such compensation, regard shall in every case be had not only to the value of the land taken, but also to the damage, if any, caused—

(a) By the severing of the land taken from other land of the claimant, and

(b) By the cost of structural alterations rendered necessary by such realignment;—

and compensation shall be assessed according to the value of the land, estate, or interest of the claimant on the date of such notice."

If my interpretation of the clause is wrong, I would like the Minister to point out where it is wrong. There is an opportunity of injustice being suffered, and I take it that it is not the function of Parliament to do anything which is going to inflict losses on property owners.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I have not quite caught the meaning of the proposed amendment, which is novel so far as local authorities in Queensland are concerned. The clause in the Bill under discussion is in operation in other States and also on the Continent. It gives the council power not to allow people to put extensive buildings up unless they adhere to the proper alignment. If a building is burnt down, for instance, it can only be rebuilt on the proper alignment. The council could come along and resume the land, but the owner would not be deprived of the proper value of the land, but would receive fair compensation. An owner would be prevented from putting expensive buildings on the land on a frontage which was out of alignment. That is to say, new buildings cannot be constructed on the old alignment. The owner will have to go back to the new alignment to build.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I am not quite clear from the Minister's explanation as to what is meant. We know that the Brisbane City Council has been purchasing or giving notice of resumption of various properties in order to widen certain streets. If the interpretation of the hon. member for Dalby is correct—and if you study the clause, it certainly seems to bear out his contention—no provision is made for compensation to the owners of buildings like the Centennial Hall if the council decide to widen Adelaide street.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: Oh, yes. That is not a realignment; that is a resumption.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not think this clause clears the matter up. There seems to me to be a possibility of a great deal of litigation over the matter.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I would point out to the hon. member that the paragraph which the hon. member for Dalby proposes to amend reads—

"Compensation for any injurious effects suffered by reason of the realignment may be claimed, but shall be limited to payment of the value of the land taken by reason of the realignment, and such value shall be ascertained and such compensation shall be payable as of the date when such land is cleared of buildings and structures by the owner or occupier, whether for the purpose of rebuilding to the new alignment or not."

Such a realignment may not occur for years—perhaps not for fifty years—but once a building is pulled down or is burned or is otherwise removed after the notice specified in the clause has been given, the owners are not allowed to rebuild except on the new line. The council will pay compensation for the land as it is cleared of buildings, and the owners will have to fall into the line with the new alignment. The idea is to prevent the owners from rebuilding so that the council will have to pay for valuable new buildings later on.

*Mr. Taylor.]*

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): The Minister said that the realignment might not take place for fifty years. It might take place in twenty years; it might take place in a week or a fortnight. In any case, what harm is there in accepting the amendment? It simply states the position clearly. Nobody can misunderstand the amendment moved by the hon. member for Dalby, but at the present time the position is in doubt.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I would like to ask the Minister what the position is in the case of a realignment of Adelaide street, for instance. If notice is served and a building is not removed, is it to stay there until it tumbles down?

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Yes. They could not put another story on that building.

Mr. KING: Then until the building tumbles down or is removed the council cannot widen the road. Take the case of Kent's Buildings, where I have my office. I understand that building has been recently acquired by the city council.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: That is not a realignment. It is a compulsory resumption. It may take sixty years to complete the realignment of one road under this clause.

At 10.10 p.m.,

Mr. DUNSTAN (*Gympie*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I want to ask the Minister if notice is served on the owners of the building known as the Centennial Hall in Adelaide street that there is to be a new alignment 15 or 20 feet further back, and a few weeks after the place is burnt down, and then a few weeks after that again another one is burnt down further down the street, is he going to have a zig-zag sort of alignment?

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Yes.

Mr. TAYLOR: That is an extraordinary provision. It will have the effect of depreciating the value of the property. The Minister says that it is no use a man repairing his property unless he brings his building into accordance with the new alignment.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: That is so. He will not be allowed to repair it.

Mr. TAYLOR: I think that is ridiculous. I think the amendment moved by the hon. member for Dalby should be accepted.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): If it is going to be carried out as the Minister says, it may be ridiculous, but there will be no hardship. Still there is nothing in the clause to say that it will be carried out in that way. Later on the Bill provides that the council shall have power to give notice for the removal of a certain structure, and five years are allowed in which it is to be done. One thing seems to work in with the other. If the structure has to be pulled down, then it is only fair and reasonable that compensation should be paid.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: The Bill says so.

Mr. MOORE: Later on in the Bill there is power given to the council to say whether a building shall be permitted to remain, and

[*Mr. King.*

the council has power to order its demolition. If a person is to be allowed compensation, then that is all right.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Yes.

Amendment (*Mr. Fowler*) negatived.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): I beg to move the addition after the word "traffic" on line 41, page 9, of the words—

"Provided that nothing in subsections (3) and (4) hereof shall apply where the land is not within a township or within a shire or division of a shire declared by the Governor in Council to be a residential district."

The amendment is moved for the purpose of eliminating areas in outlandish districts and to bring within the provisions of the clause only areas of a residential character. It will be quite obvious to the Minister that this amendment is essential, because in cutting up land in out of the way districts it is quite impossible to avoid being on a road. It is quite impossible to run it through another man's property, and it will be quite impossible to continue the road through the areas adjoining where it is cut up. I think the amendment is only reasonable and should be accepted in the interests of the areas subdivided.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: I will accept the amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. Edwards*) agreed to.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I beg to move the insertion, after the word "area," on line 48, page 9, of the following words:—

"Provided that the standard number of houses shall be so fixed as to provide a minimum area for each house of 16 perches."

This is a simple amendment which is self-explanatory.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported progress.

The resumption of the Committee was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): I desire to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member for Toowong be allowed to make a personal explanation?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MAXWELL: Last night I had occasion to leave the House for an hour and a-half to attend a reception given to Miss Campbell of Durban by the returned soldiers in my electorate. Prior to leaving the House I arranged with the "Whip" for a "pair" when the vote came on in connection with the closing of the parliamentary bar. Something went amiss, and the "pair" was not recorded. I desire now to say that, had I been present on that occasion, I would have voted for the closing of the parliamentary bar at the same hour as hotels.

Mr. PEASE: See that you do not go there for a drink after 8 o'clock.