

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 30 JULY 1924**

---

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

WEDNESDAY, 30 JULY, 1924.

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

QUESTIONS.

ALLEGED DELAY IN TRANSPORTING SICK PERSON BY RAIL.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. Is he aware that between Helidon and Laidley on Tuesday morning a sick person (a stretcher case), evidently awaiting train transport to medical attention, was not allowed to be placed upon the Western mail train, but was made to wait for the next following train?”

“2. Will he take action to prevent a repetition of such an occurrence in serious cases?”

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

“1 and 2. It is not correct to say that the patient was made to wait. Application was made for the train following the Western mail (seventeen minutes later) to stop at a point between Gatton and Grantham to pick up a stretcher case for conveyance to Brisbane, and this was promptly granted. Although not asked for, a first-class compartment was reserved, so that the patient and his mother could be made as comfortable as possible on the journey.”

DETAILS OF RECENT QUEENSLAND CONVERSION LOAN.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) asked the Treasurer—

“What are the details of the recent Queensland conversion loan, viz.—(a) Price at which issued; (b) rate of interest; (c) term; (d) costs and expenses; (e) actual cost per cent. to redemption?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*), in the absence of the Treasurer (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*), replied—

“(a) £99 10s. per cent.; (b) £5 10s. per cent. per annum; (c) five years from 1st July, 1924, or, at the option of the Government, in whole or in part, at any time on or after 1st July, 1926, on three months' notice; (d) approximately £2 2s. per cent. The final instalment of cash applications was not due until the 1st instant, and pending the receipt of account sales the exact amount cannot be stated; (e) if redeemed in five years, approximately £6 2s. 5d. per cent., but see answer to (d).”

TITLE OF “HONOURABLE” FOR CABINET MINISTERS.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*) asked the Premier—

“In view of the refusal of the Government to recommend that the mayor of Brisbane be designated ‘Lord Mayor,’ will he recommend that, in future, no Cabinet Minister be designated ‘Honourable’?”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*), in the absence of the Premier (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*), replied—

"This matter will receive the consideration it deserves."

#### PANEL OF TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN.

The SPEAKER: Pursuant to the requirements of Standing Order No. 13, I hereby nominate the following members to form the panel of Temporary Chairmen during the present session:—

- Frank Arthur Cooper, member for the electoral district of Bremer;
- Thomas Dunstan, member for the electoral district of Gympie;
- David Alexander Gledson, member for the electoral district of Ipswich;
- Frederick Lancelot Nott, member for the electoral district of Stanley; and
- Harry Frederick Walker, member for the electoral district of Coorooora.

#### MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

##### PRESERVATION OF QUEENSLAND SUGAR INDUSTRY UNDER WHITE LABOUR CONDITIONS—NECESSITY FOR CONTINUANCE OF SUGAR AGREEMENT.

The SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have received the following letter from the hon. member for Mirani:—

"Parliament House,  
"Brisbane, 29th July, 1924.

"Dear Mr. Bertram,—

"In accordance with Standing Order No. 137, I beg to inform you that it is my intention (on Wednesday, 30th instant) to move—'That this House do now adjourn.'

"My reason for moving this motion is that I desire to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, as follows:—

The urgent necessity for a full and immediate discussion by this Parliament of the best means to be adopted to preserve the Queensland sugar industry under white labour conditions, in view of the critical position facing this industry in the event of present arrangements not being continued.

"Yours respectfully,  
"E. B. SWAYNE.

"The Honourable the Speaker,  
"Legislative Assembly, Brisbane."

The SPEAKER: Is the motion supported? Not less than five members having risen in their places in support of the motion, as required by Standing Order No. 137,

The SPEAKER: Mr. Swayne.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I beg to move—  
"That the House do now adjourn."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): Mr. Speaker, I desire to raise a point of order as to whether the subject-matter of the motion read by you is a matter of urgent public importance.

Mr. VOWLES: That is a matter for the Speaker to decide.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have a right to raise the question; the Speaker may decide in his discretion how to deal with it. I know that the rulings

governing this question are largely matters at the discretion of the gentleman who happens to occupy the Chair, but I want to point out that the practice of Speakers in both the House of Commons and the Parliament of Queensland has been—and it is definitely laid down in "May"—that, if it is a matter which hon. members will have the opportunity to debate at an early date, such a matter is not to be considered as coming within the meaning of "urgent public importance." Now the question under review is definitely mentioned in the Governor's Speech—

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And hon. members will have an opportunity of dealing with this question during to-day or to-morrow.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I wish to call your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the paragraph in the Speech dealing with the question on page 3 of the "Votes and Proceedings" of to-day. You will see that the whole question of the embargo and other matters mentioned in the proposed motion will give hon. members of this House an opportunity to discuss the whole question of the sugar industry, especially the question of the agreement with the Commonwealth.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In support of my contention I ask you to turn to page 227 of the 12th edition of "May's Parliamentary Practice," dealing with the question of motions for the adjournment of the House on matters of urgent public importance.

Mr. MOORE: Are you going to move that the Speaker's ruling be disagreed with?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Speaker has not given a ruling.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I called upon the hon. member for Mirani to continue his speech. The Secretary for Public Lands is quite within his rights in rising to a point of order. It is for the Speaker to decide whether the point of order shall be sustained or not.

Mr. MOORE: You have already given a ruling.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I made a request to the hon. member for Mirani to rise to continue his speech, and it is within the rights of another hon. member to raise a point of order. The Secretary for Public Lands may ask for a ruling on the point, and it will be my duty to give it, and I intend doing so.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I quoted the page in "May" which deals with this particular question, where it is stated—

"The Speaker declines to submit a motion for adjournment to the House if, in his opinion, the subject to be brought forward is not definite, urgent, or of public importance. Motions for adjournment—"

and this is the point I want to make—

"regarding matters for the discussion of which the Committee of Supply or other appointed business would afford an early opportunity have been ruled to be out of order."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

*Hon. W. McCormack.]*

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is my point—that any matter that hon. members have an opportunity of discussing in the immediate future cannot possibly be discussed on such a motion. If it is a matter of urgent public importance—which I admit it is, I am not going to deny the importance or the urgency of the question of the sugar agreement—this House will have an opportunity to-day or at latest to-morrow of discussing the very question that it is proposed that members of this House shall waste their time in dealing with this afternoon.

The SPEAKER: The discretion is with the Speaker.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I raise the question because I recognise the discretion is with you, Mr. Speaker; still it is within the right of any hon. member of this House to raise the issue as to whether the matter is one of urgent public importance, or at least whether it should be discussed to-day or to-morrow or on Tuesday next.

Mr. TAYLOR: You should have raised the point earlier.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I could not have raised it earlier. Why I raise it now is not particularly because of this question, but I can foresee that, if it becomes the practice to allow motions for the adjournment of the House on every matter, irrespective of whether those matters are on the business-paper or not, then the time of hon. members of this House will be wasted in futile discussions.

Mr. SWAYNE: Can there be a more important question at the present time?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not deny the importance of the question. I do not want to argue the question at all. I want to ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether you, in your discretion, decide that this is a matter of urgent public importance; and, having decided that, is it a matter that could not well be postponed until the motion on the business-paper which deals with the self-same question comes before the House? That is the point I wish to make—that the matter can be dealt with by this House in the discussion on the Address in Reply to the Governor's Speech, and it is a waste of time for members of this House to deal with the question on two separate occasions. I desire to bring it under your notice, Sir, but have no desire to question your ruling. I want to raise it at this juncture because, if this is permitted, then I know of no motion that cannot be moved, even though the questions proposed to be dealt with are the subject-matter of motions already on the business-paper.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I should like to refer you, Mr. Speaker, to Standing Order 137.

The SPEAKER: Does the hon. member wish to raise a point of order?

Mr. VOWLES: Certainly I wish to raise a point of order. I submit that the Secretary for Public Lands is quite out of court. Standing Order 137 reads—

“A motion for the adjournment of the House, other than the usual motion to terminate the sitting of the House at the end of the business day, shall not be entertained, except for the purpose of debating a definite matter of urgent public importance, the subject of which

has been first stated to Mr. Speaker in writing not less than one hour before the time appointed for the meeting of the House.”

I presume that has been done, otherwise you, Mr. Speaker, would not have entertained the motion. The Standing Order goes on to say—

“Any such motion shall be proposed by the mover without debate in the first instance, but shall not be put by Mr. Speaker unless five other members at least rise in their places to support it.”

That has been done. It goes on to say—

“If five members so rise in their places, the mover may proceed.”

Where is the Secretary for Public Lands, the ex-Speaker, with his point of order? Five members have risen in their places, and I submit the hon. member for Mirani has a right to submit his motion, if he so desires. I do not want, after the Speaker has consented to the motion being accepted, to discuss the merits of it. I quite agree in some respects with what the Secretary for Public Lands says—that there may be an opportunity at a later date of discussing it. How late we do not know, and we do not know what the object of the present motion is except that it is a matter of urgent public importance. You, Mr. Speaker, have accepted that, and I submit that the motion must now be proceeded with.

The SPEAKER: The point raised by the Secretary for Public Lands is one that I anticipated might arise, and I carefully considered the question before I read the motion submitted by the hon. member for Mirani. First of all, the Secretary for Public Lands raised the point that the Speaker declines to submit a motion for the adjournment of the House if, in his opinion, the subject brought forward is not definite, urgent, and of public importance. I considered the motion very carefully, and I considered this was a matter of urgent, definite, and of public importance.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: The second point raised by the Secretary for Public Lands is an important one. “May” on page 227 says—

“Motions for adjournment regarding matters for the discussion of which the Committee of Supply or other appointed business would afford an early opportunity have been ruled to be out of order.”

An opportunity will be given to debate this matter, but I am not in a position to say whether an early opportunity will be given.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: That is the reason why I have accepted this motion. I can recall an occasion when the hon. member for Dalby, who was then the leader of the Opposition, moved a similar motion, and I ruled it out of order on the ground that the matter which it was proposed to discuss had already been discussed, and that further opportunity would be given to discuss the question. I therefore refused to accept his motion. Hon. members will observe from the business-sheet that there is some business to come before the House before we resume the debate on the Address in Reply, and I am not in a position to say whether that debate will take one day, two days, or a week.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

[*Hon. W. McCormack.*]

The SPEAKER: As I consider this is a matter of urgent public importance, I am prepared to accept the motion moved by the hon. member for Mirani.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am rather surprised at a member representing a sugar electorate, like the hon. member for Cairns, trying to tell the House that this is not a matter of urgent public importance. I only hope that his electorate will bear it in mind. I would draw attention to the last few words of my letter, namely—

“in view of the position facing this industry in the event of the Federal arrangement not being continued.”

I do not believe for one moment that any member in the Federal Parliament intends to let the industry down, and I believe that the present Federal Government are perfectly willing and anxious to do what is necessary to keep the sugar industry prosperous; but, in view of the fact that such a set has been made against it in the South by members of State Parliaments, it seems to me to be the right thing that the Parliament of Queensland—the State which is chiefly concerned—stripping the question of all party issues, and not regarding it as an attempt of one party to score at the expense of another party, should at the present juncture, when the whole thing is trembling in the balance, simply animated with the one desire for the welfare of this industry, express their opinion that it is desirable that the present arrangement be continued, and I have every confidence that the present Federal Government will do their best to carry it out.

Mr. HYNES: Was not that expressed in the Governor's Speech?

Mr. SWAYNE: I think that every member of the Country party will share with me the opinion that we should preserve a White Australia as far as lies in our power, and that, regardless of party, we will do our utmost to carry out the high ideal of making Australia white and keeping it white. In that great question is intimately bound up the welfare of the industry that my motion relates to, because, so far, it has shown itself to be the only one capable of bringing about the close population of our tropical seaboard that is necessary if we are to attain the ideal of a white Australia.

To emphasise the point I have just raised, I would like to point out that at the present time we have over 200,000 acres under sugar-cane, farmed by 5,000 farmers, who

[4 p.m.] employ about 10,000 hands, and whose expenditure upon land and plant I think I am well within the mark in putting at something like £6,000,000. Then again, speaking of Australia as a whole—including New South Wales and Victoria, each with its sugar mill—we have forty-six sugar mills in Australia employing 6,519 persons, and paying annually in wages £1,137,959. Those mills represent a value of £4,551,000. On the other hand, the six refineries of the Commonwealth give employment to 1,740 hands, drawing in wages £374,000 per annum, and the value of the buildings, plant, and so on represents something like £2,000,000, and it can be safely said that fully 20,000 persons are directly employed in the industry.

As showing what this industry is doing in those portions of this continent which otherwise, I take it, would remain unsettled tropical jungle, I would like to say that at a meeting of the Musgrave Mill shareholders the chairman pointed out that the three mills in the Cairns district—in the district represented by the hon. gentleman who has tried to burke this discussion and to block my motion—produced in one year £1,500,000 worth of sugar, whilst the most northern outpost of the industry—away up in the tropics at Mossman—has produced since 1895 1,571,000 tons of cane, and has paid to the farmers £2,908,000.

Mr. HYNES: The Labour party are responsible for that position.

Mr. SWAYNE: That is an area in which I do not suppose a white man would ever have settled were it not for the sugar industry, with its far-flung outposts of civilisation. In the face of these facts it is about time that the tactics aimed at the extinguishment of this industry were exposed. What has the sugar industry done for Australia? I remember the time when sugar was almost unprocurable in Great Britain during the war, and the population had to be rationed to an ounce or so a week, whereas in Australia we had sugar at most reasonable prices. During the years 1915 to 1921 we imported 475,000 tons of sugar at a total cost of £18,062,000. That was all sent away in gold—we did not get the sugar in exchange for other commodities—and that course was necessary because at the time the short-sighted policy which had been pursued in the past had prevented the industry from supplying all Australia's requirements. But during the same time 1,412,000 tons of our sugar were sold to the consumers of Australia at an average price of £25 17s. per ton as compared with £37 19s. paid abroad—they got it at £12 per ton less than people elsewhere—and by that means we kept in Australia £36,584,000. If there had been no Queensland sugar industry, the whole of that sugar would have had to be bought, or rather we would not have been able to buy it—we would have had to do with much less. But, had we been able to buy that large quantity, we would have had to pay for it over £52,000,000, or a cost of £12 per ton extra, so that not only would the £36,000,000 which we received for it not have been disbursed amongst our own people, but as the price of the imported article we would have had to send away a huge sum in gold.

The Right Hon. W. M. Hughes, speaking on this matter in 1923, put the position as follows:—

“Had the growers received the world's parity during the period of control, they would have made at least another £40,000,000, which the consumers would have been forced to pay. The agreement enabled the people of Australia to enjoy the cheapest sugar in the world. The retail price was 3d. in 1915, 3½d. from 1916 to 1920, and 6d. from 1920 to 1st November of this year, when it would be reduced to 5d. These prices compared very favourably with those in Britain, where, in 1918, the price was 7d.; 1919, 8d.; 1920, 10d. to 1s. 2d.; and 1921, 8d. In America the prices reached 1s. 1d.; France, 1s. 6d.; Italy, 1s. 6d.; and Java, 10d. per lb. For the four years, there-

*Mr. Swayne.*]

fore. Australia had the cheapest sugar in the world, and during that period the export of jams, canned fruits, etc., showed phenomenal increases."

Those gentlemen in the South who have been instigated into opposition to us—I do not think they know the facts of the case—exported jam to the value of £90,000 in 1914-15—the year in which the war broke out—and in 1918-19 no less a sum than £1,847,000. I notice that the Premier, Mr. Theodore, speaking on this question once, pointed out that, taking into consideration all articles using sugar in their composition, the exports increased during the same period from £250,000 to over £3,000,000, or something like twelve times. All this is due to the Australian sugar industry.

In order to disparage our industry, the charge is very often brought against us that we are spoonfed and that we received a bounty. I venture to say that we never received anything of the kind. There were some years—1902 to 1913—when there was an excise tax on the sugar grown for Australian consumption, but those who complied with certain conditions got the excise duty back, less £1 per ton. That is to say, there was a rebate. The result was that the consumer did not pay but the producer did pay. The excise collected during that time, which went into the revenue of Australia, amounted to £6,593,000, of which £3,899,000 was paid back, so that altogether the revenue received through the so-called bounty was about £2,700,000. I have not time to go fully into this phase of the matter, but those few figures, I think, are sufficient to show that the charge that the sugar industry has been spoonfed is entirely baseless and unwarranted, but that, as a matter of fact, it was singled out for special taxation. On the other hand—since it has been so constantly urged that we receive special favours—perhaps it is just as well that we should review the conditions under which other primary industries work.

I have here a list of tariff duties showing that nearly every agricultural product receives a certain amount of protection. I have not time to read it, but I would like to get it into "Hansard" nevertheless. It shows that free trade conditions do not prevail in regard to any one of them.

Furthermore, the very people who are talking about us are at the same time making strenuous efforts to get the same benefits for themselves. I notice, according to the leader in the weekly paper issued out of the office of the Melbourne "Age," that the broom millet growers approached the Tariff Board for an embargo on the importation of foreign grown millet, and before doing so they moved a resolution to the effect that the growers considered it essential that an absolute embargo should be placed upon foreign importation, and that a sufficient duty should be imposed to ensure a paying price for the growers. They are already in receipt of a benefit of £4 per ton. I notice that the dairymen are also asking for some measure of protection that will ensure the stabilisation of their industry, and in doing so they are simply voicing the demand throughout the agricultural world at the present time for the stabilisation of industry and the freedom from all risks and anxiety because of fluctuations which sometimes arise, not only from natural conditions, but also through

artificial conditions, such as undue speculation.

I would now like to mention the fruit industry, and in speaking of that industry I do not speak with any animus against the fruitgrowers. To the contrary, our interests run on the same lines as fellow-producers. I believe that, in order to cover up their own shortcomings, interested parties have made a scapegoat of the sugar industry. The fruit-growers have received a good deal of assistance, and I say good luck to them. Dr. Earle Page, in speaking to a deputation of fruit-growers, is reported thus—

"The industry had had several weeks in which to formulate alternative plans for consideration by the Cabinet . . ."

The report further states—

"The alternative proposal submitted by the canners provided that the Government should pay half the cost of the fruit when delivered to the canneries, and that the export bounty should be retained. If adopted, this plan would increase greatly the liability of the Commonwealth. Dr. Page stood firmly by his previous offer, and expressed disappointment that the deputation was not in a position to discuss the details of the plan for the payment of the bounty as previously outlined."

The report further states—

"While in Queensland he had considered the matter with the Premier (Mr. Theodore), and he said he realised that the offer was very generous for the pineapple industry. . . . In Australia markets were already established. One of his (Dr. Page's) reasons for coming into public life was to assist primary producers to establish markets, and the methods adopted in the last three years would not do."

The foregoing report contains the remarks by Dr. Earle Page at a deputation from an industry which to a considerable extent comes in contact with the sugar industry. That deputation represented the canners—I do not think the growers were represented at all—and they were asking for something similar to what the sugar industry is requesting to-day. The report continues—

"Mr. W. Palfreyman, representing the canners, said that the losses which the Commonwealth had sustained in assisting fruitgrowers would satisfy Ministers that the business was unprofitable. The fact that there was over-production of fruit was not the fault of the canners. The value of orchard property had decreased from £150 to £140 an acre."

The report continues—

"Dr. Page: You are asking for £120,000 in addition to the export bounty?"

Mr. Palfreyman admitted that such was the case. Another report on the same meeting says—

"In response to a request from Mr. Cattinach, he was prepared, however, to make a further concession by increasing the bounty to home production of cling-stone peaches from 9d. to 1s. per dozen 30-ounce tins, and on freestone peaches from 7d. to 10d. a dozen. This was a

[Mr. Swayne.

very substantial concession, and would increase the total subsidy proposed under the Commonwealth's original plan by approximately £14,000."

These are the people who accuse us of being spoonfed. When the States of Australia agreed to federation, certain conditions were stipulated by each State, which conditions the Commonwealth promised to carry out, and which should now be honoured by the Commonwealth. We know that Western Australia stipulated for the building of the Transcontinental Railway, which has cost something like £40,000,000. It may be argued that that was an undertaking of national importance, but the Queensland sugar industry, which is also Australia's sugar industry, is an industry of national importance. We know that Tasmania is receiving annually a substantial cash allowance, and that New South Wales is receiving a quid pro quo. The pledge made by the Commonwealth to Queensland was that the sugar industry would be maintained in a prosperous state, and we are only asking now that that promise be carried out.

Mr. HYNES: What have you to say about the workers in the industry?

Mr. SWAYNE: I am coming to that. The meat industry has recently received a bonus, and many other industries have been receiving assistance of late. I am very glad that the hon. member for Townsville has raised the question of the workers in the industry, and I can assure him that I am not going to close my speech without dealing with their position.

Mr. HYNES: Tell us something about the time that you reduced the workers' wages to 3s. 4d. a day.

Mr. SWAYNE: I am sure everybody must be quite satisfied with the composition of the Commonwealth Sugar Tribunal, consisting of Mr. Justice O'Sullivan, a judge of the Supreme Court; Mr. W. P. Minell, consumers' representative (Commonwealth); Mr. A. R. Townsend, Commonwealth Government representative; Mr. G. H. Pritchard and Mr. T. A. Powell (Queensland Government representatives). The Southern consumers had representation on that tribunal, which was recently appointed to inquire into the question of the cost of production in the sugar industry. The "Australian Sugar Journal" of 6th June, 1924, states—

"The tribunal having been duly constituted, and having made an investigation in terms of the reference, hereby determines that the present price of £27 per ton should be continued for the 1924-25 season."

The tribunal also found that the wages paid in the sugar industry as compared with other primary industries were not excessive, and that no excessive profit was being made in the industry.

Mr. HYNES: The hon. member has always said they were excessive.

Mr. SWAYNE: The wages paid in the industry to-day are not excessive under present conditions.

Mr. HYNES: Did the hon. member not urge the farmers to go on strike against the Dickson award?

Mr. SWAYNE: I have paid the wages, and I have not the slightest complaint to

make about them, but I wish to emphasise that, if prices fall, our ability to pay the wages will be considerably impaired.

Mr. HYNES: Did you ever assist the workers in the sugar industry to get an increase in wages?

Mr. SWAYNE: I say that the profits in the industry under the present conditions are not abnormal. The very finding of this Commonwealth Tribunal indicates they are not abnormal. A plea was lately made by some hon. members opposite in the sugar workers' case in the Arbitration Court that we did not have the same consideration for them as what they had for us, and that abnormal profits were made in the industry. I think I am right in saying—I have not the finding of the Court here—that the judges in giving their decision said that the profits in the industry were not abnormal, that they were only what the growers were fairly entitled to, and that in some instances they did not cover the payment of interest on the investment as well as the employers' time. We have, therefore, a definite finding that in the average case there were no excessive profits accruing to the grower, and that was the argument used to secure an increase in the rates of the employees. I believe that the present rates are a fair thing.

Mr. HYNES: When the judge increased the rates you induced the farmers to go on strike against them.

Mr. SWAYNE: The hon. member wants me to say something which I will not say. I believe that a good man employed in the industry can earn those rates, and that he fairly earns those rates. I wish that hon. members opposite would sink their party differences and join with us in attaining the object we have in view. All I have in view is the continuance of such conditions in the industry as will enable the industry to continue the payment of those wages, and to show our opponents that those engaged in the industry are not making extravagant profits or exorbitant wages. I think we have every ground for asking that our just claim on the subject will receive attention.

I have utterances from leading men in the South all indicating a desire to give fair play to the Queensland sugar industry. What I want to do is to point out the way to get that fair play, and I say unhesitatingly that my recommendation is the continuance of the present arrangement. I have here an extract from the Melbourne "Argus" of the 4th March, 1923, when the Prime Minister, in reply to the Queensland delegation, said—

"You have set before me a great many facts to show the value of the sugar industry to Australia. I want to tell you that I and the members of the Ministry fully realise it. We are convinced that it is imperative that the industry should be enabled to carry on and to prosper."

I have also a statement made by the Prime Minister in Melbourne in November, 1922, in which he says—

"Although the proposals for an increased duty were defeated in the House of Representatives, the Ministry was determined, if returned to power, to ensure that a measure for the protection of the industry would be given effect to at the same time, and other great industries that depended on sugar would be protected by means of a rebate."

*Mr. Swayne.]*

The Federal Treasurer, Dr. Earle Page, speaking at the Soldiers' Hall in the Goulburn Valley in June, 1924, said—

"The problems of Australia to-day were the obtaining of a sufficient population effectively to occupy this continent; the obtaining of sufficient production effectively to finance the development of the Commonwealth; and, most urgent of all, the marketing of that production to ensure that the standard of living of the producer was maintained at a sufficiently high level. (Applause.)"

We find again that the same gentleman, in April, 1922, said—

"As a representative of a sugar-growing district, and the leader of that party which essentially represents the producing interests in the Australian Parliament, I stand for the production of Australian sugar to the extent of our internal national needs grown under White Australian conditions, and to be available at a price that covers the cost of production."

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed under the Standing Orders.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murillo*): I beg to move that the hon. member for Mirani be granted an extension of time.

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

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I think, Mr. Speaker, that your ruling in giving the hon. member for Mirani an opportunity to speak on what is recognised as the most important agricultural industry we possess was right. At the same time, I question very much his wisdom in moving the adjournment of the House to put forward his case. I am in doubt from his speech—or rather the portions of it which I heard—for he gave us a mass of figures which have been published in "Hansard" from time to time—whom the hon. member wishes to impress. It is surely not the Queensland Parliament, judging from the mass of figures he quoted. Whom does he wish to be moved by the speech he has delivered? It may be his own electors; it may be his friends in the Commonwealth Parliament; but it is certainly not necessary to impress the present Queensland Government.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The present Government evolved a policy which has placed the industry—our most important agricultural industry—on a sound basis.

Mr. VOWLES: You spoke against securing £27 per ton for raw sugar.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: As a matter of fact, the hon. members opposite have opposed every plank of the policy which is now being given effect to, that was evolved by the Federal Labour party. There is no better evidence in Australia of the application of the principles of new protection, as put forward by the Fisher Government, than the policy evolved and brought into being by us in the teeth of the opposition of the other side. First of all, we brought in arbitration. That was opposed by every member on the opposite side of the House,

and they declared that the industry would be extinguished, as it could not pay a decent wage.

Mr. MORGAN: You did not bring in arbitration at all.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I heard the leader of the Liberal Administration stand up in the position where I am to-night and declare that if the Dickson award was brought into operation, in less than two years there would not be a stick of cane crushed in Queensland. It remained for the Labour Government so to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act as to enable the workers employed in the sugar industry to go to the Court and get a decent return for the work they performed in the canefields and sugar-mills. It also remained for the Labour Government to bring in the legislation respecting the Sugar Cane Prices Board, which gave protection to the sugar-grower. What was the party with which the hon. member for Mirani is associated thinking about all those years when the growers were struggling along on a miserable pittance? They did not seek to protect the farmers then. Under the Sugar Acquisition Act we acquired raw sugar, which secured for the growers a reasonable price for the first time in the history of the industry—a price that enabled the industry to be carried on. The Sugar Acquisition Act of 1915 was followed by a further agreement for three years at a higher price. It was this Government which secured the sugar agreement after long drawn out negotiations with the Prime Minister.

Mr. HYNES: We had to wring it from him.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, we had practically to wring it from him. So I am still in doubt as to whom the hon. gentleman wishes to impress by bringing forward his motion this afternoon.

Mr. SWAYNE: Some of your party.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member for Mirani knew that a few weeks ago the Premier made a clear and definite statement with regard to the attitude of this Government when the present agreement would come to an end. I would like to quote from the statement made by the Premier in the Brisbane "Courier" of the 16th instant—

"SUGAR CONTROL.

"THE EXISTING SYSTEM.

"*Equitable to All.*

"*Premier's Declaration.*"

"The maintenance of the stability of the sugar industry, and of its reasonable prosperity is of paramount importance to this State. It is our chief agricultural industry and the greatest wage paying industry we have, and the only one capable of supporting a large white population in the tropical coastal regions. It is, therefore, obvious that it is not merely a sugar-growers' matter, but one vitally affecting the industrial fabric of this State. That being so, I say that the Queensland Government strongly supports the existing form of control, which has been demonstrated by experience to afford the most effective protection to the industry, and is equitable to workers, farmers, and consumers."

"These remarks were made by the Premier and Treasurer yesterday in the course of an announcement that the

[*Mr. Swayne.*



Queensland Government had completed the agreements with the refining companies for the handling of the 1924 season's sugar output.

“BETTER THAN TARIFF PROTECTION.

“At the end of the present year the arrangement made between the Commonwealth and the State Governments expires,” Mr. Theodore went on to say. “The experience of the twelve months’ operations under the existing arrangement satisfies me that a continuation is necessary for the welfare of the industry and of Australia. I am satisfied that the existing arrangement, as a principle, is more advantageous to all concerned—producers, workers, and consumers—than simply tariff protection. For instance, the price of raw sugar on the world’s market in February last was approximately £30; to-day it is £17. Any fixed tariff, if it were to protect the home industry in July, would have been an imposition on the consumer if it operated on February’s price. The present arrangement is not unlike a fluctuating tariff as provided for in the Fordney tariff of the United States. However, this has been found to be difficult to operate, and I think the people of Australia are to be congratulated upon being free from the wild speculation and market fluctuation of other countries. The tribunal appointed by the Commonwealth Government in April last found, after investigation, that the people of Australia were not being exploited, and that the workers in the industry were not being paid excessive wages. During my visit abroad I paid special attention to sugar matters, and I returned convinced that the present arrangement as a principle is much ahead of that prevailing elsewhere. I may also state that nowhere in my travels abroad did I find sugar retailed to the public as low as 4½d. per lb.—the Australian price.

“RETAIL PRICES COMPARED.

“The Sugar Board in March was furnished with information regarding the retail price of sugar elsewhere as follows:—The approximate retail prices, namely, per lb. to the consumer for standard granulated are: Great Britain 7d., Canada 11 cents, United States of America 9½ cents, South Africa 5½d., New Zealand 4½d. And in those cases the sugar was the product of black labour. I believe that a continuance of the present arrangement will not only stabilise the sugar industry, but it secures a uniform price free from the speculative element to the consumer, and I think also that by co-operation between the exporting manufacturers and the Sugar Board other kindred industries could be placed upon a solid foundation.”

“Mr. Theodore continued with the comments with which this report opens, and said in conclusion:—‘I quite realise, of course, that the interests of the fruit-growers in this and the other States deserve every consideration, and that those industries should be fostered and encouraged. It is my opinion, however, that the interests of the fruitgrowers run along parallel lines with those of the sugar producers.’”

That statement was made on the 16th of

this month, and it should leave no doubt in the minds of any of the readers [4.30 p.m.] of the metropolitan Press as to the attitude of the present Government on this question. Our attitude is clear and defined. We stand for a continuation of the present system of control. I might say, in addition, that the large organisations—the United Cane Growers’ Association and the Australian Sugar Producers’ Association—have passed this resolution, which was addressed to the Council of Agriculture—

“THE SUGAR POLICY.

“Referring to the resolution adopted by your Council that the framing of a sugar policy be left in the hands of the two sugar organisations, we have now to inform you that our organisations have agreed upon a common policy, which is a continuance of the existing arrangement between the two Governments. We shall, therefore, be glad if the Council will now endorse that policy in terms of the before-mentioned resolution.”

That is signed by Mr. Pritchard and Mr. Doherty on behalf of those organisations. The Council of Agriculture itself has endorsed the policy of the Government, as is shown by the following resolution which was carried at a meeting of the Council held on the 24th and 25th of this month:—

“That the Council support the continuance of the existing conditions of controlling the sugar industry, viz., embargo, sugar board, and tribunal.”

Now, on the face of the clear declaration made by the Premier a few days ago, the resolution passed by the two large organisations representing the industry, and that passed by the Council of Agriculture itself as the mouthpiece of the farmers of Queensland, there is surely no need to impress on this Government the necessity or wisdom of continuing the present arrangement. Therefore, I ask again, whom does the hon. member desire to impress when he introduces this motion for the adjournment of the House?

Mr. CORSER: Your leader, Mr. Theodore. He said at one time that £24 a ton was enough.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I have no hesitation in saying that there is no man in Queensland or in Australia who has done more for the sugar industry than Mr. Theodore. Mr. Theodore was largely responsible, with my assistance, in getting Mr. Hughes to agree to the agreement made in 1920. We sat in conference in Sydney for three days with Mr. Hughes and the representatives of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and, although we pressed for a five-year agreement, we were not successful to that extent, but were enabled to secure for the people of Queensland an agreement for three years at a price of £50 6s. 8d. per ton for raw sugar. We also approached Mr. Bruce, and impressed upon him the necessity for either extending the then existing sugar agreement arranged between Mr. Theodore and Mr. Hughes, or bringing about some other system of control. When presenting that case to Mr. Bruce I presented a resolution carried at a conference which I convened, and which was held in Brisbane just prior to our meeting Mr. Bruce early in April. This is the resolution—

“That in view of the fact that the

*Hon. W. N. Gillies.]*

effect of the current sugar agreement has been to substantially assist to stabilise the industry, and having regard also to the very great importance which the industry is economically, industrially, and nationally, to the Commonwealth as a whole, and to the States of Queensland and New South Wales in particular, this conference strongly urges upon the Commonwealth and State Governments the urgent necessity of renewing the agreement, at the same price, for a period of five years."

That was impressed upon Mr. Bruce at the time, and, as all hon. members know, Mr. Bruce would not agree to an extension of the Hughes agreement. Instead, he gave us an embargo for two years, with a fixed price of £27 per ton for one year, and he set up a tribunal which later fixed the price for the coming season at the same figure. Now that system of control, as Mr. Theodore pointed out in the article I have read, has been successful, not only from the point of view of the farmers, workers, and millers, but from the point of view also of the people of Australia.

There is no doubt, no ambiguity, about the words used by the representatives of this Government as to their desire for a continuation of this scheme. Personally, I am in favour of its being continued for five years, and I notice that Mr. Jones, who has not been too generous to the sugar industry in the past, in a speech made at Mackay recently, also stands for stabilisation, and would like the agreement continued for twenty years. As a Government we have never been so ambitious as to ask for a continuation of the plan for twenty years, but I do think that an agreement for five years at the present price would be fair to all parties concerned, including the consumers of sugar.

I think the hon. member for Townsville yesterday left nothing to be said so far as the attitude of this Government is concerned in the matter of the sugar industry of Queensland. The hon. member for Townsville made a very able speech, which will occupy a fair space in "Hansard." I listened to the greater portion of the speech, and have read it since. I ask again, in view of these facts, if the hon. member for Mirani wishes to impress his friends in the Federal Government—the Bruce-Page combination—and the Press? He has quoted from the speech of Mr. Bruce, in which the Prime Minister said that he was quite alive to the interests of the sugar industry, and he also quoted from a similar speech by Dr. Earle Page. Surely he does not seek to impress the members of this Government, who have a sugar policy, and who are the only Government that ever existed in Queensland with a clear and definite sugar policy satisfactory to the workers, farmers, millers, refineries, and the consumers.

That policy makes for stability, and it remains only for the Commonwealth Government to give effect to our wishes, which have been clearly declared from time to time. I again repeat that there is no need for anyone to doubt the position of the Queensland Labour Government with regard to the present system of control. Their ideas are approved by the three large organisations—the Council of Agriculture, the mouthpiece of the farmers; the Australian Sugar Producers' Association; and the United Cane

Growers' Association of Australia. What therefore is the need at this juncture to start to beat the air for the sake of a little party kudos?

I say again that I do not think it is wise to discuss this question in detail at a time when the Press in the South are on the alert as to any move that might be made publicly for a continuation of the present control. The Melbourne "Age" and the Melbourne "Argus" have stated that if the Commonwealth Government attempt to continue the present system of control, they should be fired out of office straight away. I question if the hon. member for Mirani is a true friend of the sugar industry in raising this question this afternoon, and discussing it at this juncture, particularly in view of the fact that the Governor's Speech sets out quite clearly what the Government intend to do. I might quote one paragraph from that Speech to emphasise my point—

"As the present arrangement between the Federal and State Governments in respect of the marketing of the sugar crop will expire in 1925, some anxiety exists as to the policy of the Commonwealth Government for the future."

Not the policy of the State Government, but "the policy of the Commonwealth Government for the future." The paragraph continues—

"My advisers believe the present arrangement for the protection of the sugar industry is the best that could be devised. The embargo against the importation of sugar, except in the case of a shortage in the Australian production, and the regulation of the prices of cane, raw sugar, and refined sugar, ensure equitable treatment for all concerned, and is a much more satisfactory form of protection than any that could be afforded by the enactment of a fixed tariff.

"If the Commonwealth Government consent to a continuation of the existing arrangement, legislation will be introduced in the Queensland Parliament for the purpose of defining more clearly the authority and obligations of the Sugar Pool Board."

Could anything be more clear, could anything be more definite, could anything be more honest on the part of the Government than that declaration delivered by His Excellency at the opening of Parliament yesterday? Yet, in the face of that, the hon. member for Mirani—because he represents a sugar district I suppose, and because he wants to get his speech printed in the "Mackay Mercury"—gets up in this House this afternoon and takes up the time of hon. members in discussing something that would be best left alone at this particular juncture, because negotiations are proceeding, and his speech is calculated to do more harm than good to an industry that is of the greatest importance to this State.

There is no occasion to impress members of this Government. Members on this side of the House to a man recognise the importance of this great industry. It is one of the greatest industries in this State, as it is estimated that 80 per cent. of the value of the crop is paid away in wages. We recognise the importance of the industry from the point of view of defence; and we recognise that, without the sugar industry, the North

coast of Queensland in the tropical area would be practically deserted. We recognise also that the present policy is the one policy we can stand unanimous upon. Therefore, I say there is no business in the motion moved, and no necessity for it at this juncture.

Mr. HYNES: It is to get a little cheap limelight for the hon. member for Mirani.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): I do not know that there is any absolute necessity for this motion this afternoon. I think it would have been a better idea to try and impress the necessity on some members of the Federal Parliament of moving the adjournment of that Parliament to discuss the sugar industry, because it is an industry of most vital importance to Queensland. The hon. member for Mirani has quoted a great many figures concerning the industry, and when you consider that for the £240,000,000 invested in that industry we get a gross income of £12,000,000 per annum, it is necessary that the growers should know what they have to face in the future. They know what they are going to receive this year, but planting operations have been going on and will be continued, and the growers do not know what return they are going to get for the work that they are carrying out at the present time. We know that the world's market price has dropped from £30 to £17 per ton, and unless we can impress upon the Federal Government the necessity for continuing the embargo or of getting a much higher protective duty than has been the case in the past, the position of the sugar-growers will not be too pleasant. I know the United Cane Growers' Association and the Australian Sugar Producers' Association are doing splendid work for the sugar industry, and the results of their efforts show the splendid results that come from the organisation of farmers. Their policy is the policy that we should advocate in the interests of the sugar-growers, and it is pleasing to know that the policy that they have adopted in regard to appointing a tribunal is the policy of the Country party. We can only stabilise the sugar industry at the present time by adopting that policy, and if they support the policy of that party, I think the interests of the sugar industry in the Federal Parliament will be well looked after, and I sincerely trust that such will be the case.

Mr. HYNES: I thought the Country party and the United party were one?

Mr. CLAYTON: What about the "Collins party?" (Laughter.) The question of the production of sugar must receive consideration, and that will be a matter for the tribunal from time to time. We are pleased to know that Mr. Powell, who went South, expressed the opinion on his return that the Southern people are going to give us a fair deal. It is very gratifying to know that, and at a conference he attended those present were in favour of the existing arrangement. He says—

"I am pleased to say that we will get the wholehearted support of the producers of the Southern States."

I sincerely trust that we shall get the support of the consumers as well. Mr. Powell stated that there were sixteen delegates at the conference, representing all the States of the Commonwealth, and at that confer-

ence the following resolution was passed with one dissentient:—

"That the Federal Government be asked to introduce legislation to give the Sugar Board statutory powers to enable it to control the sugar industry."

That is what we look for, and I sincerely trust that we shall be able to impress upon the Federal Government the necessity for carrying on in that direction. The Secretary for Agriculture, when speaking, wanted to know whom we wanted to impress with this motion. I want to tell the hon. member that the people we want to impress are not the manufacturers, of whom the hon. member for Townsville spoke yesterday, who were working detrimentally to the Queensland sugar industry, but the consumers and the consumers' representatives in the Federal House, and they will be found amongst the Federal Labour party. I want to quote what was said down there at a meeting in 1922 convened by Mrs. Glencross, the President of the Victorian Housewives' Association, to protest against the continuance of the sugar agreement and the existing high price of sugar. Mr. Charlton, as leader of the Federal Labour party, wrote to Mrs. Glencross stating that Messrs. Brennan, the hon. member for Batman, and Scullin, the hon. member for Yarra, would represent the Labour party at that meeting. The meeting was convened by Mrs. Glencross with the object of securing cheap sugar, and I want the Secretary for Agriculture to take notice that Mr. Brennan and Mr. Scullin went to that meeting at the instigation of the leader of the Federal Labour party, and they supported this resolution, which was passed at that meeting in October, 1922—

"That this meeting of citizens protests against the continued high price of sugar, and declares its uncompromising opposition to the renewal of any agreement necessitating Government control, and supports the Housewives' Association in the campaign initiated by them in reference thereto. It further records its opinion that Government political control of trade and industry is pernicious and detrimental to producers, manufacturers, and consumers alike."

Messrs. Brennan and Scullin, both Labour members, spoke strongly in favour of the motion; and Mr. Higgs, Nationalist, who attended as a Queensland representative to protest against it, was roughly handled and forcibly ejected. The people we should impress in the Federal Parliament are Messrs. Charlton, the leader of the Labour Opposition, and Messrs. Brennan and Scullin. I will refer to what the Premier, Mr. Theodore, said in 1914, as reported in "Hansard"—

"Mr. THEODORE: As a matter of fact, the Chief Secretary did say that sugar should go up in price on account of things that are happening elsewhere. Everyone in the community is a consumer of sugar. The Minister for Agriculture wants to see dear meat, and other members of the Cabinet favour high prices.

"The Treasurer: Who said they wanted dear meat?

"Mr. THEODORE: The Minister for Agriculture said it some months ago.

Mr. Clayton.]

"Mr. Hunter: And the Premier said to-night that sugar was too cheap.

"Mr. THEODORE: Yes, the Chief Secretary wanted a higher price for sugar. That would mean dearer living for the people in this State. I do not think we can draw any other inference from their remarks.

"Mr. E. B. C. Corser: £2 per ton would not mean much more for the consumer.

"Mr. THEODORE: Here is another expression in favour of dear living. It may be only 4d. per lb., but several pounds of sugar consumed each week would mean several pence increase."

If we compare the Premier's remarks with those of Federal Labour members, we find that they are all advocates of very cheap sugar.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must only deal with matters relevant to the motion.

Mr. CLAYTON: I consider that I am dealing with matters of the utmost importance to the State in stressing the fact that the Premier of Queensland and the leader of the Opposition in the Federal House and other Labour members advocated cheap sugar. I do not want to make any offensive remarks on this subject. Although we shall have an opportunity of discussing the sugar question later on, I think we owe a debt of gratitude at all times to the hon. member for Mirani for the way in which he fights for the sugar-growers and workers alike in his electorate.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): We have heard speeches from the representatives of two sugar-growing electorates on this motion. I represent the consumers, and I think that I should at all times advocate their claims before the House. We find that the hon. member for Townsville would raise the price of sugar to the consumers to the old price of 6d. per lb., as the whole of his speech yesterday tended in that direction. I say that we are justified in taking the opinion of the sugar-growers themselves, who say that sugar can be retailed to the consumer at a little over 4d. per lb. I take that as being 4½d. per lb., and, if that can be done, I am here to advocate that sugar should be sold at 4½d. per lb. If, as is stated in the Governor's Speech, the present arrangement which has been entered into with the Bruce-Page Ministry to guarantee £27 per ton, and place an embargo on imported sugar on condition that the consumer gets his sugar for 4½d. per lb., is agreed to by Mr. Theodore as being an equitable arrangement, I am not going to question it; but, if the time comes round when by more efficient means of production sugar can be produced at a lesser price, it should be made cheaper to the consumer.

I think it is fitting that this Parliament, at the commencement of a new session, should pass a resolution emphasising the fact that we are not going to support any increase in the price of sugar to the consumer, and that we are going to ensure to the producer a fair price for the growing of sugar.

Mr. GLEDSON: How can we do that if you carry your resolution to adjourn the House?

[*Mr. Clayton.*

Mr. FRY: Is it not the greatest act that any Parliament can do to adjourn for the sake of emphasising the seriousness of the position to the country? The sugar question is of the greatest national importance. I am advocating the cause of the people whom I represent—that is, the consumers—and so long as I am in this House, whether the Government like it or not, I am going to advocate the cause of the people who sent me here. I have not come here to be a party man. I came here primarily to represent the people, and I am going to do it. I am not bound hand and foot like the Government members are. There is not one man on the Government side who can exercise a free vote.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is not free votes that we want here, but intelligent votes.

Mr. FRY: Then the hon. gentleman should not vote at all. (Opposition laughter.) We desire to impress upon the Federal Government and the people in the Southern States the fact that sugar is one of the staple industries of Queensland. The State of Queensland depends to a great extent on the prosperity of the wool, cotton, sugar, and cattle industries.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must deal with the question before the House.

Mr. FRY: I am going to deal with it. I am making a comparison to show the importance of this industry, and, if you will permit me, Sir, I should like to point out that it appears that the cattle industry has pretty well ceased to exist insofar as exports are concerned. What

[5 p.m.] remains to us? Practically only two industries that we can rely on and fight for. If I were allowed to go into the question of the wool industry, I would have to deal also with the higher cost of clothing involved by exportation; but in dealing with the sugar industry we are considering a commodity that goes on the table of every working man at every meal to which he sits down. Every wage-earner is concerned vitally with the price he pays for sugar. It is not a luxury; it is a necessity; and therefore we must stand up and protect his interests. So far as I can see from the argument of the speakers who have preceded me, the agreement into which we have entered is a good one. I want to repeat that, when the price of sugar is brought down to 4d. or 4½d. per lb. at the most, I am with it. I am going to support the motion, and I am not going to support anyone who wants to get kudos out of this question.

I think the hon. member for Mirani did well when he introduced the question. I had no idea that it was going to come on, but, since it has been raised and we find protests from the Government side, we are led to ask ourselves, "Whom do they support?" On the one hand they are fighting in Queensland for a higher price for sugar. In the Federal Parliament and amongst the consumers in the South they fight for a lower price, so that it is very difficult for us to find out where the party opposite really stand. I am ready to believe that those who reside in the metropolitan areas are willing to do a fair thing, and therefore I will support the motion moved by the hon. member for Mirani for a renewal of the agreement.

The SPEAKER: Order! The motion before the House is a motion for adjournment.

Mr. FRY: I know what the motion is, as I pointed out to the hon. member for Ipswich just now. It is necessary that the sugar agreement should be renewed, and it is necessary to impress upon the consumers in the South that this Parliament is of that opinion. If it is necessary that the House should adjourn to convince them, then we should adjourn; but, if hon. members in their wisdom are of opinion that it is only necessary to discuss the matter in order to impress them sufficiently—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you know who refused to renew it? Your Nationalist leader.

Mr. FRY: The Nationalist Leader in the Federal Parliament—the Bruce-Page Government—gave the present agreement, which is approved by the Queensland Government and the growers. I just said to the hon. gentleman that we required intelligent voters in this House, and I repeat it. In conclusion, I wish to say that I support the motion.

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): I think it is quite unnecessary at this time to go into the history of the sugar industry in Queensland. I think everyone in this House, indeed everyone in Queensland, is seized of the importance of the industry to this State. Just at the present time this Government and other Governments in Australia are looking for methods whereby the various agricultural industries can be stabilised, and we find that the sugar industry has been stabilised by an agreement already in existence. It is necessary for us to have that agreement renewed. It is true that a number of persons have asked whether an ordinary Customs duty would not do. That point has been argued at some length, and it is not my intention to go into the matter now; but I am satisfied that it has been thoroughly proved that a duty in the ordinary sense would not be sufficient, and that the various interests concerned would not be protected by it as they are under the present agreement. Therefore it is very necessary to have the agreement renewed, more particularly because it concerns an industry in which the erection of a mill costs £500,000, and before building one it is highly advisable to know that there is going to be some stability.

The Secretary for Agriculture wanted to know whom the hon. member for Mirani wished to impress. To my mind there is no doubt that he wishes to impress first and foremost the Government opposite, because he knows perfectly well that they are a Labour Government, and knows perfectly well too that in the South, in Labour circles especially, there is a great deal of opposition to the renewal of the agreement under the impression that the renewal means dear sugar. There has been a lot of propaganda in the Southern States to foster that impression. So the hon. member for Mirani thinks that, if he can impress this Government, they may do something even to bring into line some of their members who are opposed to the renewal of the agreement. Another reason why the matter should be discussed at the present time is that the Federal Government have the industry in the hollow of their hand, and it would be a good thing to show them that this Parliament of Queensland is absolutely unanimous that the

agreement should be renewed. For that reason the question brought before the House by the hon. member is well worth consideration. It is even the duty of the House to show that all sections of the people represented by members of the House are unanimous that the agreement should be renewed for a further period. Considering the amount of money involved in the industry and the high cost of milling and cultivating, it is only right that the people engaged in the industry should have ample assurance and plenty of faith that the representatives of all sections of the community in this House are behind the lengthening of the agreement.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I think it is the usual custom to ask for the withdrawal of these motions when the discussion upon them has served its purpose, and I intend to ask for the withdrawal of this motion, but before doing so I desire to exercise my right to reply to some of the points which have been raised. The Acting Premier—

The SPEAKER: Order! Does the hon. member wish to withdraw his motion?

Mr. SWAYNE: I understood that I had the right of reply. Some of the remarks which have been made have been replied to and discounted by the hon. member for Wide Bay; but, as I said in my opening remarks, I wished for a discussion on the question free from all reference to party matters. I think hon. members will agree that I have said nothing whatever offensive of any party. It remained for the Secretary for Agriculture to stir up the dirt. His party represents a large body of consumers, and that party looks to the consumers more than to the farmers and producers for their support to enable them to get into power. Although a few of them represent outlying sugar districts and try to persuade the producers that they will extend justice to them, still the great bulk of their supporters come from the consumers in the big towns and cities. We know that, while Labour members are telling us one thing in Queensland, other Labour members, like Messrs. Brennan and Scullin down South, are telling the people something directly opposite. That is one reason why I have brought this matter up. The Secretary for Agriculture should endeavour to persuade his party in the large centres of population in the South to follow the slogan of fairplay. The fact that the sugar industry is given prominence in the Governor's Speech is sufficient justification for me and anyone else to claim this matter as one of public importance. Hon. members have only to visit the sugar districts, where our largest agricultural industry is carried on, and where they will hear apprehension and fear expressed as to the future of that great industry, to realise what it means to Queensland and to Australia. It is the largest wage-paying agricultural industry in our midst, and I am surprised that some hon. members opposite are so ignorant of the affairs of their own electorate that they do not realise the importance of the sugar industry, and would go so far as to attempt to prevent me bringing up a discussion on it on this occasion. I desire to point out that the imposition of a Customs duty alone is not sufficient, because the industry is carried out under peculiar conditions. This is the only country in the world that is successfully producing white-grown sugar from sugar-cane. We have very close to Australia the thickly populated country of

*Mr. Swayne.]*

Java with 40,000,000 people turning out upwards of 2,000,000 tons of sugar per annum, and paying wages at the rate of 1s. 2d. per day for males and 8d. for females. What protection would be adequate to meet such a case? It only requires an exceptionally large crop as a result of a good season to place Java in possession of more sugar than they require for their ordinary consumers, and then they have to look for a place in which to dump the surplus, and Australia is the place where that dumping will be done. It has always been the policy of those controlling the Javanese sugar industry to dispose of the whole year's production, even at a loss, before the commencement of the following season; and, if we do not continue the present sugar agreement in Australia there will always be the risk that our produce will be sold at a loss, because possibly as much as 300,000 tons may be dumped in Australia to relieve the over-supply in Java. That is why I am asking for some restriction—I do not care what it is called—upon importations, quite apart from any imposition of duty. It must be obvious that such a thing is necessary. I feel that I am speaking with the whole of the industry behind me when I assert that any restriction or embargo on the importation of sugar is to be applied only in the case of black-grown sugar, and I think I am safe in saying that in the case of white-grown sugar the Australian sugar industry, like every other Australian protected industry, is quite prepared to take its chance with overseas white-grown sugar so long as there is adequate protection. Seeing that we have this black peril so close to our shores, I think it justifies us, for the sake of white Australia, in asking for what I am advocating. We know that in the United States of America, quite recently, within a few weeks sugar dropped from 7½d. per lb. to 2½d. per lb. because of the operations of speculators. It is the general feeling throughout the farming world, irrespective of the class of agriculture, that the agriculturist should be protected from the practices of the speculator. That is another reason for stating that a duty alone would not be satisfactory.

I would not be in order, perhaps, in continuing the subject I was on when my time expired and referring further to the jam manufacturers in the South, but I would like to point out that Sir Henry Jones, who is the largest buyer in the Commonwealth of fruit for jam making, has urged that something should be done to stabilise the sugar industry, and it is only by the continuance of the present arrangement that the industry can be so stabilised. I do think that the fact of the Queensland Parliament devoting a portion of its time to a discussion of this matter must impress the people of the South that the whole of the people of Queensland—not only the growers—are with us in this matter. I think my motion must impress the people in the South that Queensland is determined, and it should bring home to them that Queensland, as a matter of justice and as a matter of receiving a fair deal, should have the promise which induced Queensland to enter Federation fulfilled, and that the Queensland Parliament, representing the people of Queensland, think that that promise should be carried out. Having fulfilled my object of drawing attention to the matter, I now beg leave to withdraw my motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

[Mr. Swayne.

## STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

### APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS.

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

“That the Standing Orders Committee for the present session consist of the following members:—Mr. Speaker, Mr. King, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Moore, Mr. Gilday, Mr. Ferricks, and Mr. Theodore, and that the said Committee have leave to sit during any adjournment of the House.”

Question put and passed.

## PRINTING COMMITTEE.

### APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS.

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

“That a Select Committee be appointed to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters which relate to the printing to be executed by order of the House, and for the purpose of selecting and arranging for printing returns and papers presented in pursuance of motions made by members. That such Committee consist of the following members:—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Pollock, Mr. Barber, Mr. Gledson, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Dash, and Mr. Swayne.”

Question put and passed.

## LIBRARY, REFRESHMENT-ROOM, AND PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS COMMITTEES.

### APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS.

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

“That the Library, Refreshment Room, and Parliamentary Buildings Committees for the present session be constituted as follow:—

“Library.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Dunstan, Mr. Elphinstone, Mr. Collins, Mr. Pease, Mr. Nott, and Mr. G. P. Barnes.

“Refreshment Room.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Pollock, Mr. Ryan, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Corser, Mr. Maxwell, and Mr. King.

“Parliamentary Buildings.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Payne, Mr. Riordan, Mr. Kerr, Mr. Petrie, Mr. Morgan, and Mr. Theodore.”

Question put and passed.

## DISEASES IN PLANTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

### INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): 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 Diseases in Plants Act of 1916 in certain particulars.”

Question put and passed.

## APPRENTICESHIP BILL.

## INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): 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 regulate apprenticeship in certain trades and industries.”

Question put and passed.

## WEIGHTS AND MEASURES BILL.

## INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): 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 consolidate and amend the law relating to weights and measures.”

Question put and passed.

## PUBLIC CURATOR 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 Public Curator Act of 1915 in certain particulars.”

Question put and passed.

## AUCTIONEERS AND COMMISSION AGENTS 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 Auctioneers and Commission Agents Act of 1922 in certain particulars.”

Question put and passed.

## JUSTICES 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 make provision for the admittance to bail of persons committed for sentence on charges of certain indictable offences.”

Question put and passed.

## OATHS 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 Oaths Act of 1867 in a certain particular.”

Question put and passed.

## SITTING DAYS.

## HOURS OF SITTING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): In moving—

“That, unless otherwise ordered, the House will meet for the despatch of business at nine-thirty o'clock a.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays in each week, and that on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and after two o'clock p.m. on Thursdays, Government business do take precedence of all other business

“At five-thirty o'clock p.m. on each sitting day Mr. Speaker shall adjourn the House, without motion put, until the next sitting day, but before doing so shall invite the leader of the House to notify the order of business for the succeeding sitting. If the House is in Committee the Chairman of Committees shall leave the chair at twenty-five minutes after five p.m., report progress, and ask leave to sit again. Whereupon a motion for leave to sit again shall be moved and put to the House, without amendment or debate, and Mr. Speaker shall thereafter adjourn the House until the next sitting day.

“Nothing in this Sessional Order shall be construed to prevent the House adjourning before five-thirty o'clock p.m. if it appears to be the wish of the majority so to do, in which case the desire of the Committee or of the House may be tested by motion (moved by a Minister) either ‘That the Chairman do now leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again,’ or if Mr. Speaker is in the chair, ‘That the House do now adjourn,’ which motion shall be put either in the Committee or in the House without amendment or debate.

“Business interrupted at five-thirty o'clock p.m. under this Sessional Order shall stand as an Order of the Day for the next sitting day.

“If a division is being taken either upon a question relating to the business before the House or a Committee of the Whole House or upon a motion of closure, the same shall be concluded before the House adjourns, or the Chairman leaves the chair.

“Division upon a motion of closure shall include also division upon the question upon which the closure has been moved.

“That during the remainder of this session, Standing Order No. 17—‘Debate on Address in Reply’—shall be construed as if five-thirty o'clock p.m. were substituted for ten-thirty o'clock p.m. wherever it occurs in the Standing Order, and eleven o'clock a.m. for four-thirty o'clock p.m.

“That during the remainder of this session, notwithstanding the provisions of any other Standing or Sessional Order, Standing Order No. 307—‘Days allotted for Supply’—shall be construed

*Hon. W. N. Gillies.]*

as if twenty-five minutes after five o'clock p.m. were substituted for ten-thirty o'clock p.m. in paragraph 5, and 'five o'clock p.m.' were substituted for 'ten o'clock p.m.' in paragraphs 6 and 7.

"If on the last day but one of the days allotted for Supply the whole of the votes remaining to be dealt with have not been disposed of before twenty-five minutes after five o'clock p.m., the Chairman shall not leave the chair until decisions have been arrived at upon each of the remaining votes, and the sitting of the Committee and of the House shall be continued until the whole of the votes have been decided and reported to the House, and an order made for reception of the resolutions from Committee of Supply.

"On the day appointed for the reception of any resolution or resolutions reported from Committees of Supply and Ways and Means it shall be within the discretion of the leader of the House to proceed forthwith with the Appropriation Bill founded on such resolutions, notwithstanding that the hour of five-thirty o'clock p.m. has arrived, but upon the passage of the Bill no further business shall be proceeded with at that sitting: Provided that if consideration of an Appropriation Bill is entered upon at or before the hour of five-thirty o'clock p.m., the period for the discussion of the Bill at all stages shall be limited to eight o'clock p.m., at which hour every question necessary for the disposal of the remaining stages of the Bill shall be put by Mr. Speaker or the Chairman of Committees, as the case may be, without amendment or debate.

"That during the remainder of this session, if occasion arises to put into operation Standing Order No. 249, the Standing Order shall be construed as if 'ten-thirty o'clock a.m.' were substituted for 'four o'clock p.m.' and 'five o'clock p.m.' were substituted for 'ten o'clock p.m.' in paragraph 2. If the business then under discussion is not completed by five-thirty o'clock p.m. the Committee may continue to sit until all the clauses of the Bill or other matter have been disposed of, notwithstanding the provisions of any other Standing or Sessional Order. Thereupon the Chairman shall make his report to the House, and all action necessary to complete the business of the Committee may be taken, notwithstanding that the hour for adjournment of the House has arrived."

said: I would just like to say a few words in support of day sittings in Parliament. I think every member of this House at least is in favour of the idea of day sittings. Although there may be some difference of opinion as to the practicability of day sittings, there is no difference of opinion as to the wisdom and common sense of doing all that can be done of the most important work of the country in the day time. I should say in moving the adoption of the Sessional Order that at the closing of the last session of Parliament I forecast the wisdom of members giving some thought to the necessity of making an effort to carry out our business during daylight. I know very well that for the last sixty-five years Parliament has conducted most of its business

[Hon. W. N. Gillies.

by night. I think the time has come when we should make an effort to conduct the business of the country in daylight. That seems to be the commonsense and natural time in which to transact business. There is no doubt in my mind that, when hon. members get their proper rest at night time, they will come refreshed to do the work of the country, and will be better fitted mentally and physically to carry out that work. If we agree that the most important work of a member of Parliament is in Parliament—we devote practically half the year to sitting in Parliament—and I think we may conclude that the most important work of hon. members is putting legislation on the statute-book of the State—then, in my opinion, that important work should be carried out in daylight—the time when it is natural for work to be done.

I know that it will be said that the innovation will cause considerable inconvenience to hon. members who have other business to attend to. That in my opinion only applies to the city of Brisbane, and the city of Brisbane is not Queensland. Hon. members holding seats away in the North, the West, and other parts, and probably having their homes or businesses in those parts, cannot attend to their business in the day time and come here at night to attend to the business of the country. I refute such an argument by saying that hon. members should devote the best that is in them to placing legislation on the statute-book, and, if the present salary is insufficient to compensate them for their time, then that is a justification for increasing the salary, and not a justification for making the work of Parliament fit in with their private business.

I know that this innovation will cause inconvenience, but then no innovation has been introduced by this or any other Parliament that was worth a snap of the fingers that did not cause some inconvenience to somebody. I venture to say that, if the walls of this Parliament House could speak, they would say that they have heard the cry of inconvenience and impossibility many times. They heard it when the Labour party wanted such reforms as early closing and an 8-hour day, and many other reforms. These walls would say that they have heard the old Tory argument that "it could not be done" on each such occasion. I ask those who say that it cannot be done to give it a fair trial; and, if they do, we shall discover in time that it can be done. Of course, it will cause inconvenience to hon. members, to Ministers, and possibly to the general public; but I say it is the commonsense thing to do to carry out in daylight the work for which we were sent here. I shall not lose much sleep if the innovation is not carried, but I sincerely trust the old cry of "It cannot be done" will not be unduly stressed, and that it will be given a trial. I would point out that a few years ago it was said that the uni-cameral system was impossible and would make for revolution; but we have abolished the Upper House, and are going on all right. There are many other reforms to which I could refer which have met with the greatest resistance because it was said that such things could not be done. Queensland—I refer particularly to the present Government of Queensland—has the reputation of making history and doing things without precedent, and many of those things have been beneficial to the people generally.



Many revolutions have been brought about by hon. members on the other side of the House, one being the closure and the guillotine. Those revolutions at the time were claimed to be an infringement of the freedom of the subject; but I venture to say that there is a growing feeling outside—it is not growing in me, for it has been my confirmed view for a long time—that a great deal of valuable time is taken up by repeating over and over again arguments such as those we heard to-night with regard to the sugar industry. We have heard for the last twenty years that it is the only industry that will keep a settled population on the coast of Queensland. Those statements have been recorded ten thousand times in "Hansard" already, and I venture to say that any capable journalist, getting hold of any speech made by an honourable member of this House, with perhaps five or six exceptions, could, with no trouble at all, condense into one-fifth of the space all the fresh information on the subject supplied by any honourable member, no matter how important or unimportant he might be.

I think we might make for economy in time if we concentrated on the work of Parliament and gave it our best efforts; if we came here fresh and made it our earnest endeavour to cope satisfactorily with the work before the House. The result would be noticeable in our speeches.

This innovation does not propose to reduce the hours—in fact, it will increase the average hours for the greater part of the work by a half an hour a day. I am confident that it will result in improved work by hon. members. I think somewhere in the Scriptures it is to be found the statement that, "Men of evil ways love the darkness." While admitting that much good legislation that has been passed in the darkness is to be found on the statute-book, I say that we can get on just as well by carrying on in the natural time for work—the daylight. The work of legislation requires a man to be fit in every way. It does not require a man to come from his business after expending his fresh energies to sit here in the late hours of the night and carry out the work of government, and the placing of legislation on the statute-book. That is not fair to the people. The time has arrived when the duty of legislation should demand from hon. members the best that they can give, and, if the salary is insufficient, that is a good argument that it should be increased, and that hon. members should not give the best of their time to their business and the fag-end of it to the business of the country.

Then you have to consider the home life of hon. members. Surely that is worth something to them! They surely owe some obligation to their wives and families. They should have some home life, and they cannot have it if they have to sit here half-way into the night. Even if the House adjourns at 11 o'clock at night, it is 12 o'clock before hon. members get home, and I am quite satisfied, whether a man be a physical and mental giant, as the Premier happens to be, or otherwise, he will wear down in time. I am confident that hon. members will have noticed that the Premier, although young, during the last two or three years gives evidence of the strenuous work he has carried out and of his great responsibilities. I, therefore, ask every hon. member to give this innovation a fair trial. I do not think I need say anything further, because, as I have

already indicated, although I believe in this, if it proves a failure, we can go back to the old order of things. The time has arrived when this Parliament of Queensland, which has established so many precedents and has carried out so many reforms and has led the way in the Parliaments of the world in many respects, should bring about day sittings of Parliament so that the work of the country may be carried out in broad daylight. I think the system should be given a fair trial.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I agree to a certain extent with some of the remarks that have been made by the Secretary for Agriculture, but I was rather surprised at one remark he made—that every member on that side of the House agrees with the proposal.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not say that. I said that every member on this side of the House realises the wisdom of the proposal, if it is found to be practical.

Mr. MOORE: It is obvious that many of them are prepared to sacrifice their opinions for the sake of an experiment. I can quite understand that there are advantages to be gained by having daylight sittings. It is preferable to work in daylight, but there are also disadvantages; and it is a question for us to weigh well whether the disadvantages do not outweigh the advantages. I quite see that it will cause a good deal of inconvenience to certain individuals, such as the hon. gentleman spoke of—that is, members who have businesses in Brisbane—and it is quite likely that with daylight sittings the people may have their choice of representatives to a certain extent curtailed. It is quite likely that a man may not be prepared to give up a business that he has sacrificed a large part of his life to build up for an office with an uncertain tenure. After all, when a man gets into Parliament he does not know how long he is going to remain there. His length of tenure depends a good deal on matters over which he has no control at all, and he does not like to sacrifice his business to take up an office that has no fixity of tenure, especially when the salary is not as great as that which he can earn outside. It does not always follow that because a man gives what the Premier calls the fag end of his day to Parliament that fag end of the day is not worth more than the services of the man who gives the whole of his time to the work. The experience gained by a man in his business makes him more useful to the country in framing legislation than the man who has no qualification other than that he is prepared to give the whole of his time to his parliamentary work.

Of course, it is a useful thing at election time to attempt to influence the electors by saying that certain people only give the fag end of the day to their parliamentary work, but that sort of statement does not always bear scrutiny. I have known of instances where a man's capacity for work, his general intelligence, and generally bright outlook make him a much more useful man than another man who gives up the whole of his time. I quite realise also that it will cause inconvenience to those hon. members who have business with the various departments, because they cannot attend to that business at night, and they will either have to give an extra day to that work or take time off while the House is sitting to carry out the

Mr. Moore.]

business that they have to do for their constituents.

Mr. HARTLEY: That will give a good opportunity for a few snap divisions.

Mr. MOORE: It may be a good opportunity to get a snatch vote. As a country member, my own personal predilections are in favour of daylight sittings, but I do think it is rather a pity to curtail the opportunities for getting the best men for Parliament that we possibly can. The aim always has been to get the best men irrespective of their occupation, and we do not want to make it more difficult for men to come forward whose experience, perhaps, would be of benefit to the State by making the sitting hours of Parliament such that it will be impossible for them to attend. A business man gives up a good deal by coming into this House, and he is entitled to a certain amount of consideration. If the convenience of the individual can be studied to the advantage of Parliament, all the better; but I am averse in many ways to curtailing the opportunities of securing men who may be of great assistance. Some of the best men we have had in the Queensland Parliament have been business men, and we would not have had those men if it had been necessary for them to give up their businesses in order to come into Parliament. We might give the experiment a trial. It may not last long; possibly it may be found that the disadvantages look bigger than they are in reality, but these things must be considered when the Government are bringing in a novel sessional order such as this. I notice from the motion that it is proposed to sit four days a week straight away. Every session that I have attended, although we have had to sit four days a week, we have not started to sit four days a week at the very beginning. There may be reasons for it. The Secretary for Agriculture says we have only one Chamber. The hon. gentleman said he was quite sure that no one would think about establishing a second Chamber again, but it is quite possible it might be done.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Bring back a nominee Chamber?

Mr. MOORE: Not a nominee Chamber; but I think it is nonsensical to say that the legislation that has been passed by the one Chamber has been either satisfactory or efficacious. The whole business paper of Parliament is encumbered by amending Bills, showing that the legislation was pushed through in a hurried manner, and that not sufficient time was given to discuss it. If the extra day means that the Government want to get through their legislation so as to get into recess, I am strongly against it; but if it means that greater time is to be given to the various measures, so that the Opposition will have an opportunity of studying the various Bills before they are passed, and will be able to give that consideration to them that should be given, then I have not much to say against it; but I do trust that we shall not sit next Friday, because hon. members came down here with the idea that Parliament would not sit this Friday, and they have made other arrangements. Under the circumstances the Government might consider the convenience of those members by not commencing to sit on Friday the very first week that Parliament meets.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If it suits the convenience of hon. members, we can agree not to sit on Friday until next week.

[Mr. Moore.

Mr. MOORE: I understand from the Secretary for Agriculture's remarks that this is a non-party question, and that it is perfectly open for hon. members to vote as they desire. The Premier made a very definite statement in the Press to that effect, and it is only reasonable that hon. members on a matter of this sort should be allowed to vote as their consciences dictate, and not as the party directs. After all, it is a matter for the House to decide, and if certain Ministers consider that they cannot carry out their departmental duties the way they should be carried out if we have daylight sittings, then they should have an opportunity of expressing their views against the motion. It can hardly affect the position in the House to any great extent, and it will give members on both sides an opportunity of expressing their views in the way they desire. I am satisfied to see a trial given to the proposal, but we should give every consideration to, and meet the convenience of, hon. members. I do not say we should make it a matter of paramount consideration, but we want to make it a matter of earnest consideration before we rashly pass a novel proposal such as this to alter the hours of sitting. Members came into Parliament under certain conditions, expecting that those conditions would be continued, and suddenly to have an alteration made during the life of the present Parliament places them in rather an awkward position. I trust that, if these day sittings are brought about, the Government will give consideration to members who find it impossible at certain periods to be here, and that they will bring in their legislation in such a way as not to inconvenience those members unduly.

The Acting Premier expressed the opinion that this was an experiment, and I presume he is going to show consideration to members who were elected to the House under certain conditions. I do not think it is necessary for me to say any more. As the Acting Premier pointed out, we gain a certain amount of extra time—I think about eight hours—on the allotted time for Estimates, but whether that will be a definite advantage, I do not know. It seems to me that we could have done with another eight hours on previous occasions. It will perhaps help us to get fuller discussion, and perhaps a little less hasty legislation on the statute-book than we have had during the last three sessions since we have had only one House. I would impress on the Premier the advisability of giving fuller time to the consideration of measures. Last session a perfect avalanche of Bills came down upon hon. members, and we had scarcely time to read them, let alone to consider the effect they would have on the community. We see the result in the vast amount of amending legislation which we have had before us each session, and this session is no exception to the rule. If the Government would not be in such a hurry and would give a little more time between the introductions and second reading stages of Bills so that we would have a better opportunity to go through them properly, the legislation would be more effective and would not require the continual amendments we have to make each session.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I want to say at the very outset that I am going to oppose the motion. It is all very well for hon. members to get up and give reasons why we

should adopt daylight sittings, but I take it that every member in the House is guided more or less by personal or selfish motives—that he considers himself more than the business of the country. I say at once that I am considering myself to a very great extent; but I recognise that I am sent here by certain electors to represent them, and in the interests of the State I am going to represent them to the best of my ability, whether we have daylight sittings or night sittings. If the Government were sincere in bringing forward this motion, they could easily get over the difficulty of night sittings by calling us together in April or May, and letting us sit for a longer period in the year, instead of rushing legislation through in three months by forced sittings late into the night. The strongest argument adduced by the Acting Premier is that by daylight sittings we shall be able to discuss measures brought before us before we become weary in mind and body, and unable to give that attention to the business that we ought to give. But we do not prepare our speeches or study the proposed legislation during the night time. We study it during the day when we are fresh; and in the afternoon we give expression to well thought-out and deliberate views; and we are enabled to give our best energies and clearest minds to the subjects under consideration, when we are not weary and tired. We only give expression later in the day to what we have thought out in the early part of it. Under this proposal, when are we going to have the opportunity of considering the legislation brought before us, and deciding what is best for the country? Are we going to be able to do it at night-time when we are weary and tired, or during the day when we are otherwise engaged in the House? If the Government carry this motion, it will mean that there will be a pretty free application of the “gag.” I say with all sincerity that the difficulty of night sittings could be got over if the Government would only call us together a few months earlier, and let us give that calm and proper consideration to legislation which we are sent here to give.

The two points made by the Acting Premier were that we could not give proper consideration to the needs of the country at night—this I have already dealt with—and that we are deprived to a great extent of that social life to which we are entitled. We have to give away a great deal when we come into Parliament. We have to deny ourselves a good deal of pleasure and recreation. When I look round the House I can see that members on both sides are more or less engaged in other businesses. For instance, how is the Assistant Minister going to carry on his “Golden Casket” business? (Laughter.)

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: Did you not see my statement on that?

Mr. KING: How is the Secretary for Public Instruction going to carry on his bar practice if we have day sittings in the House? How is the hon. member for Fortitude Valley going to carry on his Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage business? How is the hon. member for Merthyr going to carry on his municipal duties? How is the hon. member for Fitzroy going to carry on his turf business during the daytime? (Laughter.)

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in

attributing to me a turf business which I have no hand in? I ask for a withdrawal, or else I will tell the hon. member what he is.

The SPEAKER: As the hon. member for Fitzroy regards the hon. member's statement as a reflection on him, the hon. member must withdraw it.

Mr. KING: I shall be only too glad to withdraw it, if the hon. member regards it as a reflection. I only referred to it because I have seen the hon. member on a racecourse myself. But, if he objects to it, I will withdraw it. Last, but not least, the hon. member for Logan carries on business as a solicitor. I do not know how I am going to carry on my business. However I am placed in a fortunate position because I have a good partner whom I can rely on. But in all seriousness I cannot see how the business of the country is going to be carried on any better than it is under existing conditions. I would like to say, however, that it is not only a members' duty to attend the sittings of the House, but he has any amount of work to do outside. His time is taken up in attending to other duties in connection with his constituency. How is he possibly going to be able to attend to the requirements of his electors? A member of Parliament must attend to the individual wants of

[7 p.m.] his electors, and they take up a very considerable part of his time.

As a matter of fact, I think that in many electorates the individual wants of the electors involve more time than the attendance of the members in the House, and I know that many of the electors appreciate that attention more. Therefore I say that, if we are confined to attendance at the House during the ordinary business hours, we shall be deprived of the opportunity of attending to those requests and wishes which are preferred to us by our electors.

Mr. BEDFORD interjected.

Mr. KING: And some members of the House will be deprived of the opportunity of carrying out their capitalistic schemes at Mount Isa. (Laughter.) I shall be very sorry indeed if my friend on the other side of the House is compelled to neglect his business just as I shall be sorry in the case of the poor professional lawyer.

Mr. BEDFORD: Those men are sinking the shafts on wages fixed by this House.

Mr. KING: It has been suggested that the difficulties will be overcome by Ministers having their Under Secretaries down here at the House. I venture to say that, when any member goes to interview a Minister, the latter immediately rings for his Under Secretary, who probably has to get a staff of clerks to turn up records, which in turn have to be brought to the Minister. That means that those records will have to be brought to the House for perusal by the Minister you are interviewing.

Mr. BEDFORD: How often does that happen?

Mr. KING: That means that valuable records which should not be taken out of the office are going to be brought down here and run a very big chance of being lost. They are worth something to the House and to the people of Queensland, and at best the change is going to create endless confusion.

To summarise my remarks, I contend that the argument which was put forward by the

*Mr. King.*]

Acting Premier that we would bring clear, untired minds to bear upon the subjects on which we have to deliberate falls to the ground, because with day sittings the only time we shall have for thinking out what is in the best interests of the State, and forming our ideas to present to the House will be the night time, when we are fagged out and dog-tired—when the country is not going to get the best that is in us. Then the suggestion behind all this, as hinted by the Acting Premier, is that, if the salary we are paid as members is not equal to our needs, increased salaries should be provided. I am totally opposed to the innovation, and, if it means that the members' salaries are going to be increased, it will be an unwarranted further tax on the people of Queensland which they should not be called upon to pay.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Speak for yourself.

Mr. KING: I am speaking for myself, and I venture to say I am speaking for other hon. members as well. I support the request by the leader of the Opposition that, if the innovation is introduced, it will not be brought into force this week.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): The Acting Premier stated that the most important duty of a member of Parliament is to study legislative measures and place them on the statute-book. That is a very important matter, but I do not know that it is altogether the most important.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The business of the country is of the first importance.

Mr. CORSER: That may be so, but, when you come to examine the Parliament to-day, you must realise that hon. members to some extent, particularly on one side of the House, are actuated by the minds of some one else, and merely come here as part of a machine.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: Speak for yourself.

Mr. CORSER: I am one who generally wishes to be guided by my own opinion and to allow my conscience to be my master, and therefore I am not going to allow even a Government to institute a Parliament or a council to dictate terms or enforce conditions upon me, and whilst I am a member of this House, in carrying out my duties, I shall resist any attempt to do so. Besides interesting ourselves in measures to be placed on the statute-book, I find that a very important duty devolving upon a member of Parliament, particularly a member from a rural district, is to see to the carrying out of those measures and endeavour to fight some of the regulations framed under such measures. It is the duty of a member to see to that in the interests of his constituents. It is his duty to try and secure for his constituents that benefit that is intended by the different measures, and which is rendered impossible by the regulations framed by the Cabinet.

It has been stated, and probably correctly so, that personal motives actuate hon. members to some extent in connection with this matter. Speaking personally as a country member who has endeavoured right along to live in his constituency, it is impossible for me, if we are to meet here at 9.30 a.m., to attend to any duties round the departments and still be in my place here, and I believe that will also be the case with many country members. If we are to sit on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, we shall

have only Saturday to attend to our other duties round the departments, and it will be impossible for me to get to my electorate and back if I cannot get away on Friday night. In that case I would not be able to get back before Tuesday morning, and if I left my business until Saturday, I could not get back until Wednesday, and it will be absolutely impossible for me to spend any time round the departments if we have to sit for four days a week, as is intended by this innovation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Will the hon. member give it a trial?

Mr. CORSER: I would point out to the Minister that, whilst I agree that most departments have been very fair with hon. members and most Under Secretaries and officers have as far as possible attended to hon. members' requirements, it is sometimes necessary for us to go to the heads of branches. If the Under Secretaries were available here, they would probably not have the first-hand knowledge that would be available to hon. members if they interviewed the heads of the various branches in attending to the interests of their constituents. I do not say that this is going to do away with night sittings either. I am afraid that it is not. I do not think anything will do away with them whilst there are unreasonable Governments in office. The Acting Premier has almost endeavoured to make this a party question.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No, I have not.

Mr. CORSER: I understood it was not to be a party question. The Acting Premier stated that all reforms were brought in by his Government, and that hon. members on this side of the House were always opposed to them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I gave your party credit for bringing in the closure.

Mr. CORSER: I give the hon. gentleman's party the credit of bringing in the ban on ratoon cotton.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: And then having to lift that ban and initiate some new reform. It was claimed by the Opposition that no country in the world could grow ratoon as we could. It has now been seen that something new that was instituted and advocated by the members of the Opposition has had to be adopted to save a rural industry for Queensland. I am desirous of assisting the Minister as far as possible, and, whilst I agree with the Acting Premier and those associated with him that they will find it easier to have their Under Secretaries present at the House, thus making it easier for them to do their duty, I believe it is going to make it much harder for the members from the rural districts to do their duty. It is very nice, as the Acting Premier said, for those members who live in Brisbane to be able to go home to their families at night, but the only opportunity that the country member has of going home to his family is by catching the train on Friday night, reaching home on Saturday, and then leaving again on Monday to be present at the House on Tuesday. Day sittings are going to make it harder for him even to do that. In fact, they will make it almost impossible for him to do so, and it might force him to take his family from the electorate altogether. I do not mind the

[*Mr. King.*]

initiation of any new reform, but I feel that this will be found to be impossible, and hon. members will not be able to do the good for their constituents that they have done in the past. We shall not benefit by the day sittings, and I do not know that the country will benefit either. If the Minister wishes to bring in measures with greater deliberation and give hon. members a greater chance of studying the various reforms, the House can sit earlier, or, as it has often done, sit five days a week, and late hours at that. Fixing the hours of sitting is in the hands of the Government, but the proposal is not going to bring about better legislation, but will curtail the activities of the members around the various departments during the day in their desire to attend to the requirements of their constituents.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): The Acting Premier in introducing this proposal seems to have confined himself to two, or I might say three, stock arguments. He told us that night sittings interfere with our rest—

Several interjections being made by hon. members.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! This dialogue between hon. members must cease.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KELSO: The principal point made by the Acting Premier seems to me to have been that night sittings disturbed his rest at night. I think that before the close of last session he forecast this motion, and he referred to the fact that it would be a nice thing for every man to spend his evenings in the bosom of his family. Now he tells us that only the fag end of the day is given to legislation if we sit at night—that after a man has done a day's work it is impossible for him to give of his best in this House. Though he admits that it will be an inconvenience to metropolitan members if this proposal is carried, I think he has only touched the fringe of the discussion.

In discussing this matter I want to look at the subject all round. When I rose hon. members on the other side suggested "Here is another business man coming forward." That is so. Like the deputy leader of the Opposition, I am frank, and say that it will be an inconvenience to most of the metropolitan members.

Mr. HYNES: You only make your parliamentary duties a side line.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member is wide of the mark, as I hope to prove later on to hon. members on the other side of the House. Let me take first of all the larger question—the question of how Ministers are going to do their work. There is a certain responsibility attaching to the office of the Cabinet Minister, and I want to know how the Ministers are going to carry out their work. If they do their duty and come here and take part in the debates, they cannot be at their offices. They cannot be in two places at the same time. It is a fact, as the hon. member for Logan suggested, that the Ministers can have their Under Secretaries in attendance here during the time Parliament is sitting, but that certainly will not make for efficiency in the departments over which those Under Secretaries have control. They will be away from their offices, or, if not away from their offices, they will be called backwards and forwards whenever Ministers want to see them and ask questions in connection with their

records. From that point alone there will be a considerable additional expense for extra officers who will have to spend their time running to and from the House getting information for the Minister.

I was very pleased to hear the hon. member for Burnett admit that country members will be at a disadvantage under this proposed alteration. It is a fact that a number of country members—and I presume this includes some hon. members on the other side of the House—who live in the country and within a reasonable distance of town can leave Brisbane on Friday and get back again on Tuesday. Some return on Tuesday morning, while others cannot get here until Tuesday at mid-day.

Mr. CARTER: They are paid to be here when they are wanted.

Mr. KELSO: That is quite right. At the same time they are here to represent their constituents, and many of them do a lot of work when they go home for the week-end. Hon. members who live a short distance from Brisbane know that perfectly well. They return to their homes over the week-end, and interview their constituents on subjects of importance. It is their duty to attend to that business, yet the hon. member for Port Curtis tells us that it is their duty to be here to attend to their duty.

Mr. CARTER: When the House is sitting it is the duty of an hon. member to be in the House.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member knows perfectly well that the House only sits on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, and there is nothing very much in that argument. It is a very peculiar thing that another section of the Labour party outside advocates—and they have done so successfully in South Brisbane—that the local authorities should hold their meetings at night. One reason why they do that is the same as one reason why I argue that we should sit here in the evening—not too late, because I suggest to the Minister that a fair compromise would be that we should commence in the afternoon at 2 o'clock, and the House should automatically adjourn at 9 o'clock at night. If we adjourn at 9 o'clock, every man then could get back, as the Secretary for Agriculture says, to the bosom of his family in decent time. The Press and members of the "Hansard" staff could also get through their work perhaps an hour later, and they, too, could get home at a decent time.

There is an agitation outside to have night sittings for local authorities. This is another strong point—almost from time immemorial in Great Britain and in the British-speaking dominions the public have had a right to listen to their representatives in Parliament.

Mr. HYNES: They have never availed themselves of the privilege here, except member's relations.

Mr. KELSO: Every time when an interesting argument is on, or when the Government are in a critical position and do not know where they are, you will find the galleries crowded with people. At any rate, the public have had this right for generations, and I ask why hon. members opposite, who are always crying about the privileges of the people—their concern is for the people—are going to take this privilege away. If any of their electors wish to hear the debates in Parliament, they will have to get time

*Mr. Kelso.]*

off in the afternoon to hear the words of wisdom that fall from the lips of hon. members opposite.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Can they not read "Hansard"?

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member has a very poor opinion of himself if he thinks that cold print in "Hansard" is anything like the spoken word. I am sure the hon. gentleman will admit that if a speech is listened to by a thousand people, it is infinitely more effective than if it is read by a thousand people. I am very much concerned about another matter, and I am quite sincere in this. I ask hon. members opposite why it is, if you cannot do good work at night, that they have their caucus meetings at night?

Mr. WRIGHT: They do not have their caucus meetings at night.

Mr. KELSO: I read in the Press a little while ago that a certain party sat till 4 o'clock in the morning. Ministers must not overlook this fact—that if we have day sittings of Parliament, both parties must have their deliberations at night—not only hon. members on that side of the House, but also hon. members on this side. I do not suppose for a moment that any hon. member on the opposite side will admit that he is physically weaker in the evening. Medical testimony tells us that we are at our worst physically about 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning, and that we are at our best between 6 o'clock in the evening and 9 o'clock at night; and I would ask hon. members to remember that some of the finest efforts that have been made on the public platform, and some of the finest lectures that have ever been delivered have been delivered between 7 o'clock and 9 o'clock at night. I certainly am opposed to long sittings, and I always thought it would be a good thing for the House to close automatically at a certain time. During my time here I have noticed that after 9 o'clock there seems to be a slackening of interest. I say that we are at our best in the period between dinner time and 9 o'clock, because by that time we have brightened up and our energies and our brain capacity—such of us as have that brain capacity—are at their very brightest. The whole history of the lecture platform shows that the very best efforts have been given during that time.

Mr. CARTER: Burglars do their best work at night time. (Laughter.)

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member has the advantage of me in that respect. He evidently knows more about burglars than I do. If he is listening to my arguments, he will know that I am claiming that the best work is that done up to 9 o'clock, but his burglar friends are gentlemen who come in the small hours of the morning. The effect of this proposal will be that every member who takes his parliamentary duties seriously, if he is going to do certain things for his constituents during the day, will have to leave Parliament in order to do that work.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We are not all metropolitan members.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member for Fortitude Valley this afternoon, in reply to an interjection as to what he was going to do if he wanted to attend council meetings, said that it was easy enough to do if he got a

[*Mr. Kelso.*

"pair." If we get into the habit of getting "pairs" on both sides of the House, the attendance will gradually diminish, and the debates will suffer in consequence. I think that that certainly would be neglect of duty on the part of hon. members. I regret that, notwithstanding statements in the public Press that this debate would not be conducted on party lines, the Secretary for Agriculture has told us that the Government have decided in a certain direction. We know that there are certain members on the other side who do not approve of this motion.

Mr. CARTER: Not one.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Have any of your side approved of it?

Mr. KELSO: The hon. gentleman must be deaf if he has not heard hon. members rise up one after the other and express their views on the subject. He asks if any of us on this side approve of it. Surely he must have been asleep to make that remark. It is a great pity that the Government have not given the rank and file of the Labour party freedom to express their opinions. It only clinches the argument that hon. members opposite, when they are whipped into line, have to vote as they are told to do.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Give it a trial.

Mr. KELSO: It is well known that there are a number of members opposite who do not want these day sittings who would be prepared to stand up if it was a non-party question and advocate their views. This is not a matter of politics, but of the personal convenience of hon. members. I think the Minister will admit that it is a matter of the personal convenience of every hon. member. Some hon. members on this side have admitted that they disagree and some that they agree with the proposal; but it would be a proper thing to take a vote of the House and let every member be free to express his opinion. I suggest to the Minister that, if we started at 2 o'clock and adjourned at 9 o'clock, we would get the same number of hours in. We would adjourn at a reasonable time and go home early, and I think the work would be effectively carried out. As the hon. member for Logan pointed out, hon. members could then attend to their duties outside and have time to prepare their speeches.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Are you speaking for your party?

Mr. KELSO: It is well known that, so far as we are concerned, every man can speak for himself. That is evident on the face of it.

[7.30 p.m.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Present a united front, as we do.

Mr. KELSO: Hon. members opposite were not a very united party the other night if the Press is telling the truth. They were a very disunited party at 4 o'clock the other morning. (Opposition laughter.) What about the late leader of the Labour party—the hon. member for Bowen? (Renewed laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KELSO: I was drawn off the track by the Secretary for Public Instruction. I think my proposition is fair and reasonable, and will get over the difficulty. I quite agree with the hon. gentleman that late sittings are not advisable. They are a tax on everybody, and I think the hours I have

mentioned would give us more opportunity to do our work better, more opportunity during the day time to prepare our speeches and do those things which it is our duty to do as members representing constituencies, than the proposed arrangement, and it would keep us from long sittings here at much inconvenience to ourselves and everybody else. I earnestly ask the Acting Premier to consider the proposition. I intend to vote against the motion.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): One attitude on which I think every hon. member is agreed is that the affairs of the people should receive the first consideration. We must admit that every attention should be given to the State and the people in the State, but at the same time it should be realised that the members of the Opposition have to work very much harder than members sitting behind the Government.

Mr. BEDFORD: Why? We have more responsibility than you ever had.

Mr. KERR: It is necessary for members of the Opposition at short notice to give much time during parliamentary hours to the Bills that come before the House, and I venture to say that that is better done in the morning than at night. If this proposal is carried, we shall have to give a great deal of attention to public matters under the night light which was previously given to them during the mornings. If the very best legislation is desired, I venture to say that we should get better legislation under the conditions which have existed hitherto than under this proposal. I want to say, too, how unfortunate it is that party politics should interfere with something which should be the privilege of the House.

It must not be overlooked also that, when various gentlemen with private occupations went before the electors, they did so on the understanding that their hours were fixed, and to that extent this proposal is a breach of contract, contrary to anything which has been in existence in Queensland politics. We realise that to-day Parliament is not what it used to be. Various decisions are known to the people by reason of the publication of information about caucus meetings before Parliament was called together even to discuss the matters involved. Thus the freedom of the House is being dragged right down into the gutter by a party who are not sticking to the tenets of men anxious to legislate properly. We should be in a position to propose matters to be dealt with in legislation, but, unfortunately, to-day that is not the case.

There is another outstanding point which appeals to me very much, and that is that one of the principal reasons for the present proposal is to be found in the absence of the Premier during the recess. It was very evident that he was against the present intention of the Government, but while the cat has been away the mice have been at play. During his absence a caucus meeting was held, and it was announced in the papers that this proposal had been passed. The Premier, to save his face and to retain the support of a section of his party, has said, "We will give it a trial." Those few words cover a multitude of sins on the part of Government members, and they are prepared to hide under the cloak of giving it a chance rather than come out in the open, as they should in Parliament, and vote as indepen-

dent members of the Chamber. In proof of my words, I wish to quote from page 17 of "Hansard" for 1922, where the Premier is reported as having said—

"In reply to the suggestion put forward by hon. members opposite, I regret that the suggestion made is not a practicable one, because Ministers have to attend to their departments in the morning.

"Mr. Morgan: It is only one day in the week.

"The PREMIER: Ministers are already engaged on duties which keep them away from their departments a sufficient length of time, and, if we held the sittings of Parliament in the mornings, it would become very embarrassing to Ministers to have to attend to their departments and to the House as well, and it would be difficult for Ministers to keep up the work of their departments."

Of course, the reason for the change is to be found in the caucus decision. No one is against a reform if he is a thinking person, and it is going to be for the benefit of the State; but we want the Government to look well ahead, and not merely say, "Give it a trial," as they gave the prohibition of ratoon cotton a trial. The present hours have worked very well for the convenience of hon. members, and, after all is said and done, members who give their energy and ability and brains to the community are entitled to a certain amount of consideration. We know very well that, while the Premier was away, it was freely mooted in the public Press that day sittings were going to be brought about for the purpose of justifying an increase in salary.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: What paper did that appear in? You cannot prove it.

Mr. KERR: I challenge them to say that this question was not raised in caucus. Yet we find that, when the Premier comes back and it is a question of a 44-hour week and a reduction of the pay of public servants, they could not possibly be granted. The position is as clear as a nutshell. (Laughter.)

Mr. BEDFORD interjected.

Mr. KERR: There is not much in your nutshell. I have heard of a picture of a man's forehead with "To let" on it, but I think it should have been "Unfurnished," and that applies to the hon. member. He should be put in his place.

Mr. BEDFORD: By a genius like you?

Mr. KERR: It is just as well that we should put the hon. member in his place once and for all. It is no pleasure for anybody to come into the House and have personal interjections thrown at him. Nobody objects to having pertinent interjections made to him—they assist materially—but, when one gets personal interjections, hon. members must recognise that he must retaliate. It is very difficult indeed to reconcile the proposal made to-night with what has occurred previously since I have been in Parliament. During that time two additional Ministers have been created, and on each occasion the only argument of the Attorney-General was that the administration demanded the appointment of an extra Minister.

He stated that he had to attend to matters with the Under Secretary. The

Mr. Kerr.]

Home Secretary stated that he had to attend to every individual application for allowance in respect of State children. I venture to say that the Director of the State Children Department will be practically living down here, and we shall have a number of Under Secretaries and clerks coming to Parliament House, and the conduct of business in that way is not in the best interests of the State. During several sessions we have crammed two days into one, and that must show that there was not much desire on the part of the Government to pass the best possible legislation. There must be something behind this matter, and, whilst I admit that we must give our very best energies to the State, I contend that hon. members are entitled to some consideration. A member of Parliament may be very popular to-day and secure a popular vote, but what is going to happen to him when he is thrown out of Parliament? We have to consider that aspect very carefully, and I for one, when I get tossed out of Parliament—as I possibly may at some future date—am not going backwards, but I want to see to the future as far as I can.

Mr. BEDFORD: I suspected that.

Mr. KERR: The hon. gentleman will probably go and live at Mount Isa. It has been suggested that the House should sit from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m., and that will very well meet the desires of the Opposition and of some hon. members opposite who are not game to voice their opinions in this Parliament, but retain them for the sealed caucus chamber.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *airus*): As one of the hon. members who has been abused by the hon. member for Enoggera—

Mr. KERR: I did not abuse any hon. member.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I think the hon. member abused everybody. A good deal has been stated by hon. members who have spoken regarding the fact that, when a party come to a decision, the individual members of that party should be allowed to come into the House and vote against that decision if their personal wishes are opposed to it. That is a very fine idea! That is one of the troubles that has confronted hon. members opposite, and which they have been trying to remedy during the last four or five years. They have been trying to remedy that difficulty, which has prevented them from coming into this House and speaking as one party. Am I right or am I wrong?

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman is absolutely wrong.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That has been the aim and object of hon. members opposite for the last four or five years.

Mr. KELSO: Why did the Premier say that it would not be a party question?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There has been nothing to supplant party Government with all its disabilities and its abuse, and, if there is nothing to take its place, then parties must remain whole, if they are going to govern the country. It is useless for hon. members to say that, if a minority of a Government or Opposition disagree with the majority, the minority should come into the House and show their disagreement by having a first-class wrangle in front of the country. I repeat again that

[Mr. Kerr.

has been the very difficulty that has prevented the Opposition from being an effective Opposition ever since this Government came into power. They have offered no effective opposition.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: What?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Personally, I think it is a good thing to have a good sound Opposition in Parliament. It is good for the Government and it is good for the country.

Mr. VOWLES: Why are you making it a party question?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If the hon. gentleman wants to retain unity, he will have to do what every other party in the world has done, and that is to sink individual opinions for the benefit of the whole.

Mr. VOWLES: We are doing that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then why complain about this party when it is proposing to do that? If I expressed any desire to cross over and vote against this proposal, my party would not ask me to vote for it. It is an unimportant matter, which affects nobody so far as the political existence of hon. members is concerned.

Mr. KELSO: Why did the Premier say it was to be a non-party question?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not know. As a good party man—and I hold I am a good party man—I think that when a party come to a decision they should stick to that decision, and not go out disunited and attempt to tell the people that they can then govern the country, whereas they cannot govern the country.

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member for Bowen wiped you out of office.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am not objecting to giving daylight sittings a trial if they can be carried out. It would be a good thing for me if they could be successful. I do not want to be here at night, for I could spend my time more enjoyably elsewhere, and so could every hon. member. What I do feel is that it will not be successful. The individuals who are going to suffer are the occupants of the Treasury bench. I know that, and I know that I certainly will not be able to give that close personal attention to my department that I have given it in the past. If there is anything Labour Ministers can be proud of, it is the close personal attention they give to their departments. They have no other interests to prevent them giving the whole of their time to their departments.

Mr. VOWLES: You have no other interests?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Ministers have no other interests, and the hon. gentleman knows that. They have nothing in the nature of a trade to concern them, and have no other interests to attend to, and so can devote all their time to their departments.

Mr. CLAYTON: Is the hon. gentleman not interested in Mount Isa?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; but even if I were interested in Mount Isa, it would not require any of my time to attend to it, because there are people to



attend to that part of the business. When I say Ministers have no other interests, I particularly refer to businesses.

Mr. KELSO: Are Labour members unique in their close attention to their departments?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I think so. (Opposition dissent.) One of my objections to the daylight sittings is that I believe that less attention will be given to the administration of the departments than would otherwise be the case. The need for close administration is very great, and in my opinion is as great as the need for legislation. Good governments have passed a great deal of legislation, and in cases it has been badly administered.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: That is true.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It has been badly administered because those administering it are opposed to the principles of that legislation. One of the weaknesses is that we have to deal with an organisation that may not believe in the principles that we translate into law, and for that reason if a Minister who is trying to administer an Act of Parliament, and the servants he is dealing with are totally opposed to the principles of that Act, he has twice the work of the Minister who is dealing with a staff who entirely agree with the principles contained in the legislation. It is not that the officers are at all disloyal, but they are not as eager or as enthusiastic in carrying out some idea that we as a party believe in and which they do not believe in, and consequently the Minister has constantly to keep them up to the principles contained in that legislation. That is the difficulty of the position.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Is that not a reflection on your staff?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. gentleman knows quite well that he would not select a man as manager or head of a department in his own business to carry out a policy which that man had openly stated would not be successful.

Mr. CLAYTON: The Secretary for Agriculture must have some trouble with the Council of Agriculture.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are not officers of the department. If we are to be here for four days a week, then a good deal of the administrative side of the work will be neglected, and it will be difficult to do the work. The atmosphere of the House is against it. I have found that to be the case. In attempting to do work here I have found that my decisions were not so satisfactory, because you are drawn away from your work by the atmosphere of the House and by other matters that keep you from dealing with that work in the way it should be dealt with. So far for that side of the question. The other side of the question is as to whether it will succeed. I personally would have preferred a proposal that this House adjourn definitely, say, at 9 o'clock.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KELSO: Automatically?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, if the Opposition, without sacrificing any of their rights, would undertake that in the time at our disposal a certain amount of business would be put through. The Government must get the business through. If hon.

members opposite held up any of our legislation, then we would put it through after tea by the closure—make no mistake about that.

Mr. VOWLES: When you hold us up we have to suffer too.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I believe there is a genuine desire to curtail the hours of sitting, and it would be a good thing if that proposal were accomplished. If such a proposal as that was made, and the hon. members of the Opposition assisted us to get our legislation through—that is, fair legislation—something would be accomplished.

Mr. KELSO: You never consulted us.

Mr. VOWLES: I consulted the Government in August, 1922.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Quite a number of the hon. members opposite agree to this proposal. If I was a private member I would be a "whole hogger" for it, because it would give me the night for myself. I am here only looking at it from a selfish point of view.

Mr. MORGAN: It is not a selfish point of view; it is in the interests of the country.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I fear that the proposal will mean whole day and night sittings.

Mr. KELSO: Do you look upon the business of the country as paramount?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I think that every hon. member of this House should, if he does not, look upon the business of the country as paramount; but I do not think this proposal will be looked upon as paramount in the public interests.

Mr. EDWARDS: You just said it was.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I fear that we shall be sitting both in the day and at night time. I would sooner have the old system, where the physical effect of hon. members opposite compelled legislation—and I say "compelled" advisedly—to be passed at half-past 10 or 11 o'clock after the day had been practically wasted. The day may not have been practically wasted, as every hon. member has a right to say what he thinks; but the physical effect of their action brought about delay in the transaction of business.

If the hon. members of the Opposition are honest and give this proposal a fair trial, the Ministers may be the only ones who will suffer. Day sittings were held during the time when I was Speaker. We have also had them since. They were introduced, not for the purposes of curtailing debate, but to give the House an opportunity to discuss the Estimates. That is all they accomplished. We know that we did not get any more business through, because after sitting all day we had to sit late at night just the same. For that reason, if hon. members opposite will give this new Sessional Order a fair trial and allow the Government to get legislation through in the day time, then the day sittings will no doubt be a success.

Mr. EDWARDS: You do not blame us for trying to block legislation which we do not think is for the good of the country?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not blame hon. members for anything. It may be argued that sensible men will do that. After the case has been definitely stated and well stated opposition thereafter is mostly futile and critical. After five or six

*Hon. W. McCormack.]*

speakers have addressed themselves to a particular subject, there is very little new to say on it. The bulk of the debate that brings about late sittings is physical rather than mental. A row occurs, and the hon. members of the Opposition say, "You won't go home yet."

Mr. MORGAN: Does it ever change your vote?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No. For that reason there is an element of success in this proposal, but I am afraid that human nature will get control of things, and we shall be sitting here, not only in the daytime, but in the night time as well.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): I would like to compliment the Secretary for Public Lands on the very mild speech he has made in connection with this matter. In fact, had it come from an hon. member on this side of the House, notwithstanding the fact that we are not looking at it from a party point of view, I, at any rate, as a business man, would have looked upon the speech as one absolutely in favour of continuing the old Sessional Order and eliminating the new Sessional Order that has been proposed.

I do not know whether it is a crime to be a business man. A section of hon. members on the other side, in the course of their speeches, seem to think that the introduction of a Sessional Order such as this will bring about a great benefit and boon to the country by the elimination of the business man from participating in the debates in this Chamber. During my experience as a public man—commencing first with local government, and practically ever since I have been associated with local government—the argument adduced by Labour, in municipal affairs at any rate, has been that night sittings were the most proper. I may say also that I do not remember any occasion where I ever voted against night sittings. I remember on one occasion in an outside local authority, when I advocated night sittings, that one individual sitting at the table said, "If I were a business man I would have nothing to do with shire council work; I would not be here." The argument adduced by Labour supporters, not only on that occasion but on other occasions—and I am sure the hon. member for Fortitude Valley will bear me out in this—has been that it gives the people an opportunity to take an interest in the business of their city or town, and those who were not able to participate in assisting the community at the council table might, at any rate, be given the opportunity of listening to the debates of their representatives at the table. My contention is that, if it is good enough for Labour representatives to advocate night sittings for local government, it is good enough for them to advocate and practise it in this Chamber. Judging by interjections that hon. members have thrown across the Chamber, the object is to eliminate the business man. I want to tell hon. members on the other side of the House that, although they may eliminate some business men from participating in the debates in this Chamber and assisting in the government of the country, they will not eliminate the whole of the business men.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is no suggestion of doing that.

Mr. MAXWELL: Certainly we will assist to try to make any measure what we think

[*Hon. W. McCormack.*

it should be. I am very sorry that hon. members on the other side of the House seem to be imbued with the idea that no business man has any right to participate in the debates of this Chamber.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are entirely wrong.

Mr. MAXWELL: I am not referring to the Acting Premier, because he did not deal with that aspect of the question at all—he took a different point of view altogether.

Hon. members on this side know [8 p.m.] that interjections have been made about business men. Now, with the object in view of giving people an opportunity of participating in local government. I find that since Labour came into power in the South Brisbane City Council, that council has adopted night meetings.

Mr. FOLEY: The aldermen are not paid, though.

Mr. MAXWELL: They have done what they have always advocated, and I have no fault to find with them for being consistent in their attitude. But where I do find fault is when hon. members on the other side of the House, in their advocacy of this kind of thing, place the onus on hon. members who do not believe in it. The hon. member for Leichhardt said that there is no payment in municipal government, but he is quite wrong. Already they have passed a provision that allows them to be reimbursed for certain expenses. Not only that, but under the Greater Brisbane scheme—of course, this is only anticipative, although we know that it is going through; I have no desire to discuss the merits or demerits of the scheme—local government representatives are to be paid. As a matter of fact, local government representatives have met and decided that the payment shall be £500 a year, and that no member of Parliament shall be a member of a local authority. They advocate the principle of one man one job.

Mr. KELSO: Do you think they are worth as much as a member of Parliament?

Mr. HYNES: Why don't you do the work you are paid for?

Mr. MAXWELL: In reply to that interjection, I say that hon. members on this side of the House are doing the work they are paid for. Also, in reply to some of the remarks that have been made to-night in connection with the functions of a Minister, I have heard it said that Ministers are rubber stamps. I would not like to say that any of our friends on the other side are rubber stamps, but I will say that so soon as they bring into existence a Sessional Order such as this, providing for Ministers to be housed in little offices here and for the Minister to be here instead of at his proper office while the business of the country is going on, if he is not going to be a rubber stamp I certainly want to know what he will be.

Mr. EDWARDS: It would be a good thing if some of them were rubber stamps.

Mr. MAXWELL: I do not agree with the suggestion made by the Acting Premier that, if we had all day sittings, members would necessarily give of their best in dealing with questions under discussion. That says very little for the business done during the nine

years in which the Labour Government have occupied the Treasury benches. You will remember, Mr. Speaker, the excitable nights we had a few sessions ago when we sat from early morning right through the night—"when the jacaranda blooms" as the Assistant Minister has said. I consider that during those times members gave of their best, but apparently that best was not palatable to the Acting Premier.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I would not listen to a speech after midnight.

Mr. MAXWELL: I certainly remember the hon. gentleman being here and sitting up and listening to speeches and participating in some of the debates. To me this innovation is contradictory on the part of the Government. Night sittings are evidently good enough for municipal government, but they are not good enough now for State government.

There are a number of business men who have the interests of their country at heart representing constituencies, and others desirous of doing so, and I say honestly and seriously that, if there was any time in the history of Queensland when the services of such men were required, it is now, when we want the best brains available in this Parliament to assist the State out of the trouble into which it has got. It is all very well to belittle or attempt to belittle the business men of the community. Such men as the hon. member for Warwick, who is a business man, are an acquisition to the House, and I would consider it a great loss if he were out of it. I contend that you are going to lose the business men of Queensland and prevent them from participating in the debates in this House if you bring in such an innovation, and then it will be "God help Queensland."

Mr. HYNES: We have had the spectacle of a business man's Government in Queensland before.

Mr. MAXWELL: And God knows we have had an example of Labour Government. We have had nine years of it, and after such an experience, if I were the hon. member for Townsville, I would hold my tongue. We should give all the encouragement we can to business men to urge them to assist in the representation and development of this State, and to place it on a sound and financial basis. That will not be done by the introduction of this new Sessional Order. If that is approved, you will practically be nailing upon the door of the main staircase entrance a placard reading "No business men need apply." I would advocate that the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition be agreed to, and that, at any rate, the Sessional Order shall not be put into operation until next week.

There is an amusing side to this subject. We know that during our Exhibition festivities a number of country folk come to the city. These folk, from the North, South, Central, and Western districts, come to the city, and usually take the opportunity of seeing the Labour Government in action. All that joy of seeing it will be removed, and they will say that the Government are afraid to allow them to see them in Parliament, and they will have to go back again to their homes without the privilege of seeing the Labour Government on the Treasury benches.

I hope that the Government will listen to the remarks of the Secretary for Public Lands, even if they will not listen to the remarks of a humble member of the Opposition, and that they will consider that it will be in the best interests of this State to secure more business men as representatives than is the case in Parliament at present.

Mr. LLOYD (*Kelvin Grove*): Hon. members of the Opposition are inconsistent, in so far as they deprecate the making of this a party question, yet by their intemperate speeches they are doing their best to make it a party question. They say, as if it were an unworthy charge, that some hon. members on this side of the House are voting for this innovation as an experiment. Now, as one of those who are supporting this purely as an experiment, I consider that that is the strongest reason for voting for it. I must admit that I am one of those who have yet to be convinced that it is practicable, and I must admit that one very sound reason has been mentioned to-night—that is, that the great bulk of the public will not hear our debates when we have day sittings. But the analogy between local government matters and State Parliament matters does not hold. We advocate night sittings in local government so that working men can be elected to the municipal bodies. That is not necessary in Parliament because of the payment of members. It is natural that gentlemen who live in a world of words despise experiment—which simply means putting a theory to the test of fact. I say frankly I have yet to be convinced that the proposal is practicable; but the majority of the Ministers—those who will be hardest hit by the inconvenience that will arise—seem to think that they can carry through; and when we have such a hard worker as the Secretary for Agriculture honestly convinced that it is practicable, and when we have another hard-working Minister in the Secretary for Public Lands with grave doubts as to its practicability—when we have such conflicting evidence as that before us, the only way of solving the question is to put it to actual experiment.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I was rather surprised to hear from the Secretary for Public Lands that, instead of there being that solidarity that we always hear about in the Labour party, there is a diversity of opinion on this matter. Notwithstanding that this is supposed to be a non-party matter, the question has evidently been decided in caucus. If we are going to be confronted with the position that matters which are non-party are to be determined in caucus, and the members of the Opposition are to have no say at all in the management of this House, then I say it is regrettable. The Premier himself told the Press that this was going to be considered as a non-party matter.

Mr. HARTLEY: When did he tell you that?

Mr. VOWLES: We saw that in the Press, and it has not been contradicted by the Premier. As a matter of pure selfishness, I am in agreement with the proposed Sessional Order, and I was in agreement on another occasion when members of the present Government refused to adopt this principle. You will remember, Mr. Speaker, in August, 1922, when we started to sit at 11 o'clock in the morning and finished at any time up to 1 o'clock the next morning. When the Standing Orders were being

*Mr. Vowles.]*

altered and all sorts of restrictions put upon us—at that time the application of the “gag” was very frequent, and business was being shoved upon us and passed without consideration—although every effort was made by the Opposition to try and improve the position, we then asked that if we had to meet at 11 o'clock in the morning, we should be allowed to get away at 6 o'clock on the last sitting day of the week, so that country members could get to their homes in their electorates. If you look at page 1043 of “Hansard” for 1922, you will find this—

“In the early part of the session, when we decided to sit on Fridays, I applied to the Premier to meet on that day at 2 o'clock and finish at 6 o'clock, to enable hon. members to catch their trains and get to their homes. We were told that it would cause great inconvenience—that it would not suit Ministers—they would not be able to attend to their ordinary functions in their offices if that concession were granted to hon. members.”

That was the last sitting day of the week—in order to enable members of the Opposition who were working double shifts to go to their homes. Now there has been a big somersault, in caucus, at any rate, not only on this matter, but on other matters that the Opposition have brought forward.

Mr. WRIGHT: Which caucus?

Mr. VOWLES: I presume it is the Labour caucus. That is the only caucus I know of. I have heard here of this Sessional Order eliminating the business man from this Chamber. Let me tell hon. members that I am a business man, and I view this Sessional Order purely from a personal and selfish point of view. I have been thirteen years in this House, and I am one of those who go back to my electorate every week-end while the House is sitting. I travel 300 miles every week in the train, and when you compare me as a business man who has his business to look after outside politics with men engaged in a similar class of business in the city, I am at a great disadvantage. I am sitting two solid days a week in the train, and if this Sessional Order is going to give me relief by enabling me to travel at night in a goods train, reaching home at half-past 11 on Saturday morning instead of at night, it will be a very great advantage. At times when we sit on Friday I cannot get home at all unless I neglect my duties in this House. Of course, last session we were given a concession. I received the sum of £10 to compensate me for my loss of time and my loss of hotel expenses, and there were these two days additional travelling expenses. Of course, that is supposed to go into electioneering expenses, but I am selfish enough to stand up for the principle I advocated on behalf of this very Opposition that I am a member of now, when I asked it for one day a week, and I am prepared to support the Government in this proposal. Give it a trial, and if it is found that it does interfere with the functions of Ministers, and the public are going to be sufferers, then I am quite prepared to turn round and support them to alter the condition; but I do ask the Government, whatever happens, to consider the country members; and, at any rate, arrange the business of this House so that the country members will know for a cer-

[Mr. Vowles.

tainty that they will be able to get into their electorates at stated times.

Mr. CARTER (*Port Curtis*): It is rather pitiful to sit in this Chamber and listen to business man after business man getting up and pleading for time to look after his private business.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: You are a business man.

Mr. CARTER: I am not in business at the present time. My business is the business that the people pay me to do. I am paid £475 a year to come to this House and attend to the requirements of the State of Queensland. The people of my constituency expect me to give the whole of my time to that work, and I believe that is the honest thing to do. I have undertaken that particular work, and if I had some private business that would interfere with the work that the people pay me to do, then I would throw it up. Hon. members on the other side of the House have to come to this Chamber possibly three months out of every twelve and give three or four days each week during those three months to the business of the country—to the welfare of their constituencies and the people generally—and they tell us it is too much to put in the whole day doing that. Hon. members opposite want to give the best of their time to their private business. Some hon. members say they want time to prepare their speeches. If they are such whole-hoggers for night work, why not burn the midnight oil to prepare their speeches? Hon. members are not much use here at night, and they will give better service in the day time. The hon. member for Toowong has told us that a number of the Labour representatives on the City Council desired to sit at night. That is quite true, and there is one very good reason for it. Those people are not paid for their services. They give their services and look after the ratepayers' interests, and the only payment they are asking for to-day will amount to £50 a year for the time they spend in the day time looking after those interests. The hon. member for Toowong knows that the business men in the Brisbane Council were not the best representatives in it. I put in some two and a-half years there, when we had an example of the actions of these rich business men. When we were making concrete streets, one of the business men insisted—and he got other business men to back him up—that only Queensland cement should be used. That gentleman is an alderman and also managing director of the cement company concerned. That is the sort of thing we get from business men in public life. The money that has been expended on making an artificial harbour at Townsville was the result of having a business man as the representative of that place in Parliament. If you examine the history of Government in Queensland or any other State in Australia, you will find that the business man in Parliament has been the greatest curse, because he has looked after private interests, consciously or unconsciously, and made Queensland or such other State pay for it.

Mr. KELSO: Do you not believe in Queensland cement being used, then?

Mr. CARTER: I do, but I believe that, when Queensland cement cannot be used as cheaply as other cement made in Australia, that cement should be used which is the cheapest. I do not think that a monopoly

should be allowed at the price fixed by the Queensland Cement Company.

Mr. KELSO: You would put men out of work.

Mr. CARTER: I would not put men out of work at all. That is what results from having as aldermen business men who claim that they run the council better than anyone else. We have had an example of business men in this House long enough. We have had political railways put all over the place, and we have had political harbours. (Opposition interruption.) We have had business men in the city council, each one representing his own private affairs. I am satisfied that, if we are going to get useful work done in this Chamber, it will be done in the day time. There is not a big business man in Brisbane to-day who would go back to long hours instead of 6 o'clock closing. Every business man is now a strong advocate for 6 o'clock closing. We know that T. C. Beirne, Finney, Isles, and Co., Foy and Gibson, or any of the firms who used to sweat girls right up to 11 o'clock at night, are all prepared to stick to 6 o'clock closing and so enable the workers to have better conditions.

Mr. KELSO: What about the "pubs"? You used to keep open till 11 o'clock, and we made you close at 8 o'clock.

Mr. CARTER: Hon. members do not believe even in late hours for drinking, yet they will come here and sit all night. One would think they had no homes to go to. (Laughter.) I believe that we should come here and do our work in the day time. I believe that the day time was meant to be the proper time for people to work. Every class of work should be done in the day time. (Opposition laughter.) The miners have been accustomed to work three shifts in a day, but there is scarcely a miner who cares to work at night time if he can work in the day time.

Mr. KELSO: Have you not heard the song, "Is not the night time the right time?"

Mr. CARTER: It might be for the hon. member. Anyone who has an avocation of that kind only wants the night to do his work. We have the bakers asking to be permitted to work in the day time. For generations they have worked at night time—I do not know why, as nobody ever gets fresh bread—and because of that the master bakers say that they should still work at night time. My own opinion is that the hours of work in the various callings and professions outside should apply to this House. Men should come here to do their work while they are strong and well. Many of them will not be too good in the day time when one knows what they are in the night time. I am satisfied that the day time is the best time. Hon. members opposite have spoken of the necessity of sitting at night in order that business men may be enabled to come into Parliament. The leaders of their party have been men who have left the Labour ranks, and whom they have been very pleased to get. That has applied in almost every Parliament of Australia. Hon. members opposite want night sittings so that business men may come here, but one knows what that argument is worth. The proper course is to do our work in the day time.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): This debate has resolved itself into a question of whether business men should not be in Parliament.

Personally, I think business men have a perfect right, if the electors think fit, to be representatives in Parliament. I think Parliament would be a very poor place if we had not got business men in it who are willing to help to direct the legislation of the State.

Mr. CARTER: That is an awful reflection on you.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. member who has just resumed his seat is an ex-business man. What is the difference between an ex-business man and a business man?

Mr. CARTER: One job at a time.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. member was no doubt a successful business man, because he has managed to retire. Personally, I favour the alteration of the Sessional Order as proposed by the Government for three reasons. I think it will be better from a health point of view, and from a legislative point of view, and that it will result in the saving of a great deal of public money. I think it will save £30 a night in the lighting of this building, as from 6 o'clock an enormous amount of money is spent in that direction. Then again, we have often been sitting here after the last trams have gone, and the Government have engaged half a dozen or a dozen motor-cars to take their members home. It must have cost £25 or £30 a night to take hon. members home after trams and trains have stopped running. An enormous saving of money is going to be effected by day sittings. I certainly think that better legislation will be brought forward and better consideration given to it. I admit that after sitting for so many years at night time it certainly is difficult to go into day sittings straight away, but after we have tried it for a session we shall probably wonder why we carried on business at night so long. We have been endeavouring to do away with night baking even at the risk of people not getting fresh bread. I am one of those who think that Nature intended men to work in the day and sleep at night.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about those who go to the opera?

Mr. MORGAN: The people who provide amusement at night could not get their living in any other way, and it is necessary for them to earn their living. A certain number have to earn their living in that way. There is no reason whatever in my opinion why we should sit at night. The Secretary for Public Lands, I am sorry to say, pointed out that members, after it was decided in caucus that the Sessional Order was to be altered, should not come along and vote against it. I am sorry that this should be made a caucus matter. There is no special principle attached to it. I quite agree that under our system of party government, whether in connection with the Labour or Opposition party, after we meet to discuss certain matters which are part of our policy and decide what is to be placed before the country, we have a right to vote solidly for it. That is the practice under the system of party government. But this is not a party matter. It was never [8.30 p.m.] placed before the electors, it is not a plank in any platform, it is not a principle. It is only a question of whether we should meet in the day time or at night; and I am sorry that members opposite are not going to vote as conscientiously as members on this side. I am going to vote according to my conscience. If a division is taken

*Mr. Morgan.]*

I shall be found voting with the Government, but I am sorry to say that members on the Government side who I know are personally opposed to day sittings, whose consciences tell them that it is not a right course to pursue for many reasons—good reasons no doubt—will be voting on the same side as I, knowing that they are voting against their consciences. I would be quite satisfied to be beaten by a majority. I have my views and I fight for them, but the moment I am defeated by a majority I am prepared to give in and say that the majority must rule. That is what should happen in this matter. It should not have been made a party question. For instance, the Secretary for Public Lands should be sitting on this side of the House when the vote is taken. It is not a matter of principle or platform; nobody will lose any political standing by voting one way or the other. Personally—and most men look at it from a personal point of view—I am a country member, and I think I shall be able to attend to my duties when sitting in the day time equally as well as when sitting at night, and I do not think any other member of the House has more departmental business to attend to than I have. I shall have the opportunity of interviewing Ministers and Under Secretaries here, but a great deal of my work is done under present conditions by telephone and letters.

We country members are not down here when the House is not sitting. For six months out of the year we have to attend to our political business whilst living in our electorates, and that means that we have to deal with Ministers and Under Secretaries by correspondence. We cannot, as members in Brisbane can, walk along to the Government offices. I feel sure that we shall be able to attend to our work with day sittings and get better work than we have got in the past. At any rate, let us give it a trial. If it is a failure after a few weeks or at the end of the session, I shall be one of the first to say that day sittings were not a success and that we should go back to the old manner of conducting business. At any rate, I am going to vote conscientiously, and I am very, very sorry to say that that is not the case with hon. members opposite.

Mr. W. COOPER (*Rosewood*): I have heard the arguments urged by members of the Opposition and on the Government side in favour of day sittings, and I want to say at once that I am in accord with the Secretary for Public Lands on the question. I am prepared to give the day sittings a trial, although I do not think they will be a success. I have listened to the hon. member for Murilla saying that he could attend to his duties as well by letter as by a personal interview with a Minister or Under Secretary. It is a matter of compulsion with the hon. member, but I do not see why this House should make it a matter of compulsion with any hon. member. I agree that it should not be a party question, and that every hon. member should have had the right to voice his opinions just as he thought fit. It has been said that we shall be able to put in the same amount of work just as effectively as under the old conditions. I am of opinion that we shall not. I cannot say, after six years' experience, that a personal interview with a Minister or Under Secretary is not more effective than a letter. I believe that in 99 cases out of 100 a letter

1. cold type or hand writing has not the

same effect upon the man with whom you are dealing as a personal interview. Anyhow, with day sittings we shall be here during the day, and I say without fear of contradiction that, if the Opposition are worth their salt—I am not going to say they are—they will keep us here working day and night. I am prepared to predict that within three months, during the life of this session, we shall want to go back to the old conditions.

Some members on the Opposition side have said that the proposal has been introduced because we do not want to have business men in this Chamber. I would be very sorry not to see business men in the Chamber, but I believe that, if a man is paid for doing a certain thing, he should certainly do it. On the other hand, there is no comparison between the work which a member of a local authority has to do and that which a member of Parliament has to do, because, after all, a member of a local authority is not paid and members of Parliament are. In practice I think it will be found that Ministers here will have interview after interview. The chances are that a Minister in charge of a Bill will have caller after caller. Members on this side or the other side will have men coming down here who will insist upon a personal interview with the Minister. The consequence is that we shall have callers down here day after day, wasting our time and their own because they cannot get a personal interview with the Minister. Let me ask any Minister or any member on the Opposition side who has been a Minister whether he can attend to his ministerial duties as well in this Chamber as he can if he is in his office, where he has his records and has access to the officers who are dealing with the matters which come before him? I say he cannot. But I am prepared, as hon. members on the other side have said, to give the system a trial. If it is not a success, I shall be one of the first to vote against it, and, let me say, I am loath to vote for it to-night.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): It is my intention to support the motion. I have been in the House a number of years, and I have been just as hard worked so far as my constituency is concerned as any other hon. member. We should at least give the principle of day sittings a reasonable trial, although it is not so much a question of day sittings versus night sittings. The point is that unfortunately during the past few years the sessions have been too short, and too much business has been attempted in a short period. If hon. members opposite were so to order their affairs that members of Parliament, instead of floating round Queensland for nine months in the year on a vacation, were summoned here about April or May to do the business of the country under proper conditions by daylight, no need for the motion would have been felt.

Apart from the question of rushing legislation, the only flaw I see in the proposal is the intention to increase the sitting days from three to four per week. I must readily admit that that is a hardship on country members, who will be compelled to miss the mail train which enables them to get back to their own homes on Saturday. I reside in Brisbane, and I have no axe to grind in that respect. If the House met on three days a week, I am sure that that would meet the objections of many hon. members.

[Mr. Morgan.

I do not think that the majority of the people would be concerned if we closed the House up altogether. I believe that we are rather over-legislated for, and we could very well have a truce so far as legislation is concerned; and I consider that daylight sittings will go a long way towards bringing about the minimising of the "sausage" legislation that we have been having during the past few years.

The HOME SECRETARY: That has not been the experience with the daylight sittings in the past.

Mr. PETERSON: No. I remember the hon. gentleman interjecting this afternoon, but he had in mind, as many of us had, the attempt to adopt the daylight sittings which failed. The hon. gentleman must admit that at that particular time we were rushing through six or seven Bills a day, and the Government reverted to the daylight sittings in order to get the Estimates through within the time specified by the Standing Orders, and, consequently, those daylight sittings were a failure. If I remember rightly, the Opposition took umbrage for some reason or other because their rights had been usurped, and they dealt with the business in such a way that daylight sittings became a farce. I think that the majority of this Chamber will be prepared to give daylight sittings a trial, and, if they prove a failure, then Parliament as the master of its own procedure can alter it at any time it wishes. I intend to support the resolution, and I trust the Chamber will carry it, more particularly in the interests of health.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): We have listened to some sophistry here to-night. The hon. member for Logan and the hon. member for Toowong made a rather strong point about what they termed the fact of business men wanting to have some time to devote to their own businesses, and being able to come down to Parliament later on in the evening to attend to the business of the country. I quite believe that in saying that they were telling the truth, but it is pure sophistry to burden the argument by saying that they required the morning in which to consider and think over Bills. A man who is attending to a business of his own has no time to devote to thinking over the contents of Bills, and hon. members know that as well as I do. I am one who has no personal opinion at all on this question, but I think that the Government should give it a trial in the interests of those who would like to get a little sleep at night and those who are of a nervous disposition. There are some such members here who do a lot of work in the daytime, and who like to have their nights free in order to get a little rest—men upon whom the performance of public duties exerts a good deal more pressure and strain than it does on others. I believe hon. members know that the Secretary for Agriculture is one who feels the effects of late sittings more than most other hon. members. Some of us are so strong that it would not matter what hours we sat, and, personally, it does not make any difference at all to me. For the sake of those who suffer as the result of sitting night after night let us give day sittings a good trial, and I do sincerely hope they will be a success.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Yanango*): I came into this Chamber to-night with a perfectly open mind on this question, but I am now satisfied that I must oppose the suggestion of daylight sittings, and for the same reasons as

stated by the Secretary for Public Lands. I listened with a good deal of attention to his remarks and to his definite statement that he did not think that Ministers would be able to give close attention to their departments if this proposal was adopted; and, if we are going to attend to the affairs of the country, then that argument alone should decide the question to-night. If Ministers cannot give proper attention to their departments during three or four months in the year—which are very important months, seeing that a large number of people who desire to bring questions before Ministers come down to the House to do so—then I am justified in urging that the proposal should not be adopted. For many months during the recess—it was particularly so during the last recess—it is impossible to find Ministers in Brisbane. It has been plainly proved that anyone who is keenly interested in doing the best for the State cannot do so if this proposal is adopted. A good deal has been said to-night with regard to the business man. In fact, the hon. member for Port Curtis stated that no one should have anything to do with a business whilst he is engaged in Parliament. I do not think the hon. member believes that.

Mr. CARTER: I certainly do, and I carry it out.

Mr. EDWARDS: Any hon. member who takes up that attitude should be despised, because sooner or later, no matter what side of the House he is on, he is going to be thrown out of Parliament; and after he has been in the House for a number of years it means that he must either go back on to the labour market, if he is fit to go there, or be thrown on the scrap heap and maintained by the State. Every man should be encouraged to look after a business in the State, so that amongst other things he will be able to make provision for his wife and family when he is out of Parliament.

Mr. CARTER interjected.

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. gentleman made most of his money after hours at night. The conditions under which he made it I will leave for another occasion.

Mr. CARTER: You sold your farm because you could not make it pay.

Mr. EDWARDS: The House should give greater consideration to the people living in the country districts.

Mr. CARTER: They should keep the hon. member there.

Mr. EDWARDS: Then the hon. gentleman would not be able to sell sour beer to the navvies. He has made his money out of selling sour beer to the navvies. I do not think that country members should leave their electorates and come and live in the metropolitan area. One of the aims of the Government should be decentralisation as much as possible.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is the policy of this Government.

Mr. EDWARDS: Hon. members representing country districts have many calls on them for information, and their constituents would not be able to get such information unless they had personal interviews with their members. For the reasons I have stated I consider it absolutely necessary that representatives should keep in their electorates in order to supply first-hand knowledge to their constituents, so far as

*Mr. Edwards.]*

they are able to do so. Those are the reasons why the Government should give every possible assistance to country members during the recess. This proposal is not going to help them, because, as has been pointed out here to-night, when residents of the country districts come to Brisbane with a desire to meet a Minister, they want to meet that Minister in his office, as they realise that when he is there with all his officers around him, he will have all the information at his finger tips, and will be able to give them far more information and a better deal than if he attended to them at this House. I have had the experience of attempting to see Ministers at the House. I know that other hon. members have been treated the same. On many occasions I have known people from the country, after sitting in this House the whole night waiting to see a Minister, having to go away without any satisfaction whatever. I, therefore, hope that hon. members, not only on this side but on the other side of the House, will view this matter with an open mind and vote for it, quite apart from all question of party or party consideration.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I hope that the proposal to sit during the day will not be made an excuse for putting off the routine business of hon. members. It is all very well to say that we sit in this House for three or four months of the year. The legislative business of this House—the passing of Bills and amending Bills—is not by any means the greatest work of a member of Parliament. Most of his work is done in attending to the wants of his constituents, which are equally as important, although they may not appear so important when viewed from a legislative point of view.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HARTLEY: I do not see for the life of me how I am going to adequately attend to these wants and be at the same time in this House studying legislation. However, as it has been decided by a majority of this party to give daylight sittings a trial, I am satisfied to bow to the will of the majority of the party, but I want to say here that I am not going to give any consideration to the Ministers for any neglect that may occur in the general routine business of a member.

Mr. KELSO: Why don't you bow to the wishes of the majority of the House, instead of the majority of the other side?

Mr. HARTLEY: We take a vote of this party, and we are bound by the vote of the majority. We are not bound by the majority vote of the House—only of this side of the House, the same as the hon. members opposite are bound by the majority vote of their party. We do not take our instructions or a lead from the Opposition. We are here to conduct the business of the country in our own way and in our own time. I want to say that a very strict watch will have to be kept on the administration of the departments. It is all very well to say that Under Secretaries can come to the House, and that hon. members can interview Ministers here. What about the departments when the Under Secretaries are away?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HARTLEY: In my opinion, it is an inefficient move, and we shall very soon have to revert to the old order. The Government departments at the present time

require a pretty strong hand, and every one of them requires straightening up and putting right right through. I do not see how that will be done if the Under Secretaries are absent from their offices attending the Ministers at this House, and the Ministers at the same time engaged in the legislative business of the House, but so far as I am concerned, I accept the voice of the majority.

Mr. MORGAN: It is not a majority of the House.

Mr. HARTLEY: As soon as I can get a kick, you can rest assured that I will do so.

Mr. SIZER (*Sandgate*): I have listened to the various arguments, and I am quite satisfied that, if we were able to follow out the lines indicated by the Premier and leave the vote on this question an open one, the majority in favour of the Sessional Order would not be very great, and I am rather inclined to think from the various expressions that the old routine would probably continue. The old routine is the better of the two. A compromise might be made on the lines suggested by the Secretary for Public Lands—that the business start at 2 o'clock in the afternoon and conclude at 9 o'clock in the evening. I must certainly oppose the proposal of the Government. From the very argument of the Secretary for Public Lands, which was based on experience, I cannot see how Ministers can administer their departments. The Secretary for Public Lands, ever since he has been Minister, has taken a keen interest in the personal supervision of his department. Ministers come exactly in the same category as business men. They are the board of directors, who carry out the decisions of Parliament and give them administrative effect. A business man does no more. The only difference is that in the case of a private individual in business his executive decisions are in his own interests, while those of Ministers are in the public interests. They are in that connection on all-fours with business men, and will find that their business from a departmental point of view will suffer just as much as that of the business man. Is it not reasonable to think that the Under Secretary, if the Minister can be done without for four days in a week, will practically be controlling the department during that time? The argument might be pertinently raised that, if the Ministers can be done without for that period, they can be done without altogether. There certainly could be a great curtailment of the number of Ministers, and they could become the nominal heads, or rubber stamp heads, to give executive sanction to the action of the Under Secretaries. That must be admitted as being logical and sound, especially when it is placed alongside the argument of the Secretary for Public Lands, who says that he fails to see how he can administer his department. I also fail to see it. I fail to see how any business man can administer his business if he is not there. Neither can any Minister administer his department if he is not there. Chaos must certainly be created in the various departments. I maintain, whatever may be said, that the departments will not be as efficiently managed as they have been for the last few years.

The HOME SECRETARY: Hear, hear!

Mr. SIZER: The danger I see so far as Parliament is concerned—and I have long since realised it—is in the case of hon. members, such as the hon. member for Fitzroy,

[Mr. Edwards.]



submitting themselves submissively to anything that a party majority may agree to—even though it may be a majority of one—for the purpose of presenting a united front. We have to bear in mind that there was one principle which the hon. gentlemen opposite used to fight for when they were on this side of the House, and that was their rights and privileges as an Opposition. I can see in this proposal—probably it is not intended, but it will have that effect—that the rights of the Opposition will be seriously curtailed, because the position will be as the Secretary for Public Lands has forecast. If the Opposition put up a strenuous fight—as we no doubt shall on many measures—much time will be taken up. Although, as the Minister has said, it may be tedious repetition to continue a discussion after four or five hon. members have spoken, there is a duty cast upon hon. members to discuss all legislation. It will very often happen that a man has

[9 p.m.] prepared himself to deliver a speech on a particular Bill, and he may not be fortunate enough to catch the Speaker's eye until eight or nine members have spoken. He will therefore be hindered, and may not have the opportunity that he has prepared himself for. After all, it is from such prepared deliberations that much wisdom is derived. Again, it is very likely that the innovation will result in tedious sittings. Probably we shall find that little business will be transacted during the day, and the Government will be compelled, as has been suggested by the Secretary for Public Lands, to introduce night sittings and we shall then have to sit till the early hours of the morning as the end of a perfect, or perhaps, an imperfect day.

I must confess that the innovation will interfere with me, but no doubt I shall be able to meet that contingency.

A very weak argument put forward by the Acting Premier was that in which he said that men should come here and give of their best to the measures proposed. If the hon. gentleman had given thought to much that has been said by hon. members on this side of the House, he would not have landed his Government in the position in which they find themselves to-day. When the cotton question was introduced last session we were told from beginning to end that we had not given sufficient thought to the subject, and those who were in favour of ratoon were informed that they were acting against the best interests of the country and that they were advocating diabolical ideas. It was not many days after when the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock found that, if he had given the thought that hon. members of the Opposition had given to the matter, his Government would not be in the position they are in to-day. Incidentally, let me say that I am not concerned so much about the Government in this matter, but I am concerned about the fact that they are here as the executors and trustees of the State, and that they have done an injury to the State, and to the citizens of the State, simply because they were not prepared to give that thought to the subject which every representative in this House should have given.

I fail to agree with the argument that business men want to shirk the responsibilities placed upon them as representatives of the country. This side of the House contains more business men than the Government side, and I consider we are quite

as good as hon. members opposite, and I am convinced that, after all, we shall meet the new conditions just as well as hon. members opposite.

I am quite satisfied that the passing of this innovation will be unfortunate inasmuch as a free vote cannot be taken. I believe the State will suffer as a result of it, and for that reason I intend to vote against it.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*): To me the question of day and night sittings is simply one of progress. There was a time when Parliaments were adjuncts to the business man's business—solely adjuncts to his business—but the voice of the people for years past has been doing away with the business man, and he has been passing out of parliamentary activity. It is not a question now of introducing this innovation in order to force business men out of Parliament but to enable those who represent the people to carry out their work more efficiently.

We had the argument of the hon. member for Sandgate suggesting sittings from 2 p.m. until 9 p.m. To my mind fixing hours of Parliament from 2 p.m. till 9 p.m. and the hours that have been previously fixed has been prostituting all the interests of Parliament to those of business. If a man has to choose between his parliamentary activities and his business activities, that is a matter for him personally. Hon. members opposite have suggested to-night that they are heart and soul in favour of the welfare of the people, and they then followed that up by a lament that the welfare of the people interfered with their private business activities.

Mr. KELSE: There were other arguments.

Mr. BRUCE: There were others, certainly. About fifteen hon. members have spoken, and I take it some of those have expressed other views. The question of what may be done in regard to the work of dealing with correspondence, interviewing Ministers, etc., can be handled in the odd days when we are not sitting. We do not take every day in the week for our parliamentary duties.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What about Sundays?

Mr. BRUCE: We have other days than Sunday, which has been suggested by the Secretary for Public Instruction. On Sunday we shall be able to go down to Coolangatta, if we wish. It has been mentioned by some hon. members that we do not sit all the months of the year. There are other times than when we are sitting in which we can carry on important parts of our business.

I think the proposal should be given a trial, but I am not advocating it simply as an experiment. I am satisfied that, if it is given a fair trial, it will become permanent. I do not see any logical reason in the world why the work of Parliament should not be done in the day time any more than work which is not of a continuous nature, such as shift work.

The reference by some hon. member that, during show week, people from the country would not have a chance of seeing us in session, is a weak argument. If parliamentary representatives meet their constituents as individuals during the year, they may be judged from their individuality; and constituents should be able to determine whether they are intelligent enough to represent them in Parliament. I feel perfectly

*Mr. Bruce.]*

sure that they do not see hon. members at their best in this House, because many of the speeches are made merely as political manoeuvres and are not from the heart—they do not represent the individual.

Mr. MAXWELL: Speak for yourself.

Mr. BRUCE: The hon. member for Toowong painted this matter in dark colours. (Laughter.) I think he laid too great a stress on it. I feel perfectly sure that, if many of his constituents come from Toowong for the Exhibition, they will much prefer seeing some good vaudeville show to seeing their representative in Parliament. Having said that in reply to an interjection, I want to say that I support the day sittings; I hope they will be given a trial, and that they will be permanent.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): This question should be approached without any bias one way or the other, and it should be approached from the standpoint of the work of Parliament. I disagree with those who would lead us to believe that it was an election understanding. It was not an election understanding at all, because this House has power to regulate its sitting hours. When the proposition was put forward originally by the Secretary for Agriculture, realising that this is not a party question, I suggested that we should have a free vote of the House, my object being to get a genuine expression of opinion from hon. members. When we got the assurance of the Premier that we would have an open vote, we were quite satisfied. I was quite satisfied, at all events; but when the Premier gave it as his opinion that it was not going to work, and when we got the opinion of the Secretary for Public Lands that it would not work, and also the opinion of the Secretary for Agriculture, who said it might cause inconvenience to Ministers and to members of the public, I started to think that this was a problem which had to be looked at from the standpoint of what is covered up, and I have discovered in listening to the debate that the main question for consideration is: "We will try day sittings. We do not think it will work, and if it does not work the remedy is to raise members' salaries." That appears to be the whole thing, because the suggestion that was repeated time and time again by the Secretary for Agriculture was an increase of salaries, to which I strongly object.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not say that at all.

Mr. FRY: The hon. gentleman cannot expect us to believe that interjection, because he repeated it again and again, and if hon. members will look up "Hansard" in the morning they will see what the hon. gentleman said. I followed him very closely, and I jotted down the actual words he made use of, because I wanted to reply to him. We have heard Ministers say that, in their opinion, the Sessional Order will not work—that they will not be able to give the attention to their duties that they are now giving—and, that being the case, the duty of carrying out the work of the departments will devolve upon the Under Secretaries. If the Under Secretaries can carry out those duties, then the country might economise by reducing the number of Ministers, and thereby save the extra £500 a year and expenses.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

[*Mr. Bruce.*

Mr. FRY: We have heard hon. members on both sides of the House—those supporting the Government, and those supporting the Opposition—saying they cannot attend to the work of their constituencies; that they will not be able to attend the Government offices and get the information required by people living in their electorates; and they complain they will be seriously handicapped in carrying out their duties. Then the Secretary for Agriculture said the public might be inconvenienced. I take it that the public have to be considered. I have not heard any member mention the public aspect, and I have a very keen recollection that during the last year or two deputations from industrialists have been in the lobbies here night after night wanting to see Ministers and wanting to see members of Parliament. I am quite satisfied that by closing the House at 5 o'clock you are going to close out those people who cannot come in the day time, so that you are imposing on the industrialist a disadvantage that should not be imposed on him. In the future, if any wage-earners wish to come to this House to interview Ministers or interview members, or to listen to the debates, they will have to get time off from their work and lose their pay. That is a very serious position, and I can well understand that Ministers are seeking to avoid the deputations from industrialists and wage-earners which have been calling at this House session after session. I follow very closely the work of the unions and the work of industrialists. I get their reports, not only from Queensland but from the other States of Australia, and I know what they are saying, and I know what they are thinking, and I give it to you as an actual fact that they are complaining that members on the Government side are getting away from the working man and joining the ranks of the aristocrats.

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member connect his remarks with the motion?

Mr. FRY: They have a very direct connection. The reason the Government want to close down at 5 o'clock is to get away from their supporters.

The SPEAKER: Order! The proposal is not to close down at 5 o'clock.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: He does not know what the proposal is.

Mr. MAXWELL: He is tuning you up.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: He is not tuning me up.

Mr. FRY: The proposal is to close down at 5.30 p.m. It is only a quibble between 5 o'clock and 5.30, because a man who knocks off at 5 o'clock cannot get his bath and get into clean clothes and come up here by 5.30 p.m. Like the average Australian, when a worker comes to Parliament he likes to come clean and respectable and on an equality with those he wishes to meet. These men are complaining that their representatives are becoming wealthy land-owners.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! The hon. member must connect his remarks with the motion.

Mr. FRY: I am referring to the public standpoint. I am taking the point mentioned

by the Secretary for Agriculture as to the inconvenience to the public, and I am here as the advocate, I hope, of the public and of the wage-earner and the working man generally, because there is nobody on the Government side who is prepared to debate this point. The industrialists say that hon. members opposite are becoming, in addition, mining speculators and gamblers on the Stock Exchange.

The SPEAKER: Order! order! The hon. member must obey my call to order.

Mr. FRY: I do not wish to disobey your call, Mr. Speaker, but I am stressing points which should be remembered, as they are reasons why we should vote against the motion. Those are the men who at election time hon. members opposite go to for their support, but now they wish to cut them off from being associated with hon. members in Parliament House. Not only is this Sessional Order going to react upon country members, who will be unable to attend to their duties and get their work done in the different departments, but it is going to rebound on members of Parliament and on the Government from the industrial point of view. Take the case which way you like, the public should not be shut out of Parliament House. The doors of Parliament House, after this motion is carried, will be open only to those who have no employment. The horny-handed toiler will be excluded. (Government laughter.) Hon. members opposite laugh when I refer to those men, but they do not laugh at election time. They sneer now in the same way as when they voted for a reduction of their wages. They laugh when I refer to these men, yet, thank God, I can stand up here and voice my opinion and not be tied down by a caucus decision, which, after all, may be an absolute minority of the House. (Government interjection.) All this interjecting does not do the Government any good. The people, as a whole, are realising that this motion has a double side. I thought that we were going to get a free vote, in order that we might test the opinions of members of Parliament without any shackle at all; but the machine has come into operation, the master has spoken, and the majority must bow to the minority, because this motion is going to be carried, as the Government are bound. A member should not take any instructions from outside with regard to his parliamentary duties. He is elected to come here by the people, who expect him to attend to the work of the country to the best of his intelligence. As late as this afternoon I said that it was my intention to vote with the Government; but, after hearing the speeches which have been delivered, I have decided to vote against the motion. In doing so, I am obeying the dictates of my conscience, and I feel that I am voicing the opinions of the public who are to be shut out of the House. I make my protest against the dictates of a party machine. Although there was a majority in the caucus in favour of the motion, it is really a minority of the House.

Mr. HYNES: That is the essence of solidarity.

Mr. FRY: Solidarity and justice do not always run hand in hand. If solidarity shuts out the wage-earner from this House, then it is not justice, and I hope that the workers will understand that it is not just to them. What benefit will this be to hon. members? Will any of them go to bed any earlier?

I take it that the majority of those who vote for it will sit up to eleven o'clock at night and until the early hours of the morning just the same as they are doing now. It is patent to everyone that the best time to study Bills is in the early morning, from five o'clock on. (Government laughter.)

Mr. McLACHLAN: Do you try that?

Mr. FRY: I might tell the hon. member that I am the son of poor parents, and have had to study at night time and again in the early mornings in order to get on. The howl that may come from hon. members opposite does not effect me one iota, because I hope that I am voicing the views of working men—the views of the wage-earner, and the views of the majority of the people of Queensland. I do so in all sincerity, and I again register my protest against the Government preventing a free vote being taken, and also against a motion which will have the effect of shutting the wage-earner out from hearing parliamentary debates.

Question—That the Sessional Order (*Mr. Gillies's motion*) be adopted—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 41.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Hynes
„ Bedford	„ Kirwan
„ Brand	„ Land
„ Brennan	„ Lacombe
„ Bruce	„ McCormack
„ Bulcock	„ McLachlan
„ Carter	„ Morgan
„ Clayton	„ Mullian
„ Collins	„ Nott
„ Conroy	„ Payne
„ Cooper, F. A.	„ Peterson
„ Cooper, W.	„ Pollock
„ Deacon	„ Riordan
„ Dunstan	„ Ryan
„ Farrell	„ Smith
„ Ferricks	„ Stopford
„ Foley	„ Weir
„ Gilday	„ Wilson
„ Gillies	„ Winstanley
„ Gledson	„ Wright
„ Hartley	

Tellers: Mr. Farrell and Mr. Riordan.

NOES, 14.

Mr. Barnes, G. P.	Mr. Kerr
„ Bell	„ King
„ Corsier	„ Maxwell
„ Costello	„ Moore
„ Edwards	„ Sizer
„ Fry	„ Swayne
„ Kelso	„ Warren

Tellers: Mr. Bell and Mr. Sizer.

PAIR.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Theodore	Mr. Appel

Resolved in the affirmative.

#### CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

##### APPOINTMENT OF MR. G. POLLOCK.

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

“That Mr. George Pollock be appointed Chairman of Committees of the Whole House.”

I think I might be permitted to congratulate the hon. member for Gregory upon having secured the nomination of the party for this

*Hon. W. N. Gillies.]*

important position. Mr. Pollock, when serving in the capacity of Acting Chairman, [9.30 p.m.] man, has shown special knowledge of the Standing Orders, and has displayed those qualities which are essential to make a successful Chairman of Committees, and I have pleasure therefore in moving the motion.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I am not surprised that the hon. member for Gregory is looked upon as a strong man for this position. I am quite prepared to admit that he has many of the qualifications for it. He is undoubtedly a strong party man, but a party man when in the position of Chairman needs to be careful that he does not exercise his power in the interests of his party.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You cannot say that of the hon. member for Gregory. He has never been unfair to the Opposition.

Mr. MOORE: A member who is a very satisfactory party man is not always very satisfactory as a Speaker or Chairman of Committees. Whilst I admit that Mr. Pollock has strength for the position, we would prefer to sacrifice a little strength for a wider view. I do not object to strength in a Chairman—in fact, I appreciate it—I expect his strength to be used towards both sides alike. I do not like him to be strong to one side and balance things by being weak to the other. I look upon him as having duties to perform to see that the Opposition have a fair and square “go.” His duty is to see, for instance, that even if the Government have a strong and servile majority, it is not used to tyrannise over the minority. At times in this House the Chairman of Committees has not given the Opposition a fair deal, because expediency counted for more than fairness when the Government wanted to get its legislation through. Every Government desires to get its legislation through, but that does not say that the Chairman of Committees should always carry out the behests of the Government or the Minister who happens to be in charge of a Bill. We all know that a Government endeavours to get its business through as quickly as it can, but that is not the question of greatest importance. To my mind, what is of paramount importance is that the business which comes before the House should be properly debated, and should have the fullest consideration given to it. I trust that when Mr. Pollock takes his place in the chair, he will see that the very fullest consideration is given to the measures that come before the House, so that they may be considered carefully. We know that we have only one Chamber, and because of that fact we want to see that time is given for the fullest consideration of all measures that come before us. I trust that Mr. Pollock, now that he has got a responsible position—I take it permanently—will see that both sides of the House get an equal and fair “go.” I am quite prepared to admit that he is a strong man and has many of the qualifications that a Chairman of Committees should have, and I want to see him give a fair deal to both sides of the House, and sink his party feelings so that he may be a Chairman of Committees of whom we can all be proud.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 9.35 p.m.

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