

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 1924

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The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Bertram, *Maree*) took the chair at 10 a.m.

QUESTIONS.

COST OF WATERING CANE CROPS IN INKERMAN IRRIGATION AREA.

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

“What has been the cost to date of watering the cane crop now being harvested in the Inkerman Irrigation Area—(a) the working expenses alone; (b) total expense, including interest, redemption, and depreciation on plant and buildings, &c.”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*) replied—

“The information will be found in the Annual Report of the Commissioner of Irrigation, which will be available in a few days.”

Mr. Foley.]

LEGISLATION TO DECLARE ANZAC DAY A
COMPULSORY NATIONAL HOLIDAY.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*) asked the Premier—

“Will he, before the session closes, introduce an amendment of the Holidays Act to provide for Anzac Day being declared a compulsory holiday?”

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

“This course is not considered advisable.”

RULES OF COURT RELATING TO CONSTITUTION
OF JURY DISTRICTS; JURY DISTRICT OF
TOOWOOMBA.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*) asked the Attorney-General—

“1. Will he lay upon the table of the House copies of the existing Rules of Court made under the provisions of the Jury Acts, 1867 to 1923, relating to the constitution of jury districts?”

“2. What is the present description of the jury district of Toowoomba?”

“3. What parts of the Toowoomba and East Toowoomba electorates, respectively, are included in such district?”

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*) replied—

“1. The Rules of Court were laid on the table of the House on 29th July, 1924.

“2. See Rule 1.

“3. See answer to No. 2.”

SECRETARY'S REMUNERATION AND BALANCE-SHEET OF TORRES STRAIT PILOT SERVICE.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*), for Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*), asked the Treasurer—

“1. Has any decision been reached on the petition of the Torres Strait pilot service to the Queensland Marine Board, praying that the secretary's remuneration be fixed on the net instead of the gross earnings?”

“2. Will he instruct the Marine Board that accounts be rendered to the members of the Torres Strait pilot service and terms adjusted every six months, no balance-sheet having been produced to the pilots for years?”

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

“1. Information is being obtained upon the matter, and an early decision will be made.

“2. If the majority of the pilots desire ‘turns’ adjusted every six months, consideration will be given to the request. The regulations provide that the ‘turn register’ shall be adjusted in February of each year, and a statement prepared annually showing the earnings of each pilot and his aggregate expenses.”

LEGAL OPINION *in re* CONTROL OF SUGAR
INDUSTRY BY COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE.

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

“1. Has his attention been drawn to the following legal opinion read, and comment thereon, at the last meeting of the Mackay District Council:—

“Mr. Powell read the opinion of Mr. Hutcheon, which was summarised in the following:—

(i.) So far as the Acts enable anybody to exercise control of any industry, the Council of Agriculture will exercise that control.

(ii.) The canegrowers could only control the sugar industry by first controlling the Council of Agriculture.

(iii.) As to funds—(a) Canegrowers will necessarily contribute a large portion of any ‘general levy’ for administrative purposes; they will have no practical control whatever of the expenditure of this money contributed by them. (b) In the case of ‘particular levies’ made upon them, they will have no control of the spending of these moneys, though regulations may be made ‘if deemed necessary’ (*i.e.*, by the Governor in Council), providing that the money paid under these ‘particular levies’ shall be spent only in the interests of the particular industry or section which contributes the money. But it would still be the Council which controlled the spending of the money. (In regulations already made providing for levies which are really ‘particular levies,’ no provision has been made that the money shall be spent in the interests of the particular branches which contribute.) Under section 11 (7), the Act Advisory Board could be appointed to advise the Council in respect to any particular matters, and the expenses of those Boards would come out of the ‘fund’; but, even if a Sugar Advisory Board were appointed, it would have no power except to ‘advise’—and the Council of Agriculture need not act on the advice. To safeguard the sugar people, therefore, the Act needs drastic amendment. Even if a Sugar Standing Committee of the Council were appointed under the regulations with complete power defined, it would not be ‘safe,’ as the regulations could be amended in five minutes whenever the spirit moves those in control.

“Mr. Powell said that was the opinion he had expressed. They found that the sugar and dairying industries contribute about £1,500 out of £1,800, yet the sugar industry only had four votes?”

“2. As this indicates that an amendment of the Primary Producers Act is necessary to enable the organization to function on a commodity basis, what are his intentions in the matter?”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*) replied—

“1. No; and no reference to this matter appears in the minutes of last meeting of the Mackay District Council.

“2. See No. 1.”

INQUIRIES BY COMMISSIONER OF PRICES *in re*
COST OF PRODUCTION OF BUTTER, WHEAT,
OR BACON.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) asked the
Chief Secretary—

“1. Has the Commissioner of Prices
made any inquiries recently *re* costs of
production of butter, wheat, or bacon?”

“2. If so, what are the costs of produc-
tion on each of these products?”

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

“1 and 2. No.”

COTTON INDUSTRY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Pollock, Gregory, in the chair.*)

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

“That it is desirable that a Bill be
introduced to amend ‘The Cotton Indus-
try Act of 1923’ in certain particulars.”

The main object of this measure is to carry
into effect the intention of the Government
to relax the embargo and allow the growing
of first ratoon cotton. It is proposed that
the growing of ratoon cotton may be allowed
under conditions approved of by the Council
of Agriculture on behalf of the grower.
The Bill also provides, in accordance
with the desire of the Council of Agri-
culture as representing the growers, that
power shall be taken by regulation to make
a levy on all cotton, provided that 75 per
cent. of the growers agree to that course by
referendum. The regulations may also pro-
vide what that levy shall be, and the object
is to build up a fund to establish or acquire
co-operative ginneries, etc.

Those are two principles contained in the
Bill, but a number of other amendments
of the principal Act are included, which
are practically all consequential. There is
no occasion for a big discussion at this stage.
The Bill is brought in in accordance
with the promise I made to a deputation
when intimating the decision of the Govern-
ment on the question. After the Premier’s
return from the old country, when the Cab-
inet had fully considered the matter it was
decided to allow the cotton growers to grow
ratoon cotton. The question whether that
decision is right or wrong can only, as I
have already said, be proved by time. The
Government have not changed their opinion
with regard to the relative value and quality
of the two kinds of cotton, or of the danger
of disease occurring in stand-over or ratoon
cotton. We have not changed our views
with regard to that, but the growers will
be allowed to grow ratoon cotton if they
comply with the conditions proposed in the
Bill, and which have been approved of by the
representatives of the growers. I might
just read those conditions because they have
been accepted by the representatives of the
growers, and in my opinion represent the
minimum of safeguards which the Govern-
ment are justified in imposing to protect
the large body of cotton growers, who are
growers of annual cotton. This year there
are 7,454 growers of annual cotton in the
State and 82 growers of ratoon cotton, as

compared with 7,927 growers of annual cot-
ton last year, and 356 growers of ratoon cot-
ton. I am not going to say that this relaxa-
tion of the embargo will not increase the
number of ratoon growers. In fact, I
believe that the majority of growers in the
Central district will grow annual cotton
and ratoon cotton side by side just the same
as cane growers have annual cane coming in
while ratoon cane is growing in another
area. I believe that, so long as the present
price for ratoon cotton is maintained in
the old country, the growing of ratoon cotton
in this State will be profitable. There
is only one thing that is likely to prevent
success, and that is a continuation of the
quarrel between those who prefer ratoon
cotton and those who favour annual cotton.

If that quarrel continues—politicians are
largely responsible for its continuance now—
it is going to damage the prospects of sel-
ling ratoon cotton. On the passage of
this Bill I think that quarrel might cease,
so that ratoon cotton can be given a fair
trial. I do not want to be put on the
defence—

Mr. KERR: You are.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICUL-
TURE: I am not. Hon. members opposite
are in the dock at present. Now that the
Government have relaxed the embargo on
the growing of ratoon cotton, I do not want
to be continually emphasising the fact that
good annual cotton is preferable to good
ratoon cotton, as practically every man
who understands cotton marketing knows.
I do not want to keep on saying that, and
I hope it will not be necessary for me to
do so after this Bill has passed. Everyone
should agree to give ratoon cotton a fair
trial. The Government are prepared to
do that and allow the farmers to have their
own way with regard to the growing of first
ratoons under conditions agreed to by the
growers. Immediately the embargo was lifted
by the Cabinet the duty devolved upon me
and the officers of the department of setting
out the conditions that are necessary to
protect the growers of annual cotton. In
my opinion these conditions are the minimum
that will allow protection to be secured—

“1. Licensing of all cotton growers.”

Exemption will be provided for on the same
lines as is contained in similar legislation in
Queensland—

“2. Government guarantee not to
apply to ratoon cotton but advances at
ginnersy may be arranged from time to
time.”

The cotton guarantee is now shared by the
Commonwealth Government. Senator Pearce
was most emphatic at the recent conference
that the Commonwealth Government were not
going to guarantee ratoon cotton in any
shape or form. Further conditions are—

“3. All seed to be supplied through
the Department of Agriculture and
Stock.

“4. Ratoon cotton to be harvested,
ginned, and marketed separately.

“5. Heavy penalties for mixing ratoon
and annual cotton, with cancellation of
license for second offence.

“6. Close season to be provided, with
total destruction of all stalks, field
debris, etc., by fire.

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"7. Any other conditions which are necessary to make the above decision effective.

"8. Necessary legislation, if any, to be passed by the Government."

Briefly those are the conditions approved by the representatives of the growers prior to the framing of this Bill.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): The Minister has made the extraordinary statement that, although he is introducing this amending Bill, he does not believe in it.

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

Mr. EDWARDS: Yes you did.

Mr. MORGAN: The Minister stated that he did not believe in the principle contained in the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No. I said that the Government were not convinced that good ratoon was equal to good annual or that the growth of ratoon cotton was the right thing, but we were prepared to let the farmers give it a trial. Time alone will prove whether it is right to do so.

Mr. MORGAN: Has the hon. gentleman altered his mind on the question of ratoon cotton? When the Cotton Industry Bill was before the House the hon. gentleman stated that, if ratoon cotton was allowed—this can be proved by "Hansard"—the industry would be ruined. The hon. gentleman now says that he has not altered his mind on that point in any particular.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not say "in any particular."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman must accept the Minister's explanation.

Mr. MORGAN: The Bill is a most important one, and one with which I am entirely in accord, but it seems an extraordinary thing that the Government have been forced to do something which they do not think is right.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Time and again the hon. gentleman advocated in this House the exportation of beef with nodules.

Mr. MORGAN: I am still of the same opinion. Queensland's beef has been absolutely victimised by the farcical action of those in Great Britain in rejecting it because of the presence of nodules.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: One member of your party said he preferred beef with nodules in it.

Mr. MORGAN: I have not changed my opinion in connection with the nodule question.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MORGAN: Evidently the Minister is not game, or the Government are not game to back up their views on the question of growing ratoon cotton. I am pleased that this Bill has been introduced, because the people will not now find it necessary to break the law in order to grow ratoon cotton. A great number have broken the law. They have been compensated by the Government for breaking the law; and now the Government, owing to the fact that there are a large number of these men directly con-

cerned, are prepared to give way and allow the ratooning of cotton.

(Several hon. members conversing in loud tones.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! I ask the hon. member to resume his seat until such time as the conversation between hon. members ceases. (Hear, hear!) Hon. members must recognise that it is difficult for me to follow what any speaker is saying with the conversation that is going on this morning.

Mr. MORGAN: I am very pleased, Mr. Pollock, that you have stopped the conversation that has been going on. The provision in the Bill providing for a vote to be taken of the cotton growers as to whether a levy shall be made on the cotton they grow for the purpose of eventually acquiring or constructing ginneries is a most important one, and will meet with the approval of at least 90 per cent. of the cotton growers. The principle that was originally laid down of allowing the ginning of cotton to be undertaken by private enterprise was a wrong one, more especially when it was recognised that co-operation is becoming increasingly popular, not only with the primary producers in Australia but throughout the world. Co-operation is favoured by primary producers because it gives them the control of the primary produce they grow from the time it leaves their farm until it reaches the home of the consumer. Until that principle is universally adopted the primary producer will not be able to carry on his industry with anything like profit to himself. At the present time there is too much profit made by people coming in between the grower and consumer. That is one of the reasons why the producer cannot get a decent price for his produce. The producer also recognises that these profits make his produce excessively dear, and that, when any foodstuff becomes excessively dear, the consumer does not consume it to the same extent. The primary producer is anxious that the consumer shall get necessary commodities at a reasonable price. He certainly wants more than he is getting at the present for growing those crops. It is apparent by the figures available, not only in Queensland but in the other States—perhaps not to such an extent in Queensland—that people are leaving the land and coming into the cities because they are not getting sufficient remuneration for the work they are doing. If money is offering in a particular calling or trade people will go almost through fire and water to reach the locality where that money is to be made. We know how, in order to reach localities where gold mining is carried on successfully, people will undergo almost any hardship because they know they will have the opportunity of making money and probably becoming rich. If the inducement to the farmer is good from a monetary point of view he will remain on the land, because he recognises that he will earn sufficient money to rear his children, and, after receiving a primary education, he can send them away to receive a secondary education, and thus give them the same educational facilities as the children in the large centres of population receive. I therefore claim that it would not be wrong to place a levy on the cotton crop if the cotton-grower has first had an opportunity of voting on the proposal and agrees to it.

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I am also of the opinion that, if there is any profit in the industry, the growers should receive it. They should not be content with a certain price for their product, but, if there is a profit in the cotton-seed, oil and other by-products, they are entitled to have it, because to a certain extent it is their own property, and there is no doubt that they should be able to get cotton-seed meal to feed their dairy cattle or stud stock. It is only right that they should be able to get these by-products at a much cheaper rate than would be possible if the industry were controlled by private enterprise. The Government sold cotton-seed last year at £1 a ton.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How much did we pay the cotton-growers in the first instance? We paid them 5d. a pound.

Mr. MORGAN: Not at all. If there was no seed in the cotton, the lint would have been worth 1s. 3d. a pound. It is recognised that it takes 3 lb. of ordinary cotton-seed to make 1 lb. of lint, so that, after the seed is extracted from the lint, the farmer would get 1s. 3d. a lb.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has gone a long way from the question. It is proposed—

“To introduce a Bill to amend the Cotton Industry Act of 1923 in certain particulars.”

The Minister intimated that these particulars are to give power to the farmers to grow ratoon cotton, and power to raise a levy for the purpose of acquiring or establishing gineries. The hon. member is not dealing with those matters at all. I am not going to allow a full dress discussion on the Bill at this stage.

Mr. MORGAN: I am referring to the second of those resolutions—the one stating that it is desirable that the farmer should make a living. For that purpose it is desirable for the farmer to take over the industry and gin and distribute the cotton-seed as he desires. I am not anxious for a full-dress debate on this matter. I am very pleased to know that the Government are introducing this amendment of the Act. The Act has been in operation for twelve months, and I feel sure that other amendments may be necessary; but the treatment of seed is one of the most important things, and is likely to become one of our greatest industries. It would be advisable to place every necessary amendment in the Act now. In any case, I am glad to know that the Government are going to amend the Act in the direction indicated by the Minister, and that, notwithstanding the fact that they are still in favour of annual cotton, they are going to give the farmer a chance to grow ratoon.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): The Secretary for Agriculture stated that the Bill is the outcome of a deputation to him from the Council of Agriculture. Two or three gentlemen met here, no doubt at the desire of the Minister and possibly by arrangement with him as President of the Council of Agriculture, and that gave the hon. gentleman, to a certain extent, the opportunity to extricate himself from the trouble in which he had landed the Government and himself. The hon. gentleman said the amending Bill is the outcome of a request of the Council of Agriculture. It is the outcome of determinations of the growers throughout the State

and of the Central District Council of Agriculture and of the Cottongrowers' Union. That combined action forced the Minister to introduce this Bill. The hon. gentleman still claims that the removal of the embargo on ratoon cotton is against his own opinion and against the determined opinion of the Government, and that they still consider annual cotton is better than ratoon.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is an open question.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman said that it was the wish of the Council of Agriculture that the embargo should be removed, and that is why he is taking this action. Why did the hon. gentleman introduce anti-ratoon legislation when the Central District Council of Agriculture met him and appealed to him to allow experiments to be carried out and a certain amount of ratoon to be grown for a year or two to enable the hon. gentleman and those in authority to see what ratooning meant to this country. I understand the Minister said that the trouble about ratoon cotton and the necessity for allowing the growth of ratoon was due to a quarrel brought about by politicians. Was I right in understanding that that was what the Minister said—that this is a trouble brought about by politicians?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. CORSER: Well, to use the Minister's own words, that it was a quarrel, the fault of politicians. If I am wrong in that, the Minister will correct me now. Did he say that or not? If he claims that it is the fault of politicians, I claim that it is proof that the politicians have been a godsend to the growers if they have compelled the Government, against their wishes, to recognise the growers. If that is so, it is not a fault, but something to the credit of those politicians. If the Minister will have it that it is the fault of politicians, and that two or three members of the Council of Agriculture have induced him to introduce this legislation, then it is to their credit for having convinced him even against his will. It is rather a peculiar position to be in. The Minister made some remarks as to levies for the purpose of acquiring gineries. I am not going to support a proposition—whether it is approved by certain members of the Council of Agriculture or anybody else—in favour of acquiring the present over-capitalised gineries at their total cost, and if that is the intention of the Government, and the hon. gentleman can show that this request is placed in the Bill on the advice of certain individuals who are representatives of the cotton-growers, as he claims, through the Council of Agriculture, I say, as a representative of cotton-growers, that I am not going to support any such idea without seeing first what is contained in the proposal.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Wait till you see the Bill.

Mr. CORSER: Certainly I will reserve my remarks in that regard until I do see the Bill. It is a most important question. The principle of co-operative gineries has been advocated, urged, and moved for by hon. members on this side, but I am not going to swallow the bait if the proposal is to take over the existing gineries without consulting the individual growers. From what I have learned of the Bill from the remarks of

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the Minister, I am not going to say that I will support that part of the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is no proposal in the Bill to take over ginneries.

Mr. CORSER: There is a proposal in the Bill to institute a levy for the purpose of acquiring ginneries.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If 75 per cent. of the growers agree. You do not believe in that?

Mr. CORSER: I believe in it if 75 per cent. vote in favour of the proposal; but they are not likely to vote in favour of taking over ginneries that are over-capitalised at the total cost price.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You do not think they have sufficient intelligence to vote on the question?

Mr. CORSER: They will have sufficient intelligence, but it all depends on what they are asked to vote on. Does the Minister intend to ask for a vote on a clear-cut issue in favour of co-operative enterprise, or is the vote going to be on this question: "Are you in favour of acquiring the ginneries that have been already established?" That is the point. It all depends on how broad the question is that they are asked to vote on. They will be intelligent enough. They will approve of co-operative ginneries, but they do not want forced on them the over-capitalised ginneries that have been found unprofitable, without full information as to price.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Don't put up Aunt Sallies in order to knock them down.

Mr. CORSER: I am not doing that. The Minister says that good annual cotton is better than good ratoon cotton. Nobody has denied that. What we did deny was that ratoon cotton was valueless and was not legal tender. It has been proved that much of our ratoon cotton is of better quality than middle American. It has been proved to be so, and the price that has been secured has indicated that it has a value on the open market. Therefore, why has it been banned, and why have the Government only offered 2d. to 3d. a lb. for ratoon cotton?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why do you say 2d.?

Mr. CORSER: Because that is the price that was mentioned in the Government's advertisements in the "Australian Cotton Journal." I can show the Minister the advertisement in the journal published in Sydney stating that the Queensland Government's price was 2d. to 3d. per lb.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Government paid 3d.

Mr. CORSER: 3d. a lb. was the price paid for the cotton. That cotton was sold to McDonnell and East as being valueless in the market except for the one particular purpose.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. CORSER: Yet this very cotton was the cotton that was taken to the old country, where it was proved that ratoon cotton was of value, which showed the necessity for this Bill. I am pleased to see the Bill introduced. I trust that the Minister is introducing a measure which is broad enough eventually to give to the cotton-growers the

control of their industry. If he is not going to guarantee the price of ratoon cotton, then

let the grower handle that side [10.30 a.m.] of the industry. Let it be handled by those who believe that ratoon is good, and not by a Government or a body which holds that ratoon is not good cotton. I think it is better that ratoon cotton should be handled by its friends and those who produce it than by those who say that it is an unprofitable and unmarketable commodity.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I do not wish to say more at this stage of the Bill than that the mere fact of the Bill being before us is a striking illustration of the obstinacy of the Minister in charge of the department. I find on referring to "Hansard" that at the very last opportunity last session he was asked—indeed, almost implored—by the Opposition to hold his hand and to get more information than he had then in his possession before he put a ban on ratoon cotton. When speaking on the vote on the Estimates for "Department of Agriculture and Stock—Cotton Trading Fund" last session, as reported in "Hansard," page 1927, I said—

"I would like to urge on the Minister, in view of the facts that are constantly coming to light in regard to ratoon cotton, that before we definitely pass this vote he should seriously consider whether more consideration should not be given to the question of ratoon cotton."

The hon. member for Normanby, who represents a large number of cotton-growers, in following me, said—

"I cordially support the contention of the hon. member for Mirani, and earnestly plead with the Minister to defer the operation of the Cotton Industry Act for six months."

Through the hon. gentleman's obstinacy on that occasion a great injury has been done. To my own knowledge, cotton-growing has been discouraged in many localities where the climatic conditions rendered the ratooning of cotton particularly applicable. I do not want to labour the question now—I shall have more to say on the second reading—but I repeat that the mere fact of Parliament being now asked to deal with the question is a striking instance of the harm that can be done by obstinacy and ignorance combined.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): When the second reading of this Bill comes forward I am going to deal with the matter as fully as my experience in other parts of the world in regard to this question will allow. Having read since my return the remarks which I made on the second reading debate on the original Cotton Industry Bill, I do not wish to vary one single statement I made on that occasion.

I think the hon. member for Burnett would be well advised if he were to be a little less rash in some of the statements that he makes in regard to what has been said and done in reference to this matter.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hear, hear!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: His reference to me—which he has not spoken about to me personally, neither have I to him—was unfortunate, because on no occasion when I made public utterances in England in regard to the cotton question in Queensland did I myself raise the ratoon issue. It seemed

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to me that that was outside my mission altogether. On every occasion when I made any public reference to the cotton industry the question of ratoon cotton was raised after my speech ended, as I can easily demonstrate by Press reports of any remarks I made. I very much question whether, under present conditions in Queensland, the prospects of this State becoming a large grower of cotton are not being severely taxed or interfered with by the party politics which have been introduced into the matter. I have said before, and I say again, that this question is vastly important to Queensland, and if we approach it from such a viewpoint we must take into consideration the needs of the consuming markets as well as the difficulties of the grower, and by that means arrive at some solution which will give us an opportunity of making it successful. I admit that the grower should have a say in the control of this matter, and therefore in that regard I welcome this measure, because the responsibility for the future of the cotton industry rests largely on the cotton-growers themselves. When all is said and done, the growers are really the Alpha and Omega of the situation so far as the production of cotton is concerned. If this matter is stripped of the passion which has been introduced, and the cotton question is put before the growers fairly and they are left to work out their own salvation with the help of that information, then I think we shall have a good chance of success.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I realise that the message from His Excellency the Governor in regard to this Bill limits the appropriation to certain purposes, and I would like to suggest to the Minister that he should delay the Bill for a week in order to seek from His Excellency a recommendation for an appropriation sufficient to enable him to make an alteration in the Bill to include compensation for those growers of ratoon cotton who obeyed the law. If that were done, we would not be met later with the excuse that the necessary appropriation has not been recommended by His Excellency.

One of the principal points I wish to deal with at this stage has reference to co-operative ginneries. It is quite apparent to me, from the statements made in the Press and otherwise, that there is some idea on the part of the Government of inviting the growers at some stage or other to take over the existing ginneries. It is well known that those ginneries cost a big amount of money, and that they were possibly over-capitalised. If that be so, the Minister should take every precaution not to force them on the growers. He proposes in the Bill that levies should be made to establish a fund to acquire ginneries or build new ones, and he should realise that this question is of intense moment to those who will have to pay. Had he tackled this question as it should have been tackled—that is, in the same way as the Sugar Works Act of 1922 dealt with the establishment of new sugar-mills—his Government would have had to find £150,000 to gin the present crop. Is he prepared, or are the Government prepared, to assist the cotton-growers of Queensland in a sensible way? He must realise the impossibility of the growers raising at this stage at least £150,000 by means of levies. Does this Bill, under the message from His Excellency, include any provision

for assistance by the Government to enable the growers to acquire ginneries? That is one of the most important questions we have to face. I am not in any way touching on the question of State enterprises—I believe their day is past.

I agree that the same consideration should be given to the growers of cotton as has been given by this Government and previous Governments to the growers of cane. The sugar industry is a big industry, and probably the cotton industry will reach very large proportions in the future. The Government will have to enlarge this Bill so as to extend to the growers a greater measure of assistance than has been mentioned by the Minister. Hon members on this side are agreed, as was indicated by the motion moved the other day by the hon. member for Mirani, that, if levies are going to be imposed upon the growers, they must be imposed upon the growers organised in a particular industry, and not upon the members of any other organisation. If the Bill provides that the levy shall be on the growers themselves and will be used in the interest of those growers, and those growers only, and not for any other purpose, it will be a success; but that will not be the case if the amount received is to be used for the purpose of assisting in directions which will not be of benefit to those organised in the industry concerned. The people who were responsible for the lifting of the ban on ratoon cotton were those in the union of growers in the Central District. Through the strength of their organisation and by testing the market they have blown to smithereens the Minister's contention that ratoon cotton is not legal tender. They have found their markets, and they are going to market their product now. The growers in the Central District have been able to achieve their ends by pressing their requirements on the Government. It seems almost impossible to reconcile the statements made by the Minister during his second reading speech on the Cotton Industry Bill with the remarks he has made to-day. It would be almost impossible to believe that the same Minister handled both Bills. He is introducing to-day only what the Opposition advocated twelve months ago—nothing more and nothing less. To-day we are in a position to advocate compensation for the men who were misled last year by the Minister through refusing to accept the advice of the Opposition. Had he accepted our advice, no such contentious question would have developed. I hope that the Minister will give very deep consideration to the points that have been raised in this Chamber. The Government are in a position to know whether the existing ginneries are a fair proposition to the growers, and they should make all inquiries so that the growers will not be forced to take over something that may be over-capitalised. The Government should give serious consideration to that question and give full information to the growers, so that the growers will not be placed in a false position.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): If I understood the Minister's remarks aright, a levy cannot be imposed unless it has been agreed to by 75 per cent. of the growers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is true.

Mr. TAYLOR: I cannot think the Government or the Minister would be so foolish.

Mr. Taylor.]

as to say that the levies were for the compulsory acquirement of over-capitalised gineries. I take it that the Bill will provide that the growers, at their own option, may take over existing gineries if the owners are prepared to sell them, and, if they are not satisfied to take them over at the price asked, they will have power to erect gineries of their own on co-operative lines. That is the way I understand the Bill. I understand that the Government guarantee for cotton is not going to be continued after next year, and the responsibility of proving their case is now going to be thrown on the cotton-growers throughout the State. Certainly the indications are that they probably will be successful. We hope that they will be successful, quite apart from politics altogether, as we are all exceedingly anxious that the cotton industry should be established on a thoroughly sound basis, and that the difficulties which have had to be contended with from the initial stages will be overcome. I deprecate any remarks made in this Chamber in so far as the British-Australian Cotton Growing Association is concerned. There is no justification for the remarks made in regard to the Association. As time goes on they will probably be glad to dispose of their gineries at cost price, and possibly less. The Association has done very good work in helping us to establish the cotton industry.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hear, hear!

Mr. TAYLOR: It has spent a lot of money in plant and assisted the industry to get upon its feet. The Minister only mentioned gineries in connection with the proposed levy. Power should also be given in the Bill to impose levies on cotton-growers, if they so desire, to deal with pests that might arise in carrying on the industry. Such a provision would be a wise one. The sugar-growers have imposed a levy upon themselves to the extent of £1 per ton to recoup themselves against any possible loss on the exportable surplus of the sugar crop. The destruction of pests is of vital concern to the growers, and, if the occasion arises, they should be given the power of expressing an opinion as to whether a levy should be made to eradicate any pest that may manifest itself in the industry.

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): As one of the advocates against any legislation controlling or interfering in any way with the cotton-growers of Queensland, I am naturally particularly glad to see this amending Bill coming forward. I appreciate the peculiar and very undesirable position of the Minister and Government in having to introduce legislation which they do not admit is right. The Minister said he has nothing to retract from his previous attitude, and that he still believes that the legislation he previously introduced is right. He has introduced a Bill which, according to his own remarks, is against his conscience. Hon. members on this side of the Chamber are particularly pleased to see the Bill, because we know it has been brought about by the general fight of those who endeavoured to start the cotton industry and have since become experienced in cotton-growing. They have prevailed in the fight they have put up. It is very pleasing to hon. members who fought against the ban on ratoon cotton to know that stupidity and injustice are not going to prevail any longer. No one can tell at

[*Mr. Taylor.*

present what harm that legislation has done. I believe that a tremendous amount of cotton would have been exported from Queensland this year had that legislation not been put on the statute-book. An attempt is now made to rectify that harm to a certain extent, but how far it will rectify it we do not know, as I am very much afraid that during the last two years, when we ought to have been getting the industry on a sound footing, we have missed our opportunity, and perhaps we shall never be able to regain lost ground or become an important factor in cotton production. During that time other countries have been vigorously increasing their cotton production with a view to capturing the markets of the world. I notice in the Press only this morning a big project with a capital of £17,000,000 being formed to embark on an irrigation scheme in Iraq with the idea of producing cotton. I am just quoting this to show what is going on in other parts of the world with which we shall have to compete. It may be that our market for cotton will be of little use to us when the legislation now proposed comes into operation. The Minister said that in this Bill there will be a minimum safeguard for the protection of the growers. We had an assurance from the Government at the time the ban was being placed on ratoon cotton that they were imposing that ban so that they could protect the grower of cotton. Who is going to say now what should be the minimum safeguard to protect growers? Personally I think growers of cotton should be allowed to grow whatever kind of cotton they desire, and that they should be given quite as free a hand as those who are producing wool. The Minister also remarked that he hoped there would be no further quarrel. I am quite satisfied that the way to avoid quarrels is to remove the cause, and leave the growers of cotton free to pursue a policy as free as that enjoyed by our woolgrowers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you mean that we should withdraw the guarantee?

Mr. NOTT: I do not think that would cause very much harm. At any rate, it would have been far safer for the industry to have had no guarantee rather than to have had the anti-ratoon legislation which has been imposed.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The growers of Queensland will not accept that statement.

Mr. NOTT: The Minister further stated that it was his intention to license all cotton-growers. This is another restriction which should be quite unnecessary. If we are going to license cotton-growers—dairymen are licensed at present, I know—why not at one fell swoop license every primary producer—every farmer? Regarding the safeguarding of the quality of Queensland or Australian cotton on the overseas markets, that could be done adequately by having our cotton thoroughly graded by efficient graders. We know that at present many hundreds of varieties and classes of wool are sent to Brisbane and which have been graded by the experts in the woolsheds. When they arrive here they are opened out for the inspection of the buyers, and prior to that they are practically re-examined and re-graded. Through that system the wool industry of Queensland has assumed its

present success and tremendous importance. Something similar could be done in the grading of our cotton to safeguard our market overseas. Then we would have no danger of any railing about the conditions under which the cotton was grown, provided it was all marketed.

We hope that the cotton industry will have a very big future and will be a great asset to Queensland. It has a good chance if the farmers are given a fairly free hand when growing it. If the Government want to do anything besides grading to improve the quality—and the Minister has indicated that they will control the supply of seed to the farmer—there is no reason why the Department of Agriculture should not do something in testing out the varieties of cotton. This should be done to ascertain which are most suitable for Queensland in the early stages of the development of the industry, and it would have meant a great deal to the farmers had the Government distributed seed of known quality instead of the unknown quality that is being distributed to-day. I think that would help materially to give Queensland cotton an even better reputation than it has at the present time. I hope that, when this Bill is going through, the Minister will consider the necessity of placing in the Bill as few conditions, especially irksome conditions, as possible.

* Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I am very pleased to know that the Minister is introducing an amendment of the Cotton Industry Act, and I sincerely trust that the provisions of the Bill will be such that the cotton-growing industry will become one of the greatest industries in Queensland. That can be brought about, particularly if there is a little toleration shown in the way of accepting reasonable amendments—if it is necessary to move amendments—and also in meeting the wishes of those who control the industry. I would like to ask the Minister whether this Bill is founded on the suggestions made by the Central District Council of Agriculture or any other institution that has cotton-growing as one of its chief interests. If the Bill is founded upon their requests, I feel sure that it will be in the interests of a majority of the growers. But, if it is not founded on their requests, I am afraid that we are going to have a little bit of friction. There is no necessity whatever for friction in connection with an important matter like this. After all, the welfare of the State is the object we are all aiming at. We all desire to see the State progress at a greater rate. If that friction can be avoided by meeting the wishes of the Council of Agriculture from time to time and by accepting their suggestions with regard to the welfare of the industry, the Minister will be well advised to accept them. When the Cotton Industry Bill was going through this Chamber some two years ago, we were distinctly told that the Minister would be open to accept the advice of these organisations. What has caused all the trouble in regard to ratooning has been that the advice of these organisations was spurned. I hope that for the future friction will be avoided, and that the Minister will be able to report for the next cotton season that we have had a record harvest.

I am not going over the arguments in favour of ratooning generally, as they are well known to members of this Chamber. It has been proved—in the large cotton belt of Central Queensland at all events—that the

only cotton that can be grown successfully from a remunerative standpoint is ratoon cotton. They have secured evidence that they have a market for this ratoon cotton, not only in England but in Australia; consequently it is not asking too much to ask that the Minister will make as little friction as possible in regard to restricting these growers. It has to be remembered that a large number of settlers were induced to go to the Upper Burnett and to select new areas in my electorate because they were told that they would be able to grow ratoon cotton. Unfortunately, their plant crops failed, and their ratoon crops were abandoned. I trust that this Bill is founded in the main on the requests of the Central Queensland District Council of Agriculture. If the Minister can give us that assurance, I feel sure that we need not expect any friction in the future. We have had quite enough trouble over ratooning—not only hon. members and farmers, but the Government also—and I hope that this will be the last time we shall have any occasion for complaint in the matter. The ratoonists have had a hard time. I do not know whether there is anything in the Bill dealing with the vexed question of compensation, but the loyal growers have a very great claim for compensation. The Minister has already announced that it is not the policy of the Government to give compensation to those who obeyed the law. There may be a lot of commonsense in that, and that people should not be compensated for obeying the law; but neither should people be let off if they break the law. However, there are special circumstances in this case which demand special and equitable consideration.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you suggest that we should prosecute those who broke the law?

Mr. PETERSON: I do not suggest that.—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. PETERSON: But I want the Minister to say whether any provision is made in the Bill for paying compensation to growers who destroyed their crops of ratoon cotton.

I do not suggest that there should

[11 a.m.] be any prosecutions—rather am

I glad that even at this late hour provision is being made to remove the ban on ratoon cotton. Consequently I trust that we shall be able to agree with the Bill, and if we cannot, in the main, agree with it, that we shall be guided by the cotton-growers themselves and their executive. I trust that the Minister will accept reasonable amendments in the Bill.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

The resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*) presented the Bill, and moved—

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

Question put and passed.

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

Mr. Peterson.]

CITY OF BRISBANE BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) (who was greeted with Opposition cheers) said: This Bill is not an important Bill to the whole of Queensland in some ways, but the various principles contained in it will have very far-reaching effects. There is no doubt that it is going to have a very important bearing on the large section of the community who live in and around Brisbane. When the Minister was moving the second reading of the Bill he gave a very lucid explanation from his point of view, a very careful analysis as to the reasons for introducing it in the form in which it has been introduced, the benefits which would be likely to accrue to certain sections, and the wisdom of having the whole of the proposed area included in the Bill. He said that the two previous Bills had served their purpose, inasmuch as they had given people ground for discussion and the basis on which they could firmly establish municipal government. Those Bills certainly gave ground for discussion, but I do not think they formed much of a basis. The first Bill was too long and complicated to enable people to discover what was involved in it. The Bill introduced last session certainly evoked a good deal of discussion, and so far as I could gather, the consensus of opinion on the part of the local authorities was that the area was too large.

The powers given under this Bill are simply enormous. Possibly the Minister will think it peculiar if I say that there is not, in my opinion, sufficient protection for the ratepayers. We have always held at conferences of local authorities that, if we are to have local government, it should be local government, and should not be subject to the dictation of Orders in Council. This Bill is giving local government with all the protection under the Local Authorities Act wiped out—or probably it will be wiped out.

I want to speak this morning from the point of view of the difference in benefit which will accrue to the people of Brisbane in connection with the two areas which have been mentioned. I will take the smaller area which the Minister himself marked out, because it seems a reasonable area, and one in which the density of population is fairly equal, and then the outside area in which the density of population is also fairly equal. In my opinion, the Bill should only be passed in its present form with the big area if the benefit to the whole of the people affected can be secured without casting too big a burden on one section of the community which happens to live in the more sparsely-settled districts. The Home Secretary appears to think that there is everything satisfactory in a big area, because, in his vision of fifty years hence, he hopes to see Brisbane what he imagines it should then be. A lot of things have to be considered, such as uniformity of plan, symmetrical design, comfort, and health. We quite admit that. But if uniformity of design and plan is to be secured, it must not be at an expense which will not be counter-balanced by any benefit to be received by the people who are living in the outside area.

The object of the Bill is to have uniformity in the government of Brisbane. That is all right if the areas selected coincide with the community of interest of the people in the outlying parts. We must have that community of interest if we are going to have

[*Mr. Moore.*

satisfactory government of the whole area of Brisbane. It is an enormous area. The principle of local government has always been in the direction of decentralisation rather than of centralisation, and to allow people who live in various districts to build up those districts in the way they consider best for themselves according to their necessities and the amount of money they have to spend. If any advantages are going to accrue to the outlying portions—that is, outside the 5-mile area which the Home Secretary has delineated on the map, at any rate, within the next twenty-five years—the Minister was very careful not to tell us what those advantages are going to be.

The HOME SECRETARY: I showed you the disadvantages.

Mr. MOORE: The Minister showed the disadvantages to the inner area of Brisbane, but he did not show us altogether the disadvantages to the outside areas, nor did he tell us what advantages those people were going to receive. If the Government bring in a Bill in which they are going to include a large section of the community, and they can only show that the inner section is going to get an advantage while the outside section is not going to receive any, we want a little further information to enable us to analyse the position and see exactly how that section is going to stand under the proposed Bill.

The Home Secretary said that there was a division of opinion as to whether the method of absorption of the outside areas should be by the direct method proposed in the measure or whether it should be by a gradual process. In my opinion, it should be direct, only if the burden thereby imposed on the surrounding outside areas as a whole is not too great. I can quite see that there are advantages in the process recommended by the Minister, but I can see also a great number of disadvantages.

The Minister also asked—

“What would be the position of a Greater Brisbane which was confined in its area to a 5-mile radius, while the whole of the outside residential areas were allowed to be divided and subdivided, without the city having any say in that most important matter?”

As a matter of fact, other people have some say in the question of subdivision, which is fully controlled by the Local Authorities Acts. Last year we made a large number of amendments to the Local Authorities Acts for the very purpose of keeping an effective eye on the subdivision of various areas throughout Queensland, so that they might not be too small, and so that there might be some uniformity of plan.

The HOME SECRETARY: We want uniformity.

Mr. MOORE: Is there likely to be uniformity merely because we have a City of Brisbane Act? I am very doubtful. I think that the uniformity in the various areas will depend upon the necessities of those districts as they grow.

The HOME SECRETARY: They are growing very fast.

Mr. MOORE: They are growing fairly well, but the plan of that growth is along the various main roads and other arteries of communication. Settlement develops along those arteries on a fairly definite plan, and the Local Authorities Act gives full power

to control the undue subdivision of land. I have here a table from which I wish to read certain portions in dealing with the question of the community of interest. It gives details of the population within a 5-mile radius and outside that radius. In Committee yesterday the Chairman ruled that hon. members could not get tables and extracts inserted in "Hansard" unless they

were read, but as it would be rather tedious to read the whole of these figures, I would like to obtain permission to put the table in, so that the information may be available to hon. members.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the table be printed in "Hansard"?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

GREATER BRISBANE.

	Area. (Square Miles.)	Population.	Population per Square Mile.
Within 5-Mile Radius—			
Brisbane	5½	45,371	8,249
South Brisbane	4½	40,000	8,880
Ithaca	4¼	21,800	4,580
Windsor	4	19,000	4,750
Hamilton	3	9,559	3,186
Toowong	4½	11,500	2,556
Coorparoo	4	8,684	2,171
Stephens	9	12,403	1,378
Taringa	6	5,920	987
Balmoral	16	10,000	625
Enoggera	38	4,500	118
Totals	99½	188,737	1,902 (Average)
Outside 5-Mile Radius—			
Wynnum	14	10,373	741
Toombul	28	15,100	539
Kedron	45	6,348	148
Sherwood	20	7,100	355
Belmont	27	1,550	57
Yeerongpilly	73	2,600	36
Tingalpa	19½	600	30
Sandgate	6	7,000	1,167
Moggill	55	1,098	20
Totals	285½	51,769	181 (Average)

NUMBER OF RATEPAYERS.

Within 5-Mile Radius	44,804
Outside 5-Mile Radius	18,648
Total	63,452

	LOAN INDEBTEDNESS.		REVENUE.	
	Amount.	Per Ratepayer.	Amount.	Per Ratepayer.
	£	£ s. d.	£	£ s. d.
Within 5-Mile Radius—				
Brisbane	1,056,257	126 9 8	249,447	29 17 5
South Brisbane	330,952	42 3 4	73,424	9 7 1
Ithaca	31,266	5 10 1	25,513	4 9 10
Windsor	118,821	20 9 4	28,677	4 18 9
Hamilton	72,641	23 12 6	26,402	8 11 9
Toowong	42,906	16 8 2	18,523	7 1 8
Coorparoo	55,702	18 13 7	12,050	4 0 9
Stephens	44,369	9 13 0	14,693	3 3 11
Taringa	20,357	10 1 4	8,579	4 4 10
Balmoral	46,253	11 18 11	14,671	3 8 10
Enoggera	11,192	5 10 10	8,208	4 1 3
Totals	1,830,776	40 17 3	480,187	10 14 4
Outside 5-Mile Radius—				
Wynnum	48,682	11 9 9	14,587	3 8 10
Toombul	59,712	11 5 10	20,864	3 18 11
Kedron	4,158	1 9 0	8,075	2 16 4
Sherwood	18,206	5 16 10	9,420	3 0 6
Belmont	18,594	17 1 6	3,659	3 7 2
Yeerongpilly			3,277	1 12 2
Tingalpa	270	1 18 7	240	1 14 3
Sandgate	19,515	7 11 10	9,525	3 14 1
Moggill	568	1 2 8	1,722	3 8 7
Totals	169,705	9 2 0	71,369	3 16 6

Indebtedness Per Capita over Whole Area	£ s. d.	31 10 6
Saving Per Ratepayer in 5-Mile Area	£ s. d.	9 6 9
Increased Liability Per Ratepayer in Outside Area	£ s. d.	22 8 6

Mr. Moore.]

Mr. MOORE: The areas within a 5-mile radius as put forward by the Minister include—Brisbane, South Brisbane, Ithaca, Windsor, Hamilton, Toowong, Coorparoo, Stephens, Taringa, Balmoral, and Enoggera, with a total area of 99½ square miles and a population of 183,737, an average per square mile of population of 1,902. Outside that 5-mile radius is a total of 285½ square miles, including the shires of Wynnum, Toombul, Kedron, Sherwood, Belmont, Yeerongpilly, Tingalpa, Sandgate, and Moggill, with a population of 51,769, or an average per square mile of 181 persons, showing an enormous discrepancy in the density of population and the possibility of a very heavy burden on the sparsely-settled community outside the 5-mile radius before they are in a condition to accept the responsibility of having, amongst other things, a considerable loan indebtedness placed on their shoulders. But I am not altogether interested in the questions of population and the liability per capita, so much as I am interested in the number of ratepayers within those areas, because, after all, those are the people who will have to foot the bill. That question was absolutely neglected in the point of view of the Home Secretary. Of course I can quite understand that considering the nature of the franchise. But the ratepayers will be responsible. What I want to point out is the desirableness of considering the question from the point of view of various ratepayers in the different areas mentioned by the Home Secretary as having been suggested for inclusion in the Greater Brisbane area. I do not want to have that overlooked because of the density of population on the one hand and the community of interest on the other. The Minister himself said that he considered that, if we had a 5-mile area, it would be like a rich squire in his own homestead with poor relations hanging on to his skirts outside. Under the Bill which he has introduced, it appears that the rich squire would be levying a heavy toll on his poor relations if he took them into his homestead under conditions similar to those laid down by this measure.

The argument that it is necessary to have the greater area because of the necessity for a deep-water port within it is very weak. We know that there are many cities where the deep-water ports are not within the city areas at all. Are there likely to be any greater conveniences because a deep-water port happens to be within the Greater Brisbane area than otherwise? It has already got railway communication, and that communication is not likely to be any better merely because the port is taken out of one local authority area and put into another. Take the city of Christchurch in New Zealand. The port of Lyttleton is 12 miles away, but there are no disadvantages so far as Christchurch is concerned. The communication is just as good, and the conveniences are just as good. What advantages would accrue if Pinkenba were brought into the Greater Brisbane area? The Home Secretary did not tell us. He simply said that it was necessary for the port to be within the area.

He also generalised on the statement that it was necessary to have seaside resorts such as Sandgate within the area, so that the workers might have speedy and cheap access to the recreation they can obtain at the seaside. I do not see that bringing such places within the city area itself is going to cheapen

railway fares. The railway communication is there already, and I do not see that any advantage on the ground of density of population or some other reason is going to accrue from bringing Sandgate or such places in rather than leaving them out until they are ready for absorption.

The Home Secretary also pointed out what he termed the injustice to one area which might be outside the Greater Brisbane area of having to maintain two main roads. If those two main roads were merely running across the Toombul area, for instance, and the traffic was going across from some place outside into the city of Brisbane, and they were really not for the benefit of the ratepayers of Toombul at all, I could understand the argument; but as a matter of fact those two main roads end at the sea within the Toombul area. The whole of their length at one end is within the Toombul shire, and they are for the benefit of the ratepayers who live within that shire. They also have a considerable amount of rateable property within the shire on each side to keep them up, but if the main roads went through a section of a shire which had very little use for them, one could understand the argument. The necessity of including that shire in the area, or one or two others such as Moggill—in which case there is a little more justification although not a great deal, because the Main Roads Board are negotiating for taking over one of the roads in the shire—therefore does not exist on that ground.

The HOME SECRETARY: We are endeavouring to get the Moggill Shire Council to enter into an agreement with the Main Roads Board to keep the main roads in the shire in repair.

Mr. MOORE: The Moggill Shire Council will have to shoulder a heavy liability when they come in under this scheme. If they were prepared to accept the liability to the extent that they will have to shoulder when they come under this Bill, they would have ample money to do far more than construct these two main roads, and they would be able to put all their roads in a far better condition.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is if they are content to remain in their present state of undevelopment. The whole of the area must be developed later on.

Mr. MOORE: They are not content to remain in their present undeveloped state, but will develop as the population increases and the necessity arises. At the present time, the Moggill Shire has a density of population of twenty to the square mile.

The HOME SECRETARY: They have all their problems ahead of them.

Mr. MOORE: They are prepared to accept those problems and take them on their own shoulders, and develop the district in the way they consider best as the problems present themselves and they have the money to spend. What the Minister wants to do is to shove on to the Moggill Shire a liability for an indebtedness of £22 per head and then allow that shire to start off from that point under this scheme. If they were prepared to accept the liability of an indebtedness of £22 per head they could probably develop to a far greater extent than is required of them at the present time. The Minister contended that the new scheme would do away with the necessity for having joint boards. In the 5-mile radius

[Mr. Moore.]

there are eleven shires or municipalities, and it will be necessary to have a Health Board dealing with those areas, and the permanent medical officer will have his time fully occupied in looking after the health of that area. The Commissioner of Public Health would be able to keep the councils of the less thickly populated areas up to their obligations in the matter of health. In the 5-mile area you have a population of 133,000, and it is imperative that they would have an effective Health Board, and you are going to detract from the effectiveness of that Health Board by bringing in another area of 75 square miles. Such a step is not going to improve or bring about a pure milk supply. A pure milk supply is not going to be more easily obtainable in a big area than in a small area. If you have a milk supply for 133,000 people, and you add on another 51,000 over a widely distributed area, necessitating the carrying of milk over longer distances at an increased cost of distribution, you are not going to confer any public benefit on those people outside, and certainly it will add to the cost of the milk supply of the people inside. The variety of existing loan rates was put forward as being a great drawback. The variety of loan rates will be entirely done away with in the 5-mile area, because all the different classes of loans, except a few Government loans for the maintenance of roads and channels in various outside shires, happen to apply within the 5-mile radius. A big majority of the joint boards are also operative within that area. No matter how big the area is going to be, you are going to have joint local authority work on the boundaries in connection with small bridges and boundary roads. You cannot get away from that. The argument was advanced that some councils were more enterprising, and had a higher sense of civic development and of the health and comfort of the people, involving heavy liability, due almost entirely to the necessities of the position. The Home Secretary quoted Windsor and Moggill as an illustration. Windsor has an area of 4 square miles, and a density of population of 4,750 to the square mile, and Moggill has an area of 55 square miles, and a density of population of twenty to the square mile. Could a more ridiculous comparison be made? The people of Moggill have accepted the responsibility for the things that were required for the number of people they had in their area. Windsor has done the same, and has spent in proportion the same amount.

The HOME SECRETARY: Under the old Bill Windsor would still have to carry its indebtedness, and pool future loans.

Mr. MOORE: That is not what I am talking about. The hon. gentleman stated that the sense of civic duty in Windsor was more highly developed. He said this—

“The thing that constitutes the weakness of the old proposal is to be found in areas like Windsor and Hamilton, which have borrowed money and improved their areas by putting in efficient drainage and have made the expenditure necessary for the comfort, the welfare, and good government of the areas. We must compare them with Kedron, Moggill, and other centres which have been unable to develop the areas or to improve the conditions of drainage and sanitation which are so necessary for the development of the general health of the community.”

It was not necessary for them to expend a large amount of money like that, because they happened to be in a position in which their scattered and sparsely populated area could not undertake the liability, nor did they require such expenditure.

The first council under this scheme will have power to make practically a new Act for itself. It will practically be able to do that by the ordinances that will be issued, and if they happen to leave anything out of that new Act, they will be governed by the sections of the Local Authorities Act governing those matters.

Again, conditions may be imposed in furtherance of the declared policy of the Government. We are to have an entirely different system coming into vogue in the payment of members and in the system we are going to have for conducting the elections. The ratepayers are not going to have the voice that I consider they should have. The ratepayers are the people who should have the vote in local authority areas, and not the electors. The Opposition have not receded from that standpoint in the slightest. Under the Bill the ratepayers are going to be of secondary importance except that they will still have to find the money. In many cases, though having to pay rates, they will have no vote at all.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Bill does not create that principle.

Mr. MOORE: The Bill does not create the principle, but it perpetuates it. I want to point out that there is no protection for the people who have to foot the bill. Supposing we got a socialist Council in power! We know that all socialists are pledged to the same set of principles, and many things that are done may be unjust and may not be favoured by a large section of the community. The only protection the ratepayer has is that the Governor in Council, or the Minister, by Order in Council, can veto an ordinance, or when it is laid on the table of the House, if it is objected to within one month it can be vetoed there; but is there the slightest possibility of any Government with a majority vetoing an ordinance when it is in furtherance of their general scheme of nationalisation, or municipalisation, or whatever you like to call it? Is it likely that a Government with a majority pledged to the same principles will veto such a proposal? They will not do so no matter what objections are raised against it or what injustices are shown. The Bill provides that aldermen are to be paid £400 per annum, and the mayor is to receive £1,000 per annum. Under that system it appears to me that there will be a large number of people who are not ratepayers putting up for elections, with nothing to recommend them except a loud voice and no conscience; and the probability is that they will offer all sorts of bribes to secure votes to retain their positions. At the present time we have had persons offering considerable bribes at the ratepayers' expense, to secure a position when there was no pay attached to it, and now that the aldermen are to be paid we know there will be all sorts of bribing suggestions put forward as to the limitation of rates in certain areas and the increasing of rates in others.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. gentleman is pessimistic.

Mr. Moore.]

Mr. MOORE: I am not pessimistic.

Mr. MAXWELL: He is a local authority man.

Mr. CARTER: He has not a high moral standard.

Mr. MOORE: That has taken place at municipal elections when no salary was attached to the position.

Mr. CARTER: No visible salary.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member has been a member of the Brisbane City Council, and he has had a better opportunity of judging of whether there were opportunities for receiving invisible salaries or not. I have never had that opportunity. I [11.30 a.m.] say there are opportunities under this Bill of offering concessions at the other fellow's expense, and they will be availed of by people who have nothing to pay, and who will be able to offer all sorts of bribes, not only to attain the positions but to endeavour to retain them, and the rate-payers will have to pay for them. That is a position which is entirely wrong and unjust. We all know perfectly well how this position has developed in the State. Even the Federal elections have developed into the position that the party offering the greatest bribe receives the greatest number of votes. We have had instances of that not only in our Federal but in our State elections.

Mr. CARTER: Did not your party try to bribe an hon. member on this side of the House?

Mr. MOORE: No, the hon. member is absolutely wrong. It will be recognised that that principle will be developed, and the Home Secretary, when introducing the Bill, said that we did not want to have a Mussolini as mayor of Brisbane. If there is any more effective method of securing such a mayor than under the powers contained in this Bill I should like to know what it is. The hon. gentleman is giving a man power to offer any bribe to the electors to secure his return, and there is a possibility that he might be elected by people who would not have to contribute to the cost of fulfilling the promises he made.

The HOME SECRETARY: He will only have the powers that the Council itself confers on him.

Mr. MOORE: We all know that a candidate for the office of mayor or alderman will make definite promises when seeking election, and that the mayor will endeavour to carry out those promises when he is elected; therefore the man who promises the most will have the best opportunity of securing the most votes. He will not care whether he is able to carry out those promises or not, although he may endeavour to do so as far as he possibly can. The unfortunate position is that the outside areas might be brought into the scheme at once, and, having the fewest votes, would suffer accordingly. I quite believe they will be brought in, though possibly not all of them, because we do not know in which direction the city will develop.

The HOME SECRETARY: Will you show me how you would adjust the portions outside of the 5-mile area?

Mr. MOORE: There is only one area, the Shire of Belmont, that would be divided

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under the hon. gentleman's scheme for a 5-mile radius. All the other shires would be left as they are, and their boundaries would be the same, and Belmont could be added to Tingalpa. There is no reason why they should not continue with their present boundaries. They have been fairly satisfactory, and there is no reason why they should not still continue. As the districts develop, they will be able to be brought up to the standard which has been attained in other districts.

The HOME SECRETARY: Belmont has been divided because we do not think the other districts should assume the guarantee of the tramway.

Mr. MOORE: That is the only liability that the Belmont Shire has incurred.

Mr. WRIGHT: It has proved too much for them.

Mr. MOORE: You can find mistakes have occurred in the city of Brisbane and in outside areas, but it cannot be said that because one mistake is made here and there mistakes have been made everywhere.

Mr. KERR: You still have got the Moggill ferry.

Mr. MOORE: All the various roads and bridges that the Minister spoke of come within the present densely populated 5-mile area.

The HOME SECRETARY: They are not all confined to that area.

Mr. MOORE: That is one argument that the hon. gentleman put forward. He mentioned one particular injustice in South Brisbane. The greater portion of the traffic through South Brisbane will be into districts within the 5-mile radius, and there is not a great amount of it that comes from outside that area. Most of the people from the outside areas travel either by rail or tram.

The HOME SECRETARY: Nearly every person in that area uses the roads; they use the trains very little. The people in the outside areas who are engaged in offices in town come in by rail.

Mr. MOORE: I know that nearly all the fruitgrowers at Sunnybank send their goods by train. They used to send them by road.

I want to deal now with the indebtedness that is going to be placed on the people residing outside the 5-mile area. The total indebtedness to the Government in loans for the whole of the area is £545,907, and the interest thereon, with redemption payments, at the present time amounts to £64,276 per annum. If we take the two areas, we find that the indebtedness in loans to the Government within the 5-mile radius amounts to £383,410, and the loans secured from other sources total £1,591,359, or a total indebtedness of £1,974,769. That is all within the 5-mile area. Outside of that area the local authorities have not issued any debentures or obtained loans from anyone but the Government, and their total liabilities are £162,497. The interest and redemption on Government loans within the 5-mile radius totals £43,184, and the interest and redemption on loans from other sources amounts to £121,854, making a total of £165,038. Outside of the 5-mile area the annual liability in respect of interest and redemption is only £21,092. As a sort of bait to induce all those

outside areas to come in and the inside areas not to raise any objection, the Government have brought forward a scheme by which all Government loans are to be pooled and have a currency of forty years. To my mind it is absolutely wrong to do such a thing, because a large amount of the work which has been completed under those loans will only last fourteen or fifteen years, yet the people in thirty or forty years will be called upon to pay interest and redemption on loans that were obtained for works which are already worn out. The principle is wrong, and does not obtain in any part of the State. Loans are only granted for the period which is considered the life of the work except in such schemes as electric lighting. In loans for the construction of roads, bridges, drains, etc., the period should only be for the life of the work. If the loans are pooled, the life of those works will not be extended, although the time of payment will be, and the consequence is that the ratepayers in the future will have to pay double for the work.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you suggest benefited areas?

Mr. MOORE: That is not extending the benefited areas. I admit that the pooling of the loans will be a big saving. If the proposal is to pool the loans for a period of forty years, I assume the average rate of interest will be 5 per cent. There are far more 5½ per cent. loans than loans at 4 per cent. Presumably, the redemption will be, roughly, about 10s. per cent. The interest and redemption on Government loans over the whole area will be 9s. 6d. per ratepayer, or 2s. 6d. per capita. The present interest and redemption of Government loans within the 5-mile radius is 19s. 3d. per ratepayer and 4s. 7d. per capita, while outside the 5-mile radius it is £1 2s. 8d. per ratepayer and 8s. 1d. per capita. The present interest on loans from other sources within the 5-mile radius is £2 14s. 5d. per ratepayer and 13s. per capita, while outside the 5-mile radius no interest is paid because they have no liabilities. The present interest on the total indebtedness of the local authorities within the 5-mile radius is £3 13s. 8d. per ratepayer and 17s. 7d. per capita, while outside the 5-mile radius it is £1 2s. 8d. per ratepayer and 8s. 1d. per capita. The annual interest for the whole area will be £2 7s. 10d. per ratepayer and 12s. 8d. per capita. The average saving to the inhabitants within the 5-mile radius will be £1 5s. 10d. per ratepayer, or 4s. 11d. per capita, while the average increased payment by the inhabitants of the area outside the 5-mile radius will be £1 5s. 2d. per ratepayer and 4s. 7d. per capita. That is a pretty big load for the people to carry, and the Government, under the Bill, will reduce the loan indebtedness inside the radius by £9 6s. 9d., while they will increase the per capita indebtedness outside the area by £2 8s. 6d.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are not taking into account loans expended on reproductive works.

Mr. MOORE: I am taking all the figures that were available to me. On all of them the liability is still there for the loan indebtedness per ratepayer or per capita. Even if those various industries or electric light schemes are paying, the loan indebtedness is still on the ratepayers in that area. Here is the position with regard to the

Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board—

Revenue from rates and sales of water	342,391	0	0
Average amount per building	6	19	9
Loan indebtedness	5,000,651	0	0
Average per building supplied	102	1	0

—	Local Authority.	Water and Sewerage.	Total.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
<i>Total Loan Indebtedness of Whole Area.</i>			
Per building or ratepayer	28 5 9	102 1 1	130 6 10
<i>Total Revenue of Whole Area.</i>			
Per building or ratepayer	7 16 0	6 19 9	14 15 9

This is a very considerable sum. What I want to get at is: Are the people in the outside areas going to receive in the future an adequate benefit to compensate them for the amount of liability that is going to be placed on them immediately? In my opinion they are not. I believe in a gradual absorption. I believe that, as the density of population grows in the various areas and the necessity arises for improvements, the people can construct those improvements much cheaper at that time than by accepting an immediate liability and possibly having to depend on a council on which they may have little influence. We know very well that under the system of election the areas having the greatest number of votes will receive the greatest consideration. It is all very fine to say that, if all these people in the outside areas can combine and decide upon a common policy, they will be able to influence the Greater Brisbane Council in seeing that the requisite amount of money is spent in such areas to bring them up to the required standard of comfort and efficiency; but it is a different thing to carry out such a scheme.

The HOME SECRETARY: You might argue that so far as this House is concerned. The same system will be operating.

Mr. MOORE: The Minister must know that the spending of municipal money depends on the representation. Where the greatest number of votes is situated there the greatest amount of money is spent. The same thing applies to this House.

The HOME SECRETARY: We shall get bigger men under this scheme.

Mr. MOORE: It is all very fine to say we shall get bigger men, but how can the Minister guarantee that? The Minister puts forward the proposition that twenty men at £400 a year will be bigger men than the members of the present local authorities. In my opinion they are more likely to be smaller men.

The HOME SECRETARY: No matter what class of men we get, they will devote the whole of their time and attention to this matter.

Mr. MOORE: Is it an advantage to have the services for a whole day from a man who is ignorant or stupid rather than the services for half an hour a day from a man who is efficient?

The HOME SECRETARY: You are prejudiced.

Mr. Moore.]

Mr. MOORE: Such an argument is absurd. We want to get the best men. To say that a man must give six months on end of his whole time does not necessarily ensure that we shall get the best men. We are more likely to get individuals for this £400 a year who cannot earn that sum in any other walk of life, and that is what I am afraid of. You will find the position will be that where the greatest number of votes are that area will secure the greatest attention and the greatest expenditure of money.

The HOME SECRETARY: That might be so if the election of the twenty men took place over the whole area.

Mr. MOORE: That would be an absurdity. Under the proposed conditions it would be very difficult to get even reasonable consideration for the people living in the outside areas. We all know there will be competition for the votes and billets, and where the greatest number of votes originate the greater amount of money will be spent. I think the Minister recognises that. He knows that we are similarly placed in this House. Where the greatest number of votes come from they receive the greatest attention.

The HOME SECRETARY: That does not follow at all.

Mr. MOORE: It may not follow, but it actually happens.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not with this Government, because they have done more for the people outside than they have for the people inside.

Mr. MOORE: Possibly there may be some reason for spending an amount of money in a particular area. As a rule that is connected with political support. The Minister said we were likely to attract a better class of men under the proposed scheme. I can see nothing to ensure that that will be the case. We are far more likely to get men who are not as efficient as those we have at present, because, when you demand the whole time of a man for £400 a year, you are not going to get the same intelligence and outlook as you would from a man who can carry on his business while giving portion of his time to the duties. It is not the duty of the members of the Council to go round and look for various things to be done. Theirs is an administrative business, and they should see that their officers report to them and give the requisite information as to what should be carried out in the different districts.

The HOME SECRETARY: I take it there will be sub-departments.

Mr. MOORE: Presumably so, but the arguments put forward so far show that these men will be expected to devote the whole of their time to their work.

Mr. HANSON: You could apply the same principle to this House.

Mr. MOORE: I would not do that at all. Hon. members have not to give up the whole of their time, and I do not think we would be likely to get better representation if that became a rule. We have to recognise that there will be a large number of people looking for billets under this City of Brisbane scheme. My contention is, the people who have to shoulder a liability of over £20 a head could spend the amount involved much more efficiently at the appropriate moment than by coming under the scheme proposed

in this Bill. They do not want to enter into that liability before the work is required. Take the case of an area with a large number of people. It is absolutely essential to carry out improvements to safeguard the health and comfort of the people owing to the congested nature of the district. Then, take a large area with a scattered population. They do not need the same money or the same conveniences. They have open spaces and do not want the same provision for ventilation and drainage. The conditions are totally different. My view is that the Bill should be limited in the first instance to practically a 5-mile radius, and there should be a process of gradual absorption as it is found necessary and advantageous to take in outside areas. To force them into the position at the present time and place a large liability on their shoulders is unfair, and it is not going to give them the opportunity to progress in the way they should progress. The community of interest is not there at present, and will only come into existence as the city progresses in the various directions. At the present time we cannot tell in which way the city is likely to extend. Some of the outside districts may not develop at all, while other sections may develop to a considerable extent in the next few years. A great deal depends on the way in which the trams extend and on certain other considerations that operate in the various districts. But we do want to see that no injustice is done merely because the Minister sees what a Greater Brisbane is likely to be fifty years ahead, by which time he hopes everything will have turned out as he expects. I trust that the Minister will go carefully into this matter and see whether it is not possible to do as has been done in other places; that is, start in a small way and gradually increase the area as the population increases and as the needs of the districts warrant. If it is shown that the inside city is suffering from maladministration or a lack of conveniences through congestion, and that an outside area will benefit by being brought in, then there would be a justifiable excuse for bringing in that outside area. I do not think the Minister can show by compelling these outside areas to come in to-day that he is going to benefit the whole. That is going to be for the benefit of a section and to the disadvantage of another section. Unless the Minister can show that the whole of the people are going to be benefited within a short space of time by being brought into this scheme, and that the benefits are not going to be counterbalanced by the financial obligations that will be placed on certain sections, then it will be an injustice to go on with the Bill in its present form. After reading the Minister's speech I can quite understand his point of view. He looks at it purely from what he hopes will take place in the future. I do not know whether he has gone into the question as to whether it is going to be just or fair to the outside areas, because in the table which he put into "Hansard" he stated that the valuations of Brisbane and South Brisbane were the only two valuations that he considered to be fair, and that the others ought to be increased by 25 per cent. straight away. If you are going to increase the valuations of the other areas by 25 per cent. straight off, it is going to mean a big difference to the people in the outside areas. Presumably all these areas have been

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valued by competent valuers, and the rate-payers in those areas have a chance of appealing. We know that in many cases valuations have been appealed against, and that the appeals have been successful. To say that the valuations in these outside areas are 25 per cent. too low is to me an intimation that it is expected that the valuations in those areas will be increased by 25 per cent. I do not know whether the people in these outside areas realise the financial obligation that is going to be placed on their shoulders, and that the benefits likely to accrue are only problematical. I quite see that to a limited extent this scheme is going to benefit the people in the congested areas, but the benefits that are likely to accrue in the outside areas are only problematical. In view of the various suggestions made by different local authorities outside and the protests made by the residents in those areas, and that at the conferences that have been held, there was nearly always a large section in favour of gradual absorption rather than of forcing the whole area to come in at once, I think the Minister would be wise to adopt the smaller area. The very object of introducing the Bill last year was to give people an opportunity of discussion, and it seems rather a pity that the Minister has not taken more notice of the views of the people who will be affected.

Mr. McLACHLAN (*Merthyr*): I listened very attentively to the remarks of the leader of the Opposition, and, while I have listened with a great deal of pleasure to the hon. member on many occasions in the past when he has appeared to be au fait with his subject, I must confess that this morning he gave me the impression that he was not familiar with the subject he was discussing. He seemed unable to concentrate on any of the particular points he raised and did not develop his arguments as he usually does. He dealt principally with the area it is proposed to include in this Greater Brisbane scheme. He argued that the area is too large, and endeavoured to controvert the arguments used by the Home Secretary when introducing the Bill. But, while he argued that the 10-mile radius was too large, he did not advocate any particular lesser area.

Mr. MOORE: I advocated the smaller area put forward by the Minister.

Mr. McLACHLAN: My interjection elicited from him the statement that he was referring to the area put forward by the Minister. If he was referring to the lesser area put forward by the Minister, he did not disprove the contention of the Minister or the arguments he used in proving that the proposed 10-mile area is the better area of the two. The speech delivered by the Minister was couched in language that was both simple and explanatory, and he went to considerable care and pains in showing that the greater area was the better area for the City of Brisbane. Anybody who has read the history of local government work throughout the British Dominions can see that there is a movement in favour of larger areas in connection with local government. I look upon local government as a very important sphere of work in the conduct of the affairs of the State. The local governing bodies deal in a greater measure with the domestic life of the people than either the State Parliament or the Commonwealth Parliament, and under the Bill that we are discussing the men who will have

control of the Greater Brisbane City, and who will be engaged in the administration of the Act, are having conferred upon them powers which will enable them to deal effectively and in a large way with the important matters that affect the domestic life of the people. It appeared to me that the leader of the Opposition, in the concluding portion of his speech, practically attacked the principle of the Greater Brisbane scheme. Most people, even though they may differ with the actual clauses in the Bill, favour the principle of a Greater Brisbane. In support of that I would like to quote one or two extracts from newspapers published in Brisbane. The "Courier" of 17th September, in referring to the salient points in the Bill, had this to say—

"With its general principles we have always been in agreement. On the second reading of the Bill there will, no doubt, be some criticism, but that probably will be confined to the scope of operation rather than to the general principle of the Bill. The principle is good."

[12 noon.]

There we have the Brisbane "Courier" admitting that the principle of the Bill is good, and insisting that the extension of the city area and the creation of a greater authority than we have at the present time in the city of Brisbane is necessary. The "Daily Standard," of the same date, has this to say—

"No reasonable, intelligent citizen can cavil at the proposal to incorporate in one authority the divers shire, town, and city councils operating in the metropolitan area. It has been proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that the present division of authority has acted in many ways as a curb upon development on modern lines, and has caused waste of effort and needless expenditure of public funds. We believe that any indifference as to the city's progress, or lack of it, in the past has been due to the very thing which will cease to exist on the creation of a Greater Brisbane. Parochialism, arising from the narrowing of municipal activity, has been a distinct drawback to the advancement of the city. Remove that parochialism and you get a broader outlook and a healthier municipal sentiment."

I think that shows exactly what will be the result of the administration under the Bill. It will have the effect of removing parochialism, and many of the small shires which are operating at the present time will be done away with. We shall have one central authority controlling the greater area which will comprise the city, which, in my opinion, is destined in the not far distant future to be perhaps the greatest in the Commonwealth of Australia. It must be remembered that in so far as this Bill is concerned we are not legislating for the immediate present or for the immediate future. The Government, in introducing this measure, are looking fifty, sixty, or seventy years ahead. They are considering the rate at which the city must grow, taking as a guide its growth and development during the last few years. Brisbane is destined to become a great city. We have that on the authority of men who have travelled the world over, and who have had experience of the other cities of the Commonwealth. I will quote just one more

Mr. McLachlan.]

extract in connection with the Bill from the Brisbane "Telegraph" of 17th September instant—

"Most people are agreed upon the central principle of the Greater Brisbane Bill now before Parliament. Broadly speaking, the 240,000 people occupying the metropolitan area are one people, having community of interest, and they should not require a multiplicity of bodies for purposes of local government. Indeed, where numerous authorities exist, as at present, there must be overlapping and clashing in various directions, which will be avoided under the Greater Brisbane scheme. Uniformity of policy, of by-laws, and so forth are desirable things attainable only by amalgamation, while economy in administration should also result."

I think that is a very fine statement in connection with what is expected to be secured under this Bill, and I feel sure that those results will be secured under the capable administration which will obtain under the measure.

I differ from the leader of the Opposition as to the class of representative which will be secured under the Bill. As pointed out by the Home Secretary by way of interjection, the franchise is not being altered. The franchise under which the aldermen of the City of Brisbane Council will be elected is the same as the franchise which is being used at the present time for the election of members of the various councils comprised in the area included in this Greater Brisbane scheme. The franchise is the same franchise that we have in connection with the return of members of the Legislative Assembly. The same franchise exists practically all over the Commonwealth.

Mr. MAXWELL: No—not the franchise in connection with local authorities.

Mr. McLACHLAN: I meant that the franchise which is being used in local authority elections in Queensland and for the return of members to this House is the same as the franchise which is being used in connection with the return of members to the Legislative Assemblies in other parts of Australia. If it is admitted—and it is admitted—that the franchise we have is the proper franchise to use in returning men to the State and Commonwealth Parliaments and local authorities—

Mr. KELSO: We do not admit it.

Mr. McLACHLAN: The hon. member may not admit it, but the fact that he does not admit it would not make it wrong.

Mr. MAXWELL interjected.

Mr. McLACHLAN: Even the fact that the hon. member for Toowong does not admit it will not make it wrong. The fact that the principle is right has been evidenced by the number of times the present Government have been returned by the people.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: That is no argument.

Mr. McLACHLAN: The franchise on which the Greater Brisbane Council will be elected is the same franchise as that on which the present City Council is elected. I have not heard that any great fault has been found with the result of elections for the Brisbane Council or local authorities generally which have taken place under that franchise.

[Mr. McLachlan.

I think the Government were wise last year in introducing the City of Brisbane Bill, as by so doing an opportunity was afforded to those who take an interest in local government work to analyse the measure and see if it could be in any way improved. As the result of that measure having been before the various local authorities and the conferences which have been held, and the Minister also having considered the matter in the interim, there have been necessary amendments made, and the Bill we are discussing to-day is a very different measure from that which was introduced last year.

Mr. MAXWELL: Even different from what Mr. Huxham, the former Home Secretary, introduced.

Mr. McLACHLAN: Probably so. As the Press reports I have quoted show, the Bill at the present time is acceptable to the metropolitan Press so far as principle and area are concerned.

Mr. MAXWELL: You are wrong there.

Mr. McLACHLAN: The hon. member might give his authority for that statement.

Mr. MAXWELL: I will give it to you.

Mr. McLACHLAN: I have not observed that the metropolitan Press has been criticising the measure in any drastic way at all.

The principal objection to the previous Bill was on the ground of the powers which were conferred on the Governor in Council by Orders in Council in connection with the operation of the Bill. I quite admit that under the last Bill there was very little power given to the Greater Brisbane City Council. Power was given to the council in certain directions, but it was practically taken away by the system of government by Orders in Council which was embodied in the Bill. That system has been eliminated from the present Bill, and while there are some utilities in connection with which I would have liked control given to the Greater Brisbane Council straight away, there are only three or four of the functions of local government in regard to which control has not been given to the Greater Brisbane Council under the Bill. I refer to the Brisbane Tramway Trust, the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade Board. I quite realise that it would be a very big order for the Brisbane tramway system to be handed over to the Greater Brisbane Council at once, but I do say that at the present time there is a great deal of difficulty being experienced by the Brisbane City Council in connection with the roads owing to the power possessed and exercised by the Brisbane Tramway Trust.

At 12.10 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Pollock-Gregory), relieved the Speaker in the chair.

Mr. McLACHLAN: It means that the City Council practically has control over the roads only in conjunction with some other authority, and it is not able to say that certain things shall be done which in its opinion it is very necessary to do. I think it is desirable to endeavour so to arrange matters under the Bill that such details of administration as I speak of may be carried out under the control of one authority without any conflicting interests. I quite realise that provision is made whereby the difficulty will disappear as time goes on, and perhaps

it will not be long after the constitution of the Greater Brisbane authority becomes an accomplished fact that that authority will ask for the power to control not only the tramway system but also the water supply and sewerage services. In this connection I would like to say that the City Council has experienced difficulty with the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board with regard to some matters over which the Board has control but which should necessarily be controlled by the City Council. It is really a case in which a lesser authority has power over a greater authority, which prevents the latter from carrying out the functions of local government. At any rate, provision is made in the Bill for the removal of those difficulties so soon as the Greater Brisbane Council is prepared to ask for the necessary powers, and no matter what Government might be in power—and there is not likely to be any change for a long time—(Opposition laughter)—when those powers are asked for I am sure they will be granted. I hope that that time will not be long delayed.

The Bill provides that the Council "shall be charged with the government of the city, and shall have control of the working and business of such government," and then goes on to set out the various matters over which the Council shall have control. In particular it mentions roads, parks, markets, baths, tramways, traffic, public health, sanitation, and so on.

Mr. KELSO: The preservation of peace?

* Mr. McLACHLAN: I am surprised that a metropolitan member should consider that necessary. I am sure that the hon. member for Toowong and any other hon. member who has had any experience of local authority work in the city of Brisbane knows that, as a Council, we have no control over traffic at the present time. I do not say that the regulation of the traffic is not being properly carried out, but the Brisbane City Council has lately gone in for a policy of widening streets in the city for the purpose of providing for the extra traffic which the growth of the city brings in its train. Quite recently the Council decided to widen Adelaide street by 14 feet, and near the Normal School they put down a roadway of that width outside the street itself for the purpose of diverting the delivery vans, and thereby helping to give greater facilities to the general travelling public. But the Council found that, as soon as they had shifted those vans, stationary motor cars took their place, and the relief sought for was not secured. I had hoped that under the powers contained in the Bill we would have full control of traffic so that we may be able to deal with such matters. On inquiry, however, I am informed that the Bill does not confer that power on the Greater Brisbane authority, and that the police will still have control, and that it will be necessary to insert a special clause in this Bill or get an amendment of the Brisbane Traffic Act whereby the control of traffic will be transferred from the police to the city authority. I certainly think that should be done, because the Council should have control over the traffic of the city.

Another matter over which the Greater Brisbane authority will have control—very necessarily in my opinion—is the regulation of noxious and offensive trades. At the present time, of course, the Brisbane City Council has power to make its own by-laws, and under them may set apart areas for such

trades, but the Council has no control outside its own boundary. It could not, for instance, put them out in Toowong without having the hon. member for Toowong arguing against it. Under this Bill, however, the whole of the area being under the control of one authority, representing the whole of the other authorities existing to-day, full control will be exercised over these things, and the Greater Brisbane Council will be able to say where these noxious trades shall be located, so that they may be established away from the actual centres of population. At the present time, they are very offensive to residents in closely settled areas.

The power to deal with public health is also very necessary. During the outbreak of plague it was found necessary to constitute a board comprising practically the whole of the area now covered by the Greater Brisbane Bill for the purpose of bringing under one competent authority the administration of the law in that respect. It was necessary to levy on the different local authorities to get funds for the central administration in a matter of that kind. The same thing happened recently in regard to the influenza outbreak, when the Metropolitan Joint Health Board was established. These things go to show the great necessity there is for a central controlling authority in health matters generally, and under this Bill we get that power.

Another matter of very great importance is the control of the subdivision of land, and town planning generally. Quite a number of organisations and associations have discussed the Bill. It has been discussed by the Town Planning Association and by a body called the City Surveyors' Association, and both bodies have gone carefully into the Bill and passed resolutions approving of the area proposed by the Bill. It is the business of the men who are in such an association as the Town Planning Association and kindred associations, and all those who are anxious to see the city grow and develop in a proper manner, to look into matters of this kind and compare what is taking place in the city in which they may live with what is obtaining in other cities of the world. We have these two important organisations—important from the point of view of being able to express their views on a measure of this kind—carrying resolutions in favour of the area and recognising the importance of the Bill. At the present time the various councils have the right to carry out their own work in connection with the subdivision of land, consequently we have the spectacle of various authorities allowing different frontages, etc., and it makes it very difficult to go in for a proper system of town planning. With a local authority such as will be constituted under this Bill, controlling the area set out in the Bill, we shall have only one administrative authority dealing with the subdivision of land, the cutting up of new estates, the planning of parks, and providing breathing spaces for the people. That is very necessary in administering an important measure like this. Men administering a Bill of this kind do their very best in the interests of the people, and we know full well that it is very necessary in the development of a great city to see that congested areas do not develop, and that many breathing places are provided for the people.

Mr. KERR: How are you going to do that?

Mr. McLachlan.]

Mr. McLACHLAN: The Bill will institute a policy which will make for the development of the city and will also make for uniformity in the matter of that development. In this morning's "Daily Mail" I read the remarks by Mr. H. E. Morton, engineer to the Melbourne City Council. It is most important that his remarks be quoted so that they can be printed in "Hansard," as they very clearly set out what is necessary in a matter of this kind. Mr. Morton says—

"Unless provision is made without delay for future development, Brisbane is going to be faced with considerable traffic confusion within the next few years."

I have been speaking about the traffic problem. It is quite admitted by everybody that something will have to be done in that direction, and the sooner the Greater City Council is instituted and has full control of the traffic the better it will be for the city of Brisbane. Mr. Morton is further reported—

"The trouble in Australia is, that most people living in a city see it grow from day to day, but they only see the particular sections in which they live. They do not see the whole growth, and it is only when they bump up against some trouble that they suddenly realise something is wrong.

"Sydney, to some extent, and even Brisbane, were working more on the American town planning idea, because they were starting with widening what were practically internal streets. In Melbourne there was a Town Planning Commission, of which Mr. Morton was a member. The commission had discovered so many urgent things that required immediate attention that an interim report would be furnished in a few weeks' time. Most of these matters were in connection with the congestion of traffic. They had several bottle-necks, as in Brisbane, and they desired to get these opened up so as to permit trams to travel at a greater rate of speed to the outer districts, where land was cheaper.

"The work of the commission in Melbourne showed how necessary it was for all cities seriously to undertake town planning work. The need also exists in Brisbane, and if the Greater Brisbane Bill becomes law a great opportunity will be presented of doing something. One of the first works of the new council should be immediately to appoint a town planning committee to deal with the particular subject in all its aspects.

"Do you approve of the Greater Brisbane scheme?" Mr. Morton was asked. In reply, he said that from a town-planning point of view it was an excellent thing. The trouble hitherto has been that each municipality has looked at things from its own point of view, and did not consider what assistance could be rendered its neighbours. Naturally, the people who provided the money wanted it spent there, and not to the advantage of people adjoining. As a matter of fact, Australian capital cities have too many suburban or shire areas. Up to a certain point this is a good thing in the early stages, because local matters probably receive more attention than they would

get with a bigger council. But there comes a time when the city reaches a certain stage of growth that it cannot be kept individually, but must be kept collectively. It is a very difficult matter, unless there is one head to control the city. Brisbane has reached that stage when individual control is no longer needed, and the greater council should at once consider traffic and other problems with the aid of a town-planning scheme. If something is not done quickly there will be tremendous congestion."

That is the opinion of Mr. Morton, who is the engineer of the Melbourne City Council, a member of the London Institute of Civil Engineers, the Australian Institute of Civil Engineers and Surveyors, the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects, and several other important bodies, and his opinion should receive very weighty consideration.

Mr. MAXWELL: He is a very able man.

Mr. McLACHLAN: It is most opportune to have such remarks by Mr. Morton published at the present time. The Bill is one that is of sufficient importance to engage the serious attention of all hon. members. The need for the extension of the area of the city of Brisbane is admitted by all thinking people. The newspapers of the city agree that the time is ripe for an extension of the area of the city, and agree with the principles of the Bill, and do not disagree with the area proposed.

The powers proposed to be conferred are not too great. If one had time, one could relate—probably this is known to many hon. members—what is being done in the city of Glasgow from a municipal standpoint. The city of Glasgow is perhaps the most up-to-date city in the world, so far as municipal control is concerned. They are continually undertaking greater activities in connection with municipal life. I look forward to the time when Brisbane will develop into a greater city than it is now, when the Greater Brisbane Council will have power to control everything and do everything in the same way as is being done by the Glasgow City Council. I feel sure that, when that time comes, the people who will then be living in this city and who will be reaping the benefit of the legislation that is now introduced will thank these men who will constitute the first Council of the Greater City—the men who will be engaged in laying the foundation for our greater city, a city which is, in my opinion, destined to be one of the greatest in the Commonwealth of Australia.

[12.30 p.m.]

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I listened very attentively to the remarks of the Minister when introducing this Bill, and I found his introductory remarks very instructive indeed. At the same time the antics of the Assistant Home Secretary rather added some amusement to the deliverance of the hon. gentleman, and in a way removed the speech away from the atmosphere of seriousness.

Before I go on to deal with the principles of the Bill, I would like to pay a tribute to those men who have been engaged for so many years in local government work in the areas which are about to be abolished. (Hear, hear!) Some of them have given their services since the inception of some of the local authorities. Those men have given good and honest work gratuitously.

[*Mr. McLachlan.*]

They have carried out the work to the best of their ability with the means and limited powers at their disposal, and have, as far as possible, made a success and done their part in building up the City of Brisbane. It is only due for me to say that they have earned the respect, approbation, thanks, and gratitude of the people of Queensland, and especially the people of Brisbane, for the work they have done. (Hear, hear!)

I would like to say in dealing with the Bill itself that it has for its object the good government of the metropolitan area of Brisbane. The best method of attaining that object is to centre in a single body all the functions of local government, the elimination of all other authorities exercising control of what are really local functions, and to formulate a scheme defining or establishing the power and functions of that body when constituted, and making provision for the financing of the scheme.

I have for many years taken a very keen interest in local government. I have made a careful study of the Bill, and I have come to the conclusion that the Bill and its principles are very democratic indeed. In my opinion the Bill largely embodies the true principles and ideals of local government. It is local government in the truest sense of the word, because it places in the hands of the people the power and authority to make their own laws. At the present time the functions of local government in the metropolitan area are distributed among a number of constituted independent bodies, including the Cities of Brisbane and South Brisbane, the towns and shires of Hamilton, Ithaca, Sandgate, Toowong, Windsor, Wynnum, Balmoral, Belmont, Coorparoo, Enoggera, Kedron, Moggill, Sherwood, Stephens, Taringa, Tingalpa, Toombul, and Yeerongpilly. The Bill proposes to grant a charter for the whole of this area. The local authorities in the past have complained of the absence of sufficient powers to enable them to function properly. I do not think that such a complaint could be made in connection with this Bill. With such a multiplicity of local authorities as are found in the metropolitan area, it is obvious that it is impossible to give effect to a single co-ordinate policy in connection with roads, bridges, sewers, drains, parks, reserves, town planning, housing, transit, light, water, public health, and all the other functions of local government. Therefore, one of the greatest advantages of the scheme will be a co-ordination and defined comprehensive policy regarding all those services. We recognise that metropolitan Brisbane is one organic whole, but, if we allow it to be chopped up into blocks, each independent of the other as at present, we weaken instead of strengthen the powers of local control, co-ordination of services, and uniformity of management which will come about under the scheme. We are benefiting by the experience of older cities. We are not legislating for the present, for to-morrow, or for a few years ahead, but practically for generations ahead, when Brisbane will be taking its place as one of the leading cities of the world.

Mr. GLEDSON: This is the most optimistic note from the Opposition for a long time.

Mr. KING: I never decry my own city or State.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KING: Brisbane is a young city, and it is up to us to try and avoid the mistakes that have been made in older cities, and to create and develop our city on the most up-to-date lines with a proper perspective as to the necessities of the future and the generations to follow.

The Bill is a very great improvement on the previous Bill, which contained many objectionable features. I am very glad indeed that the Government dropped that Bill. They could see at once, after the Bill had been discussed by people who were interested in local government, that it was absolutely useless to go on with that measure. There were many objectionable features in it. There were practically no powers given under the Bill beyond those powers contained in the Local Authorities and Health Acts, and other existing Acts. What additional powers were to be given were to be granted from time to time by the Governor in Council. As a matter of fact, in the exercise of those powers the local authority practically had no discretion at all. Although they had a Greater Brisbane under the previous scheme, practically no power whatever was granted to enable the council to engage in any undertaking unless it first applied to the Governor in Council for an Order in Council authorising it to do so. Even then the city council was to have no discretion in the exercise of those powers. The present Bill is a vastly different Bill. It gives very great and ample powers, on which I will say a few words later on.

Before I get on to the principles of the Bill I would like to make a few remarks about some of the other greater cities, because although our city is a small one so far as population is concerned, the principles that have actuated other cities in enlarging their areas and co-ordinating their functions apply equally as well to Brisbane and the scheme we have under consideration. Greater Glasgow and Greater Birmingham have always been held up as models of the greater city development. They have practically municipalised all services and public utilities, and have made a complete unification of local government facilities. Glasgow has only an area of 30 square miles, and Birmingham an area of 68 square miles. That will compare with the area of Greater Brisbane. So far a Greater London has not been created. Meetings have been held in connection with the establishment of a Greater London, but so far nothing has eventuated. If we had a Greater London, it would probably include an area of 693 square miles. Included therein would be the City of London, the London County Council, twenty-seven municipal subordinate boroughs, and other independent boroughs and county councils. Although several Royal Commissions have been appointed to investigate the problem of a Greater London, no decision has as yet been arrived at. Probably the problem is too big a one to tackle.

Mr. WRIGHT: Are they ever going to feel the need of it?

Mr. KING: Yes, I think it is generally conceded that the Greater City movement is one that is commencing to appeal to the people, and is a movement that will certainly grow.

I would like to say a few words about Greater Chicago. Chicago has something in common with the City of Brisbane, because

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in Chicago they not only increased the area of the city but they have gone in for a unification of service. In Greater Chicago there was an area of 200 square miles, and a further area of 176 square miles was added, making a total of 376 square miles. It is not only an extension scheme so far as the area is concerned, but also a unification scheme so far as its services are concerned, as all services of public necessity were not previously controlled.

A very interesting report was prepared by the Chicago Bureau of Public Efficiency in 1916 dealing with the unification of local governments in Chicago. The report says—

“This report on the ‘Unification of Local Governments in Chicago’ is the sequel to the report of the Chicago Bureau of Public Efficiency issued in 1913 entitled ‘The Nineteen Local Governments in Chicago.’”

It is curious that we have nineteen local governments affected by our measure. This treatise declared that the greatest need of Chicago was unification. It goes on—

“The main purpose of this report is to show the need of complete unification of the local governments within the Metropolitan Community of Chicago, and to present a simple plan of responsible governmental organisation under which greater efficiency might be expected from public officials.”

The preamble on page 7 says—

“Mounting taxes without corresponding increase in the volume and quality of public services continually embarrassed public finances. Widespread dissatisfaction with local administration and frequent clashes of the different authorities with one another, forced this community to serious consideration of the question of fundamental reorganisation of local government.”

On page 29 of the same work this statement appears—

“It is customary to think of benefits of consolidation of governing bodies primarily in terms of money savings . . .

“However, even if there were no money savings to be realised by consolidation or even if reorganisation on lines of unity were to call for larger expenditures instead of a decrease, the benefits of the reorganisation in the way of improved services would justify the carrying out of the programme of unification.

“This community is poorly served by this hodge-podge of irresponsible governing agencies, not only independent of one another, but often pulling and hauling at cross purposes.”

I am making those quotations because I think they are very much to the point and are quite applicable to the Brisbane scheme, as both schemes, as I said before, not only involve larger areas but also involve a scheme for the unification of all services of public utility. It is pointed out that even if there is no money saving the benefits arising from improved services brought about by such reorganisation would justify the proposed unification.

Then we have Baltimore, which has extended its area by the addition of another 50 square miles. This was only an extension

scheme, as it had unification so far as services were concerned. I am referring to Baltimore as a vexed question there was the question of the location of rural lands, which was met by a scheme of differential taxation. In the present Bill provision is made for differential taxation on lands used for primary production. I have referred to Baltimore because we have a somewhat similar problem when dealing with this Bill.

At 12.49 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. KING: We come now to one of the great principles of the Bill, that is the question of area. Although a big factor in deciding the area should be community of interest, yet there are other considerations of equal and even greater importance which demand serious attention before we commit ourselves to the scheme. I know different opinions are held as to what constitutes community of interest. I want to say right here and now that I have no doubt in my mind that there is community of interest in the larger area. I think that prevails, because, after all, what is community of interest? It is common interest—nothing more or less than common interest. For instance, is there not common interest in all the main arterial roads leading from Brisbane? There is community of interest there. A city or community is an organic whole. The people of Brisbane, numbering about 239,000 in the metropolitan area, constitute a community. How many times have the nineteen local authorities affected by this Bill been called together to take joint action? It has happened time after time. There was a Joint Plague Board, I think, as far back as 1901, an Influenza Board, a Joint Health Board, all appointed for the purpose of safeguarding the community allied by ties of common interest and common protection. There is no question about the constitution of a community of interest in such cases as those I have mentioned. If, on the other hand, these joint boards had been confined to small areas or even to a 5-mile radius, whilst the inner city would have had sufficient health services the outside areas would have had none. It must be remembered that it is outside the 5-mile radius that the noxious trades have been established. In all these matters there is a community of interest. Community of interest is an established fact so far as all these contiguous local authorities are concerned. All main arterial roads extend beyond the 5-mile radius. Sandgate, Redcliffe, Wynnum, Manly, Pinkenba, Logan road, Ipswich road, Mount Glorious, and Moggill road—all extend beyond the 5-mile radius. Furthermore, according to the census of 1921 the population of metropolitan Brisbane was 210,000, and I think the present population is 235,000. It is a growing population. Public utilities such as gas, electric light, sanitary service, and water supply practically all extend as far as the 10-mile radius and serve the nineteen local authorities. There is community of interest in regard to all these services.

With regard to the population of the metropolitan area, it must be remembered that it is growing at a tremendous rate. Between 1911 and 1923 the rate of increase was 5 per cent. per annum. If the present rate is maintained and Queensland is not ruined by this socialistic Government, there is no reason why within the next twenty-five

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years we should not have a population of 900,000 or 1,000,000 within the Brisbane area.

Mr. WRIGHT: You are an optimist.

Mr. KING: Does the hon. member not think it is going to grow at that rate?

Mr. WRIGHT: I do.

Mr. KING: Then the hon. member holds the same opinion that I do. The first essential in city planning—control of public services—is clearly within the constitutional right of any community, and involves no new feature save the fact that, when its scope is made city-wide, it takes official cognisance of the organic unity of the entire community, and that the problem must be approached from the standpoint of a comprehensive survey of the totality of all requirements as distinguished from unco-ordinated plans for merely local improvements. Community of interest in the metropolitan area was also apparent to a very large extent in the creation of the Victoria Bridge Board. All the local authorities included in the Greater Brisbane, with the exception of Toombul, Kedron, and Sandgate, were included under the jurisdiction of the Victoria Bridge Board. Personally I considered that Toombul, Kedron, and Sandgate should also have been included, because I thought the South Brisbane local authority and south-side areas were being unduly taxed. I went so far as to arrange a deputation to wait on the Home Secretary for the time being to try and include those areas within the Victoria Bridge Board area. It is quite apparent that other bridges will have to be built over the Brisbane River, as the one in existence, besides being out of the way in many respects, is now quite inadequate for the growing demand and for a proper and economic dispersal of the traffic. I understand that in Melbourne they want five new bridges over the Yarra to deal with the traffic of that city, but they cannot go on with those bridges on account of the divided control. It must be admitted that unified control is going to simplify the creation of any bridges that are required to be built over the Brisbane River.

Mr. WRIGHT: It is a much easier proposition to build a bridge over the Yarra than over the Brisbane River.

Mr. KING: Quite so; the Yarra is not a river. If any additional bridges were to be built over the Brisbane River, the area to be charged with the cost would most assuredly be the metropolitan area, recognising all the time the common interests of the nineteen communities, which must be considered as one community in this connection.

Regarding the river itself, I consider that provision should be made placing the control of the river under the City Council without any Bridge Board. Whilst local authorities have certain powers in connection with rivers, such as the removal therefrom, and from its bed or banks, of all weeds, refuse, driftwood, etc., there is a proviso which prohibits any interference with the banks, bed, or streams of any tidal water within the jurisdiction of any harbour board except with such board's consent, and also a proviso preventing the construction of river works or placing piles or any obstruction in, on, over, or across any tidal water without the sanction of the Governor in Council. Local authorities may, subject to the Navigation Act, also dredge, deepen, and widen any river and fill up,

level, or reclaim waste or low land under its control. The right, however, to the use and flow and control of the water is vested in the Crown for all purposes under the Rights in Water and Water Conservation and Utilization Act. It will be seen that there are a number of different authorities, whose duties in respect of rivers are most conflicting, and, in view of all the circumstances, I strongly advise that the control of the river be included in the Council's functions and powers.

I say all I possibly can say in support of the argument as to community of interest, and if the scheme only depended on the community of interest, I would not hesitate for a moment about agreeing to the larger area. But I say there are other considerations—perhaps greater and more serious considerations—and I must say that at the present time I am not in favour of the larger area, as the figures supplied both by the Home Secretary and the leader of the Opposition have convinced me that a big burden is going to be placed on those communities that are outside what we roughly call the 5-mile radius. It will be impossible under existing conditions for these people to carry on. It has been asked, "How do they carry on now?" As a matter of fact, they are not carrying on; they are only existing. They cannot carry on. I recognise that sooner or later they must come into the scheme; but the scheme which is foreshadowed in the Bill is such a big scheme—such a far-reaching scheme—that I am in doubt at present whether we should go to the extent that the Minister is asking us to go. It is largely an experiment. I have serious doubts about the success of such a scheme, and possibly, if we do decide upon the larger scheme, there is a danger of over-reaching ourselves altogether and making the thing a failure. I am strongly imbued with the idea of a Greater Brisbane. I believe in the principle of a Greater Brisbane. I believe in the main principles of the Bill, and I am honestly desirous that the Bill should be a success, because, as I said in my opening remarks, to my mind it approaches in its principles very closely indeed to the sentiment underlying local government and the highest ideals of local government. That is one of the reasons why we want it to be a success; but under existing conditions, with the unsatisfactory financial method provided for [2 p.m.] keeping the outside authorities alive, I am not satisfied. I agree with my leader that, if the scheme proves a success, the local authorities we propose to exclude can be brought under the operation of the Bill by a system of absorption as the progress and development of the city increase. They themselves will probably ask to be brought in, because the results of the scheme will convince them of its general usefulness. I think it is only a matter of time when they will ask to be brought in, but at the present time I think they ought to be allowed to remain outside on account of the big financial strain which they will have to bear.

In connection with the services to be taken over, we know that the election is to be held on 21st February next, and the Greater Brisbane scheme is to come into operation on 1st October, 1925, and the constituent local authorities will hold office until that date. I presume that the members of those local bodies who are holding office at the time will require to have their term of office

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extended until the scheme comes into operation. Until the Greater Brisbane Council properly functions, it will be engaged in practically making its own laws and in the preparation of its ordinances. I see from the Bill that the interim expenditure will be guaranteed by the Treasurer. The services to be taken over on 1st October, 1925, will be the joint local authorities and joint boards constituted under Local Authorities Acts, the Health Act, and the Electric Light and Power Act. We know that there is a board in existence—the Metropolitan Electric Light Board—which embraces a number of the authorities covered by the Bill, and that will be absorbed. The Victoria Bridge Board will also be absorbed on the 1st October, 1925. Then we have the Metropolitan Fire Brigade and other fire brigade boards in the area, cemetery boards, the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, and the Brisbane Tramway Trust. They are to be gradually absorbed. I wish again to emphasise that the great attraction of the scheme is the unification and co-ordination of all the services, and until this is accomplished the scheme will be practically valueless and abortive. As I said before, I desire to see the scheme a success, and the longer the delay in bringing about the unification of services, the less satisfactory will be the position. I think it is desirable as early as possible to bring these other utilities under the scheme, because until the council acquires these services the scheme will be only a mockery and a sham. The argument in favour of the larger area is materially weakened by a postponement of the date of inclusion of all these services, and strengthens the argument for the smaller area until the absorption embraces them.

Under the financial clauses of the Bill the existing loans are to be divided into two sets, those bearing interest at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and those bearing interest at $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Those loans are to be pooled and consolidated into two forty-year loans and benefited areas are to be abolished. The loan indebtedness of the local authorities concerned under this Bill at the 30th June last was approximately £545,000. The councils concerned have also raised by debentures £1,591,000, and the Government propose to guarantee repayment of those debentures as an additional security. Whilst recognising that the forty-year terms will assist the financing of the scheme, we cannot lose sight of the fact that in many instances the moneys included in these loans have been advanced in respect of works whose life has been terminated long before they will become payable and that in some cases we shall be flogging a dead horse. It is claimed by the Home Secretary that the consolidation of these loans will reduce the annual charge by £20,000. I hope that the hon. gentleman, in arriving at this conclusion, is not joining with other optimistic Ministers.

In the few remaining minutes that I have I should like to deal with the power to make ordinances. The term "ordinance" is substituted for the older word "by-law" and has long been in general use in America as equivalent in meaning to that term. It is a better term and more appropriate, although the actual process of making ordinances is much the same as the process of making by-laws.

Mr. WRIGHT: It was used long before America was thought of.

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Mr. KING: It was not used in the same sense in connection with local authority matters. Ordinances, like by-laws, must comply with certain rules in order that they may not be invalid. They must be (1) within the ordinance-making powers given by the statute in respect of the subject-matter dealt with, i.e., not *ultra vires* in the narrower sense of those words; (2) specific in their terms; (3) not repugnant to the general and statute law; (4) reasonable. As a general rule they are not binding on the Crown unless declared to be so by the statute.

The powers provided for in the Bill are very wide, and rightly so. If local government is going to be local government in the true sense of the word, then not only should the widest possible powers be given, but interference with the exercise of those powers from the central authority should not be tolerated. I have said in this Chamber on more than one occasion that the principles of local government require that a local authority should be as free and independent in its sphere as the State Government is in its sphere. The Council, however, must be very careful that in exercising powers it does not clash with existing Acts of Parliament, and whilst ordinances when passed have the force of law, nevertheless, if they do clash with an Act of Parliament, the Act of Parliament prevails. There is a danger of dual control here. For example, ordinances for maintaining peace may clash with the Police Acts, those dealing with education may clash with Acts of Parliament on the same subject, and those dealing with health matters may clash with the Health Act. I do not, however, expect any trouble, as the common sense of the Council will see that there is no confusion, and that the powers granted by the different ordinances will be definitely circumscribed.

The Bill provides in one place that the Council shall, "subject to this Act and to any alteration by ordinance," do so and so. This is not very clear. Does this mean that there is a power to alter by ordinance any of the Acts referred to? If not, what is meant? Power by ordinance is a delegated power, but the wording of the Bill seems to indicate a power to over-ride an Act of Parliament. It is well known that the powers of the Local Authorities Acts and the Health Act are limited, and also that local authorities are under those Acts, subject to restriction, and the question arises: How far may the limitations of powers and the restrictions be removed? I would like the Minister to make this position clear.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the scheme is very ambitious. It may or may not be a success. The pivot on which success turns is the class of aldermen selected. If we succeed in electing a Council consisting of men with business ability, keen perception of vision, men of imagination, men who are imbued with a civic sentiment, and an appreciation of the proper ideals permeating local government, men who are courageous enough to do their duty and not sacrifice their principles for fear of being turned down at the following election, men who will command respect, men we can trust, and men who are not after the salary, then I have no fear that the scheme will not be a success, and that the Bill, which has for its aim the good government of the city of Brisbane, the peace, comfort, and happiness of the community, will

not realise all those hopes and aspirations that we have in it.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WRIGHT (*Bulimba*): In the first place I want to congratulate the Minister on the introduction of the Bill and on the able manner in which he has dealt with many important phases of the Bill. He is to be complimented upon the very able speech that he made. Town planning of cities for the general welfare of their inhabitants is as old as the hills. Quite accidentally I learnt the other day who originated the idea of town planning. Hon. members may be surprised to know that the history of town planning goes back for many hundreds of years. So far as I have been able to trace, Moses was the first person responsible for the idea of town planning. That was in the year 1452 B.C. He was responsible for land legislation in connection with the building of cities, and that same legislation could very well be applied during the present generation. His work as a past master in the art of town planning is fully described in the fact that he arranged for half a mile of garden and field suburbs to be situated around each city, and those conditions could be very well recommended to the town planners of the present generation. If hon. members desire to delve further into the matter, I would refer them to the Book of Numbers, chapter 35.

Mr. KERR: Here endeth the first lesson.

Mr. WRIGHT: Speaking as one who has had about three years' experience on a metropolitan local authority, I welcome the Bill. I believe that there is an urgent need for a better system of local government in Brisbane, and while I believe that that need is long overdue, I consider the Government did the wisest and best thing under the circumstances in holding over the actual passing of this Bill last session. It is quite patent to all that, as a result, we have now a much better Bill. Many of those interested—local authorities, progress associations, etc.—have given considerable time and thought to the measure, and the Minister and his advisors have been guided to a certain extent by the criticism and suggestions that have emanated from time to time from those organisations who have given the matter consideration. It was a wise move on the part of the Government last year to delay the passing of the Bill, because now those concerned in the area defined in the Bill are more favourably disposed to the objects of the Bill. That is very important, because it will mean that the scheme will be launched on a wave of popular approval. There is no doubt that the thinking public in the area are heartily sick of the conditions existing at present in local government. There is a desire for a greater city in every capital city of the Commonwealth. As you know, Mr. Speaker, I have busied myself since I became a member of Parliament in travelling as much as possible throughout the Commonwealth. There is only one State in the Commonwealth which I have not had the pleasure of visiting, and that is Western Australia. I have taken particularly keen note of the work of local governments in the southern States. While it is not a compliment to Brisbane, I must say that these cities in the South are in many respects miles ahead of Brisbane.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Don't forget they are very much older.

Mr. WRIGHT: I know they are. The very fact that they are older, that they have had more years of local government, and are now clamouring for a greater city, is an argument in favour of a Greater Brisbane.

The hon. member for Logan mentioned the fact that there was no Greater London. He also referred to the additional fact that the local government of London was composed of a large number of different bodies. I would like to point out in answer to that statement that for many years men engaged in local government work in London have been craving for a Greater London. Several Commissions have at different times sat for quite long periods to discuss the question as to how and when it would be best to establish a Greater London scheme. I want to quote a few remarks in this connection made by Mr. Gomm, who was the statistician for the London County Council. He delivered a series of lectures at the London School of Economics in 1897, which were afterwards published in book form under the title of "Principles of Local Government." I want to quote from this book to show that the conditions of local government affairs in London are nothing to be advertised as an argument in favour of a smaller area, or as an argument against this Bill. Mr. Gomm said—

"At present, principles of local government are not, in this country, considered at all. There is a vague sort of idea that local government is a good thing for Parliament to occupy itself with, but there is no serious attempt to consider it as a subject which is governed by principles and not by fancy, which should not, therefore, be left to the sudden energy of Parliaments desiring to be busy with something new."

Another gentleman, Mr. Chambers, who has been quoted previously in this House, in an article on "Local Government of England," says—

"There is neither co-ordination nor subordination amongst the numerous authorities which regulate our local affairs. Each authority appears to be unacquainted with the existence, or, at least, with the work of the others. . . . Local government in this country may fitly be described as consisting of a chaos of areas, a chaos of authorities, and a chaos of rates."

It might be argued that the fact that these people in that old city and in that older world have not been able to establish a Greater London is an argument that we would not be successful if we established a Greater Brisbane scheme. In my opinion that would not be a sound argument, because the existing conditions in London and in Brisbane are not at all analogous. If we are ever going to establish a Greater Brisbane, now is the time when definite action should be taken. The main clauses of the Bill which have met with criticism and which have met with the attention of the various bodies interested, appear to be—

- The area,
- The financial clauses,
- The rate of remuneration paid to aldermen,
- The number of representatives provided for, and
- Differential rating.

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I want to spend some little time on the question of the area. The leader of the Opposition spent a considerable time this morning on the question of area. He argued in favour of a smaller or 5-mile area. Personally, I believe that the 10-mile area is the only possible solution to a successful evolution of the Greater Brisbane scheme. I presume we may take the recent Local Authorities' Conference as an official declaration on this phase of the question.

Mr. KERR: Are you talking about the Labour aldermen in caucus?

Mr. WRIGHT: No; about the Local Authorities' Conference, which sat and gave particular attention to this measure. One of their recommendations was the 5-mile area. Mr. Chuter, as a member of the Town Planning Association, addressed the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce some few months ago, and dealt very effectively with the question of area as suggested by the Local Authorities' Conference. Amongst other things, Mr. Chuter made this statement—

"The objects of the Bill cannot be attained by adopting the 5-mile radius

"It may not have occurred to the Conference that if the 5-mile radius were adopted the Joint Health Board, the Victoria Bridge Board, and other bridge boards would require to be retained, whilst others would have to be created, particularly for the crossings over the river.

"The adoption of the 5-mile radius is therefore in conflict with the Conference affirmation of the Bill and its agreement with its objects. The operations of the Water and Sewerage Board extend beyond the 5-mile radius, and it seems that it will not be long before the tram service crosses the 5-mile limit. The public utilities of gas, electric light, water, and other services, particularly the sanitary service, have been extended to points reaching more or less to the 10-mile radius."

Mr. Chuter also pointed out—I have not his words here—the importance of further river crossings and of future planning for arterial roadways, etc. Take, as an instance, the main Cleveland road. The leader of the Opposition made some reference to the Belmont Shire, to the effect that under a 5-mile limit that would be the only shire which would be cut in two, or which the boundary line would cross. The main road to Cleveland passes through the Belmont Shire, and naturally it is a heavy burden on the rate-payers in that area. At the same time it can be logically argued that the road is of just as much importance, if not of more importance, to city interests than it is to the Belmont Shire; and if a 5-mile radius were adopted, that portion of Belmont which is outside the 5-mile radius would be called upon to meet the cost of the upkeep of that road to Cleveland.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Would not the same argument apply to a 10-mile radius?

Mr. WRIGHT: Not to the same extent. You go another 5 miles further out to start with.

Mr. KERR: You might go another 100 miles, but the same argument would apply.

Mr. WRIGHT: It does not affect the position to nearly the same extent. What

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to my mind is the strongest objection to the smaller area is the fact that the unimproved value of land within the 10-mile area is approximately £16,000,000, while the unimproved value within the 5-mile limit is nearly £14,000,000.

Mr. KERR: That is a good argument why we should not go beyond the 5-mile limit.

Mr. WRIGHT: It is not a good argument that it should not go outside the 5-mile limit. As a matter of fact, if we adopted a 5-mile limit, the problem of dealing with the area outside that limit would be almost insurmountable. There is no doubt about that, as the large area with the small value outside the 5-mile limit would have just the same amount of work to do. They would require drainage just the same as within the 5-mile.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: When you have got to the 10-mile limit, won't you have just the same trouble again?

Mr. WRIGHT: Inside the 10-mile radius the Greater Brisbane Council will have power to manage practically everything in connection with local government, and the Council will have power to say where settlement should take place. They will have power to say where noxious trades shall be located, and so on. The contention of the hon. member for Wynnum, that the same argument would apply outside the 10-mile radius, is absurd. If we adopted the 5-mile limit, there would be portions of the area outside that limit which would either have to be allocated to existing shires which have no community of interest, or else we would have to create new local authorities which would extend for miles round the 5-mile area. I do not think one sound argument can be used in favour of a limited area. So far as the debate has gone, there has been no argument put forward that would convert any reasonable-minded person in favour of a smaller area. The hon. member for Logan declared in favour of the larger area, and he probably knows the problems that would arise.

Mr. KERR: He modified that.

Mr. WRIGHT: The alteration as compared with the original Bill introduced last year in regard to existing loans, and also the provision regarding the benefited area, is a decided improvement. The pooling of the liabilities is the only sound method which can be adopted successfully to carry out the proposal. I am satisfied that, if the provision contained in the Bill introduced last year had been carried out, it would have landed us largely in chaos. At the least it would have required an army of clerks and accountants to keep tally of the large number of benefited areas which have been created, and which it would have been possible to create under that Bill.

At 2.30 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Pollock, Gregory) relieved the Speaker in the chair.

Mr. WRIGHT: I believe also that, whilst the pooling of the liabilities may mean some additional expense to some of the more closely populated city areas, still it will be a boon to the outside local authorities. Speaking of the district with which I am most in touch, it will be a boon to the Bulimba people, as it will relieve them to a large extent of the unfair burden which they have been carrying for years past in keeping open a vehicular ferry at Bulimba.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Pass some of the liability on to the outside districts.

Mr. KERR: Which never use it.

Mr. WRIGHT: Speaking generally, that is the position all round, and, when the liability is spread over the whole area, the liability becomes less. I could have supplied figures this afternoon to show that the local authorities which will have to bear a little extra cost are well able to bear the burden. The local authorities in the outside area will have a large amount of developmental work to do as the city spreads and population increases, and it is only a fair thing that those charges should be made a charge upon a common fund. That appears to me to be the only sound method of dealing with the question of liability for the future development of our cities. I am quite satisfied that the members of the Balmoral Shire Council, of which I was previously a member, are in favour of the Bill.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You are looking at the matter from your own point of view.

Mr. WRIGHT: I am not speaking from my own point of view.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It is all in that direction.

Mr. WRIGHT: I am arguing that it will be better for everybody concerned. I have not heard any reasonable argument from the hon. member's quarter against the Bill.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Not against the Bill, but against the area.

Mr. KERR: You have been asleep.

Mr. WRIGHT: I have not heard a sound argument from either of the hon. members in favour of the limitation of the area. I do not intend to use the parish pump, but the Bulimba ferry proposition and the Belmont tramway proposition are two very sound illustrations in favour of pooling the liabilities and making them a charge on a common fund. I know that the Balmoral Shire Council will have every encouragement, and immediately this Bill is passed—as we all hope it will be—they will hasten the business of getting the ferry into commission. I believe that when the ferry is in commission it will be the best vehicular ferry service in the State of Queensland.

Take the position so far as Belmont is concerned. The leader of the Opposition mentioned Belmont, and an hon. member on this side made some interjection in connection with the Belmont tramway. The hon. member for Wynnum knows something about the difficulties which have been experienced in the past by the people in that small benefited area in keeping open the Belmont tramway. So burdensome has the tramway become that it has been closed down for some months. Since then they have been making payments of interest and redemption in respect of the capital liability with absolutely no return. The tramway has proved itself—it may not be always so—a white elephant. It is not the fault of the council, but, to a large extent, the fault of the system of local government. At any rate, the Belmont people and the hon. member for Wynnum were optimistic enough to think that it would become a paying proposition. Personally I would like to see the Government—I have tried to get them to do so and failed—take over the tramway. Even under a Greater Brisbane scheme there would still be dual control, because you

cannot take the people by tram from Belmont and drop them half-way to their destination. They have to travel for the rest of the journey over a State railway. For the sake of the benefits of single control, and considering the small amount it would mean to the debit account in the railway service, I think it would be the best thing for everybody concerned if the State took over the tramway.

The Local Authorities' Conference was of opinion that the representation under this measure is too restricted, and it recommended the division of the area into ten wards, returning three members each, involving a council of thirty aldermen instead of the twenty-one proposed. I am of opinion that we would be making a grave mistake if we provided for representation along these lines. The representation which the Bill provides for is easily the best, and it is certainly the most economical. It means that the local authority elections may be held on the State electoral rolls, although, perhaps, in one or two instances some rectification may be necessary where portions of electorates are outside the Greater Brisbane area. Speaking generally, however, the expense of having to provide a different set of rolls will be saved, and considering that our State rolls are kept rigidly up to date, a better system of representation could not be provided than the Bill contains.

I was very much surprised to find that the Conference of Local Authorities had decided to recommend a salary of £500 a year for each alderman. The sum provided for in last year's Bill was £200. I was especially surprised when I remembered that the majority of the members of that conference, when elected, were strongly opposed to the payment of members of local authorities. At any rate, I take the opportunity of congratulating the conference on their change of front. I am one of those who believe that every man is worthy of his hire. The amount set down in the Bill—£400—is very much better than the original amount of £200.

Mr. KERR: It is 100 per cent. better.

Mr. WRIGHT: Personally, I would not have minded if the amount had been £500. I am quite satisfied that we shall be able to elect good, sound, reasonable, and sensible men to that council, who will be prepared to give the whole of their services to the good government of this city. I hope that we shall be successful in electing a majority representing the working class. They will give their full time to the job, and will do their best for the benefit of the people whom they are sent there to govern. Other cities in the world which take the lead in local government matters are noted for having working-class members on their councils. Glasgow is a striking example in that regard, and many other leading cities could also be mentioned. I am one of those who believe that the business man is not always the most successful man in local government matters, and oftentimes when you have a body of business men discussing a certain project a lot of the discussion centres round the question of whether the utility is going to pay, rather than as to whether it is going to serve the people as a whole. I could quote a little experience that I had during my connection with local government affairs. During the time that the Tramway Trust Bill was being debated in this Chamber, many metropolitan

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local authorities were interesting themselves in the measure, and hon. members will remember that during the last stages a most frantic effort was made by the members of the local authorities to delay its passage.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: They wanted to give Badger a new franchise.

Mr. WRIGHT: I agree with the hon. member for Brisbane that that was one of the reasons, but there was also another big factor, and that was that they had not sufficient confidence in those who were likely to be elected to the Trust—their own class, and their own kith and kin—to see that the trams were run at a profit. The Bill provides that if any deficit occurs in connection with the running of the trams, the Trust, by the issue of a precept, can call upon the local authorities concerned to make up that deficit. There you have the fact that the members of those local authorities had not sufficient confidence in their own kith and kin.

Mr. KERR: No.

Mr. WRIGHT: It is no good the hon. member for Enoggera questioning my statement. I know that those members lacked sufficient confidence, because I was at the Local Authorities' Conference and heard the discussion. I could go further and say that the representatives of my own council, who were charged with the responsibility for that particular portion which was to be included in the jurisdiction of the Tramway Trust, after giving serious consideration at a special meeting called for the purpose, definitely decided to ask the then Home Secretary to declare their area outside the scope of the Brisbane Tramways Trust Bill. They arrived at that decision, and I am only mentioning this in illustration of my argument—notwithstanding the fact that there were only a few yards of tramway in the area. They did not seem to have sufficient confidence that the persons elected on the Trust—and they were of the same political belief as themselves—would be able to carry on the tramways of Brisbane. They said there was sure to be a deficit, and the council would be called upon to make up that deficit. Only for the representations of myself as a dissenting member of the Council and the good offices of the Home Secretary, that area would have been placed outside the province of the Tramway Trust and the extension of 1 mile 56 chains which has just been completed in the area would not have been made. So much for your business men!

The leader of the Opposition made reference to the present Local Authorities Act and the power it gave to local authorities. He used that as an argument against the establishment of the greater area. He said that during the last session of Parliament the powers of local authorities had been greatly increased. That is quite true. The local authorities in the metropolitan area were given power under that Act to define, restrict, or to say definitely what a residential area should be. What has been the result of giving them that power? No hon. member could have foreseen what has actually happened. The results are an argument for a system of single control as against a divided control. The question of the size of an area for residential purposes is an important one. The Balmoral Shire Council—I am not speaking definitely—fixed the area at 24 perches, while other metropolitan local

authorities fixed the area at 20 perches, 22 perches, and so on. At the present time there exists a conglomeration of sizes of residential areas in the metropolis. Whilst the Local Authorities Act gave very much wider powers to local authorities in general, that at least is one of the powers it would have been wise for the Government to have exercised and fixed a uniform area.

The hon. member for Aubigny also made some reference to the fact that the Minister had mentioned the port of Pinkenba as an argument for a greater area. He tried to tell this House that it made no difference whether the port of Pinkenba was in the Greater Brisbane area or whether it remained in the area of the town of Toombul. Everybody realises that, if you have a port, it means that the local authority administering the affairs of that area will be called upon to meet some of the expenses connected with the management of the port. Whilst it may be true that a lot of the commodities and products are carried by rail, it is also true that there is a considerable amount of traffic over their roads. That authority is called upon to maintain those roads and to meet the necessary expenses which naturally follow as a result of having that port in the area. That small local authority would be asked to keep up that expense, yet the leader of the Opposition says that it makes no difference to them.

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

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I would first of all like to state the fact that the Enoggera electorate, which I represent, will actually represent a little more than a quarter of the whole of the Greater Brisbane area. The Enoggera electorate contains two complete shires and also parts of five other shires and towns. While we quite agree with the broad outline of a Greater Brisbane scheme, I consider it would require a telescope to show where there has been complete consideration from the points of view of equity and necessity. While it is not impossible, the chances of the complete success of this proposed scheme are nullified to a large extent by the lack of harmony and the lack of enthusiasm which have been general to date. One cannot controvert the view—I think it is the foundation of local authority work—that local control in a narrow zone is most desirable. That is so from an economic point of view, from the point of view of efficiency, and from the point of view of the people who have to pay. Those are the points of view from which I have to consider this Bill. I have to consider the Bill from the point of view that I represent an electorate which has a dense population in one part of its area and a sparse population in another part of its area. The broad principles of the scheme must appeal to us all, but I have reasons which I shall state which make it impossible for me to support the area proposed in this Bill.

The HOME SECRETARY: Would you have it reduced to a 5-mile radius and leave out the outside portion of the Enoggera shire?

Mr. KERR: I do not hesitate to say that the radius I prefer is approximately five miles, and I would not touch the outside area at present. I would construct the Bill in such a manner that the thinly populated parts,

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as they became thickly populated, would be incorporated in the provisions of the measure.

The HOME SECRETARY: Would you bring in Toombul, Nundah, and Ascot?

Mr. KERR: The hon. gentleman is quite right in asking that, and I shall tell the hon. member the parts which I suggest should come in.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are the only one who has ever done that. The Local Authorities' Conference did not come forward with a practical scheme.

Mr. KERR: I shall tell the hon. gentleman later on what I would suggest. You could amalgamate the areas I suggest within the period of a month, and there would be no trouble ensuing therefrom. The area I would suggest would include Brisbane, South Brisbane, Ithaca, Windsor, Hamilton, Toowong, Coorparoo, Stephens, Taringa, Balmoral, and part of Enoggera, constituting an area of practically 99½ square miles.

The HOME SECRETARY: Would you leave Enoggera out?

Mr. KERR: No. Enoggera is only 2½ miles from the Post Office.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is within the 5-mile radius.

Mr. KERR: Part of it is. I would leave Moggill out.

The HOME SECRETARY: Kedron also?

Mr. KERR: The hon. member who represents Kedron can speak for that part of it.

I am going to deal with the principles of the Bill as far as I can make them out. The Bill sets out to co-ordinate a multiplicity of authorities. While I agree up to a certain limit in regard to roads, water channelling, sanitation, and so on, it is more a matter of bringing about uniformity in these matters than co-ordinating them. The word "co-ordination" does not apply in regard to roads. The proper word to use would be "uniformity." I venture to say that, had the Greater Brisbane scheme come into existence prior to the constitution of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, and prior to the institution of electric light, and prior to the appointment of the Tramway Trust, for various reasons there would have been a widespread clamour for separate management in regard to these undertakings. To-day this Greater Brisbane scheme is going to have this outstanding effect so far as the water supply and sewerage is concerned, that we shall not have a board elected by popular vote to control these utilities. The City Council, when it controls the greater area, will not manage that undertaking, but will appoint experts, I hope, to carry out that particular undertaking. Just the other day the Opposition advocated in this House that that undertaking should be controlled by experts, and I believe we are going to have that brought about under this Greater Brisbane scheme. I believe that undertakings such as the tramways and the metropolitan water supply and sewerage will no longer be controlled by boards appointed by popular vote of the people, but they will be controlled by experts appointed by the Council elected on a popular franchise. That is one of the great benefits that I trust is going to ensue as a result of this Bill.

The hon. member for Logan advocated that the river itself required some consideration, and I agree with him. The Local Authori-

ties Act provides that the local authorities may deepen and widen the river subject to the approval of the Governor in Council, yet we find conflicting authorities. We have the Navigation Act, the Marine Department, and a Harbour Boards Act, and there are further limitations under the Rights in Water and Water Conservation and Utilization Act.

The Bill is not complete in any sense of the word. It is not proposed to bring under it at the present time the metropolitan water supply, the Brisbane tramways, and undertakings such as that. The Government in their wisdom can see that there is a danger of bringing these undertakings in just now. On the other hand, there is an equal danger in bringing in the outside areas which, after all is said and done, have no community of interest. The areas included have no more community of interest than other areas which are excluded. I claim that the Bill should make provision in case of an application being made by a local authority in the outer area for a poll to be taken to allow the people to decide for themselves. Local government is based on that principle. We should give that aspect of the matter every consideration. Those outside areas should not be forced to come under the Bill.

[3 p.m.]

The Government have always taken the attitude in regard to these matters of saying "Give it a chance." Have the Government had a chance? Their financial chaos is well known throughout Queensland, and we should not take up the attitude of saying, "Give this a chance."

I have shown that various cities in other countries of the world did not start like Brisbane is starting to-day, but extended their local government activities as they grew. I am going to say something about the density of population. I can see no semblance of an argument for including the outside area in the Bill. It would not be right for me to take up the attitude of pulling a structure down, the building up of which, no doubt, has taken Mr. Chuter and other officials of the department a good many years. It would not be right for me to pull down their edifice unless I was prepared to put something in its place. Before I do that I wish to point out that the area under the Bill includes 380 square miles with a population of 240,000. How much better it would be to take the area which I have proposed. The advantage would be that we should then have a compact area and the density of population would be greater, and there would be better control. There would be a lack of control in the larger area. The area which I have suggested is 99½ square miles as against 380 square miles which the larger area comprises. The population in the area of 99½ square miles which I suggest is 188,737 as against 240,000, or only 52,000 more, in the larger area of 380 square miles. There is no justification for these sparsely-populated areas coming under the scheme. In the area of 99½ square miles which I suggest there would be 1,902 inhabitants to the square mile as against 181 per square mile in the outside area included in the Bill.

The trams have been mentioned. I ask any hon. member to tell me of any tram extension which has gone beyond 5 miles from the General Post Office? Is any tramway extension likely to go beyond 5 miles from the General Post Office in the next five

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or ten years? The tramways to-day are big spokes in the wheel. In a 3-mile radius from the General Post Office there are thousands of allotments and large spaces which are not even surveyed and cut up into allotments. The tendency in every country in the world has been for the population to gravitate to the centre.

The HOME SECRETARY: You want to stick to it, do you?

Mr. KERR: That is all right in theory. The Local Authority Act permits the building of a house on 16 or 20 perches. No one in the world can stop you from coming in to occupy those small areas within 3 miles of the General Post Office.

The HOME SECRETARY: The law does not say how many people shall live on them.

Mr. KERR: That is exactly what I am telling the hon. gentleman. Every country in the world is going in for denser and denser population in the cities, and these allotments that I speak of exist within 3 miles of the Brisbane Post Office—tens of thousands of them.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you want to go on?

Mr. KERR: I say there is nothing to stop it—it is not a question of what I want. There is no law to stop people from building on these areas and densely populating them, and this Bill does not contain any such prohibition. Later on I shall quote statistics to show how the density of population varies. I have mentioned the tramways. What chance has the sewerage system of extending 5 miles from the post office within the next ten years?

Mr. MAXWELL: During our life time.

Mr. KERR: Or during our life time, as the hon. member for Toowong interjects. Before it gets into Ithaca it will be five years, and Ithaca is only 2 or 3 miles out. Yet Moggill, in my electorate, will have to help to foot this bill.

The HOME SECRETARY: Is it not a public service?

Mr. KERR: It is absolutely a service; but on the Minister's reasoning, if you are going to carry the scheme to finality, you will have to include the whole of Queensland. A lot of people believe that under this Bill they will pay a lower rate because of the returns from the trams. The Bill makes provision for incorporating the Tramway Trust with the City Council. I do not know that I am altogether in favour of such a thing. If I use the trams I expect to pay for the service performed, but I do not expect to pay for somebody else's concrete drain. There is no equity at all in that. In the area I have mentioned, 99½ square miles, three-fourths of the people live who will come under this scheme. What facilities are likely to be provided for those outside areas for a very considerable number of years? When the people in them are likely to get some compensating return, then they may be brought in. I would not care if they were brought in compulsorily under those conditions, but at present it is unjust, as I shall show later when dealing with financial considerations.

The HOME SECRETARY: Does not that argument apply to the 5-mile radius?

Mr. KERR: No; the hon. gentleman cannot put it that way. The whole Bill

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creates an authority without regard to locality. There is no compensating factor for the Moggill Shire, for instance. The Minister might just as well say that the rates will come down and the people will get their commodities more cheaply. I have heard even that argument used in favour of this Bill, but there is no use in getting commodities more cheaply if the rates should go up.

The HOME SECRETARY: Moggill will help to reduce the rates in Brisbane?

Mr. KERR: It will, because the people in Moggill Shire will have to pay a higher rate.

The HOME SECRETARY: How will they have to pay a higher rate?

Mr. KERR: They will pay for facilities which they do not get, and which they are not likely to enjoy for many years. You might as well say that people who visit Brisbane and use some of the conveniences here should also come under this scheme. Some of the areas included by the Bill are exactly in that position. I have already said that we could very well start on a much smaller area than that proposed by the Bill.

The City of Baltimore was not always the great city that it is to-day. Possibly that city has been such a great success because efforts were concentrated on a densely-populated area and the work extended from that area. As soon as all their forces were amalgamated on that area they were able to extend with considerable success. That is the way in which they achieved their success.

The Government have many things to guide them in connection with their scheme, and they should begin with a small area. If we were to adopt the schemes that have been adopted with success in other countries of the world, we would have some chance of success. Whether you are in business or anything else, you have got to start with something solid. Chicago was built up in the same way. A Royal Commission was held in connection with the Greater Melbourne scheme, but a Bill proposing the superimposition of a guaranteeing authority on twenty-six existing local authorities was not passed. I do not agree with the superimposition of a co-ordinating authority. The Royal Commission held in New South Wales on the Greater Sydney scheme gave solid grounds for consideration. It proposed the establishment of an inner zone, the abolition of all local authorities within that inner zone, and the creation of an authority to exercise only certain functions in an outer zone. It recommended the striking of two rates, and I understand that it was stated that there would be no friction as a result. These things can be regulated. I suggest to the Government that they take advantage of those successful Greater City schemes in the other parts of the world, and not attempt to reach in one day what the other cities have gradually attained to. No one can say that that is not a wise suggestion. It has been suggested that the Moggill Shire should come into this scheme because of the main roads. There is no argument in that at all. Why not bring in Toowoomba or some other place equally distant?

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: Why be ridiculous?

Mr. KERR: That is no more ridiculous than to say that the Moggill Shire should be

included in the scheme because of the main roads in that area. Even if you adopt the area that I have suggested, there will still be joint control on the part of the Moggill Shire with the Moreton Shire over the Moggill ferry, also in connection with the Pine Shire. If the area is restricted as I have suggested, a good deal of the joint work will vanish, but there will still be some joint control left. Greater New York has a population of 5,500,000, yet the area covered is less than the metropolitan area of Brisbane. Let me show how the people have drifted and formed a densely-populated area. According to the census, between 1891 and 1921, over a 3-mile radius, the density of the population increased by 80 per cent. From 1891 to 1901 within a 10-mile radius, the density had increased by 1.7 per cent. From 1901 to 1911 within the same area it had increased by 1.6 per cent., and from 1911 to 1921 within the same area it had increased by 5.5 per cent. The tendency in Brisbane, as in every other city, is to create a centrally situated densely-populated area, and no law in the world can stop that. In the past why have the people gone to such places as Oxley, Sherwood, and Graceville? They went there because of the fact that traffic facilities were provided. There are other districts that have not been provided with railway or tramway facilities. Ashgrove is one of the nicest districts in the metropolitan area. I am not saying that because it is in my electorate, but because it is one of the nicest districts. (Laughter.)

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. gentleman has been reading T. M. Burke's advertisements.

Mr. KERR: That district has not been settled because it has not been favoured with travelling facilities, while such facilities have been provided for such places as Wynnum, Sherwood, and Corinda. The population has followed the railway line in those directions. It may seem peculiar that people should live such a long way away from the city when their duty calls them to the city; but as soon as the trams are extended between the different "spokes" of travelling facilities that now run out wide, so will the population density between those lines.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: That is not a suggestion that the people of Wynnum will run away from me? (Laughter.)

Mr. KERR: No, they are too well satisfied with their representative.

The HOME SECRETARY: Your argument is to extend the tramways in the Greater Brisbane area?

Mr. KERR: The policy of the Brisbane Tramway Trust appears to be to build between existing lines to give the people facilities. That must be the policy of the Trust, because they have extended the tramways to Ashgrove, which is between Toowong and Kelvin Grove. Ashgrove is within 3 miles of the city. The Trust will later have to extend the line from Kelvin Grove towards Ashgrove to open up that area, and also to Wilston and Newmarket, between Kelvin Grove and Kedron. That is why I say here there is no necessity to go beyond the area which I have suggested. Let us have a look at what it means. The density of population is a most important question in regard to the Greater Brisbane scheme. Birmingham has a density of population of 19 per acre, Nottingham 24, Chicago 20, Baltimore 30, Wellington 7,

and Greater Brisbane 1. We are starting off with too great an idea. It is all right to have a great vision.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: Why not hitch your wagon to a star?

Mr. KERR: I think the Government have done so in regard to this Bill. They have hitched their wagon to Mars, which we have heard so much talk about lately.

I wish to emphasise what I have said from the financial point of view. The total loan indebtedness of the suggested Greater Brisbane area, and the area that has been excluded, is £2,137,265. The total indebtedness of the Greater City area suggested by me is £1,974,769, leaving the total indebtedness of the outside area at only £162,496. Let us take Windsor as an example. Windsor has developed because of the increased population, and its loan indebtedness in consequence has increased approximately by £80,000 or £90,000. Again, let me take Moggill. Moggill has no loan expenditure in that respect, yet, when the loans of Windsor and other towns are pooled the people in the Moggill shire, which was not interested in the expenditure of that money—there was no community of interests there any more than with the areas omitted—will have to bear their share of the payments of interest and redemption.

Mr. WRIGHT: What about the time when Moggill wants improvements?

Mr. KERR: The hon. member has hit the nail on the head. When the people of Moggill want improvements they will come into the Greater Brisbane area.

Mr. WRIGHT: Do you suggest that Moggill should not be included until the people in that shire ask to be included?

Mr. KERR: Yes; they can ask when they want to enter the area.

Mr. CARTER: They might not get in then.

Mr. KERR: That is a very narrow view to take. It is not right for the Government to include the area proposed in the Bill. Let us take the interest charge alone per ratepayer. It means an imposition of at least £1 5s. 2d. on the outside areas. Let me explain. The ratepayers outside the area provided in the Bill would, on my suggestion, have imposed on them for interest only £1 5s. 2d. per ratepayer, and the people within the area, if the Government scheme is carried out, will be allowed to cast off interest indebtedness to the extent of £1 5s. 10d. That is in interest alone. The loan indebtedness per ratepayer in the area under the Bill is £31 10s. 6d., and in the 5-mile area I suggest £40 17s. 3d., whilst that of the outer 5-mile area is £9 2s. The Bill, therefore, represents a saving to the ratepayers in the smaller area of £9 6s. 9d. per capita, increasing the liability of the ratepayers in the outside area by £22 8s. 6d. If they are not going to get any concession, why should the ratepayers outside this area which I have suggested, who do not want to come under the Bill, be saddled with a liability of £22 8s. 6d. that they never incurred? It might be said that would be for water-channelling and roads. By the time they are ready for those improvements—which might not be for the next twenty or thirty years—that money will be spent, and the work on which it was expended will be gone and these ratepayers will have to pay for something they never noticed. That is outside all reason.

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What about the injustice to my constituents in the Moggill Shire Council? These are the figures showing the relative density of population in the following local authorities:—

	Population per sq. mile.
Ithaca	4,589
Windsor	4,750
Moggill	20

Those figures alone must force the Home Secretary to admit that it is not an equitable arrangement to bring in those outside people.

The consolidation of the loans for forty years is a bad principle, and is unjust not only to the people to whom I have been referring but to future ratepayers. If this loan has been raised for a specific purpose, why hand it down to posterity, when the work has probably gone out of existence? The loan is for a specified period and a specified purpose. In ten years the work on which it was expended may have gone out of existence, and we are going to saddle the child who is born twenty to forty years hence with the cost of this work which does not even now exist.

The HOME SECRETARY: A great amount of loan money has been borrowed since 1918.

Mr. KERR: I believe that is so; however, it does not alter the position; but after carefully reviewing the point, I think this is a sop to the ratepayers within a certain area. The hon. gentleman will be able to say to three-quarters of the ratepayers in this Greater Brisbane scheme "Your rates will be lowered." Of course they will be, but who is going to pay? It is no sop to my electors, who will have to foot the bill and pay, and I see no justification for it.

Apart from the loan rates, of which they will have to bear the burden when consolidated, I shall again quote the Moggill shire—and I only quote the Moggill shire because I know all about it—the same remarks will be applicable to other shires—

Mr. WRIGHT: You need better roads there.

Mr. KERR: There might be better roads in Townsville for all I know, but I am not concerned about that. The Greater Brisbane Council will not build those roads. The Moggill Shire Council could build roads just as cheaply if their area is outside the scheme as if it is inside.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you favour a differential tax?

Mr. KERR: I do, but there is uniform rating on differential valuations and those ratings which stand on 1st October, 1925, will be the ratings that will be observed. That is the position under the Bill. Nobody can tell me that the Moggill shire will have its valuations decreased. If the Home Secretary will now give me an assurance that those valuations will be decreased, he will dry me up immediately. The hon. gentleman cannot give me that assurance.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Bill gives you an assurance that it can be done.

Mr. KERR: The hon. gentleman has said that there are different valuations. Will he assure me that these values will be decreased? I say that it will not be done, and why not face the facts?

The HOME SECRETARY: It was done in Rockhampton, Townsville, and other places.

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Mr. KERR: Just the opposite will ensue. They have different valuations now. Let the hon. gentleman just look at the ordinary general rate they will have to pay, apart from the burden of the loan which they will have to carry. You must remember that the members of the local authorities in these outside areas were appointed to keep down expenditure, and the result has been that they have had many "Busy Bees" out there to do local authority work such as mending the roads. What is going to be the result of that under this scheme? They decided not to borrow money so that there would not be any extra rates to pay. They are satisfied with their community to-day, and I venture to say that very little more will be done in Moggill for a number of years. They are satisfied. The one thing they want is a railway, and a railway will not come under the Greater Brisbane scheme. Give them a railway line, and then they will be prepared to talk on this matter. The general rate at the present time is 6d. in the £1, and the general rate under this scheme will be 8d. in the £1 on the same valuation. Not only are they to be saddled with the responsibility for loan expenditure, but they are going to be saddled with 2d. more in the £1 in the general rate. What for? I have examined this scheme to see if I am on the right track, and I cannot find what for. If it is because of the facilities existing in this city, why not tax the visitors from Toowoomba and Townsville who come to the city? You would have the same community of interest as you have in the case of the people of Samford, which is not included. This scheme is not practicable and is not workable without the necessary harmony and the necessary enthusiasm. There is no justification for doing what has been done. Let me take a piece of land in the outside area the unimproved value of which is £500. What is the rate going to be? The owner of that piece of land will be asked to pay an additional £4 a year in rates. I am more than justified in raising these matters. I am fully convinced that the Greater Brisbane scheme would be workable if it included only those authorities which I have mentioned and we abolished the present shire councils and their administrative staffs and had one central authority. It is a 5-mile radius approximately, and you would have no new boundaries as you will have under this Bill. You would have a better chance of success, and if in twelve months we saw that all was going well, what would there be to stop us from extending the boundaries? There would be nothing to stop us extending the boundaries to include the more thinly-populated areas. As soon as this Greater City is established we shall see that, instead of the population extending to Indoo-roopilly, Yeerongpilly, and such places, it is going to come in closer to the city as a result of the facilities offered by the trams, as has been the case in other parts of the world. This will have the tendency of creating slums in the more thickly-populated parts, which will cause greater expenditure, and the outside areas will receive no benefit at all. It is unjust to consolidate the loan money which has been expended and charge this to individuals who had no say in the expenditure. The law provides that the people shall have a vote as to whether loan money shall be expended or not, and it is wrong to tax these people when they had

no opportunity of saying whether they would agree to the expenditure or not. What is to be gained by passing it on to posterity by consolidation? The only thing to be gained is that the interest will be less and the redemption will be less. Those are two things in which they will be getting an advantage. This Bill is more in the shape of a sop to certain areas in the city, and I go so far as to say that none of these outside areas—or only a very small part of these outside areas—Bulimba—are represented by Labour members in this House. The Labour members in this House only represent the inner circle, and that is why they are trying to reduce the rates to the inner circle—that is, to their own constituents. It is only a sop to their constituents in this regard. I and other hon. members in this House represent outside areas, and hon. members opposite are only going to spread their constituents' costs over the constituencies represented by hon. members on this side. There is always a nigger in the wood pile.

[3.30 p.m.]

Mr. WRIGHT: The hon. member for Logan is in the inner circle. (Laughter.)

Mr. KERR: He may be in the inner circle.

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

Mr. CARTER (*Port Curtis*): A greater city scheme for Brisbane has been for so long a burning need that I heartily welcome the Bill which has been introduced in this Chamber. I warmly congratulate the Minister on the excellent Bill he has brought in, and with the exception of one or two minor matters I heartily agree with it.

Brisbane has been a badly-governed city ever since I can recollect. The same, of course, may apply to most of the cities in Australia. There has been no vision—no attempt to beautify the city. Many years ago some of our streets could have been broadened and a magnificent promenade made along the banks of the river from Brisbane to Milton, but no attempt was made to do it. Suggestions were made to different city councils in the past, but no notice was taken of them; and why was that? Chiefly because we have had as representatives on the different local authorities men of no vision, men of commercial instinct, men sent into the different councils by ratepayers who refrained from beautifying and making the city better from a fear that it would increase their rates. There was no consideration shown for the mass of the people who were not directly paying the rates, but who had to live in those areas. We have such an area as Ithaca, where owners of property, living sometimes in more beautiful suburbs, are doing nothing to beautify that area. I recollect that not long ago the Government had to attempt, from a health point of view, to do something that the representatives elected by the ratepayers, the owners of the property, were not doing themselves. That is typical of the different bodies in and around Brisbane.

Mr. TAYLOR: Not all of them.

Mr. CARTER: Nearly all of them—at any rate, up to the period when a change of franchise was made. Commercialism and a

spirit of apathy, and the fear that the owners of property would have to pay for the improvements, have kept Brisbane in the condition it is in to-day, and that is a condition we would continue to wallow in if this Government did not possess a broader vision. Had we put the power many years ago into the hands of the people of choosing their representatives on a broader franchise, there would have been very little question about the betterment of the different local bodies in and around Brisbane; but nothing has been done on a broad scale. Brisbane, situated as it is, should, from a climatic point of view, have been the winter resort of the whole of the people in the southern hemisphere. We have a magnificent climate, which, with a beautiful city standing on a beautiful river, would tend to make it one of the show cities of the world. We are just 100 years old, yet we are in a position of comparative slumdom to-day, because the affairs of the city have been in the hands of commercialism and apathy instead of in the hands of a broad-visioned people.

We have in and around Brisbane—I am speaking chiefly of the metropolitan area—one of the most costly systems of local government that any place could possibly have. Within a 10-mile radius there are about twenty-one taxing corporations—that is, twenty local authorities and the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board. Each of these bodies has power to levy upon the people, and we have the most costly system of management on that account.

At 3.35 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. CARTER: The cost of administration of the local authorities within a radius of 10 miles of the General Post Office is in the vicinity of £90,000 a year. The late mayor of Brisbane computed the administration costs of those authorities at 1½d. in the £1 on the value of ratable land. He said—

“The present total office expenses of the twenty local authorities proposed to be amalgamated under this Bill have been set down at £55,000. The management expenses of the Water and Sewerage Board are set down at £23,319. The overhead expenses of the other boards would probably bring the grand total to £90,000.”

That is roughly 10 per cent. of the revenue of the area in question. One can see the immense saving it is possible to make by a Greater Brisbane scheme. To-day we have twenty-one bodies, twenty-one heads, twenty-one administrations, in an area which should be governed by one administration controlling all its activities.

A great deal has been said by hon. members on the other side about community of interest within the 10-mile radius. Most of them are in accord with the Greater City scheme, but they are opposed to the 10-mile radius. For what reason they have not demonstrated. They say, to be sure, that there would be no community of interest in the greater area. There is just the same community of interest in an area with a 10-mile radius as in an area with a 5-mile radius. In my opinion every Greater City scheme should extend almost to touch the border of some other city. For instance, I can see—at no great distance of time—Ipswich extending its boundaries until it

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almost touches Greater Brisbane. There will always be friction between adjoining authorities, but the less chance we have of coming into contact one with the other the less trouble there will be. To-day in a 10-mile radius we have twenty-one bodies, and, whilst I was on the City Council, we were in constant conflict with some body or another. The Breakfast Creek business occasioned a good deal of trouble with adjoining authorities; with South Brisbane we were in conflict about the bridge; on the streets we were in conflict with the Tramways Company, and now we are possibly in conflict with the Tramway Trust. The more bodies there are the more difficulties we are up against; and what applies to the Brisbane City Council applies to other local authorities. It will therefore be easily understood that the wider the radius from the General Post Office the less danger of conflict between various bodies. I can understand that there may well be a greater community of interest within a 10-mile radius than within a 5-mile area, because a 10-mile area will extend as far as Sandgate, for instance. It seems to me an extraordinary hardship that the people between Brisbane and Sandgate should have to bear the burden of constructing and maintaining a road to communicate between Brisbane and one of its seaside and health resorts, which should be connected with the city itself not only by rail but also by means of a good motor road—a general highway—so that the people might travel over it whenever their pleasure or their business called them to do so. If the 5-mile radius were adopted, we would have the example of Sandgate and Brisbane using a road which the intermediate local authorities would have to pay for. That would be one of the spectacles under the scheme which hon. members opposite favour. The hon. member for Bulimba emphasised the case of business people using a road from Bulimba up to the city, running through an area not controlled by the Greater Brisbane authority if it were constituted on a 5-mile basis. Common sense must show hon. members opposite that the proper method is to have a radius big enough to cover every activity serving Brisbane.

Another pleasure resort and health resort of Brisbane should be Mount Glorious. We should be in a position to connect up that resort without running through other shires. Any road from Brisbane to Mount Glorious should be a road direct from the city. It would be a sad state to contemplate if the Moggill Shire and a number of other shires had to pay for the upkeep of that road with little probability of using it. That is exactly what is taking place to-day. If we have not a road to such a place as Mount Glorious because certain bodies cannot afford to construct it, then it is a reflection upon Brisbane itself. If a Greater Brisbane scheme obtained, and we constructed a road to Mount Glorious through certain outside shires, it would be a hardship if the bodies between Brisbane and Mount Glorious had to pay for the upkeep of a road that served the people of Mount Glorious and the people of Brisbane more than the people within those areas. It must be patent that the best service is given where the best means of communication is maintained by one authority along the route.

Hon. members have gone to some trouble to tell us that the people of Moggill or some

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other place should not be brought in. It seems to me that they would only legislate for to-day. The Brisbane River was discovered only 100 years ago, and Brisbane, with 235,000 people within a 10-mile radius, has been built up during that period. What might happen during the next fifty years, or possibly even during the next twenty-five years? The city may double itself within the next twenty-five years if we continue to grow at the rate we are to-day; yet hon. members opposite tell us that a 5-mile radius is good enough, because we can take the other places in later on. We have an example of the difficulty of arranging matters between local authorities bordering on the boundary of cities which have grown. Some greater city schemes have been instituted in New Zealand, and many of the local authorities which were originally invited to come into those schemes are to-day experiencing a great deal of difficulty in getting into them because the greater city people are working against them. That is a trouble that we have to look to. I think the Minister is exceedingly wise in bringing in a measure covering the whole area that he contemplates will be benefited by this greater city scheme.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: In New Zealand it is a case of the rich relation not requiring the poor relations.

Mr. CARTER: That is exactly the case. The outskirts of any local authority around Brisbane might complain, because more money was being spent in the centre than on the outskirts; but exactly the same argument could be used in connection with the Greater Brisbane scheme. Naturally, there will not be as much money spent on the outskirts as in the centre, because there is not the call for the same attention. That applies everywhere. If we had only a 5-mile radius, the same thing would obtain. The people on the outskirts of the 5-mile radius would kick up the same row—if it was necessary to kick up a row—as would the people on the outskirts of a 10-mile radius. Under the Bill we are going to have the same uniform system of valuation, and where the rates are based upon that valuation I am satisfied that there is nothing to fear in that respect. No one is going to suppose that the land in the Moggill Shire is going to be valued at the same rate as the land in Queen street. That would be an absurd supposition. Provision is made in the Bill for differential rating in rural areas. There is nothing to complain of. Noting all that has been said by hon. members opposite, I am satisfied that the outside areas will benefit to the same extent as the city area, and that they will only pay their fair proportion of rates. It is proposed to include a very ambitious area of 385 square miles. It is not too much to contemplate a scheme of that size. I am only sorry that those who designed our streets originally did not make similar provision for the growth that has taken place in the outside areas. If the same provision had been made for the streets in our cities as we propose under this scheme, we would have been much better off to-day. There was a lack of vision on the part of the person or persons who designed and laid out Brisbane. I am given to understand that Queen, Adelaide, and other streets in our city were originally laid out a chain wider than they are at present, but some English officer, who was in charge of the place at the time, thought that Brisbane would never be

anything more than a mere village, so he cut the width down to a chain.

Mr. KELSO: It was the Government that did that.

Mr. CARTER: It was not the Government; Queensland was included in another State at the time. That spirit has obtained almost up to the present time. We find that to-day the streets are being widened at a great cost so as to make preparation for a better city. In spite of that fact hon. members opposite want to see continued the same tinkering methods as obtained then. I am quite satisfied that, if we are going to consider the future, we are not doing too much to give the Greater Brisbane area a radius of 10 miles. It is possible that in another fifty or sixty years consideration will be given to taking in some of the surrounding areas. I am satisfied that in less than that period Brisbane will have grown sufficiently to justify the proposals of the Government, and that the people then will say that some wisdom was displayed by us. I am satisfied that a 10-mile radius is not too much. We have to take into consideration the pleasure and health resorts of the people and make provision to connect them up with the centre.

I would like to make some comparison of the different towns in Australia with those in New Zealand. A little later than this time last year I visited New Zealand. I was particularly desirous of getting some information in regard to their system of local government. All those who have gone into the question of local government in the southern hemisphere are prepared to accept the fact that local government in New Zealand, particularly in regard to the Greater City schemes, is far in advance of anything we have in Australia. Whilst the Dominion of New Zealand has much excellent legislation, their local government is unquestionably superior to the State government. I found on visiting different towns in New Zealand that most of them had a Greater City scheme. It is true that the houses in Wellington are more closely packed together than in Brisbane, because they have a very limited area on which to build. The city is built on very rugged country, and the people have to build close together to get into the area. Wellington has an area of about 24½ square miles and a population of 92,590. They are governed by a mayor and fifteen councillors. The council owns and controls the electric tramways, the electric lighting, water supply and drainage systems, fire brigades, public libraries, cemeteries, recreation areas, public gardens, baths, abattoirs, and milk supply. If there is one city in the world which has an up-to-date milk supply, it is Wellington. The council there supplies 4,500 gallons of milk daily. There is one delivery. The milk is prepared in a common-sense way. It is pasteurised, bottled, and then supplied to the people. That milk, despite all the work put into it and the apparent added cost, is sold at a cheaper price to the people of Wellington than we pay for our milk in Brisbane. It is the best milk I have tasted in any city in Australasia. It is milk just as it is drawn from the cow without any cream being taken from it and without any water added to it. I am sorry to say that most of our milk in Brisbane has a good deal of water added to it, but I have never heard of a case of

fining because of that in the city mentioned. In Wellington they control the abattoirs and the many other activities I have mentioned. The people are very well served by an electric tram service which is comparatively cheap, and the trams are entirely under the control of the council. They cover the whole city area and run out as far as 6 or 7 miles.

Mr. KELSO: Do they run outside of the city area?

Mr. CARTER: Yes, out to some of the suburban local bodies, but mainly in the city. The electric light is cheap and well established. I venture to say the water supply was put in at a cost equal to that of Brisbane, if not greater. They brought their water something like 15 or 17 miles from the Wainuiomata River to Wellington, and when the Wainuiomata was likely to run short they put a tunnel—2 miles in length—through the Orongo Orongo Range to bring water to the town supply. These people have had greater charges to meet for the establishment of their service, but owing to their greater city and their excellent government they pay a lower cost than we pay in Brisbane. Here in Brisbane, whilst our rates covering general, water and sewerage, sanitary, and hospital rates are something over 1s. in the £1, something more than that in South Brisbane, and a like amount in most of the local bodies in and around Brisbane, in Wellington, covering all those activities and covering the following rates:—General, city improvement, library, sanitary, hospital, charitable aids, street works, unemployed relief works, general improvements, water and street lighting—they pay only about 5½d. in the £1. Yet we are told there is nothing in the Greater City system of government! It is because these people have a Greater City scheme that they can offer those facilities at less than half the cost we are paying in Brisbane and surrounding places. These people are controlling all the activities I have mentioned with a rate of 5½d. in the £1 on the unimproved value of the city lands. Of course, our friends opposite may say some of the rates are based on annual value. I have ascertained the equivalent of those annual values, and have worked it out and find that to be the cost.

Mr. KELSO: What is the franchise?

Mr. CARTER: Adult franchise, which came into operation a number of years earlier than it came into operation in Brisbane or any other city in Australia. Because they are enjoying adult franchise and a Greater City scheme with a more common-sense and better system of local government, they secure these advantages. Where we are ploughing through mud in our streets, in Auckland they have miles and miles of concrete streets, and in Wellington they have excellent macadam-bitulithic roads and miles and miles of concrete block footpaths. We are just waking up to the fact that footpaths composed of blocks that might be easily lifted are better than our asphalt and solid footpaths. In Wellington they have a common-sense body elected by the people, and not by the ratepayers only. Consequently they exercise better judgment, broader vision, and more common sense than was the case under the old system of representation where the ratepayers only had a say in the matter. When those conditions existed I venture to

say they were no better than under the same conditions here.

Mr. KELSO: They have not a Labour Government.

Mr. CARTER: No, but they have Labour men on their councils.

Mr. KELSO: That shows they must have had a majority of intelligent Tories.

Mr. CARTER: They have Tories there, it is true—more intelligent Tories than the hon. member for Nundah. Over there they have both intelligent Tories and intelligent Labour men on their councils. The councils are about equally balanced, and the fact that they have carried out these activities and given the people better service at a cost of half the rates paid in and around Brisbane shows that there they are doing things on sound lines.

In Auckland they have a council covering a slightly smaller area. They have control of trams, water, drainage, electric light, reserves, cemeteries, abattoirs, fish and general markets, libraries, technical education, baths, and hospitals. The rate covers general matters, library, sanitation, drainage, water, hospitals, and health, and they control the whole of these activities. Their rate equals 6 3-5d. in the £1 on the unimproved value of property. Auckland is a miniature Sydney. It is built on a harbour something like Sydney Harbour on easily negotiated hills, and it is a very beautiful place. There, for a rate of 6 3-5d. in the £1, they have miles and miles of concrete roads. There we have the peculiar spectacle of a city surrounded by smaller local authority areas. When you travel out from Auckland you go along a concrete road for five miles, and then you run into a mud road in the borough of Newmarket. After running through Newmarket you come on to concrete roads again on the western side of the peninsula. They give the people a better service and excellent roads, and the city is many miles ahead of Brisbane or any town in Australia, yet the cost to those people, as I say, is only 6 3-5d. in the £1 on the unimproved value. When living at New Farm, for two 16-perch allotments, I paid a rate of a little over £20 per annum, and it was not in the best part of New Farm either, but was down on the New Farm flats. The rate charged on that small area was £20 per annum—8s. per week on the unimproved value of two 16-perch allotments. These are excessive rates. I know of no place in any of the principal cities in New Zealand where the same excessive cost is imposed upon the people. Just imagine a cost of 4s. a week for a 16-perch allotment before anything is built on it! Is it any wonder that the rents are so excessive. Yet we have been doing nothing in the way of attempting to reduce the cost of local government. If we do not have an alteration, such as is proposed in this Bill, we shall not only have a more excessive cost but also less beautification of the city. In New Zealand many attempts have been made, and successfully made, to make it a more beautiful place to live in. In Christchurch, where they have not the same amount of greater city government as in Wellington and Auckland, their rates are a little higher. The position is not quite so good, although their water costs very little as the city is practically built over a huge reservoir. In Dunedin they cover almost every activity. They control

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the tramways, electric light, and gas. All these activities are provided, and the rates are on similar lines to those in Auckland—just a little over 6d. in the £1. The cost of establishing their hydro-electric scheme was very excessive, yet, despite that fact, the whole of these costs are covered by their rates, an evidence again that under a Greater City scheme with a broad franchise, the people have benefited. With the Greater Brisbane scheme covering the area indicated—which I think is a necessary area—and with the broad franchise we have, I am looking forward hopefully for both better government and cheaper government than obtains to-day.

There are two matters in the Bill that I do not agree with, and I propose to touch upon them briefly. One is the matter of taking over two activities for which no

[4 p.m.] immediate provision is made—that is, the Tramway Trust and the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board. Those activities are easily controlled. As I said before, in Wellington, New Zealand, which has a greater tramway system possibly than ours, the system is easily controlled by the council. After the election in February we shall have the spectacle of the Tramway Trust with no more efficient men on it than those we elect to the City Council now. We are making provision to elect excellent men to the Greater Brisbane Council, and to pay a salary sufficient to cover the wages of an artisan. My own opinion is that to get an excellent service we should pay for it. There will be a great deal of committee work, and the aldermen will have to give their whole time to the work of the city. To enable them to do that it is necessary to pay a salary which will pay an artisan or a small business man to go in for the council. If a bigger business man likes to go in, it will be all right, and he will have to pay somebody else to look after his business. The same principle should apply to local authorities as applies to Parliament. When a man comes into Parliament he should make it his business, and devote the whole of his time to the people who elect him for that purpose. Therefore, I think we are wise in making provision for a salary which will enable an artisan or small business man to devote his whole time to the government of the city.

I am also in favour of the Bill being extended so as to make provision for a wider borrowing power. In New Zealand the local authorities have power to borrow without recourse to the Governor in Council. A great deal of the "Governor-in-Council" business has been cut out of this Bill, and I am very pleased to see that. I believe that the representatives on a local governing body such as the Greater Brisbane Council will be should have the power which their constituents expect them to exercise. They will represent the ratepayers on a broad franchise, and should have the same freedom in obtaining loans as the State or Commonwealth. The provision for wider borrowing power is not in the Bill, and I do not know whether a majority of the people are in favour of it, but it is in force in New Zealand, where it is a great success. It has enabled the members of the city councils there who are elected on a broad franchise to do things which we have not done so far in Australia.

I hope the Bill will be viewed in a broad light by all hon. members of the House. I

am pleased to see that a number of Opposition members are at least in accord with the Greater Brisbane scheme. I am also pleased to see that the Press are in accord with it. It shows some progressive thought, and that the people are prepared for what is coming. I feel that there should be no reduction in the area, which should comprise the whole 10-mile radius. The Minister should carry the Bill through in the form in which it is introduced, because it is the best measure of its kind that I have seen introduced in any Australian Parliament in regard to local authority government.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): Theoretically, I think we must all agree that a union of effort is desirable in every city. It is a pity, of course, to find that, when the city fathers started in a small way in the early days, they did not make provision for the natural extension of the city. If they had done that the city government would have grown, and there would not have been any need for a Greater Brisbane scheme such as this—that is to say, if the idea of a city of Brisbane had been conceived at the start and provision made that, as suburbs grew, they became part of the city itself. Now we are asked to attack the subject while there is great diversity of interests between the city and the suburbs. The city has piled up a decent debt, and many of the suburban areas have progressed and have also managed to pile up decent debts. Others are just now making headway, and they are asking for money to develop their areas and cannot get it. The Minister, in his wisdom, makes provision for pooling all these debts.

Mr. WRIGHT: Every local authority works on an overdraft.

Mr. KELSO: That may be, but a progressive local authority is bound to get money somewhere. I suppose the hon. member knows pretty well that, if he wanted money from the Treasury, he would be told by the Treasurer that he could not get it.

Mr. WRIGHT: I know that.

Mr. KELSO: I know a case of a council which has a large progressive scheme in view and wants to get money with which to do necessary work, whilst on the other hand my friend, the hon. member for Windsor, has managed to get it done in his electorate already, and there they are in a very nice way with their drainage and their electric light work done. But when you go to a district such as Kedron, where the population is starting to increase, you find they are wanting money to expand. If they were brought into this Greater Brisbane scheme they would be immediately saddled with a portion of the interest and redemption in respect of the loans of the city itself, which has been in existence for many years, and has built up a debt of about £1,500,000. I would therefore like to suggest to the Minister that, if he is bent on having this 10-mile radius, it would be a fair thing if each local authority were allowed to carry its own indebtedness till, in the course of natural development, the younger local authorities had got their fair share of loan money and things were fairly well balanced. It is certainly most unfair at the present time to pool all these debts.

I do not intend to go into the figures dealt with by the leader of the Opposition.

The HOME SECRETARY: You can deal with them at the Committee stage.

Mr. KELSO: Nor do I intend to go into the details discussed by the hon. member for Enoggera. The debt of the 5-mile area outlined by the hon. member for Enoggera is close on £2,000,000, and the debt of the area outside the 5-mile radius is £162,000. If you are going to pool those debts, it stands to reason that you must necessarily increase the rates in the outside districts by at least 100 per cent.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. gentleman should look at my table.

Mr. KELSO: The loan indebtedness within the 5-mile radius amounts to £40 17s. 3d. per ratepayer, and outside the 5-mile radius it is £9 2s. per ratepayer. If those two amounts were pooled the average would be £31 10s. 6d. per ratepayer. In some cases outside the 5-mile radius it is only £11 per ratepayer. In Belmont it is £17 per ratepayer, and the amounts run down as low as £1 2s. 8d. per ratepayer in Moggill, and as the leader of the Opposition has stated, it amounts to nothing in Yeerongilly.

The revenue per ratepayer within the 5-mile radius is £10 14s. 4d. That is the amount that is necessary to meet their requirements, and outside the 5-mile radius £3 16s. 6d. per ratepayer is all that is necessary to enable them to pay their way. If you average those amounts—that gives you the amount for a 10-mile radius—you will get £8 13s. 10d. per ratepayer, so that it would mean in the case of Toombul, which has a revenue of £3 18s. 11d. per ratepayer, that the ratepayers would have to pay much larger taxes to bring their revenue up to £8 13s. 10d. per ratepayer. In addition to that, whilst North Brisbane and South Brisbane may have fair valuations, there is a tendency on the part of outside shires to undervalue their lands for certain reasons, and if everything was pooled and a valuation made on the same basis—I think the Minister himself admits this—the valuations would go up by 25 per cent. It may be all right to do that, but I would point out that in addition to having to pay the amounts that I have quoted the rates would have to be increased beyond that amount by 25 per cent. The question is: Would twenty-one aldermen be capable of carrying on the ramifications of a city the size the Minister suggests? I doubt it very much.

The HOME SECRETARY: Seventy-two members can carry on all the ramifications of the whole State.

Mr. KELSO: The conditions are not parallel.

Mr. MAXWELL: Hear, hear!

Mr. KELSO: In one case the aldermen are carrying out certain specific work, but in Parliament we deal with principles. We lay down certain principles which other people have to carry out. The work is not comparable. Under the Local Authorities Act we have a true ideal of local government, where the responsibility is divided between small areas, and in each of those areas perhaps a dozen men who take an interest in local government make it their business to meet and look after the interests of the whole of that district. Take, for instance, one of the larger electorates included in the Bill. Is it possible for one man to look after the interests of that electorate? It stands to reason that the representative is not going round to look at every little drain, as it would be manifestly impossible to do

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that; and then you come back again to the system of leaving the whole of the work of the council to paid officers.

Lately we had a debate on the question of the constitution of the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board. Hon. members on this side recommended that the Board should be administered by commissioners. I am not too sure, in spite of the Bill, that an investigation should not be made into the possibility of local government by commissioners. This method has been found successful both in Canada and America.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: Not in America.

Mr. KELSO: I have seen accounts where government by commission in America has been a success. Before we commit ourselves to an immense scheme like this, it is necessary that all the avenues should be explored to find out whether it is not better to have even a better scheme than the one proposed. However, taking the Bill as it is, we find that the twenty-one gentlemen who are to administer it will have to give a good deal of time to its affairs. As I said before, the work will really be carried out by expert officers. I doubt very much whether all the saving that has been suggested by hon. members opposite will be realised. We know perfectly well that people running a large scheme such as this is look at the matter of expense in a large way. I could illustrate my argument by referring to the Commonwealth. It was said when the Commonwealth was inaugurated that its cost of administration would be no more than it would cost to keep a dog.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: We were told that the cost would be somewhere about 9d. per head.

Mr. KELSO: Now we have an immense organisation, and the larger the organisation the larger relatively the cost grows. I fail to see from that point of view where we are going to gain much. We had a very informative and illuminating address from the hon. member for Port Curtis, who evidently made good use of his time in New Zealand in ascertaining what they were doing in the way of local government. The hon. gentleman admitted that, although these cities were mere flea-bites in comparison with the proposed Greater Brisbane, yet they controlled numerous utilities extending beyond the area of the city. He told us that the city of Wellington had the control of the tramways, and that the tramways went out beyond the city for a considerable distance. The same thing could apply to the city of Brisbane if there was a smaller area than has been suggested.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you advocate that?

Mr. KELSO: I am quite in favour of the suggestion that we should have a Greater Brisbane scheme of a moderate size, and the size which was suggested and the details mentioned by the hon. member for Enoggera appear to me to be a very fair compromise. I do not know whether it would not be a good thing to commence with three or four municipalities, including the cities of North and South Brisbane. Even if we started with the cities of North and South Brisbane, we would have a nucleus of a Greater Brisbane scheme. The moment the aldermen of the combined cities found that they could take on larger responsibilities, I would give them larger responsibilities, and allow them to take in and absorb some of the contiguous

municipalities. They have the power in the Bill at the present time to do that by means of an ordinance.

The HOME SECRETARY: No, you cannot make an ordinance without laying it on the table of this House.

Mr. KELSO: That is so, but the Minister will agree that the proposed ordinance would originate with the City Council. We know perfectly well that under a system of a unicameral parliament, the Government in power would treat the matter as a party question and adopt the suggestion if it had been previously approved by the Governor in Council. No party in power would be likely to disregard the wishes of the council of the city of Brisbane, because what is the use of conferring those powers on the aldermen if we are to find fault with them when they make an ordinance?

Incidentally, while on that subject, I desire to point out that this provision is made in the Bill.

“An ordinance or part of an ordinance may be repealed by the Governor in Council by Order in Council.”

That is an extraordinary provision, because, when ordinances are passed they have to be agreed to by the Governor in Council and have to be placed on the table of this House. After all that is done—and it may happen that the ordinance is discussed by the House—the Governor in Council has a right to repeal that ordinance or alter it without it being rediscussed by Parliament.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Governor in Council is always subject to the criticism of Parliament.

Mr. KELSO: That is so, but at the same time Parliament may be in recess, and the Governor in Council has the power to annul an ordinance that has been agreed to.

The hon. member for Bulimba tried to put up a good fight for the Bill which has been introduced by the Government, and he told us that, when there was a conference to decide the question of taking over the tramways, the alleged business experts who represented the local authority with which the hon. member is connected, had such little confidence in the ability of the members of the Tramway Trust to carry on the business successfully, that they actually suggested that their particular area should be left out. That seems to me to be one of the best arguments against popular control, because those gentlemen, who were business men, knew very well that under the business capabilities of a man like Mr. Badger the trams were well run, because they were under undivided control.

Mr. WRIGHT: Well run down! They are better run now.

Mr. KELSO: Those business men saw that possibly under an elective body and with possible changes of the personnel of the Trust, and by reason of politics being introduced—on both sides I admit—there might not be a continuance of the policy of the Trust. They feared the affairs of the Trust would not be run in a businesslike way, and that it might prove a failure. Evidently that was in their minds, and they reserved the right to exclude their particular section. I think that was ordinary business prudence on the part of the business men against whom the hon. member for Bulimba is railing.

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Mr. WRIGHT: They were the first people to ask for a tramway extension.

Mr. KELSO: When a thing becomes a fact it is no use cutting off your nose to spite your face. Had I been one of those gentlemen, I would be one of the first to ask for something that was inevitable. I do not think that assists the hon. member's argument.

Mr. WRIGHT: Experience speaks.

Mr. KELSO: One point has been stressed, and the Minister should take note of it—that is the pooling of all the debts on a forty-year basis. It certainly is very nice to have these debts spread out so that each particular generation will bear its share of the expense. But, as has been pointed out by hon. members on this side, and especially by the leader of the Opposition, under the Local Authorities Act there are certain limits within which the loans on certain classes of work are to be repaid. The Minister will be well advised to go into that matter again and see that these loans are spread out only over the period allowed under that Act. Undoubtedly some of the loans have been obtained for works which I presume will be non-existent after fifteen years, and it is quite evident that if those loans are extended over forty years they will have to be renewed pretty nearly three times during that period. That is a point that should be gone into. There must be some reason for including the provision in the Bill, and no doubt the Minister will explain why he included it.

One of the greatest reasons why I am against the large area proposed is the fact that the outside areas are going to get it, so to speak, in the neck. There is not the slightest shadow of doubt that, if areas within a 10-mile or a 12-mile limit are brought in, including Sandgate and Wynnum, it will be some years before these outside areas can get many of the benefits which are enjoyed by the sections nearer the centre of the city. It stands to reason that the citizens of Brisbane will be very proud of the large area, because, I understand, it will be the largest city in the world. But aldermen naturally, with large funds to play with, will have large and expensive ideas in the way of expending money, and various things will be done in the centre of the city costing immense sums of money. Out of the present loan of £1,500,000 a large sum is required for the building of a town hall in the centre of the city. I feel perfectly certain that, had that particular work been handled at the time in a business-like way by men who were experts and who were left untrammelled to do their work, the city of Brisbane would have had a town hall years ago. Under a system of popular representation we find one party pulling against another party—one party wanting one site and the other party wanting the other site—and now, owing to the rising costs, we are landed in an expenditure the end of which we do not know. Some years ago—I happened at the time to be hon. secretary of the Brisbane Musical Union—the then mayor was anxious to secure a town hall for the city. He met me in the street one day, and I was talking to him about the town hall and he said, "If you will interview me I am prepared to go into the matter."

Mr. WRIGHT: What town hall was that?

Mr. KELSO: It never materialised. It is materialising now. The mayor asked me if I could give him some professional assistance

with a view to ascertaining how much the town hall would cost. I got a leading architect of the city—a native of Brisbane—who was very anxious to be connected with something in his native city, and also the conductor of the Brisbane Musical Union, Mr. George Sampson. The three of us had a number of sittings together and it was finally left for this architect to draw a sketch plan, which he did at his own cost. He spent six weeks designing a rough plan for a town hall and he gave an estimate of the cost. At that time that hall could have been built for £150,000, and it would have provided accommodation equal to the accommodation proposed at the present time. If the matter had been left in the hands of an expert to carry out, that town hall would now have been built. I am only showing the defect of the system of elective representatives. Unfortunately at the present time, politics has entered into the matter, and we have fierce political fights, with the result that the requirements of the city are left in the shade. The main thing at election time is whether Labour or the other side shall get in. I hold that representation on that basis cannot give us the best work in the interests of a city such as Brisbane.

That particular phase is also bound up with the question of franchise. We find that adult franchise is to be the franchise for the election of representatives on the [4.30 p.m.] Greater Brisbane Council. I, with others on this side of the House, believe that the old system of rate-payers and owners only having a vote was a better system for all concerned. Recently I have had a case brought under my notice in which a woman told me that she had to pay all the rates on her house property. She said, "I have three girls who are living in my house rent free, and those girls have told me frankly that when the municipal election is on they are going to vote exactly opposite to the way I am going to vote."

Mr. BARBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member for Bundaberg may have said "Hear, hear!" just a little prematurely, for I am not too sure that those three girls did not vote for the Nationalist candidate. (Laughter.) It is a fair thing that the people who are responsible for raising money by which the city government is carried on should have representation in preference to those people who are mere birds of passage. It is the policy of this party not to give a vote to the man who is here to-day and away to-morrow. Hon. members opposite talk about the man who is a tenant paying the rates under the old system. Even if that were correct, hon. members know that under the Local Authorities Act, if the tenant pays the rates he can deduct them from the amount of the rent he pays to the landlord, but in default of the tenant paying the rates the landlord must pay them himself. The tenant had a vote under the old system if he paid the rates, and it can be taken for granted that in most cases the tenants who took an interest in local government used to pay the rates. If they did not pay the rates the landlord then came in. What is happening under the present law of adult franchise? Everyone who is over twenty-one years of age gets a vote in municipal elections, and that does not seem to me to be right.

Mr. RIORDAN: You do not object to that, do you?

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Mr. KELSO: I do object to it. I say that we should go back to the old system, when what is known as the ratepayers' vote was in operation—that is, the vote of the people who are actually interested in the matter.

Mr. RIORDAN: You want to go back to the Stone Age.

Mr. KELSO: Those are the people who ought to have the vote.

I do not see that there is any power of veto contained in the Bill. I do not remember whether such a power was in the last Bill or not. There ought to be some power of veto in connection with loans and in certain other directions, so that the majority of the ratepayers could be protected against a majority in the council who were of a certain political opinion different to their own. It is necessary to have that, because the whole of the Bill is based on politics. In these latter days we have decided on a certain franchise, and the whole thing is fought out on a political basis more or less, and I think some provision should be made whereby, in an emergency, the ratepayers—perhaps after an election, when something may be proposed which, in the opinion of a majority of them, is detrimental to the interests of the city—might have some chance of having the decision vetoed.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: To whom would you give the power of veto?

Mr. KELSO: I would give it to the people who have created the council.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: That is, trust the people?

Mr. KELSO: Exactly. You can trust the people, and, if the council for some reason or other do something which in the opinion of the majority of the ratepayers is not right, there should be some way by which they could have that decision brought into review.

There are various other matters which I have noted for discussion, but I would be out of order in dealing with them now, so I shall defer my other remarks until a later stage.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): As has been said by other speakers, this is an exceedingly important measure, and one which probably might have been considered many years ago with very great advantage to the city of Brisbane and suburbs. On the general principle of a Greater Brisbane scheme, I think we are practically all agreed. Nearly all of us believe that there is a necessity for a Bill for the co-ordination of effort by the local authorities in the metropolitan area. During the debate it has been suggested that men who in the past had control of local authority affairs did not look sufficiently far ahead.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: That is true, not only of local authorities.

Mr. TAYLOR: Yes. Probably in fifty or sixty years the people who come after us will say that we did not look far enough ahead. There is no doubt that we have to endeavour to visualise the needs not merely five or ten years ahead, but for fifty or sixty, or even one hundred years, ahead. But it is extremely difficult to know exactly what is best so that those who come after us and carry on the affairs of government will not be hampered in their efforts to improve the conditions of the people. The people not

only of Queensland, but the world over, are demanding something better than they were content with forty, fifty, or sixty years ago. They are not prepared to live under the same conditions. They look for something better, and it is a laudable desire. There is such a thing as standing still and thereby going back, and a nation or a people must either progress or go back. I take it that here in Australia—in Queensland particularly—we are making an effort to progress, and therefore the general principles of a Bill such as this should be welcomed by most of us as an attempt to improve existing conditions and make it possible for the people to derive the greatest possible benefit from our legislation and the work of local authorities.

I would like to refer to what the hon. member for Port Curtis said to the effect that local authorities in the metropolitan areas had in years gone by shown no vision at all. The fact that my own electorate owes the Government more than any other local authority in the metropolitan area is proof that they were looking ahead. The Windsor Council's indebtedness to the Government at the present time is about £120,000 or £130,000, and I do not think that any other local authority owes an amount equal to that. That money has been spent in improving the area by carrying out drainage work, securing parks, and doing all that was possible to be done for the improvement of the conditions of the people of the town of Windsor. I recollect when I first became an alderman of the Windsor Town Council, we had not a park in the whole area, but now we have four or five very fine parks. There was hardly any concrete water channelling in the area, and practically no drainage had been carried out. On account of the lay of the country in that portion of the metropolis, a very heavy outlay was necessary to carry out the necessary drainage work in the area. That work has all been done, and as a result the town of Windsor is heavily indebted to the Government, but notwithstanding that indebtedness, they have been able up to the present, and I am sure will be able in the future, to meet all their obligations. I am not so sanguine as to think that in carrying out this scheme we are going to effect very great economy from a financial point of view, but we certainly ought to be able to effect greater efficiency. If one result of the passing of this Bill be greater efficiency in the Greater Brisbane area, then great good will be accomplished, but personally I am inclined to think we shall not find that there is going to be a very great saving from a financial point of view. I do not see how that is possible. The demands of the people will be for something better even than exists to-day, and that demand will have to be met, and will have to be paid for.

While I welcome the Bill, I do think that this is a case where we might hasten a little slowly, especially in regard to the outside areas that I have spoken about. I do not anticipate anything like the dangers or fears that the Home Secretary expects, if the area is limited. I do not see why it is not possible so to draft the Bill as to specifically state that after the council has submitted its ordinances to the Government the outside areas can come into the scheme within a period not exceeding five years. The council then would have time to prove itself, and find out exactly whether the scheme was

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going to be successful or not. I do not see any reason why it should not be successful, but at the same time there is very great fear in the minds of quite a number of those in the sparsely-populated areas outside the 5-mile radius that they will be rated very high in order to carry out the scheme. That is the fear that is in their minds, and whether it is justified or not, I do think that we might provide that the other areas can come in within a period not exceeding five years if the scheme proves to be a good one. If the scheme proves to be a good one in twelve or eighteen months, then those other areas can come in sooner. The hon. member for Logan reminds me that there is power in the Bill to extend the area, but there is no provision in the Bill by which these outside areas might be permitted to come under the scheme at a later period, as I have suggested. It is a matter which the Home Secretary might well consider.

I would just like to quote a few figures, most of which have not so far been quoted. The population of Brisbane, within a 5-mile radius, is 188,737, and the population outside the 5-mile radius is 51,769. The number of ratepayers—not the number of electors—within the 5-mile radius is 44,804, and the number outside the 5-mile radius 13,648, or a total of 63,452. Those ratepayers have got to find the whole of the money. Hon. members opposite say that the residents pay the rates. Admitting that they do, still these 63,452 ratepayers are responsible for their payment. You cannot get at the resident or the person renting the property to recover the rates, but you can get at the ratepayer who actually owns the property. The loan indebtedness of the local authority within the 5-mile radius is £1,830,776. That is not a very large amount when the size of the area is considered. The loan indebtedness outside the 5-mile radius is only £169,705. It could be well understood that with a loan indebtedness within the 5-mile area of £1,830,776 the people outside the 5-mile radius, whose local authorities are only indebted in loans to the extent of £169,705, would naturally be anxious as to how they would be affected financially by the scheme. Finance has to be considered in a matter of this kind. I realise that the Government have often to do things in opposition to local authorities to compel them to take certain action in the matter of health and drainage which they would not take. From the figures I have quoted, the people outside the 5-mile radius have some claims for consideration. We do not want anything to happen in connection with this legislation which would cause it to be in any way a failure. That is the desire of every hon. member. I feel sure that it is the desire of the Home Secretary and the Government from the very fact that they introduced a Bill at the close of last session, and thought it desirable not to proceed any further with it after its introduction so that the people concerned would have ample time to consider it in every detail and see whether they thought it a good thing or not. The then Home Secretary, in making his speech in connection with the measure, praised it up to the skies as a most excellent one. If a vote had been taken in Parliament at that particular time, I have no doubt the whole of the members supporting the Government would have voted for that Bill, although every one of those hon. members will admit

that the measure we are considering to-day is immeasurably superior to the one we were then called upon to consider. We were told by the then Home Secretary of the various economies that would be effected if the Bill was passed. We had an hon. member telling us to-day that, if that measure had been passed, it would have taken no end of secretaries, collectors, and one official and another, to look after financial matters under that scheme. It just shows how there has been a change of opinion on the subject. Everyone agrees that this Bill is very superior to the old Bill.

Now let me give figures showing the revenue within the 5-mile radius and the revenue outside that radius—

ANNUAL REVENUE.	
Within 5-Mile Radius.	Outside 5-Mile Radius.
£ 480,187	£ 71,369

There is a tremendous disparity between those figures, and they require our most careful consideration. Again, look at the following figures showing the loan indebtedness:—

WHOLE AREA.		£
Government loan indebtedness		545,907
Interest and redemption thereon, per annum	64,276
WITHIN 5-MILE RADIUS.		£
Government loan indebtedness		383,410
Loans from other sources	1,591,359
Total indebtedness within the 5-mile radius		£1,974,769

That, of course, is not all the money owing to the Government, as there is £1,000,000 owing by the Brisbane City Council on debentures, and a very considerable amount owing by the South Brisbane City Council also on debentures.

One remarkable fact has been brought out during this discussion, and that is, that in spite of the amount of local authority work that has been carried out in the metropolitan area, there is only £545,907 owing to the Government in that area, and outside the 5-mile radius there is only £162,497 owing by the whole of the authorities whom we wish for the present, at all events, to exclude from the Bill. The whole of that £162,497 is owing to the Government. The outside authorities do not owe anything else. Now let me give the payments on account of interest and redemption—

ANNUAL INTEREST AND REDEMPTION.		
	Within 5-Mile Radius.	Outside 5-Mile Radius.
Loans from Government	£ 43,184	£ 21,092
Loans from all other sources	121,854	..
Total	£165,038	£21,092

When one considers those figures and the local authority areas concerned, we can quite understand any objection that may be lodged by those outside the 5-mile radius. We are embarking on a very ambitious project, one

Mr. Taylor.]

which I believe will be a success, but it has to prove itself. Our beliefs are not proofs. Only when the matter is tried out and proved shall we know whether it is a success or not. Undoubtedly a very considerable amount of the success of the scheme depends on those who will be in control—on those who are returned as representatives. It is regrettable that our whole system of local government has become political in its operations. Take the Bill we are dealing with to-day. We have a Labour Government in power. Say, for the sake of argument, that we have a council in power, a large majority of whom are Labour representatives. They present their ordinances, and in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred those ordinances will pass through. Take it the other way, and say we had an anti-socialist Government in power and a Labour majority in the council. They bring along their ordinances, and it is more than likely they will be thrown out, and vice versa. This is one of the difficulties likely to occur in connection with this Bill on account of the political aspect of local government to-day. It is regrettable, yet it is there, and we shall have to meet the situation as best we can.

Mr. HANSON: It is a natural development.

Mr. TAYLOR: That may be. The Home Secretary stated that, if the rate of increase in the population of Brisbane was maintained at the same percentage as during the last five census years, the population in twenty-five years would be 800,000. If we can get that population, we certainly have to be prepared, under a Bill such as we are considering to-day, to make provision to enlarge the area in which the Bill is going to operate. I see no reason why there should not be such an increase in the population of Brisbane. It is growing very fast. I have been here now about thirty years, and I recollect when I came here first I went up to North Queensland and went through the whole of Queensland before I decided to remain in the State. On my return to Sydney I recollect a friend asking, "What do you think of Queensland?" I said, "I am only sorry I am a poor man." He asked, "Why?" I said, "If I had £30,000 or £40,000, I would put every penny of it in land in the metropolitan area of Brisbane." I was so satisfied from what I saw of the State at that time that it must develop, that I felt sure it was a safe place for anyone to invest money. What I thought at that time has been amply proved during the intervening years. I have seen the city grow, as no doubt many of us have seen it grow. I recollect when the horse trams were running in the streets, and now we have a very fine electric system which is extending in every direction.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: I remember the 'buses running before there were any trams.

Mr. TAYLOR: Now, of course, we have a most up-to-date tramway system. In regard to some of the activities that it is proposed to take over, it remains with the council which is to be constituted under this Bill to say when they will take over any particular activity which is mentioned in the Bill. I hope they will not take over the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board until the place is sewered. I am afraid there will be very serious trouble if they do. Of course, the tramways are a paying proposition, and no doubt will continue to pay. The same can probably be said of the electric light supply at the present time. There is no doubt what-

[Mr. Taylor.

ever that the number of boards which are operating at the present time is very confusing, and we want to co-ordinate their efforts as far as possible and get greater efficiency. I do not look for a lower rate or for less money being required to carry out the necessary works than is required at the present time, but we might have very much greater efficiency than we get to-day. I am not going to say for one moment that there is a great want of efficiency in connection with local authority work in the metropolitan area. I have had some experience of it, and, while mistakes may have been made, I know that the local authority with which I was connected was up to date in every way, and the money it got was spent wisely and well, and as I have said before, it owes the Government more money than any other local authority.

In regard to health matters, there is no doubt that co-ordinated effort will bring about very much better results. Probably there will also be an improvement in the building of roads.

[5 p.m.] Concrete roads have evidently come to stay. They are being made in every possible direction. The hon. member for Port Curtis has told us this afternoon how much we have to learn from Wellington in New Zealand, where they have had miles of concrete roads for a long time. This Bill should enable very great economies to be effected in the matter of road construction in the Greater Brisbane area. At the present time each local authority has its steam roller and staff of men to carry out its road work, and there is no doubt that at times the men cannot be kept fully employed. Under the comprehensive scheme outlined in this Bill better results should be obtained from the greater effort which will be made to cope with the work.

I think that the Government might well consider the advisability of somewhat reducing the area proposed in the Bill for the time being. It is a fairly big area which is proposed, and it embraces the bulk of the population. If the Bill, as I think it will, proves to be a success, instead of having to ask the people in the outside areas to come in, I believe, as the hon. member for Logan says, that they will come along and ask to be taken in, and that will be very much better than compelling them to come in as the Bill proposes.

We had quite a lot of interesting information and some informative tables supplied by the Minister who introduced the Bill last year—the present Secretary for Public Instruction. They are well worth the study of anyone who takes an interest in local government matters. The statistics tabled then appear to be most accurate, and I would commend the perusal of them to all hon. members who intend to take part in the debate, so that they will be able to criticise the measure in a helpful way. We want the criticism to be helpful and not of a destructive character; but, if there are weak points in the Bill, we should certainly point them out and attempt to obviate them when the Bill comes into Committee.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

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

The House adjourned at 5 p.m.