

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 10 OCTOBER 1924

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FRIDAY, 10 OCTOBER, 1924.

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

QUESTIONS.

PARTICULARS IN RE CROWN RIGHTS OF
RESUMPTION OF PASTORAL HOLDINGS.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*), for Mr.
COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*), asked the Secretary
for Public Lands—

"1. What are the particulars of the
Crown rights of resumption of pastoral
holdings, without compensation, from 1st
January, 1922, to date, under the follow-
ing headings:—Name of lease, district,
area of lease, due date of right of re-
sumption, and area liable to resumption,
respectively?"

"2. What are the particulars of
resumptions actually made from such
holdings, under the following headings:—
Name of lease, date of resumption, and
area resumed, respectively?"

"3. What are the corresponding par-
ticulars to (1) with respect to the period
from present date to end of 1926?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*), for The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*), replied—

"The information asked for would take a considerable time to compile."

MOUNT MULLIGAN COALMINE—AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT IN RE INDEBTEDNESS OF CHILLAGOE LIMITED TO GOVERNMENT.

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

"Seeing that the Auditor-General's report shows that at the time of taking over the Mount Mulligan mine the indebtedness of Chillagoe Limited to the Government was: principal £137,542, and interest, £11,260, and that in addition a sum of £5,250 was paid by the Government to the company, making a total of £154,152 as the total cost of the mine to the State, why is it that in the balance-sheet, as contained in the Auditor-General's report, the sum of £142,892 (only) is shown as the purchasing price of this mine?"

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*) replied—

"When arrangement for purchase of Mount Mulligan mine was made the interest was written off."

BILL OF SALE AGREEMENT FORM.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) asked the Attorney-General—

"1. What is the ordinary length in words of a bill of sale?"

"2. Is he aware that in regulations dated 1st September, 1924, under the Agricultural Bank Act of 1923, a bill of sale agreement form contains about 2,460 words, not including headings and tables, this including one sentence of about 444 words?"

"3. Does he think that any ordinary man, or Minister of the Crown, or member of Parliament could follow a sentence of over 400 words?"

"4. Does he think that any ordinary man, or Minister of the Crown, or member of Parliament would fully understand what they were committing themselves to by signing such an agreement?"

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

"1. The length of a bill of sale varies with the nature of the subject-matter. The number of words in the bills of sale in use by the following companies may furnish a guide to the honourable member:—

	Words.
Union Bank	9,000 (approx.).
Bank of New South Wales	6,000 (approx.).
Law Book Company	3,000 (approx.).

"2. I am informed by my officers that such is the case. The object is to convey to the person signing these documents the very fullest information as to his rights and liabilities. The leader of the Opposition (Mr. Moore) secured an amendment of the Agricultural Bank Bill providing for all conditions to be embodied in the bill of sale.

"3. It depends upon the construction of the sentence. The sentence referred

to in question (2) could very easily be followed by any ordinary man, or Minister of the Crown, or member of Parliament.

"4. Any of such persons would fully understand what he was committing himself to by signing the Agricultural Bank bill of sale."

CLYDE ENGINEERING COMPANY AND LOCOMOTIVES CONTRACT.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*), without notice, asked the Secretary for Railways—

"Has the Clyde Engineering Company definitely accepted the contract for locomotives?"

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

"A contract has been entered into and the Railway Department has no definite evidence that the successful tenderer intends to repudiate the contract."

Mr. ROBERTS: They only made a very small deposit.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I beg to move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Local Authorities Acts, 1902 to 1923, in a certain particular."

A rather unusual position has occurred in the shire of Dalrymple, which is dealt with in the most important amendment. The shire was able to get a sufficient number of members nominated to obviate a contest. A member was required to be nominated from the shire for the harbour board. A contest was likely, and if a poll were taken over the whole area, it would cost about £2600, and the whole revenue for the shire is only about that amount. An amendment is now introduced so that in positions like that an Order in Council can be issued to permit of a postal vote being taken.

The Rockhampton and Toowoomba City Councils are installing sewerage systems. They find that they have not the power under the Local Authorities Act to compel householders to make the necessary house connections, and the Act is being amended to give them that power.

Another amendment will enable country shires to be called upon to erect signs at crossroads.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Then the Local Authorities Act is to be amended in more than one particular?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, in certain particulars.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The motion reads that it is proposed to amend the Act "in a certain particular."

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I understood that the postal-vote system was to be extended to country shires in cases where the expense of an election will be out of all proportion

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to the benefit received. The hon. member for Warrego has already pointed out the necessity for making voting compulsory, and either giving polling-booths at convenient places where the people can get to the polls without having to ride sixty or seventy miles, or of extending the system of postal voting to those areas where long distances have to be covered. Other hon. members on the Government side have also pointed out the absolute necessity of postal voting being allowed in those cases, under certain conditions. The system could also be authorised in municipal and shire council elections. I trust that the Minister will accept the suggestions put forward as to the necessity of widening the section of the Act permitting postal voting in certain areas where long distances have to be covered.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): Evidently there is a typographical error, as the termination of the motion should have read "in certain particulars." I ask leave to withdraw my motion with a view to moving a fresh motion.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the Committee that the Home Secretary be allowed to withdraw his motion with a view to substituting a fresh motion?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Motion, by leave, withdrawn

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I beg to move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Local Authorities Acts, 1902 to 1923, in certain particulars."

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 HOME SECRETARY 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.

NAVIGATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I beg to move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Navigation Acts, 1876 to 1911, so as to provide for the better management and control of motor-boats and motor vessels within the territorial waters of Queensland, and for other consequential purposes."

The measure is intended to register and control motor-boats in the river. At present there is absolutely no control, and it is left entirely to motor-boat men themselves whether they obey what is termed the right-of-way in the river and take ordinary precautions to place lights on their vessels at

[*Mr. Moore.*

night to prevent other vessels colliding with them. We also desire to be assured that motor-boat owners are capable of managing motor-boats and that they are not a menace to other people on the river.

Mr. TAYLOR: Do you propose to tax them?

The HOME SECRETARY: It is intended to impose a small registration fee.

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

BRISBANE GAS COMPANY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

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

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Brisbane Gas Company Act of 1864 in a certain particular."

The object of this Bill is to enable the Brisbane Gas Company to increase their capital from £500,000 to £1,000,000 under the provisions of the Companies Act. At the present time they are handicapped by their charter limiting the capital to £500,000. Owing to the extent of building operations going on within their area, extensions of gas mains are required, and it is necessary for them to have this additional capital to enable them to extend their operations.

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 PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) 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.

CITY OF BRISBANE BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Taavong*): Last night when the House adjourned I was dealing with the powers that are given to local authorities in connection with the matter of milk supply. Let me say that the Brisbane

City Council and other local authorities have the whole of that power, even to the inspection of dairies, taken out of their hands by the Department of Agriculture. Inspectors are appointed by the Department of Public Health, and how anybody can get up and blame a local authority for the lack of a proper supply of milk when the matter is under the control of a Government department I certainly do not know. I can quite understand the Minister wanting to widen the scope of the measure, and I am prepared to offer the hon. gentleman every assistance in so doing, but I am not going to allow local authorities to be blamed for something they are not guilty of. If anyone is to blame, it is the hon. gentleman himself as head of the Health Department. I stressed the point also in dealing with the Health Act that the appointment of medical officers is in the control of the Minister or the Commissioner for Public Health; and if they think local authorities are not carrying out their work properly in that regard, they have the power to compel them. Section 29 of the Health Acts, 1900 to 1917, provides—

"A local authority may, and when required by order of the Commissioner shall, appoint a medical practitioner as medical officer of health, and also such public analysts, public experts, inspectors, and other officers as may be necessary for the due execution of the provisions of this Act and the regulations and by-laws."

Then, again, subsection (3) of that section states—

"The local authority of two or more contiguous areas may, with the approval of the Commissioner, join in the appointment of a medical officer of health, public analyst, public expert, inspector, or other officer, and in directing the duties to be performed by such officers, and in remunerating them."

The powers are there, and if the local authorities are neglecting their work, the Commissioner is to blame. I say naturally the Minister is the man to whom we have to look, because he is the head of that department. That is why I say that, if they are missing their opportunity in doing their work, then it is the head of the department who makes an error. I believe the time has arrived when a permanent medical officer should be appointed for the city of Brisbane, and the local authority should pay for it.

Another thing mentioned by the hon. gentleman was the undue subdivision of land, and the desire to see town-planning work carried out. Section 33 of the Local Authorities Act Amendment Act of 1923 provides—

"After section one hundred and eighty-six of the principal Act the following sections are inserted:—

(a) Declare by Order in Council any defined part of the area to be a residential district; and

(b) Prohibit the erection in such district of any building for use for the purposes of such trades, industries, manufactures, shops, and places of public amusement as may be described in the Order; and

(c) Prohibit the use of any building in such district for any such purposes as last aforesaid; and

(d) Prohibit the erection or use of advertisement hoardings in such district; and

(e) Regulate the class, quality, or description of buildings that may be erected or permitted to continue (whether erected before or after the passing of the Local Authorities Acts Amendment Act of 1923) in such district."

That shows that local authorities undoubtedly have the power and it is useless for the Minister to give the undue subdivision of land and the necessity for creating noxious trade areas as the reasons for the Bill.

The Home Secretary in his speech on this Bill said—

"In the brown line 5-mile radius, Sandgate and Pinkenba would be excluded. Does any hon. member honestly believe that we can aspire to a greater city area without first recognising that it is absolutely essential for the well-being of our city that we at least have a deep-water port, and that we further should have lungs to our city, so that our jaded and tired workers may have speedy and cheap access to the recreation which they can obtain from the approach to the sea?"

I do not think the hon. gentleman could have meant that. I would not credit such a thing. The hon. gentleman talks about a deep-water port. Does he forget the deep-water ships that come up to the South Brisbane wharves? In any case, the local authority is not going to have any control over the railways so that it cannot possibly give the people cheap fares. If the workers are not getting cheap means of access to the sea, the Railway Department is to blame; and, even if the hon. gentleman passed his Bill in the form in which he desires, the local authority under it could not dictate to the Railway Department. I hope that the hon. gentleman is amenable to reason, because he knows very well that, on the whole, we are agreeable to the principle of a Greater Brisbane scheme. We want to have a Greater Brisbane, however, that is not going to be strangled at the outset, and under this Bill it would be strangled by the creation of an area of 385 square miles. I shall tell the hon. gentleman why. The Bill provides for only twenty aldermen and a mayor, and it is impossible for them to do the work appertaining to such an area. In Sydney there are twenty-six aldermen with thirteen wards; in Melbourne, thirty-two aldermen and councillors for eight wards; in Adelaide, a mayor and nineteen councillors for six wards, or twenty altogether; and in Perth, twenty-four councillors and a mayor. Does the hon. gentleman think for one moment that it is possible for twenty aldermen to carry out the work in an area of 385 square miles, even if they work day and night?

The HOME SECRETARY: We do not want to have the class of men you are accustomed to.

Mr. MAXWELL: We want the aldermen to be in touch with the ratepayers. The hon. gentleman has just shown—I cannot help saying it—that he knows very little about the functions of local government. Works and other committees are appointed to do certain things. Imagine a works committee going through an area of 385 square miles

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to ascertain the work necessary to be done! I am fully aware that it is not anticipated that the whole of the work will have to be done immediately. As the hon. gentleman pointed out, we are legislating for the future. Does the hon. gentleman not think that an area of 80 square miles, within a radius of approximately 5 miles, is sufficient? I do. That is one of the directions in which I hope to assist to amend the Bill later on.

The other point I want to stress most emphatically this morning is the provision in the Bill giving to the local authority the control of municipal enterprises. Is the Minister a stark-staring madman that he wants to do this in the face of what has happened in the management of State enterprises by his Government? Yet he wants to perpetuate the injury! Who is to pay? As I pointed out yesterday, the ratepayers would have to pay; but those people will not have control of the raising of loans.

The HOME SECRETARY: Have they got it under the Local Authorities Acts now?

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. gentleman's Government took that power from them, but, because an injustice was done when the Local Authorities Act was amended, it does not follow that it is not right for us to stress the point that we do not agree with that system. So this morning I emphasise the point in the hope that some say in these matters will be given to those people who have their interests in the area.

I also want to stress the point that the mayor or an alderman of the City of Brisbane may, under this Bill, also hold the position of a member of this House. I venture to say that every hon. member who has held such a position knows full well that it is an absolute impossibility for a man to concentrate on both jobs.

Mr. McLEHLAN: The Bill does not compel him to do so.

Mr. MAXWELL: It gives the opportunity. On reading some of the literature connected with hon. members opposite, we are led to believe that some of them attribute to us the principle of "one man two jobs," while some supporters of hon. members opposite are just as keen on securing those jobs.

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

Mr. WILSON (*Fortitude Valley*): I rise to add a meed of praise to the Government for bringing in this very important measure.

I am one of those who believe [10.30 a.m.] that there has been altogether too little interest displayed in local government affairs in the past. To my mind local government matters are even more important than State or Federal Government matters inasmuch as they touch the people in their every-day life. Local government deals with those things which are closer to the hearths and homes of the people than matters of State or Federal concern. What is required in Brisbane is a bigger and wider public spirit. We have all the natural advantages for the development of a beautiful and healthy city, and it is only by giving every citizen a voice and interest in civic affairs that a spirit which will make for a better civic life and wider outlook in local government affairs will be developed. I

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think the Government have been very considerate, in that they have shown a correct spirit of toleration in introducing the City of Brisbane Bill last session and carrying it to the second reading stage after a speech had been delivered by one member on each side of the House, which I take it was done for the purpose of giving those interested in local government affairs within the defined area a chance to discuss this very important measure. I am satisfied that it was a wise step to take, because the Minister who was then in charge of the Bill had numerous deputations from all sections of the community waiting upon him, and he was at all times ready to go into the question of a Greater Brisbane Bill and listen very attentively to what those deputations had to say on the measure. A certain section of those who were interested in local government affairs were of the opinion that an area comprising the local authorities of Brisbane and South Brisbane would be sufficient to commence with, while others were of the opinion that a 5-mile radius would be sufficient; but I make bold to say that the more intelligent class of the community was satisfied that the Bill should stand with its provision for a 10-mile radius, which they thought was absolutely necessary. I can quite realise how long we would have had to wait if it had been left to the aldermen and councillors to draw up a scheme or draft a Bill for a Greater Brisbane. As we all know, they have been discussing this matter for some considerable time, and we are all aware of the time and trouble they took in connection with the taking over of the tramways. They did not seem to be able to arrive at any finality, and, if it had not been for the fact that the present Government were in power, that utility would still be in the hands of private enterprise, and the profits would continue to go overseas to swell the pockets of the absentee shareholders.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman must not forget that there were a large number of shareholders in Australia.

Mr. WILSON: I can assure the hon. member for Wynnum that it is a good thing to keep the profits here. The absentee shareholders were right enough; they came to our assistance in days gone by.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman admits that they did come to our assistance.

Mr. WILSON: I do not think the hon. member for Wynnum can deny that it is the recognised policy everywhere that public utilities should be in the hands of the people, and be run by the people for the benefit of the people. If we have any confidence in our city, we ought to be satisfied on that score.

This measure is without doubt the greatest measure of its kind that has ever been introduced in any Australian State. It is in itself a miniature parliament to govern the local requirements of what must become a very extensive and important city. The proposed council is given all the powers necessary for development along modern lines into what should be a modern city.

What do we find if we revert to the conditions as they exist at present with so many pocket boroughs? I will first refer to taxation. The city of Brisbane, with its reasonable valuations and ratings, may be compared with those in some of the contiguous

towns and councils, where the police laid down has been low valuations and high ratings.

I am pleased that this Bill provides for uniformity. Property owners will have to pay their fair proportion of taxation in the form of water rates, land tax, etc., which will be based on the true value of the land. In consequence of the low valuations at present some of the ratepayers are not paying their just due. There is evidence of this on the boundary roads of existing municipalities. The land on either side of the road is of the same nature and quality, but the valuation of one ranges from 20 to 40 per cent. higher than the other. Local authorities usually strike their rates at the commencement of each year in order to meet their requirements for the year. They find it easier to have a low valuation, as by this means they avoid appeals, and strike a high rate, from which there is no appeal. Low valuations are also a very convenient method of escaping Federal and State land taxation and any other taxation that is based on the unimproved value of the land. The point I wish to make is this: If the valuations were increased to something near their true value, suburban property holders would not have to pay so much in rates. As the matter now stands, they have to pay an increased rate to make up for the loss caused through the low basis of valuation prevailing in the business areas of the city. I intend before I sit down to prove very conclusively that this is a fact. The Brisbane City Council has improved the valuation considerably within the last few years. The city of South Brisbane, however, is very far behind in this regard. Hon. members will be very surprised later on when I give them instances of valuations, which will show conclusively that it is necessary that we should go in for a Greater Brisbane scheme.

Let me take street improvements, and instance Hale street, which is the boundary between Brisbane City Council and the Ithaca Council. The city side of the road has its water channel and curbing, and is metalled, while the Ithaca side is absolutely unformed. Anyone looking down the centre of the road can see the clear line of demarcation. It is so pronounced that it is always calling for comment from the uninitiated.

Another case of local interest which has come before the Brisbane City Council quite recently is the bridge over Breakfast Creek near Herston. The Brisbane City Council and the Windsor Town Council approached the Ithaca Council to see if the three bodies could not meet in conference and discuss the question of building that bridge. I make bold to say that the Ithaca Council would derive a considerable amount of benefit if that bridge was built, but that council simply demurred, and the other councils had no chance of doing anything, so the project had to be held up.

There is another agitation to replace the bridge over Breakfast Creek, near Mayne, leading into what is called the "Fiveways" at Albion. That bridge was in a state of dilapidation for a number of years, and finally it was pulled down altogether. Owing to the spirit of parochialism prevailing, it is just as far off consummation as ever. If it were reconstructed, it would be a relief to the traffic going over Breakfast Creek Bridge at the present time. When we realise the

enormous amount of traffic going over that bridge, we must consider it to be almost a death trap. It carries the traffic from Ascot and Hamilton on the one side, and from Albion and Clayfield on the other; and when the Albion Park and Ascot races are conducted on Saturdays, the traffic over the bridge is enormous. Two city aldermen representing city wards, Alderman Roche and Alderman Donovan, tabled a notice of motion with the object of rebuilding the old Breakfast Creek Bridge, as was advocated in connection with the Herston Bridge, but the project dropped through in a similar manner. If the old Breakfast Creek Bridge were rebuilt, it would relieve the present bridge tremendously, and even at Exhibition time people could go across the Mayne flats from Albion, which is the shortest route. The bridge is really absolutely necessary, but at present the councils are not able to get any work done on boundary matters such as bridges. The difficulty is to get the local authorities to agree. The hon. member for Toowong will bear me out in that, as he was on the Brisbane City Council when this matter cropped up on different occasions.

Mr. MAXWELL: The amount of money that the proposition was going to cost the Brisbane City Council made it prohibitive.

Mr. WILSON: I know that, but since then the land has been drained and is being built on.

Mr. MAXWELL: People should never have been allowed to build on that land.

Mr. WILSON: The Mayne Bridge is necessary.

Then there is the question of drainage, on which there is no continuity of policy whatever, each authority draining its own area whether it is to the detriment of adjoining shires or not. Then, again, we have the main arteries from the city, where within the confines of one council the roads are good, but in the next they may be awful. If you ask the latter body, the reason given is that they have no funds, which we know to be absolutely correct. Under this measure all debts will be pooled, and the finances of the city placed on a sound footing. At the beginning of each year estimates of expenditure for the whole city will be prepared, and absolute co-ordination achieved in the development of the city and of the outskirts.

Another important matter—the most important of all—is that concerning the health of the community. At present this subject is only dealt with in a spasmodic manner. Under the proposed scheme it will be brought under proper control, and instead of one authority doing its duty and the next authority probably neglecting its duty, efficient co-ordination will be brought about. I refer chiefly to the milk supply, public abattoirs, and the prevention of disease of all forms, which will be efficiently coped with under this Bill. There is no gainsaying the fact that the prosperity of a people depends very greatly on the health of the people.

Mr. CARTER: Hear, hear!

Mr. WILSON: Some critics of this measure say that it covers too great an area; but with improved transit and better means of communication, the city dweller will be eventually forced to the suburbs and to the sea-side. This being the case, why should not the places or the localities in which people

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will live, as well as the places where people are employed, be governed by one authority?

Mr. CARTER: Hear, hear! That is common sense.

Mr. WILSON: As it is necessary to have good roads to carry the heavy traffic in the business section of the city, so also is it necessary to have good roads to bring not only the people but the produce of the country to the city. Therefore one controlling influence is necessary. I have collected a good deal of data—chiefly from the older countries of the world where they have a good deal of experience in these matters—bearing on the question of the necessity for a Greater Brisbane city, and also bearing on the question of having a sufficiently large area to commence with. I have not had the opportunity of listening to any of the speeches delivered in the House on this Bill, as unfortunately I have had to attend to other duties and could not be present when the previous discussions took place. The hon. member for Toowong is the only hon. member I have heard speak, but I had the opportunity of glancing through "Hansard," and I want to take this opportunity for saying that the hon. member for Logan appears to have approached the Bill in a statesmanlike spirit. He dealt with it in all its aspects as a man who has had considerable experience in local government. So also did the hon. member for Windsor.

As far as I can gauge, these hon. members who have spoken on this Bill have given it their blessing. The only matter that is causing any diversity of opinion is the question of area. Hon. members appear to favour the other portions of the Bill. I have collected a considerable amount of data in reference to local government in Glasgow, Manchester, Canada, and New Zealand. The hon. member for Port Curtis dealt pretty fully with New Zealand and the other places, and therefore I am going to pass that over and devote the balance of my time to matters of local concern which I believe are of paramount interest to members of this House and to the public outside.

I have read the Bill very carefully and I cannot find where any provision is made for the taking over of the electric light supply, or for the taking over of the Brisbane or South Brisbane gas supply. The Brisbane City Council has had some dealings with the City Electric Light Company. We know that provision is made in the Bill to take over the water supply, the Brisbane tramways, cemeteries, and fire brigades. I would like to quote a small table which will show the absurdity of the incidence of taxation in so far as it relates to the City Electric Light Company, and which will also give some idea of the relative positions of the company and the City Council—

Year.	Amounts Received in Rates for City Electric Light Co. Tubes and Lines.	Amounts Paid to City Electric Light Co. for Street Lighting.
	£ s d.	£ s d.
1921	109 15 5	5,728 12 4
1922	109 3 5	6,454 12 10
1923	113 0 4	7,245 13 11
	£331 19 2	£19,428 19 1

[Mr. Wilson.]

That is to say, the council in three years received £331 19s. 2d. in rates and paid for lighting £19,428 19s. 1d. I want to explain that the rates are charged on the underground cables at the rate of £1 per mile, and on the overhead wires at 6s. per mile. That was laid down in the Act some considerable time ago, and the City Council has not the power to increase those rates, which I consider is very unfair indeed.

Another monopolistic concern is the Brisbane Gas Company, which paid £129 12s. 3d. in rates in 1904 for the privilege they enjoy. Surely the time is reached for dealing with these concerns, so that they will be forced to pay an adequate amount in rates as compared with their respective turnovers.

Take the Tramway Trust. They pay 1½ per cent. on the gross earnings of the Trust based on the length of mileage in the several areas. The City Council receives £3,623 13s. 1d. from the Tramway Trust in rates. I think it is a terrible state of affairs when you have companies like that, which are monopolies, and are allowed to go on from year to year like this without our having any control over them. I want to see some provision made in this Bill in regard to that.

Quite recently, when the T. & G. building was going up at the corner of Queen and Albert streets, it was necessary to put a big hoarding round the place. The City Electric Light Company immediately put down a vault 20 feet long, 10 feet wide, and 9 feet deep under the footpath, which is hardly a fair thing to the T. & G. Insurance Company as the company wanted to put a concrete footpath round the building. It is necessary, according to the by-laws, to provide a grating 2 feet by 18 inches in size for lighting and ventilation in the basement. I am giving this early warning to the Minister in charge of the Bill so that, when it reaches the Committee stage, he will consider the advisability of inserting a provision to permit of the acquisition of monopolistic concerns such as the City Electric Light Company and the Brisbane and South Brisbane Gas Companies, when deemed necessary. I think that all utilities of that description should be in the hands of the people and should be run by the people for the benefit of the people. If it was reasonable to take over the Tramways, it is also right to acquire the business of companies such as I have mentioned. I would like in connection with that matter to quote a letter which the Brisbane City Council wrote a short time ago to the Under Secretary of the Department of Public Works in connection with the City Electric Light Company—

"City Council Chambers,
Town Hall, Brisbane.
19th September, 1924.

"The Under Secretary,
Department of Public Works,
Brisbane.

"SIR.—I have the honour, by direction of the Council of the City of Brisbane, to request that you will be good enough to bring the following matter before the Minister.

"The City Electric Light and Power Act of 1896, and Orders in Council made thereunder, confer upon The City Electric Light Company, Limited, of Brisbane, the power to construct certain

works in, under, or upon any street for the purposes of its business, but there are conditions to be observed, and one of these provides that not less than seven nor more than twenty-eight clear days before commencing the execution of such works a notice shall be served upon the Minister, and upon the Local Authority, describing the proposed works, and furnishing a plan of the works showing the mode of construction and position, and the manner and extent to which such works will interfere with the street.

"On or about 23rd October, 1923, a notice (No. 1839) in conformity with the provisions of section 19 of the Act was received from the Company aforesaid, that it was intended to break up the footway in Albert street for the purposes of building a transformer vault outside the T. and G. Building. No plans accompanied the notice, and it appears to have been assumed by the Council's officers that the vault was one of the ordinary small pits that the Company has installed all over the City, and for which it would seem the requirement that a plan shall be furnished has not been insisted upon.

"It has recently transpired that the vault referred to in the notice is of abnormal dimensions—approximately 20 feet in length, 10 feet wide, and 9 feet deep.

"It may seem strange that the construction of such a chamber could pass without remark, but the circumstances were favourable thereto, not that there is any suggestion that the Company deliberately screened its operations. The T. and G. Building was in course of construction, the footpath of Albert street and of Queen street was enclosed by a hoarding, it was the intention of the owners of the building to lay a concrete footpath before the hoarding was removed, and the vault was constructed while the hoarding was in position.

"The Order in Council by which the Company is empowered to construct works in that portion of the city area above referred to was dated 12th May, 1897, and gazetted 9th June, 1897, and Clause 13 (f) of the Order prescribes a penalty for failure to comply with the requirements of the Order. The Company has been called upon (10th June last) to show cause why the Council should not press the imposition of the penalty, but so far no reply is to hand.

"The Local Authorities Acts provide that the Company's mains shall be rateable, but there does not appear to be any provision for levying a rate or making a charge upon the Company for the occupation of the street in the manner indicated, because such a thing was most certainly never contemplated. The owner of a property paying heavy rates may be allowed a small area of only a few feet projection for the purpose of lighting a basement, but otherwise he is prohibited by the Building By-laws from using underneath the footpath.

"The Council is desirous of ascertaining the Minister's views upon this matter, and whether he will be prepared to

take action against the Company for a contravention of the abovementioned Order in Council.

Yours respectfully,
(sgd.) Edwin J. Shaw,
Town Clerk."

I thought it just as well to read that letter so that hon. members might appreciate what a valuable asset the City Electric Light Company and the gas companies would be—but more particularly the City Electric Light Company—taking into consideration the amount of money which is paid for the lighting of this city.

Mr. TAYLOR: What was the reply?

Mr. WILSON: No reply was received. Let us compare the position here with the position in Sydney and Melbourne. In Sydney the City Council's electric light undertaking yielded a gross profit for the year ended 31st December, 1923, of £611,926 8s. 4d., and, after debiting against that amount interest on debentures and overdraft, sinking fund contribution, depreciation reserve, and other charges amounting in all to £518,164 12s. 4d., the net revenue for the year was £93,761 17s. Those figures show what a valuable asset that undertaking is, and go to prove that the similar utility here should be controlled by the Greater Brisbane Council. There is no provision in the Bill for taking it over, and I hope the Minister is taking notice of what I am saying, and will have an amendment framed for consideration in Committee to give us power to take over that undertaking and one or two others. The gross revenue for the Melbourne City Council's electric light undertaking for the year ended 31st December, 1923, was £161,498 10s. 5d., and, after deducting interest on debentures, sinking fund payments, depreciation, and payments to contingency and reserve, contribution towards the purchase of the undertaking, contribution to the officers' superannuation fund, and other charges amounting in all to £135,396 10s. 5d., a net revenue of £25,102 was shown for the year. I mention that to show what a valuable undertaking an electric lighting scheme is, and we should not lose sight of such a scheme when discussing a Bill like this, which is of such great importance to the ratepayers and the community.

I have already had something to say in connection with the unfair system of valuation, and for some considerable time I have interested myself in obtaining information dealing with that matter, and it

[11 a.m.] is advisable to give that information to the House. I have stated that I was quite satisfied that I could prove to hon. members and the people outside that an unfair system of valuation had been operating for some considerable time. While the Brisbane City Council has increased the valuations a good deal since 1913, the contiguous areas have neglected to do so. Some time ago, when the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board were discussing the matter of their rates, I went to some trouble to get a certain amount of information, and I selected a certain class of business in the local authority areas of Brisbane and South Brisbane that was selling the one commodity and paying the same amount to the Government by way of license fees. I refer to the hotel business. I did not go beyond Stanley street in South Brisbane, because I was able to obtain

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sufficient information as to the turnover from the businesses in that street to enable me to make a comparison with some of the same class of places in the local authority area of Brisbane. This is the information that I have obtained—

Street.	Description.	Capital Value.	Area.	Owner.
		£	A. R. P.	
SOUTH BRISBANE, 1924.				
Stanley street	Victoria Bridge Hotel	1,650	0 0 26.7	Wm. Beil.
Ditto	Britannia Hotel	1,188	0 0 22	Wm. and K. Morrison.
Ditto	Woolloongabba Hotel	2,000	0 0 18	Brisbane Real Estate Co.
Ditto	Railway Hotel	1,100	0 0 27.58	Castlemaine Brewery.
Ditto	Clarence Hotel	2,500	0 0 35	Queensland Brewery.
Ditto	Farmers' Arms Hotel	850	0 0 20	R. W. H. Long.
Ditto	Ship Inn Hotel	1,250	0 0 16	John Gaffney.
Ditto	Plough Inn Hotel	860	0 0 36	M. J. Barry, lessee; Dan Costigan, owner.
Ditto	Atlas Hotel	1,360	0 0 16	M. J. Bowles, owner; B. Corbett, lessee.
Ditto	Adelaide Hotel	1,200	0 0 18	Perkins and Co., Ltd.
Ditto	Delaney's Hotel	2,750	0 1 37.8	J. T. Delaney.
Ditto	Palace Hotel	3,300	0 0 23.5	W. G. McCullough.

CITY OF BRISBANE, 1924.

Edward street	Exchange Hotel	7,290	0 0 36	Margt. Hughes, owner; H. Biggs, lessee.
Ditto	Prince of Wales Hotel	5,800	0 0 36	Paterson, c/o Biggs.
George street	Treasury Hotel	3,062	0 0 14.4	W. D. O'Connor.
Leichhardt street	Federal Hotel	1,600	0 0 32	Edward Flynn.
Edward street	Ulster Hotel	9,550	..	William Bulcock, owner; Mrs. K. Ahern, lessee.
George street	Lands Office Hotel	3,712	0 0 36	Miss K. M. Finucane.
Elizabeth street	Sovereign Hotel	6,940	0 0 36	Mary Keogh, owner; Mrs. E. M. Marks, lessee.
Adelaide street	Globe Hotel	12,480	..	Estate of J. S. Biggs, deceased.
Mary street	Grand Hotel	4,455	..	Marcus Oleson.
Brunswick street	Valley Hotel	3,000	0 0 20	Misses O'Sullivan.
Albert street	Royal Exchange Hotel	9,900	0 0 36	J. T. Delaney.
George street	Criterion Hotel	12,758	0 0 14.62	C. J. Stewart.

Mr. FRY: I suppose the trade done in North Brisbane is in excess of the trade done in South Brisbane?

Mr. WILSON: I have not mentioned any hotels in Queen street. I have picked out

those hotels with a like turnover and whose valuations one would also expect to be alike.

The following comparative figures are also of interest:—

City.	Area.	Population.	No. of Buildings and Dwellings.	Capital Value of Rateable Property.
	Sq. M.			£
Brisbane	5½	44,790	11,200	7,959,669
South Brisbane	4½	39,000	8,500	1,404,497

The unimproved capital value of 354 perches of land in Stanley street, with twelve hotels erected thereon is only £19,464.

The unimproved capital value of 380 perches of land in the city streets, other than Queen street, with twelve hotels erected thereon is £82,547.

Now take Baynes Brothers' wharf, shop, and chilling-rooms in Stanley street, near Birt's and the Adelaide Shipping Companies. These premises have an area of over 2 roods and the value of the land is only £2,776.

Thomas Brown and Sons' factory and wharf in Short street and near Parliament House, has an area of 3 roods and 22 perches which is valued at over £17,800.

South Brisbane Gas Company's offices and shop, with the Queensland National Bank premises in Stanley street, has an area of 36 perches, and this is valued only at £1,063.

Brisbane Gas Company's offices and shop near Elliott, Donaldson, and Douglas's premises at Petrie Bight has an area of 51 perches, and is valued at £7,400.

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Delaney's Bohemia Theatre property in Stanley street, near South Brisbane Railway Station and the Victoria Bridge, has an area of 82 perches, which is valued at £2,900.

The Melba Picture Theatre in Wickham street, Valley, which is owned by William Walton, has an area of only 12.4 perches, and is valued at £5,700.

The above figures must prove conclusively the urgent necessity for a valuer-general, if not for the whole State, certainly for the area proposed in the Greater Brisbane Bill. No better argument could be used to illustrate the great need for the full area as proposed in the Bill and thus bring about uniformity in valuations and an equitable distribution of taxation.

In the earlier part of my speech I made reference to boundary roads between municipalities, where the valuation was anything from £120 to £140 higher on the one side than on the other.

Mr. SIZER: The impression you seem to be creating is that the outside shires will carry some of the burden of the City Council.

Mr. WILSON: Oh, no; it is just the other way about. I notice the hon. member for Windsor is listening attentively, and, of course, he has had some little experience of local authority work. I do not see the

hon. member for Toowong here, but I shall pick one or two instances found in his area. I shall choose four comparative instances showing the valuation and the water rates in each case—

Local Authority.	Owner.	Area.	Valuation.	Water Rate.
		A. R. P.	£	£ s. d.
1— Hamilton— Old Sandgate road	C. F. Evans	0 2 16	680	15 6 0
Windsor— Old Sandgate road	M. Gibson	0 2 2	260	7 10 6
2— South Brisbane— Cornwall street	S. J. Young	0 0 37	108	4 14 10
Stephens— Cornwall street	C. Brantigan	0 0 32	40	2 7 2
3— Toowong— Stanley terrace	H. Wells	0 1 26	183	6 3 4
Taringa— Stanley terrace	— Florane	0 1 23	108	4 14 10
4— Toombul (Clayfield)— Sandgate road	G. McLennan	0 3 3	520	13 7 10
Ithaca (Paddington)— Drynan street	E. Smith	0 3 8	248	7 6 8

The first three instances are of properties situated on boundary roads.

The fourth is a good instance of the difference in valuation of a similar property in two different local authority areas.

Mr. HARTLEY: He must have been in the know.

Mr. WILSON: One could go on to further orders giving illustrations of a similar character.

The bell indicated that the hon. member had exhausted the time allowed him under the Standing Orders.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I beg to move—

"That the hon. member for Fortitude Valley be granted an extension of time to enable him to complete his speech."

Question put and passed.

Mr. WILSON: I thank hon. members, and I assure them I shall not abuse the privilege.

There is only one more point, and I consider it should be brought in. I have been dealing pretty fully with the disparity existing in valuations and rates, more particularly in South Brisbane.

The valuations in the city of Brisbane were increased over £2,000,000 between the years 1918 and 1923, and, despite this increase, to give some idea of the vigilance as well as the necessity for uniformity in valuations, I would like to cite a recent sale of some residential blocks in Moray and Sydney streets, New Farm. On the 6th instant portion of the property of the late Sir S. W. Griffith was sold by auction on the ground, and the following prices were realised:—

	£
Block 1—Area, 32 perches	830
Block 2—Area, 32 perches	705
Block 3—Area, 27.4 perches	660
Block 4—Area, 32 perches	650
Block 5—Area, 32 perches	650
Block 6—Area, 32 perches	700

This certainly is very interesting in view of the fact that originally there were $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres in the block, which were valued for rating

purposes at £6,000. If the balance of that property, being of the same nature and quality, was subdivided, the amount that would be realised for the whole area would be £12,300. I do not wish it to be understood that I am arguing that, because a property will fetch a certain price under the hammer, the purchasers should be rated on the purchase price; but, when you find such an enormous disparity between the valuations in South Brisbane and North Brisbane, you realise that there is something radically wrong; and my contention is that we should have a uniform system of valuation and that a valuer-general should be appointed. A Bill to provide for that was introduced and passed by this House on more than one occasion, but it was thrown out by the Legislative Council. If ever there was a time when such a Bill was necessary, it is at this juncture when we are discussing the City of Brisbane Bill. To show the increase that has taken place in the value of property in recent years, I got some figures in connection with Bulcock's Valley property, situated opposite Ruddle's Hotel in Fortitude Valley. About the month of December, 1920, Bulcock's property at the corner of Ann and Brunswick streets, containing over 21 perches, was sold to the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney for the sum of £17,000. Quite recently an area of 7 perches of this land was sold by that bank to Messrs. A. and G. F. McDonald, of Edward street, city, for £10,600. Of course we know that the Valley is going ahead, but that shows the enormous increase that has taken place in the value of property all over the place. It is hardly a fair thing to have such low valuations as have been fixed by many shire councils. Many councils appear to adopt low valuations and fix a high rate, which, I think, is unfair.

I have no desire to detain hon. members any longer. I have said all I wanted to say, and I trust that this Bill will be passed. I am quite satisfied that, when we get into Committee, the Minister in charge will listen to any sensible suggestions for the

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improvement of the Bill. It is his desire, as it is the desire of the Government, to do the best he can in connection with this important measure.

Mr. SIZER: Is it the intention to have uniform valuations, and that the valuation in a place like Sandgate should be uniform with those in the central area?

Mr. WILSON: The hon. member knows that that could not be. A system of rural districts will have to be adopted such as they have in other places, where a difference of 50 per cent. is allowed. That is done in Rockhampton. There is no question of hitting up the people in the outside areas. If we are going to have a successful Greater Brisbane scheme, there is only one way to bring it about, and that is to embrace a large area at the commencement. If we have a 5-mile radius the difficulties that have occurred between Brisbane and South Brisbane will be repeated and we shall never arrive at any finality, and later on it will be absolutely necessary to force other areas to come in.

I sincerely hope and trust that the Bill will pass. It will fill a long-felt want, and one which has been claiming the attention of the members of all local governing bodies throughout the area. I have every reason to believe that we shall get the same kudos by passing a Bill of this description as we got by passing the Brisbane Tramway Trust Bill.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): I have listened with a great amount of interest to the well-reasoned and unimpassioned speech of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, which is indeed an object lesson to many as to how informative a speech can be if it is delivered in the way the hon. member has delivered his.

Nature, it seems to me, has provided us with a most beautiful setting for a city in Brisbane. Visitors here from all parts of the world are taken to the various elevated spots round about the city, and they one and all express the opinion that, so far as the natural setting is concerned, Brisbane is beautifully situated. That advantage has not been taken of the setting is largely due to certain causes which are likely to be removed by the introduction of a measure of this nature. We must all admit that the city of Brisbane is nothing like so attractive as it ought to be; and, further, that we are suffering from a number of inconveniences which there is no need to elaborate upon, because I think we are all agreed upon that, but they have been tolerated by a long-suffering people. In other parts of the world, I make bold to say, they would have taken action long ago to have them remedied.

One of the chief causes why Brisbane has not advanced in the way it should have done is on account of the division of the area. When you have so many divided authorities coming into such close conflict with one another, as the hon. member for Fortitude Valley has pointed out, it is obvious that you cannot have any comprehensive scheme for the development of a big city. Then I am afraid that what the hon. member pointed out is true, and that with these smaller areas we encourage a parochialism of outlook on the part of our councils which militates against that bigger comprehension and wider development which is necessary in a big

scheme such as the city of Brisbane should be associated with.

Another point is that whilst there are so many local authorities around the city of Brisbane we are unable to employ men big enough and competent enough to tackle the big problems associated with the establishment of a big city. You see also in many of the areas that it is proposed to include in this Bill where the engineer is also acting as shire clerk; and, no matter how competent that man may be, it stands to reason that his somewhat limited experience prevents him having that vision which is necessary to lay out his area in a manner which will be a credit and advantage to all concerned.

For that reason I, in common with other members of the Opposition, welcome this Bill, as, in my judgment, it provides the only possible remedy for the state of affairs which now exists.

The only point of criticism I have to make is in regard to the area. History has shown us that the present Government are prone to rush into enterprises when experience should show them that it would have been very much wiser to attack them in a much less comprehensive and ambitious way. Many of these schemes for development and enterprise may be good, and probably have merit in them; but it depends to a large extent upon how they are tackled as to whether they are likely to succeed or otherwise. I would just remind hon. members that the bankruptcy records disclose weekly illustrations of what befalls enterprises and men who bite off more than they can eat. They start off with good intentions and good ideas, but their enthusiasm runs away with their judgment.

That is the only substantial criticism that I have to make on this measure. It is good and well conceived, but in my judgment it would have been very much wiser had we proceeded more cautiously and taken more time in completing the scheme. I think it would be much wiser to take in a smaller area and automatically bit by bit absorb a larger area, and so gradually work up to the justifiable ideal of the new city of Brisbane which we are all anxious to see. It is very much more difficult to overcome the financial chaos and disaster which follow doing too much at one time than it is to tackle the problem piecemeal and extend as opportunity and facilities offer. In starting a business undertaking, one does not launch out at once with a final scheme, but one chooses a centre and organises that thoroughly and develops bit by bit. As his organisation allows and his resources permit, so he extends his operations, and I think that would be the wiser policy to adopt in this matter. The Minister is embracing an area which in my judgment is too big for the present. I admit that, so far as the utilities are concerned, he acknowledges that it would be unwise to embrace them all at once, and therefore I assume that, by means of Orders in Council, the Government will bring within the scope of the city of Brisbane authority the activities I have indicated as its organisation and facilities permit. That is quite right; but I am talking about the area to start with, because the making of it so big is going to cause a lot of inequalities which are unnecessary and could have been avoided had the area to be absorbed been more reasonable at the inception.

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We propose to jump from one city of Brisbane such as we have at present and to swallow in one gulp two cities, six towns, and twelve shires. Does not that seem somewhat of a wholesale order? That is very ambitious; and the one criticism that one might fairly make of the Government's activities during the last nine years is that the position in which we find ourselves and the financial stagnation which exists are entirely due to the too ambitious and inexperienced management of the present Government. Yet we propose to throw overboard all that experience which has been so costly to obtain, and to heap still more onerous burdens on those who bear the taxation.

In the development of this scheme the expenses of the mistakes which are made must be passed on to the taxpayer—just as the mistakes of the Government and the costly blunders which they have made in their enterprises result in the expense of them being passed on to the taxpayer.

THE HOME SECRETARY: What about the mistakes of your Government?

MR. ELPHINSTONE: When we do have a Government probably the hon. gentleman will be surprised at the foresight and judgment with which the affairs of this State will then be administered. The losses that I have indicated can be passed on, and they have been passed on, so far as State activities are concerned, for the last nine years. That is why we are in the very desperate financial position in which we find ourselves. The same thing can happen in the government of this Greater Brisbane scheme. As the hon. member for Fortitude Valley said, the City Council will be a miniature parliament, and the mayor and aldermen will have a great responsibility in discharging functions the magnitude of which I do not think hon. members quite comprehend. According to how their control is exercised so will depend the taxes and burdens which must be imposed on ratepayers. I make bold to say that the taxpayers of Queensland cannot stand any more taxation.

It is quite impossible for men endeavouring to run businesses and keep their heads above water to stand any further burden in the form of taxation than those which are imposed upon them to-day.
[11.30 a.m.] There is a limit to which anyone can go in that regard, and the Government are absolutely killing all the ambition and the developmental ideas of the business community; and any further imposition in that regard would just be that last straw that breaks the camel's back.

The City of Brisbane Bill has, I think rightly, become known as "Mr. Chuter's Bill." I must commend that gentleman for having devoted perhaps more weeks and months of his life during the past few years to a study of this measure than any of us have any idea of. He has made it his one great desire to see this City of Brisbane Bill become an actual reality. This is not the first attempt he has made to put a Bill before this House, and each subsequent attempt seems to be an improvement on the first one, and to-day I think we have got down to something fairly rational and with which most of us quite agree in principle and also endorse the ultimate objective

to be aimed at. The Labour party know what an objective means. We have heard it so frequently expressed that an objective, so far as they are concerned, is that which they ultimately intend to arrive at, and every enactment or regulation is a stepping-stone towards the accomplishment of the objective. That is the view I would like to see adopted in regard to this measure, making a 10-mile radius the ultimate objective, but that we should be satisfied with a smaller area for a time, which will gradually absorb other areas as circumstances demand, until the ultimate objective is gained. I think Mr. Chuter's advice to the Minister in having a 10-mile radius as the ultimate objective was good advice; but I do contend that it is unwise to proceed at the pace that is proposed to be adopted in regard to taking this huge area at one jump.

The hon. member for Fortitude Valley made reference to this council being a miniature parliament, and it certainly occurred to me that perhaps this is one of those steps in the accomplishment of the Labour party's objective which has not yet been exposed, and that is that they may have had in their minds that sooner or later they are going to obtain the reins of office in the Federal Parliament, and, if that is so, we know quite well what their platform and intentions are in regard to usurping much greater powers for the Commonwealth Parliament and curtailing the powers of the States; and what will ultimately arise from that will naturally be that the State will be divided into smaller areas, and allowed just more or less domestic self-governing powers. It seems to me that this Bill may be establishing one of those little centres which they intend to create in various parts of the Commonwealth, and, if that is so, one must commend them for sticking to what is their policy, and making no bones about what their ultimate intentions are. If this be the position, I do argue that the ultimate success in regard to this measure will depend entirely upon the class of men who are elected to the council which will control this very big activity. One of the great weaknesses in public life to-day is that we are getting as candidates a class of men to whom such vast responsibilities should not be entrusted. I ask, therefore, that those who are going to be responsible for selecting candidates for these various aldermanic and mayoral positions aim at something high, because the responsibilities are going to be great, and, therefore, we must see that the men who are chosen are capable of assuming the very grave responsibilities that will devolve upon them. In these days of adult franchise it is difficult to get the right type of man. Unfortunately, the man who will get upon the platform and make the wildest promises that have the least possibility of being enacted is the man who, as a rule, gets the chief support. The man who is not prepared to commit himself to anything wild, who is only prepared to offer to do his best, unfortunately does not get that support which is his due. As this Bill seeks to embrace the real home life of the ratepayer and the real domestic happiness of the householder, I am hoping that the electors will take a different view, and will appoint to this council men who have a sense of responsibility and a certain amount of vision.

I want to call attention to the position of one of the areas in my electorate that falls within the ambit of this Bill. That is the

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shire of Yeerongpilly. I have no mandate from the council to voice any complaint whatever in regard to this measure, and I do not intend to use the parish pump in any remarks that I am going to make. I just use it as an illustration to show the effect that this measure is going to have on the outlying areas which are brought within the area of the 10-mile radius. The portion of the shire of Yeerongpilly which is brought within the scope of this measure contains no less than 73 square miles. That shire, small so far as population is concerned, provides 73 out of the 385 square miles comprised in the proposed area. It is nearly one-fifth of the whole area; yet the population in that area is only 2,600 out of a total population comprised in the city to be of 240,000. Its population is one-ninetieth and its area one-fifth of the whole area. Does not that illustrate the point I am trying to make—that this portion of the shire of Yeerongpilly is only necessary in the light of the ultimate objective and eventually to complete the scheme in its entirety? I contend that amply illustrates my point that it will be very much wiser to proceed cautiously in regard to area, and let it be known that in so many years' time the Greater Brisbane area will be so and so, but for the time being the smaller area will prevail. In the meantime we can gain experience and get into the council men competent to undertake this task. By so doing you will have a much better prospect of successfully controlling this most important development. The council can include such areas from time to time as it can properly and easily digest, instead of risking the success of the whole project by undertaking the unwieldy area which is proposed under this Bill.

Another point I wish to make—and I ask the Minister to reply to it—is regarding the compensation which this 73 square miles of the shire of Yeerongpilly with its 2,600 people is going to receive in return for being brought within the ambit of this measure. It seems to me that the very fact that we are allowing differential rating to those people who are engaged in primary production is in itself an admission that we are going too fast. I can hardly imagine a Greater City scheme embracing areas which are used in primary production, as is proposed in this great scheme. That is another indication that we are going too fast—that, to overcome what we recognise as an inequality and an imposition, we propose to allow differential rating to those people who are engaged in primary production. It seems odd, when you talk about the capital city of Brisbane, that we have to make special allowances to people who are engaged in primary production in a city area! As I say, it is going too fast. That is the only criticism I have to launch at the Bill, and I am sure that it is fairly well grounded.

The hon. member for Fortitude Valley spoke in regard to valuations, and I am sure all hon. members were greatly interested in the information which he gave, many of us hearing that information for the first time. I have never heard such concise and clear comparisons. What deduction has one to draw from the information the hon. member has given to us? It is surely that the valuations of these outside areas have to go up. If those valuations go up, the rates have automatically to increase. The hon. member may say that the council is going to take

all these facts into consideration, and strike a differential rate so as not to make the burden too heavy; but one must also take into consideration the water and sewerage rating. The hon. member pointed out that the outside areas are paying water rates upon local authority valuations, and therefore the lower the valuation the smaller the rate. If all these properties are to be valued on a uniform basis, what is going to be the water rate these people in the outside areas will have to pay? It will be something colossal. The basis for water rating in Brisbane is outrageous. The water rate entitles us to a certain minimum quantity of water, and not one of us in the outside area reaches that rating, and consequently we do not get the water we pay for. This is all the result of the burden the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board has brought about by its sewerage system. Take an area like Yeerongpilly, which, to a certain extent, enjoys the advantage of the water service. If the valuations there are to be raised, and the water rates are automatically to increase, I contend that the burden on this very sparsely populated area—in which special provision is going to be made in the rating of those engaged in primary production—is going to be very heavy, in spite of all the alleviating provisions which the Bill contains.

This matter has been long enough in suspense, and it is time we came to some definite conclusion. A lot of the local authorities do not know where they are, and they cannot adopt any definite form of policy, because they are uncertain as to when this measure is going to be enacted. I am therefore quite sure that we should arrive at some definite conclusion to permit general development to proceed.

I heard the hon. member for Merthyr make reference to a very important question, and that is, that an authority such as the one we are going to create should undoubtedly be given the control of traffic within its area. That is most essential, otherwise the inevitable conflict in authority must lead to certain invidious positions. For the sake of illustration, to-day we see a policeman and a Tramway Trust employee standing on point duty doing practically the same work—work that could be done by one man. That is an absolute waste of money and efficiency. One man controls the trams, and the other motor-cars and other vehicles. In any other place one sees one man doing both jobs. It is ridiculous for such a state of affairs to continue, and unquestionably the hon. member for Merthyr was wise in his contention that the new authority should be given power to control all traffic within its area.

Another point is this—it may be a touchy one, but I am going to refer to it. I hope that this new authority will be given absolute power to control the use to which their streets and public places are going to be put as regards gambling devices. Unfortunately, we are living in days when the local authorities have to be protected against this Government. That is an extraordinary position. We read in the debates of various local authorities that they make this complaint: "What is the use of our trying to run this particular area in the manner we wish when the Government can come in and force upon us undesirable pastimes such as these gambling devices that we see around, and which spoil the whole outlook and prosperity of the neighbourhood? Look at the pathetic

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appeal one saw from the town of Coolangatta quite recently, when the members of the town council there stated that they had done their best to stop the introduction of gambling devices in their midst which interfered with the happiness of the community and with business, and put a completely altered aspect upon the whole holiday of many that went there, yet they could do nothing because the Government forced these activities upon them. I cannot understand how men who pose as being so anxious to assist in the moral uplift of the people, and who are continually stating that they are permeated with humanitarian instincts—showing them down our throats as though we did not possess them ourselves—should at the same time tolerate and encourage to a very large extent these shocking gambling devices which are eating into the vitals of the young people of this State. I do hope that this authority is going to be allowed complete control over such things, because, as I say, we are living in days when local authorities have to be protected against the Government. A most shocking state of affairs! Nevertheless, that is the position.

Another point that I just want to touch upon is one which was mentioned by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, and that is in regard to the inclusion of a power to take over the gas and electric light activities, just as there is power to take over the water and sewerage, the tramway, and other utilities. One of the great disadvantages on the south side of the river has been the incompetency and inefficiency of the South Brisbane Gas Company. There are many districts in that area that should be served with gas which have been begging and asking for gas to be made available to them, but all without avail. I remember that Mr. T. L. Jones, who represented Oxley prior to my coming into this House, was instrumental in getting the Government to introduce a Gas Bill, which had for its object the giving to the people living in those areas the right to demand that the facility of gas should be made available to them. What has been the result? We have struggled and struggled, but we are still without gas. If we are going to set about a big scheme of this nature, if we do not give this new authority—which, I hope, will be controlled by competent men—the right to control the supply of gas in the area, then we shall be falling short of our duty.

Another point, of course, is in regard to the electric light. It is ancient history now, but I will state briefly the position on the South side in regard to electric light. We were not allowed to draw our electric light supplies direct from the City Electric Light Company. The only way in which the Government would make this light available to us was by the local authority applying for an Order in Council to distribute electric light. What was the result? We, first of all, had to pay about 1d. in the £1 additional rates for interest and redemption on the money which these local authorities have had to borrow to provide the facilities to distribute the electric light; and, secondly, we are paying about 1½d. a unit more for electric light than we would have paid had we got it direct from the City Electric Light Company. That is an extraordinary position; yet this long-suffering community is standing it. Heaven only knows why; but it must surely be because of our inability to put the position clearly before the people. They do stand it, and

they have stood it up to this very moment. I contend that, in the area in which I live, we are paying 1½d. a unit more for our electric light than we should have done or need have done had an Order in Council been granted to the City Electric Light Company to distribute light and power throughout that district. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley is quite correct in calling attention to the fact that we are making no provision here to overcome that condition, and thus perpetuating the position of one big company like the City Electric Light Company selling electric light in bulk to each local authority, which employs officers to distribute the electric light through the various areas which are controlled under this Bill. That should not be allowed. It may be that I have not studied the measure very carefully, but I was surprised to learn from the hon. member for Fortitude Valley that there is no provision in the Bill for embracing the manufacture and distribution of gas and electric light within the area.

Another important point I want to touch upon briefly, seeing that the trams fall within the responsibility that devolves upon this council, is in reference to the impressions which one gains in other parts of the world as to how motor 'buses are driving electric trams off the streets. I think we should consider very carefully indeed before any large sums of money are utilised in extending our tram service in this city and in the bigger city which is to follow. If you use your eyes and intelligence in other cities of the world, you see that trams are becoming a back number, and that motor 'buses are advancing by leaps and bounds, and, by reason of the elasticity by which traffic can be controlled where 'buses are used, they must ultimately prevail. Motor 'buses have now become absolutely reliable. In the city of London there are no less than 4,000 motor 'buses in use, all built of uniform pattern, and it would be impossible to move the traffic of London in any other way except with these motor 'buses. You seldom, if ever, see a breakdown. These 'buses run to a scheduled timetable. They have regular stopping places, they are rapid in transit, and, in my judgment, they must sooner or later drive the electric trams off the streets. One sees an object lesson as to the disadvantages of electric traction in cities like Kingston-on-Thames and Richmond, outside of London. I saw on more than one occasion strings of motor-cars at least a mile long waiting to get through a bottle-neck where trams were passing one another in a narrow street. These are matters we should bear in mind when we are thinking of creating a great city such as we propose the city of Brisbane shall be under this measure. Therefore, I contend that, instead of spending large sums of money on tramway extensions, we should keep the motor 'bus question very prominently in mind.

Another important point I wish briefly to refer to is the designation which we propose to attach to the chief officer of Brisbane when the election ensues. I noticed by the Press reports during my absence from the State that overtures have been made to the Government to permit of the adoption of the title of "Lord Mayor" by the chief citizen of the city of Brisbane, and I was sorry to see that the Government threw cold water on that suggestion. It is not a matter of whether this is one of those embellishments to which the present Government

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so object. For instance, there was a time when the Speaker of this House was not arrayed in his robe, and I have yet to appreciate that the authority of the House and the dignity of the Speaker were improved by the Speaker not being arrayed in his robe. I was glad to note, Mr. Speaker, that you subsequently adopted that robe, which adds to the dignity of the office you enjoy. So it is with the chief citizen of a big city such as we propose to set up under this Bill. To my mind the title of "Lord Mayor" differentiates between the larger and the smaller cities. The first citizen of the chief city in the State should undoubtedly enjoy that title. Go into other parts of the world and observe the position there. We talk about the six big cities in Australia. Five of them have "Lord Mayors" and one of them has only a "Mayor." What is the inference in the mind of the man to whom you are speaking, or who notices that fact? Obviously it is that Brisbane is a small city, not yet risen to the dignity of a real city, and therefore not entitled to use the word "Lord" in front of the word "Mayor" in the designation of its chief citizen. It is not a matter of unnecessary embellishment, but a matter merely of acknowledging the dignity such as will be his if this measure is passed. I therefore urge that, as the Government are endeavouring to exercise some vision in this development, they attach to the chief citizen that designation which is world-wide in its application in the capital cities.

The hon. member for Bulimba was particularly condemnatory of the business man in local authority work. I am one of those who feel that, in order to make a man a proper leader and controller of the destinies of a State or a municipal area, business knowledge and experience need to be tempered with vision. The application to the conduct of these affairs of too rigid business principles is liable to hamper development. Vision must be introduced with them. I, therefore, agree with the hon. member up to this point—that all business and no vision is a bad thing in the control of local authorities; but if the alternative which he proposes is the evil from which we have been suffering for the last nine or ten years in Queensland, and which has brought the State to the verge of financial strangulation, then I part company with the hon. member. I say that the business man's control is far preferable to the system which has brought Queensland to its knees financially at the present moment. Where would Queensland be but for the business men who are paying the taxes to maintain the State? Who contribute to the Consolidated Revenue taxation in sufficient amounts to make it possible to square the ledger, if not the business men and the successful activities which they help to support? In this and all other matters it is moderation that we want; it is the assimilation of varied experience, if this scheme is to develop along the lines we wish to see. I give the measure my blessing for what it may be worth, but I sincerely hope that ultimate consideration will lead the Government to determine that it is much better to proceed slowly in regard to this development, and I hope that if an omission has been made by the exclusion of the gas and electric light undertaking, steps will be taken to bring them within its ambit, because they are most necessary to the successful accom-

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plishment of what this Bill sets out to achieve.

Mr. HANSON (*Buranda*): I congratulate the Minister on his association with the introduction of this measure. To my mind, it is the product of a good deal of thought, and no doubt the result of experience gained from the perusal of the large measure which was introduced in 1917 and the smaller Bill brought down last year.

The Bill indicates that those responsible for it possess clearness of vision and a broad outlook. One very pleasing thing to notice

[12 noon.] is the almost complete unanimity in regard to the acceptance of the principles of the Bill by this House. The only real contention has been with respect to the area over which the Greater City Council should have jurisdiction. I believe the Minister anticipated all the opposition that there would be on that point. I am quite satisfied that, if the smaller radius of 5-miles had been adopted, there would have been a big clamour on the part of the local authorities without the 5-mile radius and within the proposed 10-mile radius to come within the scope of the measure, if not at once, then within a very short space of time.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Not so far as my area is concerned.

Mr. HANSON: I understand that some local authorities outside the 5-mile radius, and just within the 10-mile radius have carried resolutions asking to be brought within the scope of the Bill.

Mr. KERR: Not in my area.

The HOME SECRETARY: They carried resolutions both ways in the area of the hon. member for Enoggera.

Mr. KERR: No.

Mr. HANSON: Two of the local authorities which have carried resolutions to that effect possess a greater population than some of those areas that have not expressed that desire. The hon. member for Oxley stated that a good deal of primary production was carried on in some areas outside the 5-mile radius, but anybody with clearness of vision and broadness of outlook, and anybody who has carefully watched the development and expansion of Brisbane during the last few years, must recognise that within a very short period of time those portions which are now engaged in primary production must be cut up into smaller areas and used for residential purposes. Why not anticipate that, and create a greater area at once, rather than wait until that development and expansion takes place.

Mr. SIZER: Some of those areas will not be required for twenty years.

Mr. HANSON: I cannot agree with the hon. gentleman. In view of the huge increase in population during recent years, I am satisfied that practically the whole of those areas will be cut up within a very few years, and, if I am allowed to prophesy, I would say that possibly within five years very little of that land will be left vacant.

Mr. SIZER: Take the area along the road from Bald Hills to the South Pine River. How long will it be before that land is required?

Mr. HANSON: The intense population in the inner suburbs makes it absolutely necessary for people to go out further along the

railway lines and tram lines, and there is no doubt that these places must be cut up, and very soon there will be a big population just outside the 5-mile radius. The leader of the Opposition stated that the powers that were conferred on the Greater Brisbane Council were enormous. It must be admitted that that is so, but the powers which must be conferred on such a council must be enormous if the city of Brisbane is to progress and develop as those who live in it desire it to progress and develop. If the city is to develop and expand, particularly in the interests of the domestic life of the people, there is no doubt that the council must possess enormous powers.

I am not one who desires to criticise the present local authority system, or those who compose the local authorities. I believe it is a wonderful system, and that the councils with the limitations imposed on them have done marvellous work. I am also satisfied that there comes a time when the limits of usefulness are reached, and when we must consider some method for the better civic government of the people. This scheme is going to supersede something which has outlived its usefulness so far as the Greater Brisbane area is concerned.

The grouping of the local authorities proposed under the Bill will in time become the forerunner of a general policy of grouping. That system will become natural as a result of the present local authority system outliving its usefulness and breaking down. I am not concerned about the Greater Brisbane area probably becoming in time a province under a system of unification which may operate throughout the Commonwealth. I stand for unification. Anybody who has considered the question must admit that we are paying too much to-day for government, and the gradual transfer of powers from the States to the Commonwealth, and also from the States to the local authorities will bring about a simple system of unification which is desirable. Such a system will be more efficient, economical, and satisfactory to the people of the Commonwealth. It is possible—and I believe it will come about—for the Brisbane Council to become ultimately the Brisbane Provincial Council under a system of unification operating throughout the Commonwealth, and I believe that the system will be extended to other parts of the Commonwealth.

The only criticism I desire to offer in connection with the Bill is not that it is too big but that it is not big enough. I see no reason why some local authorities which are not being brought within the jurisdiction of the scheme should not be immediately brought into it. I refer to the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, the Brisbane Tramway Trust, and other like bodies.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Don't you think it is wise to proceed by degrees instead of undertaking the administration of such a huge area at once?

Mr. HANSON: I am satisfied that the longer the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board is allowed to drift as it is, the more serious will its position become. I honestly believe that if the Greater Brisbane Council were given power to control or co-ordinate these functions, a lot of trouble experienced in connection with them would be eliminated.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Is that how you propose to get rid of the president of the board?

Mr. HANSON: I have no desire to get rid of the president.

Mr. KERR: Do you think the present system of administration of the board good enough?

Mr. HANSON: No. It is one of the biggest mistakes that the Kidston Government ever made.

Mr. KERR: But your Government are perpetuating that mistake.

Mr. HANSON: I admit that, but it does not necessarily follow that I believe in its perpetuation. I say quite frankly that I have never believed in the board as it is now constituted. The Greater Brisbane Council should have the power not gradually but immediately to absorb all the local authorities within the metropolitan area which are at present omitted from the Bill.

When I became a member half of the members of the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board were merely voucher and cheque signers when they attended meetings. The president was also in that category, and the position was absurd. One or two of us managed to get affairs improved slightly, but under the system prevailing with the old water board, and which was continued with the present board, various members wasted from one to three hours signing cheques and vouchers. Those members were not given an opportunity to participate in the real business and functions of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board. That was my experience, and I have myself sat from one to three hours doing nothing but sign cheques. That is absurd, and there is no necessity for it. We should not ask a man like the president, who controls that huge institution, to spend a large amount of his time signing cheques. It is an absurdity. No harm, but a great deal of good, would be done if this Bill provided for the taking over of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board in a similar fashion to that provided for the taking over of the Victoria Bridge Board on 1st October, 1925.

The hon. member for Oxley mentioned the matter of traffic control. The City of Brisbane Council should control not only street traffic but river traffic. The time will come, as the functions of the Greater Brisbane Council extend and as the city expands, when the council will have to take over the control of the street traffic and also the control of all river traffic right to the mouth of the river. That should be done in the interests of the city. I say that because I believe in a system of unification. I believe in cutting out State Parliaments with a view to giving the Commonwealth Parliament greater powers, and I believe in similar action with regard to local authorities.

The hon. member for Toowoomba mentioned the matter of adult franchise. Adult franchise having been an established fact for four years in connection with local government. I did not anticipate that there would be any opposition to it to-day. I thought everybody was reconciled to it. The principle has been found successful in connection with Commonwealth and State elections, and I do not think any difficulty is experienced when it is applied to local

authority elections. If there is a fear on the part of hon. members opposite that they will not get control of the council because of the adult franchise, I do not share their opinions. I am satisfied that the success or otherwise of the City of Brisbane Council will depend largely upon the type of men elected to it. I am not now concerned from a party point of view who may be elected, but I desire to see the very best men possible selected to sit on that council. I realise they will have a very big proposition to deal with.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HANSON: If business men are the best men to perform such functions, then let the people elect them. If they are too much concerned about their business and only regard a seat on the council as a hobby, then let us get someone else. It has been, and is, the belief of a large number of people that the business men elected to these institutions do not take the business seriously; that they simply regard it as a hobby, and something that will give them a standing in the community; and they do not attend to the duties associated with the position of a member of a local authority as they should.

Mr. MAXWELL: The attendance of members at the local authority meetings does not show that.

Mr. HANSON: The attendance of members at the local authority meetings does not mean anything. If a member attends every meeting of the council, it may show a very good trait in his character, but perhaps that is the only good trait he has. It does not mean that he is attending to the business of the council. My experience is that the greater part of the business is not done at the council meetings but outside.

I think the hon. member for Toowong raised some objection in regard to the number of members to be elected to the Greater Brisbane Council. I think he presupposes that there will be a system of committees such as has operated in the past. If that were so there might be some justification for his objection, but I trust that such a system will not obtain. I hope that, when the council is established, separate departments will be set up, and that the aldermen will become heads of departments with efficient and practical experts under their control so that the business of the council will be carried out in an efficient manner. This system of appointing committees has been the trouble in the past, and I hope such a system will not operate in connection with the Greater Brisbane Council. We know that in the past the ordinary aldermen have simply been message boys.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Is not a member of Parliament sometimes a message boy?

Mr. HANSON: Of course he is. That is one of the reasons why I advocate the abolition of the State Parliaments. I realise that a member of Parliament to-day is largely a message boy. It is very hard to avoid that. I hope that a system of departments will be established in the Greater Brisbane Council, and that the members of the council will be given an opportunity to attend to the big matters they will have to deal with, and that they will not be asked to visit all round the district inspecting

things they know nothing about. I have known of members of local authorities being invited to visit portions of their areas to look at a street or a road, and when they came away they were just as wise as they were when they started out. These are matters for experts. Members of councils should be prepared to take the advice of their experts, and, if they do not agree with them, they should get others. Certainly there is no need for the members of councils to run round looking at streets and other propositions with regard to which they have no practical knowledge whatever. It is a waste of time, and they could devote their time to matters of policy and the big matters with which they have to deal.

On the whole, I think that the Bill is a very fine measure. I hope that it will be carried with very little alteration, except, perhaps, with respect to a still further widening of the powers conferred on the council with regard to loans. I am satisfied that the Bill will do away with a considerable amount of the dual control that exists under the present local authority system. While I do not wish to deprecate that system in any way, I am satisfied that the new measure will give Brisbane and its suburbs a chance to expand in the way they should expand.

Mr. SIZER (*Sandgate*): The period of time which has elapsed for consideration since the first City of Brisbane Bill was introduced into this Chamber in 1917 has been of considerable importance, and lends weight to the argument that possibly it might be advisable at the present juncture to adopt a smaller area than is outlined in the Bill. We should then be allowed time to develop, and after having gained a considerable amount of experience in the meantime we could take on the responsibilities of the greater area. The experience which has been gained by our capable officers, such as Mr. Chuter, who has devoted so much time to the Bill and has changed its provisions on several occasions, is an evidence that possibly even now we have not got the best scheme that can be evolved, and that is an argument which should be considered.

The general principle of a Greater Brisbane scheme is accepted by everybody in the area concerned. It is true that, with a few exceptions, the main contention between hon. members is as to the advisability of extending the area to the maximum extent in the first onset, or whether it should be taken piecemeal as experience advises. I have looked at the matter from various points of view, and I can quite sympathise with the hon. member for Oxley, who has the shire of Yeerongpilly in his electorate, which, I think it will be admitted, has very little to gain from coming into this scheme. The same remark applies to the Morgill Shire. Probably the case of these areas for exclusion at the present time is particularly strong. On the other hand, there are very strong arguments why a town like Sandgate should be included even in the initial stages. I hope that I shall not be considered parochial if I take up a little of the time of the House in dealing with that aspect of the question. We know that no two shires even in the outside area are exactly in the same category. A city built near the coast must naturally have an outside watering place, in order that the people may have bathing facilities and other benefits. The Sandgate

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Towa Council has endeavoured, with the limited capital from rates at its disposal, to provide all the facilities possible in that direction. But the Sandgate Council finds, naturally enough, that the maintenance of the foreshores is too great an undertaking for it to maintain, and the cost becomes a very heavy drain on the locality. Nevertheless, those foreshores offer a tremendous advantage to people who go into the area on holidays. Those people must have breathing spaces, therefore a large area of parks and similar land has to be maintained. So far the people of the Sandgate area have been called upon to finance their maintenance entirely, but to give visitors the benefits which everybody would like to offer is quite beyond their financial powers without taxing themselves to an undue extent. For that reason I am safe in saying that, although it may not be advantageous to all districts to go in for a vast scheme, yet there are isolated areas which are really suburbs of the city although there may be large intervening areas of purely rural land. Therefore such suburbs must be considered as parts of the Greater Brisbane, and no doubt will have to come into the scheme during its initial stages. Nevertheless we are placed in a serious difficulty. Naturally the people of Brisbane want to get to the coast at the nearest possible point, the majority by rail, and those who are able to afford it by motor-car. The latter must have some facilities for travelling with a reasonable amount of comfort. To-day anybody who goes to Sandgate by motor-car will admit that it is anything but a pleasure, and, although Sandgate may be a very beautiful place, I very much doubt whether an unbiased person will admit that he is compensated thereby for the very rough journey he has to encounter. That is a state of affairs that cannot continue much longer. The Main Roads Board has refused to do anything, and so a considerable population is practically isolated, but at the same time is asked to provide facilities for the people of the city of Brisbane. It is financially impossible for them to do it, and I am one of those who say that, if the people of Brisbane want Sandgate beautified and to have a good road to Sandgate, they should pay for it. We in Sandgate would like to do it. We have done the best we can, but it is financially impossible for us to continue trying to make Sandgate a suburban area for the people of Brisbane at our own expense. From that point of view I can only conceive that Sandgate as a town has all to gain and nothing to lose from this Bill. But then—and here is where my difficulties come in, and where I sympathise with the hon. member for Oxley—we embrace also an outlying part of the Kedron Shire in the neighbourhood of Bald Hills and adjoining places, where the farming community will have to face the selfsame responsibilities and burdens as the people of Sandgate, and, amongst other things, have to pay for the upkeep of a road from which they will derive no great benefit, if any, for many years to come. It is doubtful whether for a generation, at any rate, the people of that area will gain any benefit from entering the Greater Brisbane area. The only thing in which their condition will differ from their present condition is that they will have to carry their share of the burden of the scheme.

The HOME SECRETARY: The land will be cut up into building sites.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. gentleman will find that it is a long way from Bald Hills to Brisbane to start with, and a big part of the land there is too low for building sites, although excellent agricultural land. It is land which would be condemned as building sites.

The HOME SECRETARY: Differential rates would apply.

Mr. SIZER: The people in those areas are better off to-day from that point of view than they would be if they came under the Bill. It must be very many years before any benefit could accrue in that direction. When I say that, I am convinced that some benefits will accrue to the town of Sandgate.

I want to point out that the town [12.30 p.m.] of Sandgate is quite entitled to take its full share of the additional financial responsibility, provided it obtains additional benefits. On the other hand, there are other areas which will be compelled to take an increased share of the financial responsibilities without obtaining any proportionate increase in benefits, and I would ask the Minister to consider seriously if it is not possible to devise a scheme which would be more practical in creating a community of interests than the scheme contained in the Bill.

The HOME SECRETARY: The same arguments were applied in connection with the Railways Guarantee Act.

Mr. SIZER: That may be so. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley referred to the differentiation in the matter of valuations, and he gave me the impression that the Brisbane City Council had made the valuations so high that they had become a burden, and, as the outside local authorities had not increased their valuations to the same extent, and as the Brisbane City Council could not pass on the burden, there was only one way to deal with the situation, and that was to pass this Bill so that the burden could be spread over a greater area, and a portion of it be borne by people living in the outlying districts. We know perfectly well that the outlying areas will have to bear more than their fair share of the loan indebtedness if they come under the scheme. The House is aware that the total loan indebtedness amounts to something in the region of £9 per ratepayer within the 10-mile radius, and nearly £40 per ratepayer within the 5-mile radius. The outside areas will therefore have to accept a bigger share of that responsibility. I have no objection to those who are going to get some benefits under the Bill accepting those responsibilities, but, on behalf of the farming community, I certainly do object to those responsibilities being placed upon their shoulders when they are going to gain nothing by it. The hon. member for Oxley emphasised the fact that, if the burden of the valuations imposed by the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board and the present Brisbane City Council are to be extended to certain outlying areas, the burden is going to be very crushing indeed. It has been advocated that the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board should come under this scheme immediately, but even if that were done I do not think it is possible to devise any scheme at the moment which is going to improve reasonably the position of that body, because they have gone too far and have committed the community to certain schemes which will have to be carried out. I can see nothing

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but a tremendous additional burden being placed on the community. If there is one concern more than another which should have been considered under this scheme, from the point of view of relieving the burden of the valuations, it is the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board. I sincerely hope that the people in the outlying areas will not be called upon to pay for the colossal blunders of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board. Unless some special provision is made, I can see nothing to prevent that happening. I appeal to the Minister to give the outlying areas—particularly the rural areas, which have nothing to gain—some protection from the burdens of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board.

I now want to deal with the question of valuations. Provision is certainly made for differential valuations. I asked the hon. member for Fortitude Valley whether the valuations in Sandgate would be based on the valuations prevailing in the city of Brisbane? I ask the Minister that question now, because it is of vital importance. If there is to be uniform rating, with preferential valuations in the areas engaged in primary production, we have reason to believe that the outlying areas, which are purely suburban and residential areas, will have their valuations very largely increased. The people of Sandgate have to travel 12 miles to reach the city. Naturally their valuations should not be anything like as high as the valuations in Ithaca, where the people can reach their homes in a short space of time by taking a 3d. tram. If the valuations in Sandgate are to be on the same basis as in Ithaca, then, with the 7½ per cent. increase in railway fares, it will be a luxury to live there; and only those people will live there who have interests, which they probably could not get out of, and those who are compelled to do so for health reasons. It will be very unfair if the people of Sandgate have their properties valued on a par with the land in the city of Brisbane, and, in addition, have to pay railway fares to and from the city. If there is any argument at all in favour of preferential valuation it is because of that fact. Other towns in the same category as Sandgate should also have preferential valuations. I would like to know from the Minister whether it is intended to strike differential valuations in those areas, or is it the intention to confine those valuations to land that is used wholly for primary production?

THE HOME SECRETARY: That will probably be dealt with later.

MR. SIZER: I hope the Minister will deal with it later. From the general point of view there is a distinct advantage to be gained in co-ordinating the various services. Lack of co-ordination in the past has made it difficult to deal with nuisances or matters affecting the health of the public. I have had experience in one or two directions where the overlapping of control has prevented nuisances being remedied. In trying to deal with them I was reminded of the boy who was a bit of a fool at school whom we used to send from one to another with a note reading "Send the fool on further."

We are sent from one local authority to another, then to the Home Department, the Health Department, the Marine Department,

and the Fisheries Department, and, when one is finished, he finds that he has been chasing his shadow all the time. There has been an absolute waste of time and money and an appalling lack of administration in that direction. If this scheme does nothing else but co-ordinate these matters and bring them under the control of one direct authority, some benefit will accrue to the general community. The attempt in the metropolitan area to bring about the removal of nuisances and so forth provides a life-long task for any one man, and the people are sick and tired of the present futility of the attempt. That is one reason why many people are prepared to accept this scheme without going more fully into the bigger questions involved. I am a strong advocate for regulations governing a pure food and milk supply; but I am going to oppose anything favouring municipal enterprise, or control of trading in any shape or form. I shall not give one moment's consideration to any proposal to pass trading enterprises over to the control of the council. If I thought that was a vital feature of the scheme I would oppose the scheme on that point alone, irrespective of any good accruing in other directions. We have had sufficient lessons as to the futility of State control of trading enterprises. If the experience of the Government, as evidenced by the Auditor-General's report, is not sufficiently convincing, then we shall never be convinced. I can see no benefit that will accrue to the people of the State through State trading. Even if the Minister is able to show that any concern he is conducting has shown some shadow of profit, and has done this or that, or that the State coalmines have been beneficial to the Railway Department, we must take the other side of the ledger, and in this particular case we know that the Blair Athol mine has been practically closed down as a result of State trading.

THE SPEAKER: Order! Order!

MR. SIZER: I point that out only to emphasise my contention that no advantages are to be derived from municipal trading. I am quite satisfied that, although the Minister may profess to see some alleged advantage here or there, the loss to the general community more than outweighs the alleged benefit. I have no intention of supporting clauses of the Bill which authorise general trading on the part of the Greater Brisbane Council. At the same time let me make a distinction between ordinary trading and the control of general public utilities, such as the tramways.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Or in regard to every public utility.

MR. SIZER: There is a clear distinction, and I do not wish to be misunderstood in that respect. It would be a distinct weakness if we could not regulate electric light and gas under such a Bill as this. The argument I want to put forward now is one on which I cannot understand the attitude of the Government. Although they are so keen to bring a vast area within the scope of this Bill, they have not made any provision for the very things that are essential for the people in the greater area.

There is no intention at the present moment to take over the water and sewerage system or transit. People living in the outlying areas want transit concessions, and they

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want better water and sewerage conditions; and there are no provisions in the Bill to bring these activities under the control of the Greater Brisbane Council. The people living in the outlying areas will be called upon to pay a larger quota, yet they will not have an opportunity of getting those things that they want most.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Don't you want milk as much as water?

Mr. SIZER: Yes. A large portion of the milk supply of Brisbane comes from the outlying parts of my electorate which will come under the Greater Brisbane scheme. We want a fresh milk supply, and we want to encourage people who have land near Brisbane to produce milk so that it can be brought to the city as hot milk, and in the shortest possible time. Under this proposal the present producers of milk will have additional burdens placed upon them, and at the same time they will be bound down by fresh regulations. I have heard it said that certain local authorities have passed by-laws compelling the milk producers to wear white coats when milking their cows, and things like that. It is not possible to carry out some of the ridiculous regulations that have been introduced by some local authorities. At the same time we have a Commissioner of Prices who is going to fix the price of milk, and the suppliers will not be allowed to get an increased price to cover the increased burden placed upon them. The milk producers are not only going to be asked to supply milk at a cheaper rate than they can produce it at, but they are going to be asked to pay additional rates and taxes. I have always advocated that the control of the milk supply should be in the hands of the farmers themselves. Central depôts should be established, and arrangements made with the existing vendors to distribute the milk. That is the most effective way of dealing with the milk supply of Brisbane. If that system were adopted the Greater Brisbane Council could have their own inspectors at the central depôts, and they could inspect the milk as it was served out to the vendors. In that way you would get as pure a milk supply as it is possible to get. Let me point out the utter futility of a lot of the arguments put forward in this connection. You can have inspection at the dairy; you can have inspection at the depôts; you can have inspection when the milk is delivered to the vendors; you can do everything possible to prevent the milk from becoming contaminated, and then, when the vendor delivers the milk to the householder, he carries it in an open can and leaves the milk on the doorstep. All the regulations in the world are not worth a snap of the fingers, because the cat drinks milk, and that is the end of it. This only shows the danger we are likely to get into when amateurs attempt to deal with things they know nothing about from a practical point of view. I am one of those who believe that the control of abattoirs and the milk supply should be left in the hands of the producers concerned, on the lines of the scheme which has been advocated in connection with the cattle industry. All the necessary facilities can be obtained under that scheme, and the health of the people will be safeguarded. The City Council should confine itself to inspection; it should certainly not go into trading ventures.

I can foresee that the farming community in the outside areas is going to have a rough

time in endeavouring to get their by-roads kept in a reasonable state of repair. Although the aldermen will probably give attention to the main roads, the little by-roads which are so essential to the farming community will be seriously neglected. An alderman will have to be a sort of travelling encyclopædia to be able to deal, or even partially deal, with the hundreds of little requests that will be made to him from outlying areas in connection with these small by-roads.

The HOME SECRETARY: Each area will have its own man.

Mr. SIZER: I would not like to have the job of administering the local affairs of an area of the size of Sandgate under this scheme.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yet you frequently make representations to the greater Parliament here as their representative.

Mr. SIZER: The duties of a member of Parliament and an alderman under the new City of Brisbane Council are totally different. We have certainly come to a stage—and I regret it very much—when members of Parliament have to a great extent become message boys. What the position of an alderman is going to be I do not know. When people come along and complain to us now about drains we can say that it is a matter for the local authorities, and that it is not within our province; but when an alderman has to take his part in the administration of the policy of the Greater Brisbane Council, and has at the same time to devote himself to small matters of drainage, and, metaphorically, put his nose over every drain, what will the position be?

The HOME SECRETARY: If he does that he will not be fulfilling what the Greater Brisbane scheme demands.

Mr. SIZER: If he does not do those things then he is not necessary.

The HOME SECRETARY: You will have practical men to control those things. It will not be like it is to-day, when the greater portion of the revenue goes in expenses.

Mr. MAXWELL: You are creating more sub-departments, according to your statement.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, over a big area.

Mr. SIZER: With the diversity of interests which will obtain in the urban and rural areas, and the different manufacturing interests which will have to be considered, I am inclined to think that the life of an alderman in the City of Brisbane Council will not be worth living.

The HOME SECRETARY: You say he should be paid.

Mr. SIZER: I certainly think he should be paid. I am afraid that we shall get to such a state of chaos that the theoretical benefits which we think will accrue will not eventuate. That is what I am afraid of. Certainly, in view of the fact that he is bringing into this scheme outlying areas which have a very small loan indebtedness as compared with those included in the 5-mile area, I think that 80 per cent. of the loan money spent in the future should be spent outside the 5-mile radius, at least for a large number of years. The hon. gentleman is asking people outside the 5-mile radius, who have a loan indebtedness of only about £9 per head, to take the responsibility

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of half the indebtedness of those inside that radius who have an indebtedness of about £40 per head. He is asking them to pool their debts. Those of us who will be asked to carry the extra burden without having anything to show for it say that in the future a very large proportion of the new loan money should be spent in our areas in order to bring about a fair condition of things. If we are to take a share of this responsibility, then greater consideration should be shown to us. When the Minister gives some thought to the suggestion, I think that he will see that it is only equitable and reasonable. Otherwise, what are we going to gain by this scheme? Everything will be spent in the vicinity of Queen street. We shall never get any benefit, but we shall have to carry the burden. I ask the Minister to consider the matter, and lay down the principle that an extra portion of the future loans shall be spent outside the 5-mile area.

The success of this scheme will largely depend on the personnel of the council, and every encouragement should be given to get the very best men to undertake the work.

THE HOME SECRETARY: The electors of Sandgate will elect the alderman for Sandgate.

MR. SIZER: I am aware of that, but I am not satisfied in my own mind that the best men will be secured because of the vast amount of minor, or what I might call paltry, work that will have to be done.

THE HOME SECRETARY: They will not have to do it.

MR. SIZER: They cannot help it. Very often through force of circumstances the Minister has to deal with paltry things, and matters which are really beneath his notice. If he did not he would soon lose his seat.

MR. WARREN (Murrumbidgee): As a country member I have not a great deal of interest in this Bill, but, as it affects the city, it must indirectly affect the country, and in some respects to a great extent. Everybody agrees that there is need for a Greater Brisbane area, but the complaint of many hon. members is that the area provided in the Bill is too large to commence

[2 p.m.] with. We agree that there should be a Greater Brisbane area, and for the life of me, on looking at the map, I cannot see why Redcliffe should not be just as much a part of the Greater Brisbane area as any other outlying place. Redcliffe will be one of Brisbane's greatest breathing spaces, if not a residential area. I am of the opinion that in time the trams will form the means of communication between Redcliffe and Brisbane.

MR. RIORDAN: Not necessarily.

MR. WARREN: I agree that it is not necessarily so.

MR. RIORDAN: There are far better places than Redcliffe.

MR. WARREN: I cannot agree with the hon. gentleman; he is talking nonsense. If he had been to Redcliffe he would not say a thing like that. If there is one place in Queensland that is suited to be a watering place and health resort for Brisbane, it is Redcliffe. At the present time Redcliffe is accessible to a certain extent, but, if it was made more accessible to the city workers, it would be a godsend to the city. I have made every representation and done everything possible to see that Redcliffe benefited

by this scheme, as Redcliffe has more right to come under the scheme than a lot of agricultural areas. The inclusion of Redcliffe would mean an immense advantage to the scheme.

I now to deal more particularly with matters affecting the health of the community, particularly the milk supply. That aspect has been fairly fully dealt with by the hon. member for Sandgate. The clause in the Bill which is supposed to give the Greater Brisbane Council power to take control of the milk supply empowers it to take control of everything that is connected with human life, even the morals and the happiness of the people. I am not convinced that the Bill does give the power to deal with the milk supply. The Home Secretary has been considering a Bill to give the council that power, and we have heard about that Bill for some considerable time. It will be necessary to have some municipal control of the milk supply, but I believe the scheme has not been considered seriously enough. The milk supply of the city is one of the most important things connected with the health of the community, but at the present time it is only being played with. For years I have been bringing under the notice of the Health Department the necessity for doing something in this respect. There is no guarantee under this Bill that something will be done to improve the position. There is no guarantee that the milk will be received and distributed for consumption in the proper manner. The hon. member for Sandgate mentioned one matter which must appeal to everyone, and that is that the milk is left at the various dwellings in open jugs, and no steps are taken to prevent cats and germs from having access to it. The position is worse in regard to restaurants. The control is at present divided, and divided control means no control. I want to know what the control of milk is going to be under the Bill.

The Minister also mentioned that a central receiving depot will have to be established for milk. One of the chief troubles in connection with the milk supply of Brisbane is that it is received everywhere and in any condition. Separate control will not result in an improved milk supply. Other countries are going in for the bottle system. It would not matter how the supply of milk is regulated on the farms, or if the man milking a cow is compelled to wear a uniform, unless it is regulated in some way after it has left the central receiving depot.

THE HOME SECRETARY: That is a matter for regulation under the Bill. The city of Brisbane has never had a permanent medical officer. Under this scheme the council will be in a position to initiate all these matters.

MR. WARREN: We have constantly heard about the methods that are going to be adopted under this Bill to protect the health of the people in regard to the milk supply, but I cannot see how we are any nearer to a solution to-day.

THE HOME SECRETARY: The trouble is that the country local authorities have their health officers, and a number of the local authorities in the city have not seen fit to appoint one, and have been using the officers of the Health Department.

MR. WARREN: I have yet to learn whether the Brisbane City Council or the Home Secretary's Department controls the

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health of the city. While this Bill is going through I want to see the health of the people protected by efficient and up-to-date methods in the distribution of milk. One of the reasons why the city has not a good milk supply is because the price in seasons when there is a glut of milk is not sufficient inducement to the dairy farmer to produce milk under reasonably healthy conditions. At present the inspection of milk is made under the Health Act.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are wrong.

Mr. WARREN: I am not.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are. The trouble is that the local authorities in the country appoint their own medical officers to supervise health matters, but, when the milk is received in Brisbane, its inspection is left by the councils to the Health Department.

Mr. WARREN: I do not deny that. The hon. gentleman charges a fee of 10s. for registering dairies. What is the meaning of that? If the hon. gentleman has not control, why charge 10s. for registration?

The HOME SECRETARY: We have control only over the distribution of milk in Brisbane.

Mr. WARREN: Generally the dairy cows are not healthy.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not dealing with the Bill.

Mr. WARREN: This Bill should contain some guarantee that the old system is going to be wiped out, and I cannot see that that guarantee exists. I am receiving information from two different sources, one of which tells me that such authority is contained in clause 35, but the Home Secretary admits that it is not. The Assistant Home Secretary is even prepared to call a conference for the purpose of getting into touch with those concerned.

The HOME SECRETARY: The only milk affected by this Bill is that which is distributed in Brisbane.

Mr. WARREN: How can the distribution alone affect the milk? It cannot.

The HOME SECRETARY: The only bearing on this subject that can be discussed to-day is the distribution of milk; that is the only question affected by the Bill.

Mr. WARREN: We have been so long working under a loose system that it is time we had a complete system for the people of Brisbane.

In the first place, the success of this Bill will depend upon the financial point of view. It must be a success financially if the necessary administration is to be effective. I do not know how we are going to make the administration effective unless we adopt a complete system. It would be advisable to start off with the two cities of Brisbane and South Brisbane, and amalgamate them. If the Bill is brought in to consolidate the utilities, how is it those utilities are left out, to be brought under the control of the council at a later date at the discretion of the Governor in Council? Undoubtedly the Minister is actuated by a desire to bring about better conditions, but he is taking practically half the population of Queensland and handing them over to the administration of twenty men in Brisbane, who will have to attend to the whole of the functions

of the council. If one reads clause 34 in a broad sense, it will be seen that the hon. gentleman is handing over the whole of the functions of city government to those men. It is intended to bring about a more complete system of local government than was ever previously tried in Brisbane, so much so that one hon. member on the other side admitted that it was a step in the direction of setting up provincial councils. What a sorry state of affairs for a Government who have been in office ten years to admit that they are so far from having a policy of municipal government that they now desire to alter the whole form of that government! That is what it means. The Government knew that, owing to their lack of business method, they have brought about a certain condition, and they now want to alter the whole method of local government. If that is going to be the case the Bill is going to be a rank failure, and it will not be for the advancement of the State. It merely means that we shall have an additional twenty members of Parliament with a remuneration of £400 a year each. It is only extra expense.

Our reason for desiring the amalgamation of the shire and city councils is because we wish to lessen expenditure; but I cannot see that this measure is going to lessen the expenditure one fraction. I can see a lessening of expenditure in the city of Brisbane, but there will be an increase of expenditure in all the outlying areas. While there is going to be differential treatment in the matter of valuing farming and business areas, the whole thing will mean a very great increase in the amount of rates, with no compensating advantage.

What are we going to get in the place of the present system of local government? Take the farming lands. Is it likely, when the predominance of the voting power is in the centre of the city, that the few farmers in the outlying districts will be considered? It is a stupid blunder to include these farming lands in the Greater Brisbane area. If the Government want to give a Greater Brisbane scheme a trial, let them give it a trial on a smaller scale, and not bring these farming lands into the scheme at present. There is everything in favour of starting on the smaller scale, and absolutely nothing against it. Every hon. member in this Chamber stands for amalgamation in order to bring about more effective working and the lessening of overhead expenses; yet at the same time those not shackled by party would like to see the area of the Greater Brisbane extended gradually. The Government have provided for the greater area now because they do not believe that it can be brought in afterwards. If they had thought it would be possible to increase the area as we go along, I am quite satisfied they would have been prepared to commence with a smaller area. While I do stand for a Greater Brisbane city, most emphatically I do not stand for farming lands being brought into the scheme. It means that the farmers are going to have a heavy burden placed on them. It is not much good for a farmer to be near the city, as the lands at present close to the city are overcapitalised, and the idea that these men will cut up their farms for closer settlement is preposterous. Already we have too many "rooks" cutting up land. Sufficient land has been cut up to satisfy all requirements for fifty years ahead. This Bill is going to

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increase the attractiveness of land outside the Greater City area. At present people living at Caboolture and at all stations this side of Caboolture come into the city, and it is going to have the tendency of not increasing the population of the city, but of driving the population outside the city boundaries. The Home Secretary will be well advised if he will seriously consider whether it is the proper thing to include the whole of these farming lands in this Greater Brisbane area.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I suppose, as a country member, I should not worry very much about what happens to the Brisbane people under this Greater Brisbane scheme, but I do worry about the tragedy that is going to happen to the businesses of some people who are engaged in the calling that I follow. It is not a question of the benefits to be derived. Whatever benefits may come in the future are very remote, and the burden immediately placed upon them will be so heavy that it will not be worth their while to come into the scheme. As far as the city of Brisbane is concerned, I do not anticipate that it will make very much difference whether we provide for the smaller or the larger area. It will be just the same with Brisbane. It will be badly governed, it will have dirty backyards and as many "pubs," and it will be just the same burden on the rest of Queensland that it is now. I do not think things are going to be altered. There is a large number of people who depend on the produce of the land for a living, and, seeing how these people will be treated under the Bill, I think there has been a good case put up for the restriction of the area. The position of these people ought to be considered. They have to get their living from the areas which they work. Under the Bill their valuations will be the same as in the other parts of Brisbane, and their rates will be the same. They will have to pay water and sewerage rates without getting any benefit at all. They will not have much representation on the council. There is no provision for benefited areas being declared with respect to loan expenditure. At the present time some of the local authorities in the area have incurred very little debt, but under this Bill they will be made responsible for a bigger debt. There will not be so much attention given to their roads, and nothing whatever will be done to help them to produce more and give them a better market. They will receive no benefit for many years to come.

Mr. DASH: You were over here for fifty years and did nothing.

Mr. DEACON: The hon. member for Mundubberra, who represents an outback area of the country, should agree with me when I say that it is cruel for the people in the outside areas to be brought in in the manner proposed under this Bill. I heard one hon. member on the Government side say that we should take a broad outlook. It appears to me that the advocates of this scheme in Brisbane are taking a broader outlook. They have looked outside to see how many farmers they can bring in, so as to get more revenue for the city of Brisbane. Their broader outlook has not been for the benefit of the people outside, but simply to get them in and see how much they can get out of them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why are you stonewalling?

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Mr. DEACON: I do not think that any member in the House should be accused at this stage of stonewalling on a Bill of this description. A measure like this ought to be thoroughly discussed. The case of the people who are going to be badly treated under it should be fully considered. I can quite understand the indifference which is being shown when I look at the empty back benches on the Government side.

The HOME SECRETARY: Look at your own back benches.

Mr. DEACON: I am sorry to see the Government perpetuating the same stupid blunder in this Bill as they did when they introduced the adult franchise into local government in Queensland. It is a blunder and a crime that people who have to do all the paying should not have a fairer share in local government than they have at present.

Mr. GLEDSON: Do you think they should have all the voting power?

Mr. DEACON: They should have all the voting if they do all the paying. If you alter the system of voting you should alter the method of paying. The people who find the money for local authority work should share in proportion with others in regard to the franchise; but that is not the case at present. Hon. members opposite ought to realise that in many cases during the last three or four years they have made great blunders in administration through not listening to the suggestions put forward by the Opposition. If they had taken notice of the suggestions made from time to time the conditions in Queensland generally would have been better, and so would the conditions of the local authorities all over the State. I am not going to follow up that question at this stage except to say that hon. members on this side protest against it. If I did so I would be ruled out of order.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must connect his remarks with the Bill.

Mr. DEACON: There is no provision for any benefited areas under this Bill, and it is necessary that there should be. There is no provision for any poll on the question of loans, and that means that the producers in these outside areas will have no voice, or at any rate a very small voice in the matter of raising loans. They have to bear a large proportion of the burden without getting any of the benefits, and under these conditions I do hope that we shall have the principle of benefited areas recognised.

I notice that the Home Secretary said that the main object of this Bill is to bring in greater revenue.

The HOME SECRETARY: When did I say that?

Mr. DEACON: The hon. gentleman said it by way of interjection across the Chamber. He said that there would be sub-departments to deal with certain things, and that they would have more revenue.

The HOME SECRETARY: I never said that.

Mr. DEACON: From what I heard I understood the Minister to say that in an interjection to the hon. member for Sandgate.

The HOME SECRETARY: I said that it would be a saving.

Mr. DEACON: I understood that the hon. gentleman said that we would have more revenue. He was replying to the contention

of the hon. member for Sandgate that the aldermen under the Greater Brisbane scheme would have to deal with small matters, and said that they would be dealt with by sub-department, and that would mean more revenue—that they would have much more revenue.

The HOME SECRETARY: I never used those words.

Mr. DEACON: If they are going to create sub-departments it will not mean a saving. It will mean more employees than we have now.

The HOME SECRETARY: We are abolishing nineteen councils.

Mr. DEACON: Where does the difference come in if you cut out nineteen councils each with a clerk and engineer and create sub-departments? It will not make the slightest difference. What happens under the State Government? We know very well that the sub-departments do not save very much, although they may carry out the work more efficiently, and it seems to me that the people of Brisbane will have to find more revenue, and many of them get no benefit from it whatever.

I think it would be better for the producers in the outside area if they were allowed to declare what they want themselves, seeing they have to find the money. They will be able to deal with their own problems for a good while to come, and I do not see why they should be brought into the city area. After all, you cannot call the country city land. The conditions are entirely different. We have to remember that, if we add any imposition to their land, it comes out of their labour, because they cannot pass it on to the people in the cities. I am hopeful that the Government will give some consideration to the needs of these people.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I have listened with a great deal of interest to the speeches delivered by hon. members on both sides, and they remind me of the promises that were made at the time of federation, when we were promised that under the new order of things we were going to be relieved of certain expenses, and economy was to result.

We know how disappointed Australia has been in that regard, [2.30 p.m.] and I hope we are not going to be disappointed in this measure. I heard the hon. member for Fortitude Valley dealing fully with the electric light scheme, and I believe he said that, whereas the council paid £19,000 per annum for electric current, the body that furnished that current paid only £300 per annum for rats to the council. But that small amount of £300 might very easily have been lost, and even ten times that amount might have been lost through bad management on the part of the council. Mismanagement and extravagance are the main features in connection with bodies elected under the present franchise, and I fear that, if many of these schemes are placed under municipal control, the cost will be greater, and the amount received by the council will be less than is the case at the present time. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley gave us a good deal of information concerning the discrepancy between the valuations on properties in South Brisbane and North Brisbane, but it must be remembered that a great deal of the South Brisbane property referred to is within the Good area, and that to some extent may

possibly have accounted for the disparity in valuations. What appears to me to be a great danger is the very great powers that are to be given to the new body. I do not for one moment say that they are too great for such a body, but you have to consider all the factors operating in that connection. Under the Bill the Greater Brisbane Council will have power to deal with recreation, tramways, etc. The members will be elected on the adult franchise, and any person who has drifted in temporarily, and has no interest in the area, and nothing to lose in the long run, can exercise the franchise. One cannot help feeling that there is a great deal of danger in that, especially if some untoward happening occurs, or if there is any financial stringency.

In the future the aldermen are to receive £400 per annum. That is not very much for a good business man, who is worth anything in the world to-day; but it is a good deal to a certain class, and amongst that class are some big-gun speakers who are eloquent on anything and everything, but at the same time notoriously inefficient in the conduct of their own affairs. It seems to me quite possible that the control of the new body will ultimately pass into their hands. It may do so by these people buying votes, by making promises that the trams are to be run at less than the cost of running, or possibly free, or that there shall be free entertainments, etc. In that case the position of the rat payer will be made very hard indeed. It may be quite possible under this Bill to have a Greater Brisbane Council constituted of men, not one of whom is a ratepayer. The possibility of such a danger is a very grave menace to those who have put in a lifetime to save up money to purchase their own homes, perhaps on the time-payment system. Voting on proposals to borrow money on the security of the property of the ratepayers should rest with the rat-payers only. Mere birds of passage who have been here a few weeks should not decide whether a heavy indebtedness shall be imposed on the property of the ratepayers. I hope that when the Bill reaches the Committee stage, an opportunity will be given us to remove that grave risk.

It is proposed to work the tramways under this new scheme. Our railways are controlled by a body elected on a franchise similar to that of the new council. We know how disastrous the administration of the railways has been, and how huge recurring losses have been made from year to year. Although I am not prepared to say that great powers should not be entrusted to the body controlling the Greater City of Brisbane, I do say that the system of electing that body should be different, and that those who have acquired property as a result of industry and hard work should receive better protection than they are afforded under this measure.

A great gulf exists to-day between the two schools of political thought—those who think individuals should own nothing, and those who say that those who work are entitled to enjoy the fruits of their own labours. That is the great line of demarcation between the two schools of political thought to-day. We have to weigh all these measures in those scales, and this measure most certainly contains grave elements of risk in regard to confiscation of values. The council has the power to pledge the property of Brisbane ratepayers to such an extent that the loan

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rates, especially expenses in connection with unproductive work, might involve property up to its maximum value. It is that element which has entered into the legislation of the present party in power that has brought Queensland into the position she is in to-day. Recognising that fact, and seeing the results we can see—I would not be in order in enlarging on them, and it is only necessary for me to mention them—some safeguard to the savings of the thrifty is necessary in the measure we are dealing with.

Brisbane is comparatively a small town, and it seems to me that a 5-mile radius is quite sufficient at the commencement of the scheme. As the council gets used to its work and shows its capability for conducting the affairs of that area, and as the outer zone becomes more populous, it can be gradually extended. That is a very reasonable way to view the matter.

I am not opposed to the Bill at the second reading stage, but there is a necessity for very important alterations when we come to the Committee stage, especially in the matter of the franchise. I am a ratepayer and have property in South Brisbane, and so have a right to speak on the matter. It seems unjust that the whole result of our toil should be at the mercy of casuals who happen to blow in and who are elected on their promises to do certain great public works, not because they will be reproductive, but because they will afford relief. It is unjust that we should be exposed to the risk of their legislation, and I therefore hope that the Bill will be very considerably altered when we get into Committee.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (Warwick): Though not a city man in the sense of being a representative of any city electorate, yet in other respects one's interests come to the surface, and naturally lead one to form certain opinions. It is here that I find myself in conflict as a city man versus the country man. That leads me to a *via media* aspect of the case. As a city man, knowing the growing burdens that are being heaped upon the city and the city man, one looks abroad, and is ready to take others in to share the responsibilities and bear the burdens. But instinctively I am a country man, and my sympathies are largely with the country men. Whilst admiring the vision of those who look ahead in this great scheme, I cannot but think that the area decided upon is altogether in excess of what should be undertaken. I therefore allow a weight of thought and sympathy to come in to a large extent in favour of those who live in areas not yet touched by undue taxation—such areas as the Moggill Shire, which was referred to this morning. If I understand rightly that shire has an area of some 73 square miles and has between 2,000 and 3,000 people. The area populated by that small number of people represents one-fifth of the whole area to be brought under the City of Brisbane Bill and they are free of all debts. Those people are to come into this scheme and graciously take upon themselves the responsibility of bearing their *pro rata* proportion of the city burdens with the ratepayer of the city. There it is that the thing is unfair. Of course it will be said that there is to be preferential rating in the matter of country areas, but that will in no way be an inducement to the smaller farmer or to the bigger farmer to take upon himself the huge responsibilities which are coupled with improve-

ments to be worked out not only to-day but those that are to be conceived in the future. They are going to be a mighty thing. Certain it is that the usual expenditure will continue to take place in the more important centres in and around the city. The outlying centres, to which broad reference has been made, will certainly enjoy the benefit of some of the improvements made from time to time, yet they are not going to participate to the fullest extent in the advantages that will accrue to the city. There may be the all-round patriotic feeling, "It is our city," and that kind of thing; but, when the pocket is touched, very frequently sympathy dwindles down to a large extent. I therefore feel that, while the conception is fine and while the opportunity should be afforded to the people living in the outside centres to come in by and by, the time for them to come in is not yet. It may be the right thing by and by, and we should be prepared to make it easy for these centres to come in at a time when quite convenient to them. It may be that, as a result of the experience gained in the smaller scheme, the outside people will find that it will be to their advantage to throw in their lot with the people already in the Greater Brisbane scheme. But if they do so now they will find themselves face to face with increased expenditure.

Take the water and sewerage scheme. I am not sure how it will be affected, but by and by there will have to be a good deal of spreading of the responsibility in connection with that activity. It may not apply at the present time, but it is a burden that is going to be placed on the whole of the people, and that burden will lead the city people to say, "Let those outside come in and share the difficulties of the position with us." They will have to realise, too, that new valuations will have to be made, and will of necessity be made, and, however inviting it may be to those in the outside areas to feel that there will be preferential treatment to some extent, yet that is not going to be much of an inducement to them to come in. Whilst those outside the 5-mile radius should not be brought in straight away, the way should be made easy for them to come in later on if they think it advisable. It is not wise to coerce the outlying centres to come in at the present time.

Reference has been made to the franchise. I understand that many a city man who has not a vote at all now will have a vote under the new conditions. The right thing is for the occupier or owner to have a vote in connection with matters which have to do with expenditure and the burden they will have to bear. It is not right for a man to dictate to you as to the amount you are to expend, and to call upon you to pay the piper. That does not seem to be a fair thing. Whilst indirectly every man may contribute in one way or another, it is only fair that those who have to stand up to the payment of taxation should have some say in such a matter.

Reverting once more to the Moggill district, that is almost absolutely a farming district, and on that score I think this Chamber should realise the unwisdom of bringing an area like that within the scope of the Bill. The incidence of taxation in connection with Moggill and other outlying places is going to work unevenly. We shall find happening what we found in the

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district of Warwick. We had a fairly large area there originally, but as taxation increased and rates went up the people in the outlying districts petitioned for separation, and eventually they secured separation. They realised that the burden had become too great for them. They were shavers in expenditure out of which they had no direct enjoyment. What took place at Warwick and caused the people to petition for separation may happen here in the event of the Bill being brought into operation. I think it is just over-ambition which has caused such a large area to be included, and the interests of all concerned would be served by limiting the area to a 5-mile radius.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I would like to say a word or two on the Bill, but I am conscious of the fact that the Bill having been fully debated, there is not very much new ground left to go over, and one is almost compelled to go over some of the ground which has been covered by previous speakers.

I read with a great deal of interest the remarks of the Minister when introducing the Bill. He went back to ancient history, and told us that in 1915 the late Hon. T. J. Ryan, when leader of the party opposite, had included the Greater Brisbane Bill in his policy speech, and that it was part of his programme at that period. I am reminded of the report of a Railway Commission which at one time was carried into the House by the then hon. member for Carnarvon, Mr. Gunn, and the hon. member for Toombul. (Laughter.) It will be remembered how bulky it was. That was a report which it was said was going to save us a very big sum in connection with our railway management, but we did not get beyond the report. However, Mr. Speaker, it is out of order to refer at length to that matter. The first City of Brisbane Bill, which was brought in in 1917, was a very big one, and the Minister who introduced that Bill made special reference to the fact that it contained about 500 pages. At any rate, it was something that wanted a great deal of wading through.

MR. MAXWELL: There was nothing much good in it.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member for Toowong cannot have had anything very nice for lunch. He says that there was nothing much good in it. The fact remains that it was introduced at a later period, but in the meantime a reducing process had been going on with a great deal of success. I hope the Minister will not think that I am in any way vulgar or personal if I say that it may be that he had got on to it and it had therefore been reduced very much in size. (Laughter.) At any rate, the hon. gentleman has apparently given a great deal of attention to this Bill, although it is perfectly certain that he has overlooked some very important points, and it is in connection with those that I want to speak.

The hon. member for Fortitude Valley—followed by the hon. member for Oxley—made reference to the omission of any provision to include the electric light supply in the Bill. I want to say in the very strongest possible terms—and I am not in any way reflecting on the City Electric Light Company, because I believe they have done splendid service for Queensland—that the Government by a very singular act have

put Coorparoo and other local authorities in an extraordinary position. Are they going to continue to act in this way? The City Electric Light Company said, for instance, to Coorparoo, "We will install electric light in your district" but the Government said, "We will not let you; but we will advance the local authorities money to put up their poles and wires in order to install electricity." The extraordinary part of it is that Coorparoo and other councils own the poles and the wires, but the energy comes from the Electric Light Company. Every local authority which has had to borrow money from the Government or elsewhere for electric light installation is dependent on the company for the vital thing—the energy which gives the light. That simply means that the local authorities have become responsible for large sums of borrowed money, whereas they could have got the light—more cheaply in my judgment—without any of the responsibility or difficulty of financing it. The present Minister was not concerned, but he may have had some responsibility in conjunction with his colleagues.

THE HOME SECRETARY: The Bill provides that the council can acquire electric light.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That seems to be one of the vital things.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Do you think that we should make it mandatory on the City of Brisbane Council to take it over?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not. The hon. gentleman has introduced that idea himself. I say that there are certain utilities such as the tramways which should be possessed by the Greater Brisbane authority, and it seems to me that the water and lighting supplies also ought to be acquired by it.

MR. MAXWELL: The "Golden Casket"? (Laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not wish to incur your disapproval, Mr. Speaker, but I may explain that I was delayed when on my way to the House by a lady, who showed me a "Golden Casket" ticket which she said had been advertised as a prize winner, but she had not got the prize. (Laughter.)

THE HOME SECRETARY: They all seem to go to you. (Laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES: I can only hope that the balance will go to the hon. gentleman, because I am sure the Minister would look after it perhaps as well as anybody in the community. He would be very sympathetic; and you want sympathy in many of these things. The hon.

[3 p.m.] gentleman will be a very sympathetic Minister when he has to do with that. I want to ask the Minister seriously whether he thinks that it was a fair thing for the Government—whoever was responsible at that particular time—to say to the local authorities, "Saddle yourselves as much as you like with financial responsibilities, and your assets shall be the poles and wires."

THE HOME SECRETARY: They would have been in a very bad way if they had the poles and wires and could not get the "juice."

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Government should have found the "juice" in the first place before they insisted on the other work being done. If the hon. gentleman had had anything to do with it, I am sure he would have seen that they got the "juice."

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The hon. gentleman says that this Bill has been on the stocks for a considerable period. One hon. member this morning was very strong in his feelings, when he said that the local authorities ought to be deeply satisfied by reason of the fact that the Government had allowed them a very considerable time to go through the Bill and make suggestions. I believe that is correct. I am not for one moment attempting to qualify that statement, but probably the circumstance arose from the fact that the Government did not feel quite equal to it themselves, and they wanted to get all the help they possibly could.

THE HOME SECRETARY: That is a very broad view to take.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is in keeping with the hon. gentleman. He is naturally very broad—(laughter)—and it was a very broad view indeed to take. The Bill deals with some matters which I think are extremely vital, and I take it that every man who gets on his feet to deal with a Bill of this character should consider it largely from a non-party point of view. He should look at it from the strongest possible point of view in the interests of the good of the community. That is a very proper stand to take. A great deal of discussion has taken place as to the area to be adopted, and a lot has been said about a 5-mile radius, and a lot has been said about a 10-mile radius. To me it seems that you can go to some places and say distinctly that a 10-mile radius should not be adopted by reason of the particular industry that is carried on in that district. I will admit that whatever radius you may adopt you are going to have some inequalities; but the point I specially want to make is this: What virtue is there in either a 5-mile radius or a 10-mile radius as such? Was it not possible to have included those places which seemed from the standpoint of population, etc., the necessary ones to bring in, leaving out some of those which should not have been included?

THE HOME SECRETARY: When the problem arises we shall adjust it.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am perfectly certain that that could have been done to greater advantage than by having the present scheme. I heard one hon. member this morning saying that the 10-mile radius was quite all right from one point of view, and I heard the same hon. gentleman saying that the smaller area was better by reason of the very point that I raised just now.

The biggest point I want to make, and I want to stress it, is in connection with the matter mentioned by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, who went to a very great deal of trouble in connection with the speech that he delivered in this House, but, Mr. Speaker, did you notice that he let the cat out of the bag? The cat he let out was this: He gave some figures which had been carefully compiled of hotels in North and South Brisbane, omitting Queen street. He drew our attention to the fact that the rating within the city of Brisbane was much greater than in the city of South Brisbane, and he stressed the point that we were not getting sufficient income tax and land tax from those properties. If those valuations are increased, the Commissioner for Taxation will have a say in it. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley, in drawing attention to the inequalities in valuations,

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certainly did advocate that there should be a lifting of the land values.

MR. CARTER: On the south side.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He said there should be an increase in those values because the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board and others were not getting the rates they should from the properties that are now under-valued.

MR. CARTER: He did not suggest the valuations should be increased on this side; he suggested they should be increased on the south side.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am very glad of that admission. If they are increased on the south side, will there not be an increase in taxation?

MR. CARTER: Not necessarily.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Council of the City of Brisbane has been held up as being the ideal thing. That meant that the land values in other districts were to be raised.

MR. CARTER: He did not say that all values should be raised.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He practically said so by the way he argued. I want the electors to realise that the Government are bringing in a Bill under the guise of a Greater Brisbane Bill apparently with a view of getting more taxation out of the pockets of the people.

MR. MAXWELL: That is it.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not wonder that the Minister smiles when he realises that. We all know how necessary from a Government standpoint it is to get increased taxation. We can only get out of local authorities what we allow them to draw from another source.

The hon. member for Bulimba, in dealing with the question of tram lines, referred to the Belmont tramway, which he regarded as a local matter, but which is also a public one. As a local authority the Belmont Shire Council have stood up to their obligations to the very letter in connection with that tramway. The hon. member for Bulimba was quite right when he suggested that some relief should be given to those people who have stood up so well to their contract. They should have relief for this reason: That the obligations with respect to guaranteed railways have been removed, and this local authority should have been included in this Bill and relieved of an obligation to which it is entitled by reason of what has been done in another direction. The hon. member was quite right in taking up that stand.

The hon. member for Bulimba pointed out—as I wish to do—some difficulties which are operating and which might be used in just the opposite sense to which he used them. He said that the valuation within the 5-mile radius was £14,413,000 and within the larger radius only £16,000,000. That was the point to which special reference was made. I am prepared to admit that it does not matter what your area or radius may be, if you are going to have an absolute 5-mile or 10-mile radius, there will be something that will not work out quite satisfactorily. That is a matter which should receive the fullest consideration of the Government of the day.

Probably I am right when I say that the local authorities to be included in this area

have about twenty chairmen and two mayors, and they have about 200 aldermen or shire councillors. Yet under this Bill we are asked to place this tremendous area under the administration of twenty-one men. Some hon. member remarked this morning that members of councils should not be errand boys, or something of that kind. Although they are not errand boys, and do not desire to be errand boys, still they have to attend to details connected with their constituents. They cannot escape the work. If a person comes to you in dire need, it is your duty to hear him and do what you can for him. If it has been necessary to have 200 men to do the job in the past—and I want to say on behalf of local authority men that they do their job very well and have rendered excellent service on the whole—how will it be performed by twenty-one men? I do not wish to speak for myself, but I do say that, if you take a man from any district, his duties are not going to stop with the interests of the people he directly represents. Take twenty aldermen, and choose, say, the member for Toombul as mayor. Is it to be said that all he is to be concerned about is Toombul? Whilst I am prepared to admit that Toombul matters must receive his special attention, he will have to deliberate very earnestly about every matter pertaining to the city of Brisbane. If he does not, he is not worth his seat. I do not know if the Minister has thought of this, but a tremendous responsibility will be placed upon these twenty-one men, and it is going to be a very difficult matter for them to accomplish their task in the specified time. They will have correspondence coming in; interviews will have to be given; and they will have to attend to all those things which crop up in the life of a representative in a big district. Take as an example a district with 20,000 or 30,000 people. We know what duties will be entailed by the representation of such a district, and I say this arrangement is not going to be a very helpful or suitable one so far as the members of the council are concerned.

There is another point I wish to make. Recently we have had exhibitions which have not reflected favourably upon local authorities. By way of illustration, supposing you get twenty men who quarrel amongst themselves, just as well as they quarrelled in a neighbouring council quite recently—what is going to happen? My confirmed opinion—though it may not meet with public approval—is that a big area like this would be very much better administered by commissioners than by men selected in the way suggested. My opinion is that that would be very much better.

It is no use anyone saying that the political element has not crept into our local authorities. It is there. If someone is put up for election who is a reasonably good man and he represents the side of politics that I stand for, whom will I vote for? For the candidate chosen by the other side? No. I will vote for my man. As a result of that system, it does not always follow that the man selected for local authority work is the most suitable. I disagree with the hon. member for Buranda when he says that business men are not required in local government. My own opinion is that, if you are going to run local government work well, you must have men with business qualifications—men who are able to deal with problems as

they arise. I do not know whether anyone has faced the financial problems in connection with this Bill. If I were a member of a local authority and it were possible to get money, I should get as much as possible just now for my own district because the debts are going into a common pool. I ask what are going to be the financial responsibilities of this business once it is perfected? I know the trams and I know the water authority are not going to come into it at once, nor is electric lighting; but, if ever there was wanted in connection with an undertaking of this kind men who understood business, now is the time. Men who understand finance should be put in control of undertakings of this kind. It is all very well to say that the representatives of the people will fill the bill. They will not. A man is elected very largely by reason of his popularity with the people, apart altogether from his qualifications. We have to admit that. Qualifications do count. I have heard it said many a time with regard to party politics that it did not matter in some electorates who was put up; so long as he had the right brand he would be elected. That is one of the things that will operate in connection with the election of representatives to the Greater City Council.

There is another matter that I wish to refer to. I know it is to some extent a matter for the Committee, but I would like the Minister to give it his consideration. So far as I can see, no provision has been made for a contingent vote. If there is a three-cornered contest in connection with elections to this Parliament, there is a contingent vote, and I ask why some similar provision is not made in this Bill, so that a selection may be made of the man who, in the opinion of a majority of the people is the most suitable? If that is not provided for, we may find ourselves in a very peculiar position indeed.

I do not know whether provision has been made in the Bill to the fullest extent for some of those things which need very great attention from a local authority point of view. Some of them have been touched on. The one I want to stress specially at the present time is the question of overcrowding. Once this Bill becomes law, the effect will be twofold. If the rates are increased—and they will be increased—many a worker will remove still further from the centre of the city. It will send many a worker further from the city than he is to-day, because he will want to get into some area where the rating is not so high. In my opinion it will have the effect of promptly helping to do away with slums to which I have made reference before now in this House. By way of illustration, I would point out that that splendid piece of legislation, the Workers' Dwellings Act, when fully administered gives the worker facilities to secure a home for himself outside the present city area. I do not know that there is anything in the Bill dealing with this matter, but if there is anything to-day that we want to see to, it is that children shall not be brought up in slums. We have evidences of that in South Brisbane; I have referred to that before. There are places there which are a disgrace to our civilisation. The Minister should see that the Bill penalises to the fullest extent those who want to huddle little children and their parents in places which are not fit to live in. I hold that there is

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a duty cast upon the Minister at this particular time to see to that.

MR. MAXWELL: What about the clerks employed by the local authorities?

HON. W. H. BARNES: If you are not fully prepared to make a speech, it is always well to have someone to feed you a bit. My friend, the hon. member for Toowong, is willing to feed me a bit. I shall have something to say about the clerks in a little while.

The next question is the new bridge. I take it that Brisbane is growing to such an extent that there will have to be some additional bridge accommodation across the Brisbane River. While we are discussing this Bill, as that is a big financial consideration, we should know what are the intentions of the Government in that direction. I assume that the bigger city will have the responsibility of that in some form or other.

THE HOME SECRETARY: The Bill provides for that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am glad to know that the Bill provides for it, for it is absolutely essential that that should be done. It should not be too long delayed, because the congestion, as the hon. gentleman probably knows, is very great at certain times of the day. I trust, therefore, that ample provision will be made in the Bill in that regard.

I was asked to say something in connection with the present employees of local authorities. There is no question that some of these men have given practically all their lives to this duty, which has been a very special duty. While we may not be able to deal with that very definitely, I think that in any legislation that is passed we ought to keep it in view, and see if there is anything we can do to make the way of these people easy. There is a suggestion that the Bill is going to mean economy. We were told that when Federation came there was going to be a wonderful amount of economy, but I do not think anyone will say that there has been economy as a result of Federation. I want to ask if this Bill is going to secure economy?

THE HOME SECRETARY: It will bring efficiency.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is a very sorry condemnatory remark with regard to the present Government. If there has been efficiency, there has not been economy.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

HON. W. H. BARNES: We are dealing with this Bill, and I cannot enter into that matter, Mr. Speaker, as you would probably pull me up. But we have found that some of the movements inaugurated by the Government that we were told would be in the direction of benefiting the people have not been in the interests of economy at all, but quite the reverse. I think that a great deal of the success of this measure, if it is passed in its present form, will depend upon the first council which is elected, and I would like to say to the public of Brisbane, through this House, that it will be their duty to see that they get the very best representatives possible. By way of illustration, let me tell the House that a doctor once met me in the train, and said, "All politicians are no good." Then he turned to me and tried to soft-soap me by saying, "Of course, you are

the exception." Of course, I would not have been the exception if I had not been there. I said, "If they are as you describe, there is a public duty on you to lend a hand to see that the best men are sent to Parliament." I want to say very earnestly that under this Bill, which is proposing something quite new, the citizens of the larger city must see that they choose men capable of doing their job. I further say that, whatever may happen, the question of finance is so important that they should have somebody associated with them who will have a grip of financial questions so that they will be able to carry out their duties efficiently.

I cannot agree with the hon. member for Toowong that the men who are sent into this House should be disqualified by the Bill from becoming aldermen or mayor of the Greater Brisbane Council. I hold that there should be perfect freedom in the choice which is made, and that we should throw upon the people the responsibility of selecting those who they think will be most suitable.

One other word. The electors should be very careful when they do make the selection of their aldermen—whether they be parliamentarians or not—that they get men who realise that wet corn swells fast—that they do not get swollen heads, because swollen heads will kill them. I hope that the new men, whoever they may be, will do their duty, and, when it is done, they will be able to say that it was well done.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

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

BLIND, DEAF, AND DUMB CHILDREN INSTRUCTION BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, Mount Morgan): In moving the second reading of this measure, I feel that I am moving the second reading of a Bill which has been long delayed. It is gratifying when addressing this House to feel that both sections of the men in it will heartily support your proposal. The main principle of this measure is to give education to a section of the community who require special care and attention, and I realise that no section has a monopoly of good intentions towards them.

We in the State of Queensland pride ourselves upon the great educational opportunities which we offer to our children; but we have to recognise on both sides that, whilst as far back as 1875 we have had legislation providing for the compulsory education of children in possession of their full faculties, we have nevertheless permitted the less fortunate in our community to be robbed of the education which is necessary to fit them for the battle of life—in many cases through the very kindness of their parents.

Whilst it is compulsory for children who are in possession of their normal faculties to attend school until they either pass a certain standard or attain a certain age, the unfortunate children to whom this Bill refers for some reason or other have not been compelled to attend school. Although we have

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the Blind, Deaf, and Dumb Institution, which is doing excellent work, [3.30 p.m.] still a certain number of blind, deaf, and dumb children are not attending that institution. There is a band of men and women in this State to whom I desire to pay as high a meed of credit as is possible—I refer to the Adult Deaf and Dumb Mission. They are the most unselfish body of workers it has been my lot to meet. (Hear, hear!) They have been striving in season and out of season by conciliatory methods to induce the parents of many of those unfortunate children to send their children to the institution so that they may obtain the necessary education to make them self-reliant in after years.

Mr. KERR: How many children do not attend the institution?

The HOME SECRETARY: There are fully sixty children in the State to-day who are not receiving any instruction. Many of their parents have been approached by the mission, and have been shown the advantages that would accrue to the children, but a mother's love for an afflicted child is so great that the interest of the child is sacrificed in the mother's blind feeling of love and desire to retain the child with her. The institution is performing great and good work, and it is with a feeling of gratification that I have obtained from the Superintendent this very fine testimony to the work of the institution as performed by those children—

"Audrey Jones, a past pupil, passed all the examinations of the Royal Academy of Music and the Trinity College of Music, gaining the degrees of A.T.C.L. and A.L.R.A.M. She is now a capable music teacher practising at Goodna.

"Miss Littley, a past pupil, also passed all the examinations of the Trinity College of Music, obtaining the degree of A.T.C.L.

"Eddie Dickinson, another past pupil, passed all the examinations of the Trinity College of Music, and obtained the degree of A.T.C.L."

Amongst the present pupils of the institution are—

"Harold Dickinson, fifteen years of age, has passed the Intermediate Divisional Examination for the violin, and obtained 72 per cent.

"Charles Addermann, nine years of age, and Edward Stewart, fourteen years of age, are being taught the violin, and are both entering for the preparatory examination.

"Ivy Bertherson, another pupil, received honourable mention at the 1923 A.N.A. Eisteddfod. This pupil and a pupil named Joan Barry will enter the next local eisteddfod. The latter pupil, Joan Barry, is thirteen years of age, and has been attending the institution for a period of only twelve months. This girl, who shows such great promise, came to the institution with absolutely no knowledge whatever, and, without the teaching which she is receiving at the institution, would undoubtedly remain useless all her life.

"Tom Kelleher, a past pupil, won the first prize for baritones in the Wynnum Eisteddfod in 1922."

Four other present pupils are studying piano playing, and any child in the institution who shows any aptitude is given every opportunity and assistance. That is the instruction the blind children are receiving as a result of their parents sending them to the institution. The average person who walks along the street and views a blind child or a blind man manifests his sympathy by the ready manner in which he assists such persons, but the most unfortunate of all the afflicted people is undoubtedly the deaf mute. Just imagine for a moment what must be the position of a person who is absolutely a deaf mute!

When these children come to the institution they know absolutely nothing. It takes the most patient training even to educate them into a knowledge of the various articles of apparel which they wear. Just imagine what it means! Without education, that child will grow up unfamiliar with the objects round about it. Unfortunately in Queensland to-day many of these children who should and could be useful citizens are unable to help themselves because they were denied, through their parents' foolishness, the education necessary to make them useful citizens.

We propose making the education compulsory—parents who have children physically able to attend the institution will be required to send them there. When the children—particularly the deaf children—have been at the institution and learnt through the methods of teaching there to read and write, they will pass from the school into another branch of a technical nature, where they will be taught the rudiments of various trades which they will be able to follow in spite of their natural disadvantages, in a similar manner to other children who have been fortunate enough to receive these advantages in the past from the mission. After they have received this training the mission looks out for employers for these children. Thank goodness there are many employers who have been only too willing to help these children to engage in industry. These children are taught different branches of certain trades and callings which will assist them to be independent of any charity and assistance.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: What are you going to make the retiring age?

The HOME SECRETARY: I have had a considerable amount of literature placed at my disposal in framing this Bill. In this measure I have not accepted what is usually laid down as a prepared policy. I have laid down the retiring age at sixteen years. They can be educated up to a certain standard by the age of fourteen years, after which they will receive a technical education for two years. Authorities on the treatment of deaf children state that the child cannot be brought to school too early. In many parts of the old country they are so far advanced in the education of these children that they are brought into the school before they are three years of age, and in many cases they are kept at school until they are twenty-one years of age. I believe we shall make a good start, and that the provisions of this Bill will meet with the approval of people who have spent a considerable portion of their life in helping and guiding the welfare of these children. I shall not labour the question any further. The Bill is one that I feel there will be no debate upon.

Hon. J. Stopford.]

Many hon. members on the Government and Opposition sides of the House visited the institution with me a short time ago, and had an opportunity of seeing for themselves what was being done there. Each and every one of them expressed their high admiration at the work performed there. With these remarks I have much pleasure in moving—

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

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): I believe that this Bill will receive the endorsement of every member of this House. (Hear, hear!) The only point that lends itself to criticism is the fact that this and other Governments have been somewhat tardy in bringing forward an important measure of this description. The Minister said that there will be about sixty defective children to come under this measure. I am rather of the opinion that that is an under-estimate.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have a statement from the mission, who have followed the matter up for years.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I have also made it my business to see the mission, and, personally, I hope the hon. gentleman is correct. I rather think the figure should be nearer one hundred than sixty. I was delighted to hear the encouraging remark of the Minister in reference to this mission, which is endeavouring to do what the State should have done in looking after these children over whom there has been no control. This Bill seeks to bring those children compulsorily within the scope of institutions already existing for those who are blind, deaf, or dumb. Just to give the House a little knowledge on the subject, I propose to read a few illustrations which will throw some light on the activities of the Queensland Adult Deaf and Dumb Mission, and show how necessary is a measure of this description—

"INSTANCES OF CASES.

"There is a girl in Rosalie totally deaf, twelve years of age, whose mother we have been urging to send her to school for the past two years. Members of the mission have tried repeatedly. Kindergarten workers have tried, also Sunday school teachers, mothers of deaf children have taken their children, the mother and the girl were taken up to the institution and shown round, all without effect. The girl is quite deaf, and therefore dumb, but her mother will not let her go to school because she (the mother) would feel lonely at night. There is no thought of the child's welfare, but the selfishness of the mother is depriving this naturally bright (although deaf) child of her intellect.

"Another case is a boy at Redbank who was discovered last year by the mission. One of the members of the mission went to Redbank in November last and persuaded the parents of this boy, who was eleven years of age, to allow him to start school after the Christmas holidays. The parents were induced to inspect the Deaf school (Blind, Deaf, and Dumb Institution), and were loud in their praise of all they saw. The boy started school in January, and was very happy, but as his father spent most of his spare time gazing over the school fence, the lad did not settle down.

At the end of a fortnight he considered he had learnt all he would need, and refused to come any more. The parents, on account of his never having been at school before, have no influence over him. The mission then took a hand again by going up to Redbank to urge the parents again to send the lad, and after persuasion, they said he would come after Easter. We went for him and found his clothes packed and ready, but the boy was not ready, but the mother's consent was obtained to take him. He was taken to school that night, and was quite happy also all the next day, but that evening his father came in a rage and took him home, because 'he had not come of his own free will.' We contend that the boy has no right to decide his own future, and that the parents have no right to deprive him of the education he needs to fit him for life.

"A young man at Milton named Newman, twenty-six years of age, totally deaf, has never been to school, because his father did not want him to learn the deaf and dumb language. He is naturally a fine intelligent man, and could have been taught any trade (not requiring hearing), but as he was not educated he hides himself because he cannot make himself understood by either the deaf or speaking people. We have endeavoured to get him to the Manual Training College, and are willing to pay his fees, and have him taught cabinet-making, but he will not come, and sits on a box all day, and does nothing but brood over the injury his parents have done to him by shutting him out from converse with his fellows by neglecting his education."

And so on. There are many such illustrations. There is no doubt that one of the greatest drawbacks in bringing these children within the scope of these institutions has been the reluctance—which cannot be understood—of parents to let their children be equipped, in view of their affliction, to fight the battles of life. It is a very wise measure to compel these parents to give their children the opportunities afforded by this special education.

I cannot let this opportunity pass without making a brief reference to the Manual Training College at South Brisbane. There they are doing excellent work in regard to these blind, deaf, and dumb people.

The HOME SECRETARY: So is the farm at Ekibin.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I have no doubt there are other places just as worthy. To-day one case was brought under my notice where a young man—almost a beast in his nature by having been deprived of all means of having refinement inculcated into him—has been taken in hand by this college, and in a week's time the results of the education and tuition have been remarkable. He seems to have applied himself to cabinet-making, and at last has something in life to look forward to and to live for. That I take it is the object of the Bill, and I am sure every hon. member in the House will give it his blessing.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CONROY (*Maranoa*): I would like to say a few words in support of this Bill, and I take this opportunity of congratulating the Home Secretary on its introduction.

[Hon. J. Stopford.]

Quite recently, through the courtesy of the Home Secretary, in company with several other hon. members of this House, I had the privilege of paying a visit to the Blind, Deaf, and Dumb Institution, and I was very interested indeed to see what is being done to educate these children. I am quite satisfied from what I saw there—and I am sure all those hon. members who visited the institution were very pleased to see it—that these children are receiving every facility in connection with education. I saw quite a number of children there; they were all well dressed, and had every appearance of being well cared for; and I am quite sure that the parents of these children are satisfied that they are well cared for by the institution. I quite agree that there is an absolute necessity to educate those unfortunate children who are blind or deaf and dumb, and to my mind that applies more particularly to a deaf and dumb child. The Bill provides for the compulsory education of these children after they reach the age of seven years, and under the Bill really no hardships are placed upon the parents. If a parent is not in a position to pay for the maintenance of the child, no charge is made, and in no case will the contribution exceed 15s. per week. In Victoria, South Australia, and New Zealand the education of the blind, deaf, and dumb children is made compulsory. As a matter of fact, in New Zealand, they go further than we propose to do in Queensland. The Superintendent of the Blind, Deaf, and Dumb Institution in New Zealand, in his report, states—

“Education is compulsory from seven to twenty-one years, but exemption is granted if in the opinion of the Minister a child's education is sufficiently advanced. The age of twenty-one is fixed to meet those cases frequently occurring where education is not begun until the child has reached the advanced age of fourteen to seventeen or even older.”

The hon. member for Oxley mentioned the circumstances surrounding several blind, deaf, and dumb children, in whom I have also taken an interest. I also obtained information in regard to some of the cases mentioned, but, as the hon. member has already given the particulars, I have no intention of repeating them.

This Bill, to my mind, is a very humane measure, and also a very necessary one. We all realise that there are occasions when the parents of blind, deaf, and dumb children do not attend to their education, and that these children are allowed to grow up without receiving the necessary education. It has struck me that possibly when the Bill becomes law there may be cases where a child is, perhaps, fourteen or fifteen years of age. Under the Bill that child would only receive about twelve months' education. I would like to ask the Minister whether under those circumstances such a child would be entitled to further education after reaching sixteen years of age?

The HOME SECRETARY: Provision will be made to give further education in a case like that.

Mr. CONROY: I am pleased to hear that, because, if the Bill would not allow such a child to receive any further education, I do not think it would be right.

I do not think there is much more that I need mention in connection with the measure beyond saying that I think it is a very good Bill and one which is absolutely necessary. I desire again to compliment the Minister upon introducing it.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I think we all agree that it is the duty of parents of a blind or deaf and dumb child to provide efficient and regular instruction for that child. I find that the matter of accommodation is mentioned in the report of the Superintendent of the Blind, Deaf, and Dumb Institution. I hope the Minister will take into consideration the statement made in the report that the schoolroom needs improvement, and that the lighting in some of the rooms is poor. The new schoolrooms suggested last year would be a valuable asset to the school work. I do not mention that fact with the idea of finding any fault with the Bill. The maximum age to which a blind, deaf, or dumb child will receive education is sixteen years, but I hope there will be other useful instruction given to the children besides an ordinary school education. I think that many of our troubles to-day have been caused by over-education. While we provide that instruction shall be given up to the age of sixteen years, it is necessary for the Government to look beyond that point, and provide these children with some other useful knowledge to help them in the future. I notice that music has been taught in isolated cases, but I am referring to more useful knowledge. At the present time there are something like ninety workers in the Blind, Deaf, and Dumb Institution, who are doing excellent work in the manufacture of baskets, brushes, and millet brooms to the value of many thousands of pounds.

While under the Bill efficient educational instruction will be given, there is a need for something being done in addition to giving educational facilities. I know of a family where there are three or four children affected in this way. It is awful to think that these children have no outlook in life but merely to walk about the house from year end to year end. Something should be done in that regard. It is not proposed under this Bill to give the children free education. It is true that they can get daily instruction by attendance at the institution, but we have only one institution where they can be taught. Why should a child in Brisbane who can attend regularly have an advantage over a child who is living in the Central or Western part of Queensland?

The HOME SECRETARY: Provision is made for their maintenance at the institution, but they do not get it if they live at home and attend the institution daily.

Mr. KERR: I see what the hon. gentleman is aiming at, but I am talking of what the Bill permits. It permits regular attendance free—that is laid down—but there is a maintenance charge of 15s. a week if the child is in the institution.

The HOME SECRETARY: If the parents can afford to pay.

Mr. KERR: Assuming that there are sixty deaf and dumb children in the State who are not receiving education, I think we could well give them free maintenance. It would only amount to a little over £2,000 a year. I do not think they should be at any disadvantage in this respect. We should make

Mr. Kerr.]

no discrimination between country children and city children.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KERR: I am discussing the Bill, which deals with maintenance. We could very well amend some of the clauses of the Bill so that there will be no discrimination, and so that education would be free throughout.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

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

Clauses 1 to 11, both inclusive, agreed to. The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

The third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

BABINDA SUGAR WORKS BILL.

SECOND READING.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): The Babinda sugar mill has had a prosperous time in recent years—so prosperous that the indebtedness to the Treasury has been very considerably reduced, and the time has arrived for transferring the mill to a co-operative company of the

[4 p.m.] farmers who are cane suppliers.

The Sugar Works Act of 1911 provides for the transfer of the mill to the farmers on payment of the capital cost of the mill. At that time it was contemplated that the transfer would take place when the entire capital was paid off.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: In about twenty years.

The TREASURER: In twenty-one years. We anticipate the period which enables the asset to be transferred to the new company, knowing that the Treasury will be amply secured because of the strong financial position established in connection with that mill.

Mr. BRAND: Will the new company consist of farmers?

The TREASURER: I will explain the provisions made to ensure a thoroughly co-operative control. The amount of capital expenditure on the Babinda mill charged to loan account is £405,429, of which there has been repaid to 30th June of this year, £159,571, so that the balance outstanding on 30th June this year was £245,858, and that represents the indebtedness to the Treasury at the period of transfer. It is only natural that the farmers want to control the mill. Occasionally in the administration of these properties the question of policy inaugurated by the Treasury, which is the corporation in possession of the mill, is naturally questioned from time to time by the farmers, who say that the policy is sometimes incorrect, and representations are made to have it changed in this direction or some other direction. They sometimes request a change in the distribution of profit, the creation of reserve funds, the granting of permits or the withholding of permits for the growing of cane, the instalment of plant, etc. While the Government have a very large liability at stake, the corporation must determine the question of policy, at the same time giving reasonable consideration to the views of the

farmers whose interests are involved. These differences are bound to arise. Where a mill such as this is to be ultimately handed over to the farmers, and can be handed over at an earlier time than was originally anticipated, it should be handed over with entire security to the Treasury, and it is good business to hand it over.

The farmers waited on me some time ago and made representations that the mill should be transferred to them. I agreed to do that under certain conditions that were laid down in the memorandum of agreement. One of the conditions was that a poll of the cane-growers should be taken and carried by a substantial majority in favour of taking over the mill. There were 197 persons eligible to vote, and at the poll 164 voted, 146 voting in favour of taking over the mill, and 18 against it. It will be seen that the decision was backed up by a strong majority of the farmers. The agreement which has been entered into with the farmers' representatives provides that there should be a provisional directorate to take charge as from 1st July, 1924, so that the actual management of the mill would not have to wait until the passage of this Bill. They could actually take control from the commencement of this financial year. That directorate was formed, and has been supervising the business since 1st July last. Articles of association are to be prepared, and are to be subject to approval by the Government to see that the conditions stipulated in the memorandum of agreement entered into between the Government and the farmers' representatives are fully carried out. The articles of association provide that not less than three-fourths of the directors are to be cane suppliers.

The articles of association are to provide that no dividends will be paid to shareholders while the company is indebted to the Treasury, and that after the indebtedness is extinguished the dividends are not to exceed 5 per cent. per annum. The principle of one shareholder one vote is to be established. Provision is also to be made for those who acquired cane credits under the 1911 Act. Shares not applied for by those entitled to hold them are to be forwarded and held by the Treasury in trust. All assets are to be transferred to the company on the execution of the transfer. Temporary banking accommodation has also been arranged for the company. The indebtedness to the Treasury is to be paid by annual instalments. The conditions I have read out which form the basis of the agreement between the Treasurer and the farmers are where necessary being embodied in the Bill, and, as far as it is necessary, the conditions are also covered by the articles of association.

Mr. TAYLOR: Have the farmers accepted that agreement?

The TREASURER: Yes; they have accepted that agreement, and it is on that agreement that this Bill was drafted.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: They are in possession now?

The TREASURER: Yes. The salient points of the agreement were embodied in the ballot-paper, and the farmers knew what they were committed to in voting.

As I mentioned, one of the conditions of the agreement was that a provisional board was to be formed and take possession of the mill from 1st July last, and they have been

[*Mr. Kerr.*]

actually supervising the mill and managing its operations since 1st July. They are now considering the articles of association, which will later be approved of by Cabinet.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: What interest are they paying?

The TREASURER: They are continuing to pay the same rate of interest as has been paid on the mill indebtedness in the past. The Bill also provides that the company is to maintain the assets up to their present efficient standard to the satisfaction of the Treasurer. It also provides for access to the works and books by officers of the Treasury. It also provides that all information respecting costs and particulars of manufacture shall be furnished to the Treasurer from time to time as the Treasurer may require. The Treasurer also has power to appoint competent persons to audit the books and accounts of the company. Provision shall be made for depreciation each year as the Auditor-General may prescribe. The purchase money is to be liquidated on 31st December in each year; the amount of the annual redemption has been fixed at £30,286 4s. 6d., and the interest rate at 4 per cent. Those payments will secure the extinction of the indebtedness in a little more than seven years. The business of the mill is in a very flourishing condition. The capital of the company will not be large under this new arrangement. The farmers are quite competent to manage the business themselves. (Hear, hear) There is no doubt about that. They have men very well versed in sugar-mill affairs on the provisional board that has already been appointed. Four experienced men, and a chairman who has a wide commercial experience, comprise the board. I am confident that this will be a safe business investment for the farmers and a thoroughly sound security for the Government. I am delighted myself at the business progress of the mill, and with the fact that the farmers have got on so well in the early life of the mill.

Mr. BRAND: Will the other mills be afforded a similar opportunity of taking over those concerns?

The TREASURER: When they are in the same position as the Babinda sugar-mill they will get the same opportunity and terms. I might mention that the farmers in the South Johnstone area have made a request to the Government indicating quite a different policy of control on their part from what the hon. member has suggested. The farmers supplying the South Johnstone mill have requested the Government to regard the mill as a permanent national institution. That decision may have arisen from the different financial situations in respect to the concern. At any rate, the farmers in the South Johnstone area, after reducing the indebtedness on the mill to the same condition of safety from the Government point of view, will have the same opportunity of taking the mill over if they so desire. Of course, the Tully mill is in a different position.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: It is too early, in any case.

The TREASURER: The Tully mill was established on a different principle. I beg to move—

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

Mr. SWAYNE (Mirani): I am very pleased to see that the farmers in the Babinda area are to acquire this mill. It has always been the policy of the present Opposition that the farmers should own these mills, and this is a step in the right direction. When the Sugar Works Act was originally passed, as the Treasurer pointed out, it contained provisions to this effect; but this Bill rather anticipates the date at which the mill was expected to become the property of the farmers. I notice that the annual payment is something over £30,000. I suppose the farmers know that and consider that it comes within their means. It works out at about 3s. or 4s. a ton on the cane, which does not seem to be exorbitant.

There is one thing I should like to be clear upon, and that is the system of credits mentioned by the Treasurer. A very good provision was embodied in the Act to enable this system of cane credits to come into operation. It means that, if the principle is carried out in its entirety, the largest shareholder will have grown the most cane, and therefore will have done the most to pay off the indebtedness of the mill. The position is that the mill is one-third paid for now, and that payment has been made by these growers. When the company was originally formed shares were to be allotted in proportion to the cane credits.

I notice that the articles of association are being prepared under the approval of the Governor in Council, which means the Government, and I take it the system with regard to the apportionment of the shares will be continued. If those who have done most towards paying off the indebtedness are to have the largest number of shares, it is a very fair system. As has been already pointed out, each shareholder will have only one vote. That has been the case in most of the mills hitherto formed into companies.

I should like to ask the Treasurer whether the mills at Proserpine and North Eton will also be allowed the advantage of this scheme.

The TREASURER: Yes, when they arrive at the same relative position.

Mr. SWAYNE: I think that is satisfactory, and, seeing that the farmers themselves have full knowledge of the provisions of the Bill, it does not become anybody in this House to cavil at it. I am very pleased to see that our principles are being carried out, and I hope that before long all farmers who are at present growing cane will be in a position to avail themselves of similar advantages. Of course, the Tully mill is differently placed, but I hope it will eventually be in a similar position to the Babinda mill.

The TREASURER: No doubt it will when it reaches the same relative position.

Mr. SWAYNE: Of course, when the Sugar Works Act of 1922, under which the Tully River mill was built, came before this House an amendment was moved by this party to secure the embodiment of conditions similar to those contained in the Sugar Works Act of 1911, under which Babinda was built, but we failed. We can only hope that, when the Tully mill arrives at the same relative position as the Babinda mill, the growers there, as well as the growers of other mills, will be allowed to take over the mill under similar terms to these. I hope the Bill will pass its second reading.

Hon. W. H. BARNES (Wynnum): I feel deeply interested in the Bill by reason of

Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

the fact that I had the honour, as the then Treasurer, of introducing the Act that is now being amended. That Act had to do with both the South Johnstone and Babinda mills, and we recognised at that time that we were embodying in that Act principles of true co-operation. In other words, we were making it possible for the cane farmers to have full control of the mills at a later period, and it is very pleasing to realise that the cane farmers in that district are now in a position to take control of the mill. I understand that three-quarters of the members of the board of directors, as provided under the present Act, must be cane farmers.

THE TREASURER: At present the whole of the board must consist of cane farmers, but under this proposal at least three-fourths of the board must be cane farmers.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am very glad to know that the principles laid down in the Act are very largely being followed in this case. I quite recognise that a great deal will depend on the directors. It is no disrespect to any person to say that a man may be a very good cane farmer and yet not be a good business man. I can only sincerely trust that the men who have been appointed by an almost unanimous vote—I understand that only eighteen voted against the proposal—will make a very great success of it. I realise that we have more and more to encourage and assist the men who are developing our State. The Treasurer suggested that the Bill would provide that no dividend shall be payable until the whole of the indebtedness has been paid off. I do not think anyone can take exception to that; but it struck me that once that has become an accomplished fact the price of money ought very largely to dictate what the dividend should be. I can quite conceive that money may become very dear—I hope it will not—and a return of 5 per cent. may not be sufficient. I suggest therefore that the dividend might be left somewhat open so that it may vary according to the value of money. The fact remains that these people have in a very short period paid off £159,571, and I think that is a great achievement. I want again to say that the original Act made it possible for this to be done. I am quite prepared to admit that in framing an Act like that you cannot be sure of the actual time it will take to wipe off the indebtedness because so much depends on the seasons. The original Act anticipated that the deductions made on the cane supplied would be sufficient to pay off the indebtedness in twenty-one years. The cane suppliers are going to accept the responsibility earlier, and I wish them the best of luck in connection with this undertaking, because it is true co-operation. That is good for Queensland, and I feel sure that it will be good for the individual. I wish them every success, and I would like in my public capacity to congratulate them on getting into such a satisfactory financial position.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRUCE (Kennedy): This Bill is one that must give pleasure to every member of the House, as it is an instance of sound co-operation. I congratulate the sugar-growers on the fact that they are taking over the mill. It shows what a magnificent industry the sugar industry is, when under a form of co-operation they will ultimately be enabled to secure the means of manufacturing their crop. The hon. member for

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Wynnum has stated that his party originated the principal Act. I do not deny that, but I certainly say that the Labour Government are to be congratulated on the administration of the Act. This form of co-operation should be an example for other industries to follow. The fact that the sugar-farmers are able to take over the milling in their own interests is one which should give satisfaction to all hon. members of the House. The hon. member for Wynnum also mentioned that, while men may be successful sugar-growers, they may not be capable business men. I say that men who have successfully carried out sugar-growing operations under difficulties caused by drought and financial stringency will undoubtedly be successful business men. I trust that the ordinary business man who runs a business solely for profit will be eliminated as far as possible from the control of these particular mills, and that the mills will be left entirely in the hands of the successful growers, who made it possible by their energy on their sugar farms to bring about this position.

MR. BRAND (Burrum): I do not think there is anything in this Bill which will raise any objection on this side of the House, because it is a policy we have advocated in the past. We desired last year to have something of this nature placed in the Sugar Works Act of 1922, but we were unsuccessful. I would like to congratulate the Treasurer on his conversion, and on the apparent fact that he now believes that the nationalisation of industry is not as good as the control of industry by those engaged in it. (Laughter.) This Bill is one which I have great pleasure in supporting.

I also congratulate the farmers of the Babinda area in being able to get the mill under their own control. Although there has been great success in the administration of the Babinda mill, in other mills in Queensland—the South Johnstone mill, for instance—the administration of the corporation of the Treasurer, particularly last year, has not been so successful. I am hoping the time will come when the South Johnstone people will get into the same position as the Babinda suppliers, and will be able to take over their mill as those at Babinda are doing. There are also other mills in Queensland which are being administered by the Corporation of the Treasurer. I am pleased to learn from the Treasurer that, when those mills get into the same relative position that Babinda is in to-day, he will give them the concession which he is giving under this Bill to the farmers in the Babinda area. I wish to congratulate the farmers of that area on having succeeded in their desires.

The matter of the 5 per cent. dividend was raised by the hon. member for Wynnum, and he asked the Treasurer to leave it an open question. I do not think it matters a great deal. I think the cane farmers in co-operative mills throughout Queensland have no desire to pay a dividend, but if they wish to pay any profits to the cane suppliers, they should be able to do so. I hope the Treasurer will attend to the matter.

THE TREASURER: That was one of the matters included in the ballot-paper.

MR. BRAND: I am pleased to hear that. In connection with the Isis Central Mill Company, which is forming a co-operative company for the purchase of the Doolbi area, there is no intention of paying dividends. As a matter of fact, the suppliers in the

old central mill area who have large holdings in the mills have readily foregone any dividends on their shares, and are quite agreeable that the profits should be paid exclusively to the suppliers of cane. I have again to congratulate the Treasurer on his conversion, and I hope that he will continue to carry out the policy of this side of the House.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I want to say a few words on this Bill. I regret that the articles of association of the company or association which is to take over the mill do not appear in the Bill. I am not worrying about the 5 per cent. dividend which has been mentioned by other hon. members. All the shareholders are cane suppliers to the mill, and it is only a question of making interim payments to the suppliers and then afterwards all profits will go to them also. But I am rather anxious, and I would like to see the articles of association to make sure that the only persons who will be affected are those who are going to pay for the mill. It is rather indefinite in the measure at present. There is nothing in the Bill to show the conditions on which they are taking it over, and I think that should appear in the articles of association.

In view of the balance-sheets which we have from time to time showing the position of the other central sugar mills, the farmers in the Babinda area must have done very well to enable them to take over this mill in such a short space of time. I should like to take this opportunity of complimenting the hon. member for Kennedy on his conversion to the Country party's platform. (Laughter.) It must show the farmers that hon. members on the other side are gradually getting tired of their policy of nationalisation and are coming to understand that the Government are not able to run a business in the same successful way as the farmers under co-operation.

The TREASURER: The Government anticipated the Country party. It is on the Labour platform, and the Country party stole it. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: The Labour party have had nationalisation in their policy for years and they altered it a little while ago to socialisation, but we have been for co-operation all the time. I hope that the hon. member for Kennedy will be followed later by other hon. members.

Mr. BRUCE: You want us in your party?

Mr. MOORE: I am not worrying whether they come into our party or not, because I am perfectly certain that we shall soon be in a position to say whether they shall come in or not.

Mr. BRUCE: Vain hope!

Mr. MOORE: I can see that, when the farmers get a taste of the policy of the Country party, they will have nothing else. Some of them have evidently been keen on nationalisation, and now they are coming round to a sense of the decided advantages to be gained by co-operation. I think that the hon. member has only adopted our policy through force of circumstances. He finds that people up in his district are getting away from the policy of the Government, and so he comes down here and talks co-operation and pretends that they have been in favour of it all the time. I am pleased, because I am inclined to think that people up North are beginning to learn that nationalisation

is a failure. We shall be able to encourage them still more in their belief in co-operation, and that is why I say we are not worried about the future.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I have not very much to say. I want to point out that the Government have done more for the sugar industry than they would have done for any other industry in the [4.30 p.m.] State. All the money required for the Babinda mill was advanced by the Government out of loan funds, but, had the same proposition been put to the Government with respect to any other industry, the money would not have been advanced.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Don't be so hard on the hon. member for Wynnum. He was Treasurer at the time.

Mr. DEACON: If we were to approach the Government to-day with the proposition that they should erect flour-mills capable of treating all the wheat produced in Queensland, they would not fall in with the idea.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

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

COMMONWEALTH AND STATE INCOME TAXES AGREEMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): This Bill does not require a very full explanation. Hon. members are fully aware of the agreement that was entered into, and I think they know the full text of the agreement. It was entered into on 31st October last, and came into effect on 1st December last. The main features of the agreement are that the State department will collect taxes for the Commonwealth within the State of Queensland, the State Commissioner being appointed Deputy Federal Commissioner. The necessary Commonwealth officers were made State officers, and merged into a combined staff. The interests and accrued and accruing rights of those officers were preserved in the agreement, the Commonwealth Government having paid compensation, bonuses, or retiring allowances with respect to the staff that was not taken over. If the agreement is terminated, the Commonwealth are to take back the transferred officers; and, if any retrenchment be necessary as a result of the Commonwealth modifying taxation, the retrenchment will be made solely from amongst the Commonwealth officers. That is provided in the agreement.

Mr. TAYLOR: That refers to the staff?

The TREASURER: Yes. The Commonwealth are reducing their area of taxation from time to time, as they should do, as finances improve.

Mr. MOORE: And as their good administration becomes effective?

The TREASURER: No. The hon. gentleman knows that it does not require any keen administration to keep the Commonwealth revenue going by the present Customs impost. The Customs revenue last year yielded £34,000,000.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Is that why the hon. gentleman is going to Federal politics?

Hon. E. G. Theodore.

The TREASURER: No. The hon. member apparently is assured that I am going to Federal politics. (Laughter.) I agree with him to this extent, that whoever is in Federal politics during the years immediately succeeding will be in a sphere where finances are less troublesome than they are here. (Laughter.)

Hon. W. H. BARNES: And where supporters are also less troublesome. (Laughter.)

The TREASURER: That is not the result of any inherent virtue in Federal administration or inherent weakness in State administration. (Opposition laughter.) It is the result of a fairly evenly-balanced financial position as provided under the Australian constitution, and the depredations of Federal Treasurers in the past.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Finance is not the test of the Federal Government, but it is of the State Government.

The TREASURER: Finance is a test of ability—and to some extent successful finance is a virtue—but finance is not the only test. Hon. members want to understand that attributes of one kind and another, especially in politicians, are to be tested not by one element but by a combination of elements. Fortunately, wherever these tests have been applied to the present Administration in Queensland they have always yielded good results. (Opposition dissent.)

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: They have not yielded good results to the taxpayer.

The TREASURER: The hon. member for Oxley made a rather insidious suggestion about a possible change. I want to say that in regard to political ambitions and political careers the hon. member seems to be particularly happy. (Laughter.)

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I wanted to give you a safe retreat.

The TREASURER: I am afraid the hon. member will have very little to do with it. However, I must get away from this mundane business. Any difference arising between the Commonwealth and the States in the administration of the agreement of the Taxation Department will be referred to the Treasurers of the Commonwealth and the State. In the event of their not being able to determine the matter, it will then be referred to arbitration. There has been no conflict between the State and Federal Treasurers with regard to the apportionment of the cost of collection. The cost of the collection of the taxes is borne on the basis of the actual cost, and the determination itself will be settled as between the Commissioners of Taxation for the Commonwealth and State. There will be no difficulty in arriving at an apportionment of the amount. Last year the apportionment was fixed on the basis of 60 per cent. and 40 per cent., the Commonwealth paying the larger amount. The Commonwealth proportion of costs diminishes as the number of officers engaged on purely Commonwealth work decreases. It has also been agreed that, in order to facilitate the work, both the Commonwealth and State Governments should submit to their respective Parliaments any alteration in the rate of taxation before 30th September in each year. It has been agreed that, as far as practicable, the law in regard to income tax shall be uniform, and provision is made for a consolidation of the State income tax law to conform with the Commonwealth practice.

[Hon. E. G. Theodore.

There will be a joint income tax return distributed under the agreement, and that is in operation for the first time this year. One return only is required from the taxpayers. The agreement is for five years, and thereafter six months' notice is required before it can be determined. The agreement was in force for seven months last year, and substantial economies were effected in the administration of the Income Tax Department. It proved of considerable convenience to the taxpayers, and many have expressed their satisfaction to the Commissioner of Taxes. The Commissioner was able to congratulate himself last year that he was able to gather in the amount of the Commonwealth income tax fully up to the expectations of the Federal Treasurer. All the States were not able to do so. The joint return is a considerable aid to the taxpayer. Heretofore the returns, although based on the same requirements, were not made out at the one time. The return is now made for Commonwealth and State purposes on the one date. That must save the taxpayer a considerable amount of trouble.

I have here a resume of the income tax agreement, with a number of comments, but I feel sure hon. members do not desire to be wearied with the full text. If any further information is desired I shall be prepared to answer any question. I beg to move—

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

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): 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 4.40 p.m.