

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 1931

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TUESDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER, 1931.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. C. Taylor, *Windsor*) took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

REGULATION OF SUGAR CANE PRICES
ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

ASSENT.

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor, conveying His Excellency's assent to this Bill.

QUESTIONS.

COST OF RUNNING PUMPING STATION AT
NORTH BUNDABERG.

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. What are the comparative costs of running the pumping station at North Bundaberg since the installation of electrical power, as compared with the costs of previous steam plant?”

“2. Is it true that the private electric light company is making a handsome profit from the revenue received for power supplied, while the employee in charge of the plant is being rationed in his working hours?”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*) replied—

“1. and 2. The cost is practically the same in each case, viz., 8d. per 1,000 gallons, provided no overtime is incurred in operating the steam pump. The electric pump is being used to supply the whole of the requirements for North Bundaberg depot at present. The services of the pumper, therefore, are not required, and he is employed as a labourer, pooling work with others. It would involve payment of overtime to obtain the whole of the water supply by steam pump. I have no knowledge of the electric light company's profit and loss account.”

SALARIES PAID TO OFFICIALS, MARYBOROUGH LOCOMOTIVE DEPARTMENT, 1924-25 AND 1930-31.

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What was the amount paid to the following officials of the Maryborough Locomotive Department—viz., locomotive foreman, assistant locomotive foreman, and locomotive inspector, for the financial year 1924-25:—(a) Salaries of each officer, respectively; (b) regulation allowances, and other incidental expenses to each officer, respectively?"

"2. What was the amount paid to the locomotive foreman, assistant locomotive foreman, and locomotive inspector for the financial year 1930-31:—(a) Salaries of each officer, respectively; (b) regulation allowances, and other incidental expenses to each officer, respectively?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*) replied—

"1 and 2—

Position.	Salary.	Allowances and Expenses.	Total.
	£	£	£
1924-1925.			
Locomotive Foreman	402	59	461
Assistant Locomotive Foreman	374	Nil	374
Locomotive Inspector	365	59	424
1930-1931.			
Locomotive Foreman	421	Nil	421
Assistant Locomotive Foreman	413	Nil	413
Locomotive Inspector	358	62	420

During the year 1930-31 the position of locomotive foreman was held, at different times, by two officers and a relieving officer, whilst that of locomotive inspector was held, at different times, by two officers. There was, however, no officer occupying the position of locomotive inspector for one month during 1930-31.

MAREEBA TOBACCO-GROWERS.

Mr. O'KEEFE (*Cairns*) asked the Premier—

"1. Will he kindly inform me if the tobacco-growers of Mareeba have yet received payment for the crop manufactured last month?"

"2. What is the name of the tobacco company who are handling the crop for Mareeba growers?"

"3. The name of the bankers of the said company?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*), for the PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*), replied—

"1 to 3. The Government has no official information on this matter, but the company concerned has courteously supplied the following answers to the honourable member's questions:—

(1) Yes.

(2) The National Tobacco Company, Limited.

(3) The National Bank of Australasia, Limited."

PAYMENTS TO WHITE AND HANCOCK FOR ASSISTANCE TO MUNGANA COMMISSION.

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*) asked the Premier—

"1. What was (a) the amount of fees, (b) travelling and other expenses, paid by the Government, either to the firm of White and Hancock, public accountants, or to Mr. R. C. Hancock, accountant, who was engaged by the Government to assist in the Mungana Royal Commission?"

"2. Is it not a fact that the said Mr. R. C. Hancock occupies the position of treasurer on the executive of the Country and Progressive National Party?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*), for the PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*), replied—

"1. (a) Messrs. White and Hancock were paid the following amounts for professional services:—

Principal, first-class clerk, and other clerks	538	3	0
(b) Travelling expenses	8	0	0
	£ 596 3 0		

"2. The honourable member should inquire from the association concerned."

POTATOES CONDEMNED AT ROMA STREET MARKETS.

Mr. MAHER (*Rosewood*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"1. What quantity of potatoes were condemned by the Government inspector at the Roma street markets for the twelve months ended 30th June, 1931?"

"2. What becomes of condemned potatoes?"

"3. Will he agree to return condemned potatoes to growers who are prepared to pay the return freight?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. H. F. Walker, *Cooroora*) replied—

"1. 4,816 bags.

"2. If the infestation is not excessive they are picked over, the sound tubers being rebagged and returned to the agents. During the year 1930-1931, 3,145 bags of sound tubers were returned to the agents; 266 bags of slightly blemished potatoes were allowed to be sold for immediate consumption, and 1,404 bags were supplied to approved piggeries to be boiled and fed to pigs.

"3. It is not considered advisable that condemned lines be returned to the senders; previous action in this direction was found to be most unsatisfactory. One of the principal objects of the Diseases in Plants Acts is to prevent the dissemination of pests and diseases, and to allow the return of diseased potatoes would have the opposite effect."

ELECTORATE MAJORITIES FOR RETENTION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Mr. MAHER (*Rosewood*) asked the Premier—

"Out of seventy-two electorates in the State, how many gave a majority in favour of the retention of the Upper House when the referendum was taken?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*), for the PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*), replied—

					“ Total.
Against	60	...	179,105
For	12	...	116,196

Majority against 62,909”

MUNGANA MINING LEASES.

Mr. A. J. JONES (*Paddington*) asked the Secretary for Mines—

“1. What is the date on which the Mungana leases, including the Girofla and Lady Jane mines, became automatically forfeited under ‘The Mareeba to Chillagoe Railway Act of 1897’?”

“2. What is the date on which application was made for a lease of the area embracing the Girofla and Lady Jane mines after they were forfeited under ‘The Mareeba to Chillagoe Railway Act of 1897’?”

“3. Is it not a fact that these mines were held under claim tenure between the date of forfeiture and the date of lease application?”

“4. By whom were they held?”

“5. Was there not legislative restriction under the Chillagoe Act which precluded at the time of the forfeiture of the leases the Government working metaliferous mines in the Chillagoe district other than the Einaslough mine?”

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*), for the SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. E. A. Atherton, *Chillagoe*), replied—

“1 to 5. The information is being obtained.”

DIVIDENDS AND ROYALTIES PAID BY MOUNT MORGAN COMPANY.

Mr. A. J. JONES (*Paddington*) asked the Secretary for Mines—

“1. Under which Act was the famous Mount Morgan mine converted from freehold to leasehold tenure?”

“2. What Administration was in power?”

“3. What is the total amount paid in dividends by the Mount Morgan Company and the annual dividend paid from the inception of the mine to the year 1909?”

“4. What is the amount of royalty on gold won paid to the Mines Department by the Mount Morgan Company from its inception to the date of conversion from freehold to leasehold tenure?”

“5. What is the amount of royalty paid in the year prior to the date of conversion from freehold to leasehold tenure?”

“6. Is it not a fact that 1 per cent. royalty was paid on all gold won prior to the date of conversion under an Act of Parliament, and that the said conversion from freehold to leasehold tenure relieved the company from payment to the Crown of a large sum of money by way of royalty at a time when the mine was dividend-paying?”

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*), for the SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. E. A. Atherton, *Chillagoe*), replied—

“1 to 6. The information is being obtained.”

SUPERANNUATED CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES IN CLERICAL DIVISION, RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

Mr. HANLON (*Ithaca*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. What is the number of classified employees in the clerical division retired under superannuation?”

“2. How many of the vacated classified positions were abolished?”

“3. How many of the vacated classified positions were reduced in classification?”

“4. How many other classified positions were abolished in consequence of promotion of employees to classified positions rendered vacant under superannuation?”

“5. Does he consider he is carrying out the spirit of his circular to employees when he put the superannuation scheme to them?”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*) replied—

“1. Twelve classified clerical employees.

“2. Three.

“3. Two.

“4. Eleven.

“5. Yes.”

FEES PAID TO CROWN COUNSEL IN MUNGANA TRIAL.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*) asked the Attorney-General—

“1. What was the fee agreed on brief between the solicitors acting for the Crown and the Attorney-General in the case *re* the Crown *v.* Reid, Goddard, and others?”

“2. What was the fee agreed on per day in respect to the Attorney-General in the case referred to in (1)?”

“3. What was the fee agreed on brief between the solicitors acting for the Crown and Mr. A. D. McGill in the same case as referred to in (1)?”

“4. What was the fee agreed on brief per day in respect to Mr. McGill in the case referred to in (1)?”

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*) replied—

“1. to 4. The fees have not been agreed on as yet.”

STOCKS ON HAND OF RAILS AND SLEEPERS, RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. What surplus mileage length of new rails has the Commissioner in the Southern Railway District on hand at the present time?”

“2. What number of sleepers have the department on hand in Southern Queensland, and what length of line would same construct?”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*) replied—

"1. Nil. Stocks on hand are required for financial year 1931-1932, for maintenance and regrading purposes.

"2. Only sufficient sleepers are being cut to meet maintenance requirements and miscellaneous works for the year 1931-1932."

SUGGESTED GRANT TO MONO TROPICAL FRUIT COMPANY, TOWNSVILLE.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*) asked the Premier—

"In view of the policy expressed by him during the election campaign at Townsville of assisting industry, will he give favourable consideration to the granting of assistance to the Mono Tropical Fruit Company, to the extent of £5,000, which will be adequate, to enable them to fulfil the orders they have in hand, and thus considerably and immediately add greatly to employment in the North of Queensland."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*), for the PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*), replied—

"Last year this company applied for assistance under "The Industries Assistance Act of 1929," but the board for various reasons could not recommend the Government to make the desired advance. In June last I was given to understand that further representations would be made, but so far I have not been approached. Any application the company may make will receive careful consideration."

COST TO GOVERNMENT OF BANKRUPTCY EXAMINATION OF FREDERICK REID.

Mr. O'KEEFE (*Cairns*) asked the Premier—

"1. What was the total cost incurred by the Government in connection with the public examination held in October, 1929, of Frederick Reid, insolvent estate?"

"2. (a) To whom were fees, expenses, etc., paid, and what were the respective amounts of same; (b) what are the full details of the total costs incurred by the Government in this case; and (c) what department or departments defrayed the same?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*), for the PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*), replied—

"1. £358 19s. 1d.

"2. (a) and (b)—	£ s. d.
State Reporting Bureau ...	7 4 0
Mr. A. D. McGill ...	57 15 0
Taxing Officer, Bankruptcy Court ...	3 19 0
Messrs. Fitzgerald and Walsh, including witnesses' and other expenses, and incidental costs ...	237 6 1
Public Curator ...	2 15 0
	<hr/>
	£358 19 1

(c) Costs were allocated pro rata in proportion to the respective claims of the departments concerned."

PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Proclamation dated 21st August, 1931, under "The Abattoirs Agreement Ratification and Meat Industry Act of 1930."

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Roberts, East Toowoomba, in the chair.*)

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*) [2.45]: I beg to move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to provide for the reduction of the number of members of the Legislative Assembly, and of the number of electoral districts to sixty-two; for the distribution of electoral districts, and to make provision for the better representation of the people of Queensland in Parliament."

The Bill is introduced to bring about an equitable redistribution of electorates and cause a saving by reducing the number of electoral districts from seventy-two to sixty-two. The present Acts of 1910 and 1922 will be repealed except for the purpose of filling any vacancy that may occur in the present Parliament before it is dissolved.

The Bill will declare that the number of members in the Legislative Assembly will be sixty-two and the number of electoral districts will be sixty-two. Three commissioners will be appointed, one to be the chairman, and it will be their duty to divide the State into sixty-two electoral districts. The quota will be ascertained by dividing the net enrolment as at 30th June, 1931, by sixty-two, and that quotient shall be the quota. That number will be ascertained in accordance with the figures supplied by the principal electoral officer; and, when published in the "Gazette," it will be conclusive evidence as to the number of electors on the roll. I understand the answer given to a question the other day is a correct record of the number of electors on the roll as at 30th June, 1931. The commissioners, in making their redistribution, will have regard to the community or diversity of interests, means of communication, physical features, and the area of a proposed district not comprising any part of a city or town. The commissioners, as under the old Act, will be empowered to fix the number of electors at one-fifth more or one-fifth less than the quota in any given electorate.

There is a new feature about this Bill, and that is in regard to a proposed district wholly comprised of a city or wholly comprised of part of a city. In that case the number of electors shall not be less than the quota. Also, where within the boundaries of a district there is included a city or part of a city, the number shall not be less than 7,000. The total number of electors on the roll at 30th June, 1931, was 497,506. The quota will be 8,029. The maximum—one-fifth above that—will be 9,634, and the minimum—one-fifth below the quota—will be 6,424. In addition to that, under the Local Authorities Act, outside Brisbane there are ten cities—namely, Toowoomba, Townsville, Charters Towers, Gympie, Maryborough,

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Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Ipswich, Mackay, and Cairns.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: What will their quota be?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is not exactly known what their quota will be, but it is likely to be a minimum of 7,000. I am not speaking authoritatively—that is entirely a matter for the commission—but, as far as I can make out, the seats I have just named—I am only assuming, as I do not know what the commission will do—may be comprised of the cities and districts outside them.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Who are to be the commission?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We have not appointed the commissioners; that will be done in due course. It is likely that, on account of these cities I have mentioned comprising areas outside the city boundaries, their minimum enrolment will possibly be 7,000.

I would like to mention that the whole of the Brisbane electorates will have a minimum of the quota under this Bill, viz., 8,029. On the present-day figures there are eight Brisbane seats under the new quota. Those seats are Brisbane, Buranda, Fortitude Valley, Kurilpa, Maroo, Merthyr, Paddington, and South Brisbane. The other twelve seats in the metropolitan area are above the quota. I have roughly calculated these figures myself and cannot vouch for their accuracy, although I think they are fairly accurate. In the country there are twenty seats below the minimum, leaving out of consideration the ten city seats that I have mentioned.

On or before 1st December, or at such other date as may be prescribed, in case they are not quite ready at that period—although we hope they will be—the commissioners shall cause to be exposed in the court houses and principal police stations throughout the State a map delineating the boundaries of the proposed districts and contiguous districts and the approximate number of electors. Objections may be lodged within a month from such exposition; and the objections shall be considered by the commission before making a final decision. On or before 1st February, 1932, or at any other prescribed date that may be necessary, the commission shall make a report setting forth the quota of electors, the names of each electoral district, the boundaries of each electoral district, the approximate number of electors therein, and shall also furnish signed maps showing the names and boundaries of the electorates. The Governor in Council shall thereupon proclaim the names and the boundaries in the "Government Gazette." After the Commissioners bring in their reports due provision will be made for the compilation of the rolls, in compliance with the Elections Act. If by any chance a by-election should occur before the end of the present Parliament, it will be held on the old boundaries, no matter in what district it may occur.

Then there is a final provision giving the Governor in Council power to make any readjustment.

Mr. BEDFORD: You had better not let too many over there die before this comes in, because there will be a new House.

[Hon. N. F. Macgoarty.]

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The remark of the hon. member for Warrego compels me to state that his is one of the unfortunate seats in which the enrolment is below the minimum. It is also provided that the Governor in Council may at any time readjust the boundaries or have a complete redistribution when such is required.

I think that the information I have given is all that is required at this stage.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [2.55]: This Bill is one of considerable importance. It deals with the number of members to be elected to this Parliament, and sets out the terms and conditions under which their election shall be made. It purports to reduce the number of members of Parliament by ten for the purpose of effecting some form of economy. These are days of economy, and where economy can be effected then it is worth while taking the opportunity; but I submit that it is not a desire for effecting economy that has induced the Government to introduce this Bill. The real facts are known—that the Government, having made preliminary surveys of all the electoral districts of the State, have discovered that by no other means that they can devise can they so adjust those electorates as to secure the return to this House of a majority to support them. Therefore, they have devised this method, under which, by reducing the number of members by ten, they can so manipulate the boundaries of electorates as to keep themselves in power; so that the Bill could be aptly described as a "Government Electoral Insurance Bill," because, so far as legislation can contrive it, the dice are to be loaded in their favour. That is the main and undoubted object that the Government have in mind. I repeat, they have had a complete survey of all the electoral districts in the State.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is not true.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: They have discovered that no other means of manipulation they can think of will enable them so to reconstruct the electoral boundaries as to be in their favour; and, as a consequence, they propose to reduce the number of members of this House by ten and fix city quotas in such a way as to further their object in the direction I have indicated.

One must view this question from the point of view of its general effect on the people of Queensland. I think it was in 1896 that the number of members of this House was fixed at seventy-two. It was pointed out then in justification of the Bill which increased the number of members of the Legislative Assembly that, with the growth of population, and having regard to the variety of natural resources of this State, an increase of the number of members of this Assembly was necessary in order to give adequate representation to industries and to all sections of the community. It was felt that, where population was congregated in the capital city, for example, the people had quick and easy access to the Government of the day, but that people in the remote portions of the State, who were pioneering and developing its resources, had not the same opportunity. The number of members was accordingly increased with a view to giving adequate representation to all portions of the State, so that their claims might be brought before the Government and Parliament, and their interests properly safeguarded.

The number of seats was fixed at seventy-two when the population was less than one-half what it is to-day; so that my contention that the Bill is devised to load the dice in the interests of the Government and not in the interests of the country is true.

A further important point must be mentioned. During the past twenty years the responsibility of Parliament has increased enormously and the ramifications of government have extended in every direction. As a consequence, the problems to be dealt with by Parliament are now greater, more complex, and of more importance to the people generally. At one time, if the Government introduced an amendment of the land laws, the Budget, and passed the Estimates, that could be regarded as the work of the session. At that time the people did not regard some of the things now dealt with legislatively as being within the sphere of legislation. Even the hurried survey such as I am making now demonstrates beyond a shadow of a doubt that the activities of a Parliament have increased, and its responsibilities have become greater, as has the number of subjects to be dealt with by that tribunal. That is one of the reasons why a reduction in the number of the members of Parliament should not be made.

We must also realise that the whole principle of representative government is involved in a Bill of this nature. People who do not look beneath the surface of things—and included among them are many leader writers on Tory newspapers—argue that a Parliament fewer in number can adequately do the work that is now being done. From a superficial point of view it might be argued that a Parliament composed of twelve men could legislate and do all that was necessary in the interests of the government of a country. Perhaps the Treasurer subscribes to that view. Particularly does he think that when he is baited in his party meetings by some of his recalcitrant subordinates. The principle of Parliament is based on the fact that all men have equal rights; that all law should be based on the consent of those subject to the law; and, inasmuch as no man can be a law unto himself, the principle of representative government has been evolved throughout the ages. Therefore, we have arrived at a parliamentary system whereby the individual delegates to his representative that authority which, in the last analysis, belongs to the individual; and we have an electoral system whereby a given quota of men delegate their own basic authority to that man in a representative capacity for a period of three years, and no longer.

The reason for that is to preserve liberty, and to preserve the rights of the individual generally; in a degree justice is to be meted out by Parliament. The reason why the people have always overcome dictatorships and unrepresentative forms of government is that tyranny is begotten as a result of power being vested in the hands of a few people; and the wider the form of representation the greater the bounds of freedom. The narrower the basis of representation the greater the capacity there is for tyranny, and the undesirable evils frequently associated with power and sometimes with government; therefore, the desire to reduce the number of members of this Parliament is basically the desire to limit the representative system. What particular

value is there about the figure sixty-two? If sixty-two, why not fifty; and, if fifty, why not twenty? Then you get to the basis of fascism, whereby the representative system of democracy in government is abolished entirely, and a dictatorship established in Parliament. All those things are involved in a proposal of this kind.

Mr. GEMSTONE interjected.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. member for Gympie may interject as he likes; we know that he is not a democrat, and that he does not give allegiance to any of those principles of freedom which I have enunciated.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. member for Gympie did not interject.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I beg the hon. member's pardon. The interjection is all the more unpardonable coming as it did from the hon. member for Stanley. When the hon. member for Stanley came into this House, he at least had a minimum of intelligence. He at least had some training in democratic principles, and those ideas of freedom and liberty which I have enunciated; but since then, probably because evil associations corrupt good manners, he has deteriorated to a very large extent.

This is the beginning of the gradual whittling down of the principle of representative government. The present Government have tried a number of things. They tried to get away with the idea of extending the life of Parliament without the authority of the people. Certain members of the party opposed that idea; and the party realised very quickly that the public would be so outraged by such a line of activity that it would be dangerous to pursue it. Now they have devised another method for reducing the number of members in the Assembly, limiting the number of electorates with a view, first of all, to saving their own political hides, and, secondly, with a view to paving the way for creating another House of Parliament, thirty members in number, which will be given power and authority to thwart legislation passed by the elected Assembly. It is all part of a general plot conceived by people, who realise that they have repudiated their obligations to the people, and who realise the wrath of the people who have been betrayed. They are shrinking with terror at the idea of meeting the people who voted for them at the last election—those people who believed that their pledges were their bond; and, in consequence, they desire so to manipulate their electorates and the method of election that many people will not have the opportunity of casting their votes, while the areas in which those votes will be cast will be different. The jury to whom they will appeal will not be the people most affected.

Another reason why I am against this Bill is that it is a form of interference with the legislative machine that cannot possibly be of any advantage to the people of Queensland or of the Commonwealth. I favour an amendment of the Constitution of Australia generally, and, included in that, is an amendment of the Constitution of Queensland. It is ridiculous that there should not be a central authority having complete power within the Commonwealth, and I believe that the Commonwealth Parliament should be vested with supreme power. That would

Mr. Smith.]

mean a recasting of the States, and a restatement of the powers and authority of the States. There should be centralised authority in the Commonwealth, with delegated powers to State Parliaments, much after the fashion of the Canadian Constitution. Matters of domestic concern within a State should be dealt with by that limited State Parliament; but national questions, affecting the interests of the whole of the people of Australia, should be in the final control of a Commonwealth Parliament. No matter what may be said against such a proposition, the undoubted trend of events is in that direction. At the present time numerous conferences are taking place between men who have come from every State in the Commonwealth to confer on matters affecting the whole of the Commonwealth. That means delay—inevitable delay; it means division of opinion; and it means that, in the absence of a central authority, no definite coherent policy can be applied and insisted upon for the period necessarily required to give effect to it. It is absurd that there should be a federation unable to give expression effectively to its desires and needs. The amendment of the Constitution should be in the direction of conferring greater powers upon the Commonwealth, and to that extent delimiting the powers of a State and giving it control only over domestic matters which come within its purview. That is the proper method of dealing with the Constitution, and when that is done it will be time enough to deal with the whole question of the number of members and the conditions under which they should be elected. This Assembly could be completely recast on the basis of the changed powers and conditions which would then result.

The fact is that at the present time Queensland is a sovereign State, having complete power in all matters with the exception of those delegated to the Commonwealth. While that position exists no Government and no member of Parliament should allow any vestige of that authority to be removed or any of its powers reduced. When it is done for the purpose of saving the hides of the Government in power, and done particularly with a view to paving the way for the establishment of another form of Parliament devised deliberately for the purpose of thwarting the public will, I contend that a measure to reduce the number of members of Parliament is one that should be opposed because it is contrary to the public interests. I shall oppose the measure at all its stages.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*) [3.14]: I am a strong believer in reducing the number of members of this Parliament, and at the outset I beg to move the following amendment:—

“Omit the words—

‘sixty-two,’

and insert in lieu thereof the word—

‘fifty.’”

I shall now proceed to set forth my reasons for the amendment.

I have never in all my life heard such an exposition as that given by the Attorney-General, whose poor introduction of this measure gives the State of Queensland absolutely no reason why a reduction of only ten members should be made. However, let me get my powder and shot in first; I shall criti-

[*Mr. Smith.*

cise later. On 22nd July last I asked the Premier—

‘1. Seeing that Mr. T. R. Roberts, member for East Toowoomba, in 1920 moved the following motion re the reduction of members of Parliament, viz.:—“The motion be discharged from the business paper with a direction to the Government that this House is prepared to consider an amendment of the Constitution providing for a reduction of the number of representatives to fifty,” and that the following members of his Government supported such resolution when the House divided on the question, viz., Messrs. W. H. Barnes, G. P. Barnes, W. A. Brand, E. H. C. Clayton, E. Costello, W. A. Deacon, J. B. Edwards, J. P. Fry, J. S. Kerr, R. M. King, J. F. Maxwell, A. E. Moore, Godfrey Morgan, T. R. Roberts, H. E. Sizer, E. B. Swayne, Charles Taylor, H. F. Walker, and R. J. Warren, why is it now suggested by him and his Cabinet Ministers that if a reduction does take place that the number be sixty-two?’

‘2. Does he not think that not only this State but every other State is over-governed, and that it would be in the interests of the country to reduce this Parliament to thirty-six representatives?’

“The PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Moore, *Aubigny*) replied—

‘1 and 2. Hon. members will have the opportunity of a full discussion on this matter when the Bill is presented to Parliament.’”

I divided the House last year on the question of the reduction of members of this Assembly, and there were only three members who voted in favour of it. These members were myself, the hon. member for Fassifern, Mr. Wienholt, and the hon. member for Lockyer, Mr. Jamieson. Now, that it is a Government measure, I want those nineteen members of the Government Party who voted against the reduction to explain their position. Speaking to the amendment, you, Mr. Roberts, said—

“The majority of members on this side of the House advocated such a proposal during the general election, and I do not think it necessary to advance any further argument in favour of the amendment.”

When the question of a reduction of members of the Legislative Assembly was under discussion in 1920, the present Secretary for Railways, Mr. Morgan, as reported on page 83 of “*Hanard*” for that year, said—

“Personally, if I had a vote upon the matter I would be in favour of amending the Act in such a way as to reduce the number of Ministers. We recently went to the country on a policy of economy, and, at any rate, the Country Party preached to the country the necessity of cleaning up our own House first. We are in favour of reducing the number of members of Parliament to fifty or fifty-two, and if the Minister introduced a measure to-morrow bringing about a reduction of members he would find, at any rate, as far as the Country Party is concerned, a unanimous vote

in favour of it. Let us first of all economise in respect to ourselves before we introduce retrenchment or economy in other directions."

Further on he said—

"Parliament is costing thousands and thousands of pounds more than it should, and the people are calling out all over the country for a reduction. I hope that a vote will be taken, and that every man on this side will record his vote against this attempt to place further expenditure on a country that is over-taxed and cannot go on bearing the burdens it is carrying."

Then, on page 91, he is reported as having said—

"Right throughout my electorate and in other parts of the State where I addressed meetings, one of the main points in my speeches was that our party were in favour of reducing the number of Parliamentarians to fifty or fifty-two, and, so far as I was concerned myself, I said that I was in favour of restricting the number of sitting days to sixty, if possible—that that should be the greatest number of days we could sit on any one year, and that members should be paid £3 a day or £180 a year. (Hear, hear!)"

Further on he said—

"When federation was consummated, we were told—and it was said right throughout Australia—that there would be a reduction of members of Parliament. In Queensland that promise has not been kept, but in the little State of Victoria it has been kept. There is no State in Australia where the cost of government per head of the population is so great as it is in Queensland. In fact, I am doubtful whether there is any place in the world where the cost of government is greater per head than in Queensland. (Government dissent.) I ask hon. members who interject to look up the statistics; I went into them myself and I have not been able to find one country where the cost per head is larger. The time has come when the people are crying out for reform in this direction, and if the matter were submitted to the people by referendum there would be an almost unanimous vote in favour of reduction of members."

The Secretary for Labour and Industry, then speaking as the hon. member for Nundah, said—

"I propose at a later stage, if I am able to do so, to move the deletion of 'seventy-two' with a view of substituting 'fifty.' I believe that fifty members of Parliament could carry on the business of Queensland equally as well as it is being carried out to-day, and, if the majority of those fifty members happen to be on this side, it would be far better than if there were 100 members on the other side. There is an opportunity now for every member on the Government side to follow their leader in his announcement yesterday that he sought the co-operation of this side of the House in measures for the benefit of Queensland. A reduction of members will be for the benefit of Queensland, and the Government will be

hypocritical if they do not accept this amendment.

* * * * *

"So far as we are concerned, we have no intention or no desire to dominate over the country in any way. (Hear, hear!) The country members and the Northern members can take that as definite—that we have no desire in any way to deprive them of any representation in the House. We want to bring about a reduction of members, because the cost of Government at the present time is too great. We need economy, and we ask the Government to be serious in practising economy at the present time. We should let the public servants know that when their claims for increases were opposed in the Arbitration Court on the score of economy, the Government also recognised that it is necessary to practise economy, and they can prove that by agreeing to a reduction in the number of members of Parliament. They will show their sincerity and inspire confidence in the public servants if they have any objectionable work to do, and I feel sure that it will also help to get their loan. I hope that the House will favourably consider this question. The State will not be affected detrimentally in any way, the cost of Government will be less, and the people will be just as adequately represented in the future as they are at the present moment. As a city member, I say that we have no intention of outvoting the North or dominating the situation."

I will also read what the present Speaker had to say at that time, as reported on page 101 of "Hansard" for 1920—

"Mr. TAYLOR argued that, in coming to a decision on the amendment, it was necessary for members to decide the question as to whether the government of the State could be carried on as efficiently by a reduced number of members as it was carried on at the present time. Personally, he was of opinion that it could be carried on as efficiently with a smaller number, and that the fear of Northern representatives that the interests of North Queensland would suffer if the total of members was reduced was unfounded."

The present Deputy Premier also spoke to this amendment, and "Hansard," at page 101, reports him thus—

"Mr. KING (*Logan*) said this was a most important proposal, which would lead to sane and stable government. If sincere, the Government should welcome the amendment, which would not react unfairly on North Queensland. The increase in the work of the departments did not necessitate the appointment of a further Minister, and a reduction of members would stop the drift of population to the cities. The Premier would have the country behind him in agreeing to the reduction proposed."

The hon. member for Kurilpa, Mr. Fry, also supported the amendment moved by the hon. member for East Toowoomba, that the number of members be reduced to fifty; in fact, he seconded the motion. I think there are seven of the present Cabinet Ministers who were then in Opposition; and I want

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to know what they have to say in regard to reducing the number to sixty-two only.

Mr. KELSO: That was eleven years ago.

Mr. DUNLOP: They have not got a leg to stand on. The plea used then was on account of the financial position of the Government; and they wanted the number of members reduced to fifty. I ask the ex-Attorney-General to let me, by way of interjection, know if that was not so—he knows it is. The state of the country at the present time is ten times worse than it was in 1920; and there is all the more reason why we should have only fifty members.

I would like to give a small quotation from the Brisbane "Courier" of 22nd July last on the non-party system in an article by Mr. Philip Frankel. He has expressed my ideas to a nicety—

"If a change is to be made, why not turn our attention to something progressive by advocating the alteration of our Constitution with a view to bringing about a non-party Government? This would obviate the necessity for a second Chamber altogether, and would bring about a sounder and more representative Administration, where all classes of the community would be adequately cared for. If such a Government were established, I submit that we would not require more than forty-eight members of Parliament all told, and that their salaries should be fixed at £500 per annum, with an extra allowance of £500 for each of the Ministers who devote their whole time to parliamentary duties. This would mean an expenditure of about £27,500, as against the present expense of about £43,000."

I want to know whether those seven Cabinet Ministers and the balance of the nineteen intend to sink their honour or stand firm for the principle they then supported. The Government should treat this motion as a non-party question. The country is waiting to see where their desire for economy comes in. I challenge the Treasurer and the Secretary for Railways to declare themselves for my proposal. Where is the Secretary for Labour and Industry, who talks about how sincere he is, going to stand? Where will the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—a man for whom I have the greatest respect—be found? Are they going to sink their honour, or vote for the reduction to fifty?

Mr. BRAND interjected.

Mr. DUNLOP: The hon. member voted for fifty; and he has not the courage to get up and say why he is not going to do so again. If the Government intend to be honourable and fair; and if, as they say, they believe in co-operation, then they should reduce the number of Nationalist seats by five and the number of Labour seats by five; but we shall find that ten Labour seats will be cut out, which, in my opinion, will be a scandalous state of affairs. (Government interjections.) Hon. members cannot scare me. I have them where I want them, and will divide the Committee to see where they stand.

The Premier says that he wants to re-establish the Upper House, with fifteen nominee members representing industries on a non-party basis—which is my ideal, and against the Premier's—and fifteen elected members and a President. If we only had thirty-six

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elected members in this House and the balance of the fifty representing industries on a non-party basis, we should not need an Upper House at all.

On 21st September the Chambers of Commerce of Queensland will meet, and, amongst other things, will discuss the constitution of Parliament. The Bowen Chamber of Commerce will bring forward this motion—

"That this conference is of the opinion that the political system in Australia is a failure, and that the country would be more efficiently and economically governed by a commission comprising men of proved qualifications; that the root of the existing evil lies in adult franchise with its small percentage of intelligent opinion and resultant poor type of representative, class government, and class legislation; and that to achieve the desired change, men pledged to take steps for the alteration of the Constitution only should be elected to Parliament."

The newspaper which contains that report also says—

"The Ipswich Chamber of Commerce proposes an amendment of the Electoral Acts to provide for State electorates to coincide in area with the Federal electorates, and that each electorate be represented by four members.

"Four chambers—Townsville, Ingham, Gympie, and Brisbane—have intimated their intention of moving resolutions in regard to the reduction in the number of members of the Legislative Assembly.

"Townsville favours a reduction to fifty members, each to be paid a salary of £400.

"Ingham merely suggests 'a general reduction in the number of seats.'

"Gympie opines that 'the time is opportune for a reduction in the number of State and Federal legislators.'

"The Brisbane Chamber of Commerce expressed appreciation of the Government's determination to reduce the number of Legislative Assembly members and to re-establish the Legislative Council."

The Brisbane Chamber of Commerce will not be pleased to read in "Hansard" that nineteen of the present Government Party supported a House of fifty members, but that not a man Jack of them—as I think—is now game to get on his hind legs and express his opinion on the point. The majority of our Cabinet to-day—seven—could rule the roost if they wished; and I want them to get up and say why they are not prepared to reduce the number of members of this House below sixty-two.

The "Courier" of 27th August last had this to say with regard to a reduction of members—

"Precisely on what lines the redistribution commissioners will proceed cannot be accurately forecast; but it is generally thought that three metropolitan and seven country seats, most of them in the Central district, the North and the West, will be abolished or amalgamated with other electorates."

The result will be the abolition of ten Labour seats, instead of the abolition of five Nationalist seats and five Labour seats. The

"Telegraph" of 30th July, 1931, had this to say concerning the proposed Redistribution of Seats Bill—

"In the fixing of the number of seats at sixty-two on Wednesday, the Government Party negatived a suggestion. 'That an Assembly of fifty members would be sufficient for Queensland,' because the lower figure would entail the creation of several huge electorates in sparsely populated areas."

Government members did not say that in 1920. The rank and file are afraid to take a proper stand in the interests of the State. They fear the loss of their electoral seats, and they have driven the Cabinet to take this action. As a bona fide Queensland, I am prepared to take the risk with all-comers. It does not matter to me how my electoral seat is mutilated. I am prepared to stand by the will of the people. The majority of the Government members are afraid of losing their parliamentary salaries of £500 per annum and their electoral seats, and have driven the others to agree to this proposal.

The "Telegraph" further stated—

"Even on the basis of sixty-two, some of the northern and north-western areas will be extensive, and this is an agreement adopted by members, some of whom represent the large rural areas, against any reduction of salaries of members from £500 to £400 as has been suggested."

One Government member expressed himself in this manner—

"With any addition to his electorate, as probably there would be under the redistribution, it would mean an expenditure of £100 from his parliamentary salary to enable him to cover the electorate at election time alone."

I appeal to the nineteen members to whom I have referred not to disgrace themselves, but to stand by me and to vote with me in the interests of Queensland. I take it, that you, Mr. Roberts, the Treasurer, the present Secretary for Railways, and the present Deputy Premier, meant what you said in 1920. I am prepared to advocate a reduction of members below thirty-six. Australia as a whole is over-governed, and twenty members in this Parliament would be quite sufficient. However, I propose to adhere to my proposal for a reduction of members to fifty.

I differ from the contention of the Leader of the Opposition that Queensland is entitled to seventy-two members on a population basis. The Federal Labour Party has already adopted a resolution providing for a referendum on the question of the abolition of State Parliaments. The Leader of the Opposition must, therefore, stand for the abolition of State Parliaments and the recognition of one central Parliament. The contention by the hon. member is not sound, and he should support my proposal as a stepping stone towards the ultimate ideal and objective of the Federal Labour Party—the abolition of State Parliaments and the constitution of one central Parliament for Australia. The cost of parliamentary Government in Australia is altogether too high. I do not propose to quote the relevant figures quoted by me during the discussion on the Financial Emergency Bill. On that

occasion I pointed out in an unmistakable manner that the cost of parliamentary government had been far too heavy.

The average annual cost of parliamentary government in Queensland over a period of five years has been £110,541, while for the years 1923 and 1929 the cost of the Federal Parliament was £1,407,741. It took that sum to govern 6,000,000 people! The average cost per annum of the Parliaments of the Commonwealth from 1920 to 1925 was £1,258,303. Those figures go to prove that it is costing too much to govern this country. Not only have the people of Queensland, but the people in every State of the Commonwealth, year in and year out, been hoodwinked in this respect.

An analysis of the cost of municipal government reveals a similar state of affairs. Municipal government has proved an absolute farce, because a commission of two or three persons could achieve greater results than the whole of the present Brisbane City Council. A remunerated committee could save the salaries which members of any local authority are paid in any given year. The people are waking up to these facts. I previously pointed out that the 1,182 local authorities throughout Australia were costing in the aggregate £34,405,000. Is there any need for me to go any further to ask hon. members to support the amendment moved by me? Reform of parliamentary government is taking place in every country in the world, including Britain.

It has been argued in Queensland that it is impossible to have a non-party government. It is not impossible; and in that respect Mr. Philip Frankel has given the key to the situation in a contribution to the press. I hope that the nineteen members of the Government Party who previously expressed themselves in favour of a reduction of this Assembly will support my amendment, for in doing so they will be serving the interests of Queensland and providing an example for the rest of the Commonwealth.

Mr. HYNES (*Townsville*) [3.38]: I am opposed to this Bill. On a previous occasion I referred to this proposed legislation as being something of a very cowardly nature in so far as the Government are concerned. The only justification for it put forward by the Attorney-General in his introductory remarks was that the Government are economising, and that it will save the State approximately £5,000 per annum. That is a palpable misstatement of the position, because we know that it is the intention of the Government to re-establish the Upper House.

Mr. KENNY: Who told you that?

Mr. HYNES: The press who dictate the policy of the Government, and the annual convention of the hon. member's party, which dictates its policy, and tells the hon. member what he must do. It is well that the community should realise that the saving resulting from the proposed abolition of ten seats will be infinitesimal. The population of the State is 930,000, and the saving per head of population involved by this Bill works out at five farthings per head per annum. That shows how farcical and stupidly funny is the statement that this measure is introduced in order to economise. The real motive behind this Bill is to enable

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the present Government to hold office. They have exploited every avenue to enable them to hold the plums of office.

Mr. KENNY: You want to watch your seat.

Mr. HYNES: And the hon. member wants to watch out that I do not contest his. If I did, I should be a "six to four on shot." (Laughter.)

The Government have exploited every possible avenue in order to retain office. First of all, they altered the Elections Acts so as almost to prohibit the people engaged in our primary industries from having a voice in the government of the country. So far as migratory or nomadic workers are concerned, the present law makes it most difficult for them to qualify for enrolment in this State. That position was created for the purpose of assisting the Government to hold office. If there is any person in this country who is justly entitled to a voice in the affairs of the State, it is the men who are working in the primary industries of the State—men who go away from the beaten track, who leave the luxuries of city life and rough it in the out-back, in the shearing and other primary industries, where they are subjected to harsh conditions of living. Those people are not to be allowed a voice in the affairs of their country, merely because the present Government desire to retain office at the next election. (Government dissent.)

The next proposal that came along was to extend the life of Parliament. The Government found that they had been so discredited in the constituencies that their only chance of retaining the plums of office was arbitrarily to extend the life of the present Parliament. The Government would have given effect to that proposition had it not been for the open hostility of their own press and a big section of the decent Nationalists, who considered the proposal a barbarous one. At any rate, the Government did not proceed with that proposition, although I believe that there are some members on the other side who are still endeavouring to extend the life of Parliament.

However, the genius who is at the helm of the National ship brought out another proposition. That proposition we are considering to-day. It aims to cut out ten Labour seats. The Brisbane "Courier," in a perfectly candid manner, said that the ten seats which will be eliminated will necessarily be Labour seats because the constituencies with the smaller number of electors are held by Labour men at the present time. That is a statement which appears in the Brisbane "Courier" of recent date.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: How do you account for that?

Mr. HYNES: I account for it in this way: The "Courier" dictates the Government policy, and the Government slavishly follow that dictation. The "Courier" gives expression to the wishes of the capitalists of this country, and the Government are the servants of the same people.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Speaking about a capitalist, have you still got a motor car?

Mr. HYNES: I have; but that does not make me a capitalist. May I ask the hon.

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gentleman if he got the fat fees in the case into which he pulled the Government?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes.

Mr. HYNES: Well, the hon. gentleman—with his 'cobber," Mr. McGill—will be able to get a "Rolls-Royce." My motor car has been paid for by me—not by the taxpayers who will have to pay for the Attorney-General's car. (Opposition laughter.)

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: "Fellow workers!"

Mr. HYNES: I think the hon. gentleman and Mr. McGill can call themselves "fellow-shirkers" after this. The idea in this proposal is to eliminate ten Labour seats. That gives the Government party a pretty decent break at the start, and then they can go further and, under this proposal, so gerrymander the remaining sixty-two electorates as to make it very difficult for Labour to secure a majority. By the elimination of ten Labour seats and fixing the quota as it is to be fixed under the Bill the dice are loaded in favour of the Government side.

Mr. NIMMO: Like you did in 1922.

Mr. HYNES: We made no effort to cut out ten Nationalist seats, and we were so much more decent than the other side, at any rate. If they say what we did was wrong, then they should do the opposite. Seeing that the Nationalist Party has a majority in the House, there could not have been anything drastically the matter with the conditions as we left them. The sole purpose of the Bill is to enable the Nationalists to save their mean political hides. There is no doubt about that. The people outside will appreciate that fact; and I trust they will get the support they so richly deserve. I am utterly opposed to the Bill.

The previous speaker made some reference to the enormous cost of parliamentary government in Queensland. He said that parliamentary government cost more in Queensland than in any other State, and I want to correct the hon. member. In 1923-29 the cost of parliamentary government per head of population in the various States and the Commonwealth was:—

	s.	d.
Commonwealth	...	1 11
New South Wales	...	2 4
Victoria	...	1 6
Queensland	...	2 11
South Australia	...	2 11
Western Australia	...	5 6
Tasmania	...	4 3

The average for the Commonwealth was 4s. 5d., so that Queensland was considerably below the average for the Commonwealth. If we have offended in this connection, all I can say is that the other States have offended to a larger degree than we have. I wish to repeat that the obvious intention of this Bill is to enable members sitting behind the Government to retain their seats at the cost of the dignity of parliamentary government.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) [3.47]: I do not propose in any way to support the amendment. The argument I put forward on the main proposal applies with equal force to the amendment, and I do not think any time should be wasted in discussing the amendment. I just intimate my opposition to it.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*) [3.48]: From time to time I have advocated a reduction of members to fifty; but what is the use of all these fireworks and wasting the time of Parliament when we know that such a proposal could not be carried?

Mr. POLLOCK: Why could it not be carried?

Mr. FRY: Is the hon. member prepared to vote for it? If the Labour Party will vote for a reduction to fifty, I will vote for it. (Opposition laughter.) Mock heroics! Fireworks! I say, and I have said all along, that, if such a proposal could be carried, I would vote for a reduction of members to fifty. I have advocated that time and again.

Mr. DUNLOP interjected.

Mr. FRY: I am not going to follow the hon. member for Rockhampton, for in doing so I would lose my self-respect. The point I am arriving at is that of common sense. I told the people in my electorate long before the Government brought this matter up that I was prepared to support any motion for a reduction of members of Parliament from seventy-two to sixty-two, because I thought that would be the only vote that would be carried in this House. I thought that, if any attempt were to be made to reduce the number below sixty-two, it would be defeated absolutely.

Mr. DUNLOP: What rot! What about your seven Cabinet Ministers?

Mr. FRY: Not more than twenty members would support a reduction to fifty, leaving fifty-two members opposed to such a proposal. I am supporting the Government's proposal, and I would support fifty if the Labour Party would support it too.

Mr. WIENHOLT (*Fassifer*) [3.52]: I do not wish to waste the time of the Committee; but I want to speak on this amendment, and, if I speak on the amendment, I will not speak on the general motion nor on the second reading of the Bill.

I am one of those who believe that it is highly desirable to reduce as far as possible the number of members in this House, for it is in line with what I advocate—that is, a simpler and less costly form of government—just as I advocate that to enable us to keep up our standard of living, we must have a simpler form of private life. There is one overwhelming argument in favour of the reduction, and that is that this House has now become only a sub-Parliament. That may not be nice for us to realise; but, as federation was the first step which reduced the status of the Queensland Parliament, so since then we have again very much reduced our status, our power, and our responsibility by the Financial Agreement and the Loan Council. The Leader of the Opposition says we have increased our responsibilities.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: We have.

Mr. WIENHOLT: But the Leader of the Opposition will remember that we had a special session of this Parliament, and we were not allowed to alter one jot or tittle of the Bill which was then before us. We are, as I say, to-day, owing to the unification of our finances—and I make this statement on very good authority, because Sir Robert Gibson himself makes quite frankly in a letter to Mr. Lyons, the then Federal Treasurer, the statement which I will quote,

Sir Robert Gibson being chairman of the associated bankers—

“Owing to the practical unification of the finances of the Australian Governments through the creation of the Loan Council.”

If you unify your finances, what is there left to do? It is not a pleasant or popular thing to advocate, but I believe that this reduction of members should only be the start of what I have always advocated—a self-denying ordinance for this Parliament. This reduction is the first stage, and must be followed by a 20 per cent. cut in allowances, doing away with the life gold passes of members, and many other parliamentary economies which I have advocated from time to time, such as the elimination of political influence and interference in administration; doing away with politicians taking the blue ribbons of the service, the abolition of compulsory voting, and such other political reforms; and, besides those, the abolition of that rather shabby custom of soliciting subscriptions from members of Parliament other than they would give in their ordinary private capacity.

There are two essentials in connection with any reduction of members. The first thing the Government should do is to make a job of it, do it properly, and do not spoil the ship for a ha'p'orth of tar. It seems to me that, if we reduce the number of members of this House from seventy-two to sixty-two, we are doing it grudgingly, with the least possible reduction, just to save our faces, like a man putting a threepenny-bit into the collection plate in church. I say, “Do it properly, if you are going to do it at all.”

A motion dealing with this subject was discussed in this House some time ago. I have read up the “Hansard” report of the debate, but I do not want to probe into it too deeply, because I think these back “Hansards” remind one of the saying, “Oh, that mine enemy would write a book!” I think it is quite clear that some hon. members have altered their minds; and it is only fair that such hon. members should give reasons for doing so, and that they should tell us why, having at one time voted for fifty members, they now think sixty-two is a better number.

If any reduction of members of this Assembly is to be made, we should not allow the people of Queensland to get it into their heads that that reduction is undertaken for the purpose of “dishing” the Labour Party or any other party. The reduction must be done with scrupulous fairness. The members of the commission should be acceptable to Parliament. I think the Leader of the Opposition might well be consulted in its personnel.

This motion proposes that it is desirable to introduce a Bill amongst other things to make provision for the better representation of the people of Queensland in Parliament. I wonder if the people of Queensland will not themselves take a hand in making provision for their better representation in Parliament.

So far we have had political warfare between two political parties, Nationalist and Labour, who have been in and out in the Federal Parliament and in the various State Parliaments; and we are now facing a state of national bankruptcy; unemployment is rife; and Queensland's Parliament

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has handed over the control of her finances to the Australian Loan Council. This latter is the result of the Financial Agreement for which both big parties are responsible, and for which both parties must bear their share of responsibility; and, with them, the Nationalist Senators, because it seems to me that, when they supported that agreement, they were such good party men that they forgot they were also Queensland representatives. However, when we look at the State of Queensland to-day, and when we remember that last week here we had the spectacle of the debate over Mungana taking over eight hours, and the debate on a financial Bill most important to the interests of Queensland lasting about eight minutes, then I say that the people may themselves, perhaps, make provision for their better representation in Parliament. How they will do it I do not know. We do not know who will be here after this Parliament. I have no personal ambition myself whatsoever. I do not know whether I still hold the confidence of my electors, or whether they wish me to represent them again; but I would suggest to the people of Queensland that, if a debate on Mungana takes eight hours and a debate on a most important supply Bill eight minutes, they may very well seriously consider returning sufficient members with the right to think, speak, and vote as they think right and as their conscience dictates, who might form a real Queensland party to champion and protect Queensland's interests.

Question—"That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Dunlop's amendment*) stand part of the question" (*Mr. Macgroarty's motion*)—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 54.

Mr. Barber	Dr. Kerwin
" Barnes, G. P.	Mr. King
" Barnes, W. H.	" Kirwan
" Bedford	" Macgroarty
" Blackley	" Maxwell
" Bow	" Morgau
" Brand	" Mullan
" Brassington	" Nimmo
" Bruce	" O'Keefe
" Carter	" Pease
" Clayton	" Plunkett
" Conroy	" Pollock
" Cooper	" Russell, H. M.
" Daniel	" Russell, W. A.
" Dash	" Sizer
" Deacon	" Smith
" Duffy	" Stopford
" Edwards	" Tedman
" Foley	" Tozer
" Grimstone	" Walker, H. F.
" Hanson	" Walker, J. E.
" Hill	" Wellington
" Hynes	" Wilson
" Jones, A.	" Wiastanley
" Jones, A. J.	
" Kelso	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Kenny	" Fry
" Kerr	" Hanlon

NOES, 3.

Mr. Dunlop	<i>Tellers:</i>
	Mr. Jamieson
	" Wienholt

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. MULLAN (*Flinders*) [4.8]: It is a pity that the Attorney-General did not tell us why he was introducing this Bill. The Bill is supposed to be for the better representation of the people in Parliament. It is somewhat an anomalous pretence on the part of a Government to propose to re-establish the Upper House to describe anything they intend to do as being for the

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better representation of the people, because the elective House, however well the parties may be distributed, can have its legislation vetoed by an Upper House, sixteen members of which will be nominated and fifteen will represent, not population, but economic interests.

At 4.10 p.m.,

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

Mr. MULLAN: I cannot understand how, by the wildest stretch of imagination, anybody can understand this Bill as being for the better representation of the people in Parliament. In 1886, when the number of members was increased to seventy-two, the population of the State was 392,000. To-day the population is approximately 1,000,000; and it will surely not be argued that, on the score of population, there is an argument for a reduction in the number of members. Of course, it may be argued that since that time the Commonwealth Parliament was constituted; but I would remind hon. members that at the time of federation the Tory Party was in power and remained in power for a long time afterwards. At the time of federation the population of Queensland was 493,000. The Tory Government then in power said, "We shall still retain seventy-two members."

Mr. EDWARDS: When did they say that?

Mr. MULLAN: By not altering the law they retained that number.

Mr. EDWARDS: They did not say it.

Mr. MULLAN: They did, by inference; otherwise the law would have been altered to reduce the number. If there was a case then for Queensland to have seventy-two members of Parliament, how much better is the case now? We have a great variety of interests in Queensland. Further, there is a greater variety of soil and climate here than in any other State. In every way there is a better case for a larger number of members for Queensland. That is one of the strongest reasons for my opposition to the Bill. We recall at this time the biblical saying, "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety." The smaller an Assembly, the more important every member in that Assembly becomes; and in a small Assembly with a narrow majority there is always the danger of one or two men dominating the situation, and, in effect, dictating the policy of a Government.

Mr. EDWARDS: For a long time you ran the Government of the country by means of the proxy vote.

Mr. MULLAN: We ran the country very successfully with the proxy vote; but that does not alter the position. Some years ago, when Tasmania had thirty members in its Assembly, there was the spectacle of one man holding the balance of power, morely because it was a small Assembly. That is another argument in favour of retaining a reasonable number of members.

Surely this measure is not introduced on the grounds of economy. Last year the total expenditure, including revenue, trust, and loan funds, controlled by this Parliament, was £24,000,000. The proposed reduction of members will effect a saving of £5,000. That is not the way to economise. This is merely an excuse for creating an Upper

House. Fancy the irony of the whole position! We propose to reduce the number of members of this Assembly by ten, whilst at the same time we propose to increase the number of parliamentarians, in the aggregate, by twenty-one, because that will be the position with the re-establishment of an Upper House of thirty-one members. The expenditure involved in the new Chamber will be—

	£
Thirty members at £150 each ...	4,500
President of the Upper House	1,000
“Hansard,” printing, attendants, and other commitments consequential on the creation of an Upper House	14,500
	£20,000

The position will be a loss of £15,000 on the supposed economy of £5,000 under the Bill now under consideration. At the present time this Parliament costs £134,000, including the establishment of the Governor, salaries of Ministers and members, costs of the electoral department, and all the consequential expenditure of this establishment.

What is a saving of £5,000 in an expenditure of £134,000? If the Government wanted real economy, surely they would want to save more than £5,000 out of £134,000! To a certain extent the parliamentary system is jeopardised, because this proposal is the thin edge of the wedge, and if it is a good thing to reduce the number of members to sixty-two, next year it may be considered a good thing to reduce the number to fifty-two, and so on.

Parliament, with all its imperfections, is the best institution that has yet been devised in civilised countries for conducting the affairs of the country. There are two sections in the community ready to destroy this Parliament. One is the Communists, who openly say that any alternative is better than the present parliamentary system. Then there is another section—the extreme wing of the Tory Party—who wish to appoint a dictator as a corporation sole, and who are out to destroy democracy and establish a dictatorship. Both sections are equally dangerous. The extreme wing of the Tory Party, who would set up a dictatorship and destroy parliamentary government, is just as dangerous as the Communists. They would pull down this great temple of democracy, which is the best mankind has yet devised. This is the thin edge of the wedge; and, of course, one can easily lead the public to believe that there are too many members of Parliament. If we reduce the number to sixty-two, we shall have the metropolitan papers asking for thirty-two, until we destroy Parliament altogether.

The executive of the Labour Party has to thank the Attorney-General for his courtesy in affording us an opportunity of perusing the Bill. It certainly was a very graceful act on his part, and it gave members an opportunity of criticising the measure. As the Attorney-General stated, the Bill will repeal the 1910 and 1922 Acts, except that there will be a provision for casual vacancies. I would point out that a hiatus will be created if the Attorney-General does that. There will be no provision for the carrying out of a general election, if such becomes imperative, between now and the time when the commission's report is proclaimed. All the world over Parliaments are subject

to crises, and a crisis may occur at any time. The Nationalist and the Country Parties may be divided over some question of policy, and it may become necessary to dissolve Parliament. I would like the Attorney-General to consider what he would do in that position, because, if the 1910 and 1922 Acts are repealed, there will be no electoral boundaries and no electoral machinery for carrying out a general election. I admit that such a situation was created after the passage of the 1910 Act, and continued until the new boundaries were proclaimed. That was wrong. It is a long time between now and April or May next, and it is quite conceivable that in the interval a crisis may occur. It is not probable, but Parliament should make reasonable provision for every possible contingency that may arise. All the Attorney-General has to do in order to avoid that difficulty is to provide for the repeal of the existing Acts on the proclamation of the new divisions. Possibly something in that direction might meet the case.

The Attorney-General has stated the numbers in connection with the quota. He told us that the figures are substantially correct, but that there may be a little inaccuracy in them. He gave 8,029 as the quota, with a maximum of 9,635, and a minimum of 6,424. What I take exception to in this Bill is that not less than 8,000—or not less than the quota—would be the number of electors in a city electorate. I also take exception to the provision that there must not be less than 7,000 in an electorate which includes within its boundaries a city or part of a city. I take it that Charters Towers is regarded as a city.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: One of them. It is in the list of cities under the Local Authorities Act.

Mr. MULLAN: Toowoomba is another. My objection is that Charters Towers, for instance, is remotely situated. It is days of travel away from the seat of government; but an hon. member representing Toowoomba can stay in the House until 5 o'clock and be home in Toowoomba by about 9 o'clock. There is no comparison between the difficulties of representation of those two centres. For that reason cities in the North should not be put on the same footing as cities close to the seat of government.

I hope the Attorney-General will reconsider clause 15 of the Bill, which is extraordinary. In the Act of 1910 there was no provision for regulations. Parliament gave the general instructions, and laid down the conditions on which the Commission was to act, and that was the end of it. In this Bill indirectly the Government have power to make by regulation the most sweeping changes in the whole conditions of the redistribution system. After we pass the Bill, section 100 of the Elections Act is to apply. That section was passed in 1915 in abnormal times. One of the reasons why so much scope was allowed in that section was to enable the Government to give the men at the front a vote. It was to some extent a war provision, so that every contingency that might arise in connection with giving a vote to the men at the front might be met.

There was also another good reason for the inclusion of section 100 in the Elections Act in 1915; that was to give the Government a wide latitude in the conduct of a general

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election. Anybody who has had anything to do with the conduct of such an election knows that sometimes a situation arises a day or two before an election making it imperative for the Government to make a regulation to overcome a difficulty. No exception can reasonably be taken to that. Our Government made regulations because we found it absolutely necessary, and no Opposition party ever took exception to them, which showed that they were always justified. But, whilst that is a very good thing as applied to the case of a general election, there should be no such latitude in the framing of regulations applying to a redistribution. It is not right to say that "for the purposes of this Act section 100 of the Elections Act shall apply."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: How can it affect it?

Mr. MULLAN: It may affect it. If Parliament adjourns in December next—which in the ordinary course of events will be the case—the report of the commission, after objection has been heard, will not be available until approximately 1st February or such other time as the Governor in Council may prescribe. Whichever way it goes, Parliament may not be in session; and there will be no opportunity for a member or a party to object to something in the report, however wrong it may be.

The moment the Governor in Council proclaims the new electoral districts, the redistribution becomes final and conclusive, and, under clause 11, cannot be appealed against, reviewed, or called in question in any court. I am not questioning that, but there should be some reasonable provision to protect the interests of members before the redistribution is proclaimed; but the point is that there is to be no appeal. The Government, for example, may wrongfully make a regulation giving undue power to the commission to exercise a discretion which it was not intended it should exercise; and Parliament will have no other opportunity of dealing with such a regulation and will have no redress. Suppose the Government issue a regulation which is ultra vires, as may happen, although the Attorney-General may say that under this provision such a regulation cannot be ultra vires. Even if it is ultra vires, clause 11 says that it cannot be questioned in any court of law. That is an interesting point the Attorney-General might investigate before the second reading. How does he reconcile the two things—one that section 100 of the Elections Act—the regulation making power—is to apply, and that under it the Government may make any conceivable regulation; and the other that, under clause 11 of this Bill, the action of the commission may not be questioned in any court of law. That is a very important point, and I hope the Attorney-General will consider it.

There are several other aspects of the measure which, of course, we shall deal with at the proper stage; but I think sufficient has been said now to show that this party strongly resents the action of the Government in proposing to reduce the number of members from seventy-two to sixty-two, and also the provisions of the Bill to which the Leader of the Opposition, other members, and I have referred.

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Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*) [4.30]: This Bill bears all the earmarks of a very crude political job. The object of the Bill apparently is to enable the Government to retain power at all costs. From what we can see in the Bill, a copy of which has been given to us through the courtesy of the Attorney-General, their object, first of all, is to reduce the membership of this Assembly from seventy-two to sixty-two. If that were animated by a genuine desire for economy, it could be understood; but the Premier and other members of the Government have from time to time made thinly veiled references to the question of the redistribution of seats; and at least eight or nine members on this side have been twitted with the fact that they will probably not be in this Parliament after the forthcoming elections are over, and that they will be fighting for someone else's seat. To me that is an indication that in reducing the number of members from seventy-two to sixty-two the Government are not so much desirous of securing economy as they are desirous of eliminating nine or ten Labour seats. The desire to reduce the number of members in this Parliament is not so great as the desire to curtail the Labour Party's representation in Parliament, and to make it impossible for us to win at the next State elections. That is the desire behind this Bill.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: You are over-represented now.

Mr. POLLOCK: Why do the Government stop at sixty-two members if they are genuinely desirous of economising by substantially reducing the membership of this Assembly?

Mr. DUNLOP: They should have made it fifty members.

Mr. POLLOCK: Why stop at fifty? They could have reduced the number to twenty members.

Mr. DUNLOP: Quite enough, too.

Mr. POLLOCK: This alleged desire for economy by reducing the number of seats by ten will probably result in a saving to the State of approximately £5,000 per annum, with parliamentary salaries at £500 per annum per member. To carry out genuine economy and to get nearer to the Nationalist policy, which is one of social Fascism—their policy is developing in that direction every day—then the more members cut out the greater the economy, and the nearer will the Government get to the objective of the Nationalist Party. I cannot understand what particular merit is attached to sixty-two, or even fifty members, over fifteen or twenty members.

Mr. DUNLOP: Now that my amendment has been defeated I am agreeable to sixty-two so long as the Upper House is not restored.

Mr. POLLOCK: The hon. member for Rockhampton has never been sincere on this subject; he is merely looking for the limelight. If there was a desire for real economy, then there could have been a saving of £26,000 per annum by reducing the number of members to twenty. However, we object to that principle. In the beginning, the tendency of democracy was to get away from rule by monarchs or by individuals, and to further that objective Parliaments were created and the people given

larger representation. The tendency throughout the world, particularly during the past ten or fifteen years, has been to give the people still further representation at every opportunity in the direction of providing them with more members. That marked the beginning of a desire to get away from autocracies—government by kings or any other individual, or executive government—and to place the control of the destinies of a country in the hands of the people. The Bill definitely marks a desire to get back to that old state of dictatorship, government by commission or by an executive, or to get back to a form of very limited representation. The nearer one gets to actual dictatorship the further one is getting away from the principles of democracy.

What is the basis of this Bill? What is the root cause of its introduction? Firstly, the clamour by newspapers for a reduction of members of this Assembly, the alleged desire being to save money.

At 4.35 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. POLLOCK: These people—very few in number—apparently exercise such an influence on this particular Government that whatever the newspapers say to-day the Government do to-morrow.

Mr. BLACKLEY: The people are calling out for it.

Mr. POLLOCK: The people are not doing anything of the sort. Under the alleged economy proposal, the people will be relieved of the payment of 2s. d. per elector per year. That is the total saving. It will cost a goodly proportion of that sum to introduce the Bill and put through the legislation to effect that saving. Bills are expensive matters. To get back to the question of the return from democracy to the old form of dictatorship, the desire for a redistribution has been expressed by newspapers allegedly on the ground of economy. The answer of the Government to that desire for economy is to save £5,000; but they stop at sixty-two members, because, having had a survey of the position, they have decided that they can give the Labour Party a very severe hurdle to jump at the next election if in the ten seats to be cut out at least nine are Labour seats. From what we have been able to gather as a result of remarks by the Premier and other members of the Government, at least nine of the ten seats to be cut out will be Labour seats.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: It will be poetic justice.

Mr. POLLOCK: Whether it is poetic justice or not, according to the hon. member for Toombul it will be perfect justice. The scheme in the minds of the Government is this: The state of the parties in Queensland to-day is forty-six Nationalist-Country Party members and twenty-six members of the Labour Party. If this scheme is given effect to, the Nationalist-Country Party will lose one seat at the very outside, leaving them to go to the country holding forty-five seats. The Labour Party will lose nine seats, leaving us to go to the country with seventeen seats. That forces us into the position of being compelled to gain another nine seats before we can be where we are to-day. That is the objective of this legislation. That is the sole desire of the Government

behind this alleged scheme of economy, which is merely a strong-arm political job miscalled a redistribution of seats. A feature of this newspaper propaganda is that, while the Government listen to and heed it, it is not necessarily public opinion. After all, one man writes an article in the "Courier." The Government are stirred to all kinds of deeds by that one article; but it still remains merely the opinion of one man, who in many cases is not as competent to form a judgment as to the needs of the country as any individual member of this House.

Mr. BLACKLEY: You are quite right.

Mr. POLLOCK: Yet the hon. member and his party on every conceivable occasion are stampeded by the opinions expressed in a newspaper by one man. Every day this happens. The editors of the "Courier," "Telegraph," and "Daily Mail" are apparently the real rulers of the State. They agree on a certain policy, and expound that policy as something which the Government ought to do, and inevitably the Government give effect to it. But, if they object to any scheme of the Government—and one of the newspapers did object to the scheme to extend the life of Parliament for five years—then the scheme is dropped, because what is regarded as public opinion, but which in reality is only the opinion of one man, apparently sways the Government more than the real interests of the whole of the State.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: You know the people have demanded a reduction of members.

Mr. POLLOCK: I know nothing of the sort. I know that to-day in Queensland, because of this incessant newspaper propaganda, there has been created an atmosphere which passes as public opinion—an atmosphere which creates the belief that public opinion demands these things. To-day such an atmosphere has been created that a member of Parliament has sunk so low in the opinion of the general public that people believe that a reduction of members is a very good thing—that is, that section of the public which takes its views from the newspapers, and, unfortunately, that is a very considerable section. Not only are the newspapers constantly at work making up the minds of the Government, but, being discussed over the breakfast table every morning, this propaganda is being used to make up the minds of the public. The objections which are raised to the opinions of these newspapers are never permitted to be published. Nobody is ever permitted to publish an objection to any scheme that these newspapers take up as their own and intend to use as propaganda.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: That is not right.

Mr. POLLOCK: It is true, and I will give an illustration—I could give 1,000, if necessary. If it were not for the newspapers, hon. members opposite would not have a leg to stand on. Every morning after this Parliament has sat the rather capable gentleman who writes the "gallery notes" for the "Courier" can so dress up the remarks of Government members that people who take their politics from that paper and believe all they read in it would think that those on the other side are a collection of geniuses, and that we on this side are a lot of fools.

Mr. KELSO: He has been very good to you people.

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Mr. POLLOCK: If it were not for these men the Government would be entirely bereft of argument, because these journalists provide the arguments that hon. members opposite would like to use if they had the capacity to do so. Not having the capacity, hon. members opposite have to get these journalists to supply it for them.

Mr. TOZER: You are the white-haired boy of the "Courier." (Laughter.)

Mr. POLLOCK: I am not jealous.

Mr. KELSO: A "strong silent man" is how you were described.

Mr. POLLOCK: Whether we like it or not, if we adopt this Bill, we are getting away from that form of democracy which aims at giving the people representation through a reasonable number of representatives in Parliament, and are approaching a system of government by an individual or by a dictator. The more the membership of Parliament is reduced the closer we get to government by a group or by individuals. The whole desire of the civic reformers to-day—and of some Nationalists who would like to be civic reformers only they would have to sever their connection with their own party and lose their seats—is to get back to government by commission or by a manager. That is the argument they have used in regard to local authority government. The civic reformers and the extreme section of the Nationalist Party—I might say the bosses, the wealthier section, the extremists, the agitators, the walking delegates of the Nationalist Party—are making an effort day by day to get control of the municipalities by a form of group government which they call government by commission—that is, government by two or three men.

The more you reduce the number of members in Parliament the closer you get to that ideal. Once you admit the principle of a reduction in the number of members you will be driven inevitably by some of the newspapers to a further reduction—to 30—to 20—until you get to ten or get to the position when, in order to save further money, you get not to the position of a city manager, which apparently is the supreme objective of the Nationalists—but you get to the position of having a State manager or dictator. If that is not so, I shall give the Attorney-General an opportunity of showing just why he only proposes to reduce the number of members by ten.

The TREASURER: When did you learn that it is the desire of Nationalists to do certain things?

Mr. POLLOCK: You cannot cure some people of asking questions. The Treasurer got the Attorney-General and Mr. McGill to spend about six months framing questions to ask a certain jury; and surely the answers they got would cure them for ever of asking questions. The alleged objective of the Government is economy, although the Attorney-General did not say so. This Bill has been introduced either for the sake of economy or to make the position safe for the Nationalist Government. If they will not admit that, then the only argument left is that they want to economise. When you view the policy of the Government from all angles, it will be seen that this is not intended as a genuine economy measure.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It will save £5,000, you know.

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Mr. POLLOCK: £5,000 is probably not half what the Government paid to Mr. McGill, and probably not as much as was paid to the Attorney-General in the Mungana case. There will be a saving of £5,000 in this connection; but, if you take into consideration the cost of the restoration of the Upper House, for which hon. members opposite all profess to stand, it will mean an increase in the cost of parliamentary government in this State. This proposal is not made for the purpose of decreasing the cost of government. It is merely to provide an excuse or pave the way for the restoration of the Upper House, which will mean an expenditure of another £7,000 or £8,000 on that body; so that, instead of having secured a reduction in the cost of government, this is merely intended to mislead the public into believing the Government are indulging in real economy, whereas they intend, by the restoration of the Upper House, to put a more expensive form of government in its place.

There is no good in the Bill that I can see. There is no advantage to be gained by the State under this system of redistribution with a reduction of members. The advantage is to be gained wholly and solely by the Nationalist Party. It will enable them to force this party to win another nine seats before we can get back to the position we hold to-day.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Do you believe in a redistribution?

Mr. POLLOCK: An equitable redistribution, yes. We recognised that principle in 1910 and in 1915, and we recognised the need for giving as nearly as possible one vote one value. In my opinion, it is difficult to adjust that. My own view is that this Bill is framed entirely for the purpose of enabling the Government to hold power at any cost whatever.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*) [4.50]: I am opposed to the resolution for two reasons. The first is that it tends to deprive Northern and Western Queensland and the workers generally of their fair share of representation in this Parliament. When the present Government were sitting on this side of the Chamber, they were harping all the time about the Labour Party being in office; and the Tory daily press was also up against the Labour Party being in office, and contending that Labour had too much representation.

I want to deal with this question by starting with the number of members first elected to this Parliament, and I am taking as authoritative the figures in "Queensland Politics during Sixty Years," by Mr. C. A. Bernays, the Clerk of the Parliament. The membership of the House was, in the first instance, almost purely metropolitan in character; and, owing to the agitation of the people in the back country, the membership was increased to give them representation. The Legislative Assembly of Queensland was created by proclamation dated 6th June, 1859, which fixed the number of members at twenty-six, the population of Queensland then being 28,056. In 1864 the number of members was increased to thirty-two. The outlying portions of the city of Brisbane claimed representation, which was granted, bringing the membership up to thirty-two. During the session of 1872 the number was increased to forty-two, the population then being approximately 132,459. In

1875 the number of members was increased by one for the purpose of giving the electorate of Cook representation. In 1878 the number of members was increased to fifty-five, the population being approximately 162,000. The claim of the outside portions of Queensland for representation was so strong that the membership was increased to fifty-five at that time. In 1885 the number of members was increased to fifty-nine, the population being approximately 300,000. As the population increased, so did the representation in Parliament increase; and there was a strong agitation then from Northern and Western Queensland for proper representation. The question was very strongly debated in this Chamber on different occasions. "Hansard" shows that all these increases of membership were brought about by agitation in the Northern and Western portions of Queensland. In 1887 the membership was increased to seventy-two, the population being then approximately 390,000. It will be seen that from 1887 there has been no increase in membership of the House but there has been an increase in the number of electorates. There were something like sixty electorates at that time, represented by seventy-two members.

The increase in membership of this House was brought about by agitation by the people, who considered that they had not fair representation. When we examine the resolution now before the House, we see that it tends to do away with certain representation in Northern and Western Queensland, which is very unfair. Since 1887 the population has increased from 390,000 to 932,871, the latest figures available.

This Bill has for its purpose the robbing of North Queensland of its fair representation, and also the robbing of the workers of their representation in this House. The hon. member for Toombul, by way of interjection just now to the hon. member for Gregory, said, "You are over-represented now," which means that the Labour Party are over-represented in this House, and bears out my statement that the measure is aimed at Labour representation. Before the Labour Party came into office in 1915, there was a strong agitation in North Queensland for separation and the establishment of a Northern Parliament; and it was because North Queensland had not got a fair deal from the Government of the day. It was not until 1915 that the agitation died down; and it died down because Labour gave North Queensland fair consideration.

Mr. KENNY: It continued until the day you left office.

Mr. DASH: The agitation did not exist during Labour's term of office, but it has since been renewed, much to the surprise and disgust of the Tories. In one statement the Premier said North Queensland had got too much consideration; and that is one of the reasons why this Bill has been introduced—because hon. members opposite fear that North Queensland and Western Queensland will get a better deal under Labour than under Nationalist control. Since the present Government have been in office very little development has taken place in North Queensland. Tobacco growing at Mareeba is the only instance hon. members opposite can name.

Mr. KENNY: What about the Barron Falls hydro-electricity scheme?

Mr. DASH: When Labour was in office, North Queensland progressed in a manner which stood to the credit of our Government, and which stopped the agitation for separation. The territory which members for North Queensland represent is in itself a very important factor in this debate. There are sixteen seats in Northern and North-Western Queensland, comprising 361,300 square miles.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: How many people?

Mr. DASH: When we come to deal with the Bill itself, we shall find out exactly how many. The point is that North Queensland is a very important portion of this State. There we have one of the largest sections of the wool industry, the sugar industry, the cattle industry, the mining industry, and the timber industry—all of them very important—and, if this measure goes through, North Queensland and North-Western Queensland will be robbed of the representation which was obtained only after years of agitation both by members of Parliament and the people outside.

Mr. KENNY: How do you know?

Mr. DASH: I have read up the debates, in which the hon. member will find that the increase in the representation was fought for by the then Tory members for Mackay, Cook, and other Northern members. They agitated for increased parliamentary representation for North Queensland; and, if the present hon. member for Cook had the interests of North Queensland at heart, he would fight for further representation on behalf of that area rather than allow the representation to be whittled away. It was not until 1891 that the first Labour representative was returned to this Parliament, to be followed in 1893 by the return of thirteen Labour representatives, to be followed, in turn, by the capture of the reins of government in 1915. That has been a very sore point with the Tories ever since. The Tory newspapers never let up on the Labour Party, and continued a campaign of severe criticism during the period Labour was in office.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: The Labour Party retained office by gerrymandering the electorates.

Mr. KIRWAN: That is not true.

Mr. DASH: The Government are endeavouring to prevent the workers from having direct representation in this Parliament. No matter how the Government may endeavour to cloak their action, the Bill clearly demonstrates that it is introduced with the object of depriving the working people of the right of representation. During this session Government members have twitted hon. members on this side with the prospect of losing their parliamentary seats; and during this debate the demeanour of Government members indicates that they are not in any way perturbed by the passage of the measure. They sit comfortably on their benches with smiles on their faces, saying to themselves, "How well we have done the job! We are going to deprive Labour of certain representation in the next Parliament." The Labour movement will suffer as a result of the redistribution of seats, because the Bill definitely states that the quota for certain cities and towns must not fall below a certain number. We realise full well that North Queensland is suffering from the effects of

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drought, from the temporary closure of the mining industry, and from brief operations in the meat industry. We also know that, as a result, a proportion of the population in North Queensland has moved to the South. That has inevitably increased the population in the South at the expense of the North, which will be deprived of fair representation under the new quota system. It is my earnest desire to protect North Queensland, and to safeguard the interests of the workers whom I represent. The Labour representatives in the South are quite capable of looking after similar interests in that portion of the State. Trade unionism has had a very difficult task since its early inception. Under the present Government workers have had considerable difficulty in maintaining their names upon the electoral rolls. In the first place, the Government amended the Elections Act with the object of depriving the nomadic workers of the right to vote. These workers are perforce compelled to travel from place to place, from shearing shed to sugar field, and from the sugar field to the meatworks in search of employment; and there is no doubt that, when the elections arrive, they will discover that their names have been removed from the electoral rolls.

The Government have made it impossible by recent legislation for seasonal and nomadic workers to keep their names on the rolls. To obtain the franchise they must first be resident in an electorate for three months. Many of these workers, who are employed in our seasonal industries, will, therefore, be disfranchised at the coming election. On top of that legislation, the Government have introduced this so-called Redistribution of Seats Bill. I will not lay any blame at the door of the commissioners whom the Government will appoint under the Bill, because the Bill lays down what they must do, and they must carry out what the Bill sets out as the intention of the Government. Independent action on the part of the commissioners is taken away by the last clause in the Bill, which gives the Governor in Council power to make regulations as he may think fit. Those regulations will be made under another Act of Parliament altogether; but they are to apply to this Bill, which, when passed through this Assembly, will be an Act of Parliament. If the Government were honest and straightforward in this matter, they would state clearly in this measure the powers which they will vest in the commissioners, and not attempt to camouflage the intentions of the Bill. This is not a Redistribution of Seats Bill; it is merely an Elections Bill. The all-embracing powers contained in the Elections Act give to the Governor in Council power to deal with the elections—not with the redistribution of seats. The Government, therefore, will be able to keep a tight hand on the work of the commission. That makes us suspicious of the intentions of the Government.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Your Government appointed temperamentally qualified commissioners.

MR. DASH: The hon. gentleman ought to be ashamed to make such an interjection.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I said so at the time, and I have said so all along, and still maintain it.

Mr. Dash.

MR. DASH: The remark made by the Secretary for Railways is one which I would not apply to the members of the commission about to be appointed. The commission will have certain powers, which will be well defined by the Governor in Council. By this means the Government will keep a tight hand on the members of the commission. They will not have a free hand, because, if the Government so desire, the report may be referred back to the commission.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You know that you had the same power before.

MR. PEASE: We were too honest.

MR. DASH: The Redistribution of Seats Act passed by the late Tory Government conferred specific powers on the electoral commissioners, and the Government had no say in the matter. I intend to vote against this resolution, and against the Bill at all its stages. We believe that the Government under this Bill are attacking the Opposition with a club, and a very heavy club at that. Their idea is to minimise the chances of Labour at the forthcoming elections, and is not animated by a desire for economy. The whole object of the Bill is to enable the Government to retain the reins of office. They have thought out many schemes in order to do so; and this, to their mind, is the most formidable; but, however much they may attempt to disfranchise the workers and deprive them of representation in this Parliament, they will not succeed in their purpose, because the people are so incensed at their actions that, no matter what the Government may do to prolong their life, they will be effectually wiped out of Parliament.

In view of the large territory which is comprised in many of the Western seats, it will be apparent that, if the representation is decreased, it will make it almost impossible for any man representing a Western constituency to look after his electorate as it should be looked after. Instead of doing Labour out of its representation in the North and West, it should be the objective of the Government to give more representation to these parts of the State, seeing that they comprise more than half the area of Queensland. I am opposing the Bill because we are not in favour of depriving Labour of its representation.

MR. KELSO (*Nundah*) [5.10]: I cannot say that I am surprised at the statements put forward by hon. members opposite, who have worked themselves into a passion about this reduction, and have tried to make themselves believe that, for political purposes, the Government have certain fell ideas at the back of their minds in order to defeat the Opposition at the next election. If the Leader of the Opposition is logical—and very often he is logical—he must admit that he has overlooked one phase of the argument. The hon. gentleman objected to the reduction, and said that our objective was to wipe out nine Labour seats, which would make it very difficult for the Opposition to win the next election. Cannot the hon. gentleman see that, if that argument is correct, we can go still further and reduce the number of seats to thirty? The Federal elections show that the smaller the number

of electorates and the larger the area, the greater our chances of winning. Queensland has ten Federal seats. How many members does Labour get out of those ten seats? When you take the elections over a larger area still, you find that in the Senate we generally scoop the whole pool. That shows that, in the aggregate, Queensland is not Labour, notwithstanding what hon. members opposite may say. They say they represent all the workers; but they must admit that, if they represented all the workers, and all the workers voted for them, there would be precious few of us on this side of the Chamber. We say we represent the workers, simply because we represent all interests in the State. On the other hand, hon. members opposite say they represent a class; and they will never be on top so long as they take that as their motto. If we were out to accomplish the objective which hon. members opposite are stressing this afternoon—that we want to get rid of Labour members in order that we may be returned to Parliament—we have not half done our job, because, if we reduced the number of members to thirty, it is an absolute certainty that the benches opposite would be nearly empty. That is the logical position; and the Federal elections show it in every case.

The hon. member for Mundingburra has been airing a grievance in the admirable appeal which he made on behalf of the men out West. Surely the hon. member does not forget that the Government of which he was a member were responsible for certain electoral legislation, and we know from the figures published in the journals of this Parliament the other day just how inequitable was the redistribution that was made by the Labour Government. The hon. member suggests that the vast areas in the West will not get enough representation. Let me take the hon. member's own electorate.

In Mundingburra there are 7,235 electors. That is a really good quota; but, when it comes to some of his colleagues, what do we find? In Flinders there are 3,377 electors. We have always been hitting at that inequitable distribution as regards Flinders. Flinders has 3,377 electors as against 12,939 in Enoggera and 12,697 in Logan. I ask the hon. member is that fair representation?

The hon. member knows it was his own party that was responsible for the redistribution of seats under which that state of things was made possible. The Commissioners, in carrying out their duties, had to take certain things into consideration. In estimating the quota they could go 20 per cent. above or 20 per cent. below, and they had to take into consideration community of interest, physical aspects, and so on. Can the hon. member tell me why it is that in the electorate of Rosewood, which is a purely farming area, in the last redistribution there was a narrow strip like a finger which brought that electorate down past Ipswich and included an industrial area which came right down to Goodna? Why was that done? Apparently in order to make the Rosewood seat safe for the then sitting Labour member. To show the inequality of the representation, let me take some of the towns and cities. It is in the towns that the

larger number of electors are situated. Just look at these disparities in the numbers!—

	Electors.
Brisbane	4,790
Bulimba	12,294
Enoggera	12,939
Fortitude Valley	6,735
Logan	12,697
Nundah	11,162
Oxley	11,685
Buranda	6,930

As hon. members know, for years we asked the late Government for a redistribution, but that Government refused it. The Act was in force, and if hon. members had done their duty the Act should have been carried out; but, notwithstanding that, for years we always had a majority of the votes of the total electors, although the hon. member for Flinders produced figures to the contrary—

Mr. MULLAN: You cannot get away from the fact that it was under the distribution you denounced that you won the election.

Mr. KELSO: In spite of the inequitable distribution, the public of Queensland were absolutely so fed up with the Labour Government that we won the last election; and, notwithstanding the opinion of the hon. member for Mundingburra, because of the splendid work we are doing at the present time, we are the admiration of the whole of Australia, and we are going to win the next election. If the statement made by the hon. member is correct, and we have done this purposely to cut out nine Labour members, then we are not fit for our job. If we had wanted to defeat the Labour Party, we would have reduced the number to about thirty, and then hon. members opposite would have been conspicuous by their absence.

The Leader of the Opposition did not seem to like the Bill and said that his party was going to vote against it; and he said all the nasty things that occurred to him. Then he got on to unification—he said he was a unificationist.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I never said that.

Mr. KELSO: If the hon. member did not say so—

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Why do you say that I said a thing that I did not say?

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member made remarks which would lead us to believe that he is a unificationist.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: I never said that.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member told us as plainly as words could tell us that he believed that the opinions of the States should be set aside, and that there should be one central authority which should tell the States what they should do.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: Should delegate certain powers to the States.

Mr. KELSO: What does that mean—unifying the whole of the Federal activities, and handing over domestic matters to the States, which would be like glorified shire councils? That is what the hon. member indicated. Under such a scheme as that the smaller States would be at the mercy of Victoria and New South Wales. I do not think that hon. members opposite are sincere when they say they believe in unification. They know what the consequences would be to Queensland. We have a measure

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of independence now. I think we ought to start at the other end. We ought to get back a great measure of our former independence, and only delegate to the Federal Parliament those things which are absolutely national matters, and cut down the tremendous cost of the Federal Parliament at the present time. In that way we would develop our individuality in Queensland. I believe Queensland is being held back because she is in the Federation. Fancy being chained to a mad dog like Lang—a man who has ruined New South Wales, driven people and capital out of that State to Queensland and Victoria! Fancy being chained to a man like that.

Mr. PCLLOCK: A lot of people call Mr. Moore a mad dog, too; it depends on the viewpoint.

Mr. KELSO: The hon. member knows that some people come here from the South and say, "Can't you lend us Mr. Moore?"

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: We will lend him.

Mr. KELSO: Mr. Moore is the man who is straightening the finances here, with the assistance of the Treasurer, and he is an example to the other States of the Commonwealth. Do hon. members opposite say the same thing of Mr. Lang? The Leader of the Opposition was one of the first to dissociate himself from Mr. Lang. But not so the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I do not want to be unkind this afternoon, as I might be ruled out of order if I said what I thought about the Deputy Leader's attitude in relation to Mr. Lang. The Labour Party had the opportunity of righting matters while they were in office; but they saw that their only hope was to hang on by the present electorates which were gerrymandered for their own purpose.

We are now taking the thing in hand, and doing it as the Act says it should be done; and we are going to reduce the number of members. For what reason? Now I will answer the hon. member for Gregory. He made a very temperate speech. I feel sometimes inclined to congratulate the hon. member, but the other night he gave me a nasty one on the solar plexus and I am not going to congratulate him any more; I am going to let the hon. member alone so far as throwing bouquets at him is concerned. The hon. member for Gregory, in a most temperate speech, suggested that the real reason why the Government are seeking to reduce the number of members by ten is owing to those people who write to the papers—"Pro Bono Publico," "Eye Witness," "A Mother of Ten," and people of that sort. The Government are not unduly influenced by paper criticism; but any Government is influenced to a certain extent. What we take notice of is the opinion expressed through the whole of Queensland by people of all shades of political opinion, and which we can get at any time, because, fortunately, we have forty-four members representing some of the best electorates in Queensland, and it is their business—as hon. members opposite know, as they do the same themselves—to ascertain the temper of the people with regard to public questions, quite independent of newspaper criticism. Those forty-four members give us the benefit of their information when we meet—hon. members know that they did the same thing—and, quite outside of newspaper criticism,

we make up our minds as to the feeling of the public; and immediately we translate into action what we believe to be the desire of the majority of the people of Queensland. Hence this Bill.

We are not unduly influenced by newspaper criticism. I am not talking now of the sensible newspaper criticism. We recognise that some of the biggest bosh men could ever write is published in the press. It is a good thing the newspapers allow them to let the steam off, to get these things off their chests, and to see their names in print; but it does not count very much with us. We want to find out the feeling of the people, and we have the means of getting information as to what the public think of us; and, as a result of information we have got, we have decided that there is a general desire for a moderate reduction in the number of members, and that is our reason for introducing this Bill—not, as hon. members opposite say, that we wish to cut out nine Labour seats.

Mr. FOLEY (*Leichhardt*) [5.27]: Anyone who has followed events, or has observed what we might call the signs of the times, since the present Government have been in power may easily realise why this measure is presented to Parliament. It is quite evident to anyone who has watched the happenings of the last two and a-half years and has paid attention to what has been foreshadowed by hon. members opposite that this Bill is nothing more or less than a plan on the part of the Government in the direction of self-preservation. The Government realise the position which confronts them. From the very moment they were returned to office we see them attacking a great section of the people—the working class, which constitutes the majority of our citizens—we see them making war on their interests and their standard of living to such an extent that it is now impossible for them to stand any further reduction. It is only reasonable that hon. members opposite should pay attention to this position of the people. They realise that, as a result of their legislation and administration, the electors are only waiting for an opportunity to record their votes in order to hurl the present Administration from office; therefore they naturally look round for a means to preserve themselves.

One of the first events in the train of causes of this measure is to be found in the amendment of the arbitration law. Later on we had various taxation measures, which brought into the area of taxation thousands of people who had previously paid no taxes—rightly so, on account of their small earning capacity. Then last session we had an amendment of the Elections Act, by which the Government, realising the effect of their actions on the great mass of the people, disfranchised thousands of workers in the Central, Western, and Northern portions of the State. That may be looked upon as the first sign of the times, the first indication that the Government were looking about for a means to safeguard themselves from defeat at the next election. Apparently, however, the disfranchising of such a tremendous number of nomadic workers in those portions of the State was not sufficient; and a survey of the electorates had to be made to see whether it was possible, by means of a redistribution, to make good the deficiency.

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Instead of extending equitable representation to the people of this State by a redistribution on the existing quota, which would have adjusted all anomalies, the Government realise the impossibility of their return to power, and have so fixed matters as to safeguard themselves. We have now a proposal to reduce the number of electoral seats by ten, thereby reducing the number of parliamentary representatives in this Parliament by a similar number. By that method the Government hope so to adjust matters as to secure their return at the next election. It has been stated by Government members that, if they had cared, the number could have been reduced to twenty or thirty; but apparently upon making a survey of the whole situation they discovered that by reducing the number by ten a redistribution scheme could be evolved which would work out more effectively for them. We know from hints that have been dropped by Government members from time to time that that survey has already been made, that the question has been considered by Cabinet, presented to the Government caucus, and has the approval of Government members. Only the other day the Premier lowered himself to insinuate that in all probability one hon. member on this side would be missing after the next election. The Premier has a full knowledge of what is likely to occur.

The Bill is part of a plan for self-preservation on the part of the Government. Apparently their action in amending the Elections Act to disfranchise thousands of nomadic workers in the North and West was not sufficient, hence the introduction of this measure. It is also important to remember that the Government have an additional safeguard within reach, in case their plans go amiss. We have it from the Government Party directors, according to the last convention held, and we have it from their official organ, the "Courier," that it is intended to reintroduce the Legislative Council on a reconstituted basis. Any intelligent person who considers one event after another must be convinced that the Bill is purely and simply part of a plan to save the Government from defeat, if possible. It is farcical to suggest that the Bill is introduced in the interests of economy, or that it is introduced to give effective representation to the people of this State. The existing system provides representation as equitable as could be devised by any system. It has been pointed out by previous speakers that in 1886, with less than half the existing population, there was a desire on the part of the people for increased and more equitable representation than then existed. I wish to emphasise this point: If that action was justified in 1886 with the then existing population, then the present system provides a fair and equitable basis, having regard to the present population of approximately 1,000,000.

I cannot understand how the Government arrive at the title for the Bill, more especially as they are reducing the representation laid down in the Act of 1886. No logical argument can be brought forward by Government members that the Bill is justified on the score of economy. We may economise to the extent of £5,000 under this measure; but that saving will be effected by cutting out ten electoral divisions and ten representatives in this Chamber. If the

plan which the Government have in view is carried out, as I feel sure it will be, as the Nationalist convention has authorised it, the Government will proceed to re-establish the Legislative Council. That will mean an expenditure of an additional £30,000 per annum. The whole thing is a farce, and will be viewed as such by the electors. I would again emphasise that this measure is part of a plan arrived at by the Government to safeguard themselves against defeat. They foresaw that, given a fair chance, Labour would defeat them at the next election. Notwithstanding the restriction of the franchise and the elimination of Labour seats which is proposed under this Bill, it is quite possible that the plans of the Government will be upset.

One hon. member opposite interjected that the late Government retained office by gerrymandering the electorates. The late Attorney-General pointed out how fallacious that statement was in view of the fact that the present Government are in power as a result of that redistribution. I remember very well that the only persons who expressed themselves as being dissatisfied with the late Government's redistribution scheme as adopted from the findings of the commission were those members who were likely to lose their seats. Every other hon. member was quite contented, and, as a matter of fact, pointed out to the electors how fair and equitable the redistribution was.

The Bill provides power in clause 15 to the Governor in Council to resort to a certain section of the Elections Act in the scheme of redistribution, if it is desired. The Attorney-General very carefully kept that fact in the background when explaining the provisions of the Bill. That clause is inserted to give the present Administration power to vary the findings of the commission in the event of it not doing the job according to the lights of the Government. When the Government amended the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, we had the spectacle of the Attorney-General making the public statement that the amended Act was not functioning as was intended. That gives rise to the thought that, if the commission to be appointed under this Bill does not function in the way the Government desire, they will invoke the aid of the Governor in Council to make regulations to vary the recommendations of the commission according to their liking. Those are my views on the matter, and I intend to cast my vote against the Bill at every stage.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [5.40]: I did not intend to speak at this stage, but I consider it my duty to do so after listening to the hon. member for Mundingburra and his references to North Queensland, because I am second to no hon. member in my advocacy of North Queensland interests.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The best member Cook ever had.

Mr. KENNY: I was surprised to hear the hon. member for Mundingburra say that there was no development in North Queensland, because I remember that the Labour Government, of which he was a member, were in power for fifteen years. When we realise the contents of this measure and we hear the remarks of some hon. members opposite about a number of people

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being disfranchised in the North, one wonders whether these hon. members know what they are talking about, because if the Labour Government had looked after the interests of North Queensland there would have been no occasion for any reduction in the number of members in that part of the State. When the hon. member speaks about this measure being an attack on the Labour Party and affecting only Labour seats, I am convinced again that he does not know what he is talking about.

We know that during the Labour regime the population of North Queensland was reduced considerably, and there was ample evidence of the state of stagnation which was caused by the Labour Government. Since the present Government assumed office, there has been considerable development. For example, there is the establishment of the tobacco industry in the Mareeba district. A further example is the work of harnessing the Barron Falls—a work which was used as a political catch-ery by hon. members opposite. Then, again, we know that the Mossman district, which I have the pleasure to represent, is now, after fifteen years of isolation, getting communication with Cairns and the southern portion of the State—a work that was never thought of by hon. members opposite. We know that in respect of the Daintree lands there was no other communication for settlers but the small rowing boats in which they brought their cream to market. Now the position has been considerably improved by the provision of road communication.

Mr. POLLOCK: What has this got to do with the Bill?

Mr. KENNY: No doubt I am getting away from the Bill; and I shall have many opportunities of dealing with that phase of the question. I merely wish hon. members opposite to know that it was the Labour Government which put North Queensland in the position of not being able to justify the whole of its representation to-day, let alone warrant an increase of that representation. I am not concerned as to how this redistribution will affect me, and I am not aware whether the hon. member for Townsville will be my opponent, as he suggested. One thing I can guarantee is how the result will go in the Cook electorate.

Mr. POLLOCK: If you know that, you must have a good idea as to how the redistribution is going.

Mr. KENNY: I have a good idea as to what the people in the Cook electorate are going to do. I care not which hon. member opposite—even the Leader of the Opposition—comes into the Cook electorate; I know what the result will be. I am, however, digressing.

Hon. members opposite accuse the Government of trying to cut out Labour representation. The hon. member for Mundingburra stated that definitely, and in the next breath he said we were taking away the representation of North Queensland. Who represents North Queensland to-day? North Queensland is not represented by a majority of Labour members; so what is there in his argument? The hon. member said that, when the Labour Party was in office, there was no talk of separation in North Queensland, and no talk of a Northern Parliament. It was while Labour was in office that there

was talk of a Northern Parliament in order to get away from the Labour Party; and that propaganda was kept going up to the time Labour went out of office. It was only when Labour got into power in the Federal Parliament that the agitation was revived. The Leader of the Opposition talked about unification; and I ask hon. members opposite what effect unification would have on the North. Over 50 per cent. of our population is situated in the vicinity of the capital city of the State; and I am of the opinion that, if we had unification, there would be no people in North Queensland at all, as the whole of the population would drift to the capital city, whether it be Canberra or anywhere else.

Mr. POLLOCK: North Queensland is going to lose representation under this Bill, and will probably lose you, too.

Mr. KENNY: If it was for the good of North Queensland that they should lose me, I would be quite willing to go. Hon. members opposite are trying to read into the Bill something which is not in it. They are very concerned about their seats. They are wondering why we are reducing the number of members of this Assembly. We know quite well that legislation always follows the wish of the people. Throughout Australia to-day the people are condemning the cost of government; and the surprising thing to me is that the squeal about reducing the number of members of Parliament should come from these electorates which are represented by hon. members opposite. It is a reflection on the representation of those electorates.

Mr. POLLOCK: Why did you stop at sixty-two?

Mr. KENNY: The parliamentary representative has a big job to represent the outlying portion of the State.

Mr. POLLOCK: You are providing an argument for an increase in the number.

Mr. KENNY: I am not providing an argument for an increase. If hon. members opposite would support a reduction in the city seats by half, and give the balance of the representation to the outlying portions of the State, I would be with them.

Mr. POLLOCK: Why don't you make the quota larger?

Mr. KENNY: It is necessary to have a redistribution, because under the quota allowed in the Act the Labour Party fixed a minimum number of electors in city electorates, where the population is greater, and in the country electorates they had the maximum number of electors.

Mr. HYNES: Name some.

Mr. KENNY: Brisbane, Charters Towers, Mount Morgan, and Rockhampton. In the cities, with the densest population, the Labour Government had a minimum number in the electorates; but in the North, where we wanted development, the electorates had the maximum quota.

I admit that the last Government were responsible for that; but the distribution on this occasion will be done by a Commission, and it will be left to the commission to distribute the seats fairly. There is a necessity to put in the Bill a minimum under which they cannot go, and a maximum they cannot exceed, so as to look after those

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places in North Queensland that the hon. member for Mundingburra is so concerned about.

Mr. POLLOCK: Why are you altering the quota?

Mr. KENNY: I do not take exception to the quota. I would like to see a margin of 25 per cent. above or below the quota, in order to give greater representation in the outside districts; but we must do the job in the interests of the whole of the community; and, when we realise that the outlying portions of the State will be protected by the maximum and minimum provision to the extent of 40 per cent. over the city seats, we can see that the country has had a fair crack of the whip.

Mr. POLLOCK: Why didn't you move that 25 per cent. in your party?

Mr. KENNY: The hon. member for Gregory is trying to bait me, but he will want to get up early in the morning to do that. I do not give way one iota to hon. members opposite in my desire to safeguard the interests of North Queensland. North Queensland will be looked after under this Bill. There is only one thing I regret, and that is that during the regime of the Labour Party North Queensland was depopulated, and we had not the representation that we have at present.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*) [5.52]: I am going to ask the Attorney-General why he does not go further than a reduction of members of Parliament. This Bill provides for the reduction of the number of members of Parliament and an alteration of the number of electoral districts to sixty-two; for the distribution of electoral districts and to make provision for the better representation of the people of Queensland in Parliament. That raises the question of better representation; and I take it that that will include the question of elective Ministries. If we want to get down to democratic principles, Ministries should be elected by a ballot of members of Parliament. (Opposition assent, and laughter.)

If we are going to carry out democracy in its purest essentials, every hon. member should have the right of voting in secret ballot for the election of Ministers. Further, in order to carry that out, there must be proportional representation. Those are things to which the Labour Party are opposed. While listening to the talk of hon. members opposite about democracy, I asked myself how many of those hon. members are sincere in what they are saying. Only the other day we had the hon. member for Mount Morgan, who was a Minister in the Labour Government, saying—

"We, as members of Parliament, are held responsible to the people we represent. What is the Governor in Council? The Governor in Council is the Cabinet. Very often the Cabinet is not unanimous. A Cabinet of ten may be divided six for and four against. The majority of the Cabinet will have power to amend an Act on which their own Cabinet is not unanimous. What is that going to lead to? A strong Premier with a pliable Cabinet, and probably a strong party, will be able to frame by-laws giving him power to do what he likes in recess without the representatives of the people making a word of protest or

having the right to protest. Every member of this House owes a duty to the democracy of this State to prevent the Government of Queensland becoming a bureaucracy."

If, for instance, in a party of forty-six, we had twenty-four for and twenty-two against the introduction of a Bill, the twenty-four would carry the Bill in caucus. The Bill is brought into the House, and the result is that these twenty-four rule the balance of the seventy-two members. The Labour Government showed us so often that that was what took place with their party. If we are going to have democracy, let us have it in its purest sense. A reduction of members is purely elementary, and is touching only the surface of things.

If this Bill is for the better control of Parliament and the better government of the country, let us get as far as we possibly can with it. I am not supporting the hon. member for Fassifern, but I want to know exactly what hon. members opposite mean. If they say that the best form of government is to get away from bureaucracy, or departmental control, or government by Order in Council, so that every member of this House has the right to know what is going on and vote openly, then let us carry the thing to its logical conclusion. Hon. members must go that distance, or else be silent on this Bill. They cannot argue on this Bill for democratic principles; they cannot say that this is a negation of democracy, and at the same time introduce bureaucracy into government, or govern by Orders in Council, all of which things they did for many years when they were in office. It was they who set the example. The worst form of government we know to-day was planned by a Labour Government. They even went so far as to import the proxy vote from Europe to destroy democracy in this State. It was one of the worst forms of government that could be introduced; and it was hon. members opposite who put it on the statute-book. Yet they now cry out against bureaucracy!

An analysis of the speeches of hon. members opposite makes me feel that the pioneers of the Labour Party, who prepared the ground, planted the seed, and saw the crop grow, would be very disgusted with the men who now reap the increase due to their work. The reduction of the number of members of Parliament is only a very small thing in parliamentary reform; and I believe that before very many years have passed this Assembly will be a very different place. An evolution is going on which is going to affect this Chamber; and sooner or later Governments will find themselves more under the control of Parliament than they are at present. After listening to hon. members opposite, I have come to the conclusion that on Thursday next they will vote for the amendment of the Secretary for Labour and Industry in favour of co-operation, because, if they are in favour of democracy, they are in favour of non-party government, which means that every man who is elected to this Chamber has an equal vote under equal conditions, which means that a majority of twenty-four in a party consisting of forty-six shall not control the destinies of this State. I am tired of listening to the democratic cries of hon. members opposite, whilst at the same time their actions prove them to be enemies to democracy.

Mr. Fry.]

Mr. COOPER (*Bremser*) [7.0]: The debate on this resolution has been dragged into many by-paths and byways by the hon. member for Cook and the hon. member for Kurilpa; but I shall endeavour to bring it back to the straight and narrow path in which the Opposition desire it to remain.

The main consideration of a measure such as this should be that of representation, and there is no doubt that representation is a big thing in this Bill. Representation is something that has grown up in the parliamentary system of this country, taken from the parliamentary system of England. Representation is substituted presence as opposed to actual presence. There was a time when the actual presence of all voters could be obtained in the Legislature. That was the case away back in the days of ancient Greece; but those days have gone, and we have gradually come to a time when we have what is known as representative government; that is, a Government representing certain sections of the people. There are some people who believe that the State is governed by a certain number of men as men. That, of course, is not the case. The State is governed by a number of people as the representatives of certain sections of the community. Therefore, it is really a matter of representation that we are to consider, in the main, in a matter of this kind. It is not a matter of men, but a matter of government in the name of the nation. That argument entirely upsets the non-party contention. There are people who contend that there should be such a thing as non-party government; but such a thing is an impossibility to-day; because, when all things are considered, we must get down to party and party measures in some way or another. Might I remind you, Mr. Roberts, that some years ago interested people recommended that there should be some sort of coalition in Queensland. Without mentioning the names of either gentlemen, I need only say that two were mentioned as being the ideal leaders of this movement. And, again, without mentioning names, hon. members will remember that one was a retired Agent-General and the other was the then Premier of the State. One of these gentlemen was somewhat impressed with the idea of the newspaper arguments for a coalition; and the first man said to the second, "I suppose you have seen our names closely associated with the proposed coalition for the government of Queensland," and the second man said, "I have noticed it." The first man then said, "Might we discuss the matter?" and the second said, "I have no objection." The first man said, "If we are to form a Government, it will be necessary to have some ideals upon which Queensland is to be governed. The burning question of the day has to deal with land. A certain measure with which I have been connected has been termed 'The Repudiation Act.' What will be our policy in Parliament on that measure of repudiation? Would you stand for it, or would I have to give up my ideas upon that point?" Then he said, "There is the matter of arbitration. I strongly believe in arbitration: it is one of the ideals that the nation should aim for. How do you stand upon that? Will you adopt my arbitration principles, or shall I have to jettison them and follow you?" After bringing up one or two questions, the man not well versed in politics said, "I can

[*Mr. Cooper.*

quite see that a coalition between people who are absolutely opposed—"

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman opened his speech by dealing with the matter before the Committee, but he is now getting away from the question.

Mr. COOPER: I am just using this to illustrate the impossibility of representatives of the people elected along certain lines following a thing in any other way than on party lines. If you, Mr. Roberts, rule that aspect of the question out of order, I shall probably reserve it for the second reading. (Laughter.) If I had been allowed to proceed, I would have connected nicely with the great thing that hampers, that is the want of simplification. In all our measures simplification is the great thing, and simplification cannot be obtained with a complicated system. I admit that the great thing to be desired in this connection is equality of representation. There are various things that prevent the ideal being reached. Equality, of course, is an impossibility, and an approximate equality is the only thing that can be reached. I am afraid that the Bill as outlined by the Minister does not give that approximate equality that is to be desired, or that true democracy desires. In that case the Bill fails, in that it does not give that approximation to equality that the country demands, and that has been the aim of all people who have dealt at any great length with the matter of representation of the people.

The matter of getting away from equality of representation and getting back to a dictatorship has been ably dealt with by other hon. members on this side; but I would like to point out that the argument used by the Attorney-General that it would save expense is one of those myths that have been used over and over again in this Chamber. There is no greater fallacy than that a reduction in the number of members of Parliament will to any great extent reduce the cost of government.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you say that to reduce the number of members will not reduce the cost of Parliament?

Mr. COOPER: I ask the Minister: Will a reduction of members of this Assembly reduce railway expenditure by one penny? It will not. I ask the Attorney-General: Will a reduction of members of this House reduce the expenditure of his department? It will not. As a matter of fact, it is likely to add to rather than reduce expenditure, because an increased expenditure will be placed on a restricted number of members of this Assembly.

Let me take my own case as an illustration. I represent a constituency fairly close to the city, and I am, therefore, able to get into touch with the various departments and consult with my electors the same day, or in one or two days. Every department with which I come in contact is saved a tremendous amount of labour in answering communications received by me from electors. That is one of the big expenses connected with electoral representation. I suppose that during the last four or five months, during which the Railway Department has been suffering severely from the retrenchment policy of the Government, I was in the office of the Commissioner for Railways at least a

hundred times. Had I been the representative of a big constituency that was unable to keep in close touch with the department, it would have meant two or three hundred letters being written. Larger constituencies mean a greater demand upon the departments of this State for hon. members to keep in touch with their constituents.

The Home Secretary is not here, but I well remember the time when the hon. gentleman was a member of the Labour Party. He told us in caucus that his correspondence for the year averaged 3,000 letters.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You should not say here what he told you in caucus.

Mr. COOPER: He also said it in this Chamber.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is altogether different.

Mr. COOPER: The hon. gentleman said that his correspondence averaged 3,000 letters annually. That was in respect of the small constituency that was then represented by the present Home Secretary. I can assure this Committee that on the score of expense the State is not going to save one penny by the reduction in members; rather do I believe it will be added to.

Then there is the other question as to whether any great benefit will be achieved. Hon. members on the Government side pretend to believe that there is nothing hidden in the measure, and that there is no ulterior motive for its introduction. If there is no ulterior motive, if there is no saving of expense but rather the adding of expense, why the introduction of the measure? Having looked at it from all angles, I fail to find in it that reason that we should have for the introduction of a measure of this kind.

Added to that is the late hour at which the measure is introduced. In previous introductions of measures of this kind or of amendments thereof, I believe I can say that they were introduced at least in the second session of the Parliament. Here is the closing session of the Parliament. According to what the Attorney-General told us, the commission is not expected to report until 1st December. It may not be able to report until the 1st February, which means that it will probably be July or August before the Government can go to the country to give an account of their work to the electors. Of course, a picked commission might report a week after it was appointed; but we must take the statement of the Attorney-General that there have been no preliminary surveys. Nothing of that kind has been done; nor have the three men who are to compose this commission been approached upon the matter. I am accepting the Attorney-General's statement that no spade work has been done; that no man has been approached; and that nobody has any idea as to what the outcome of this commission will be. That being so, the 1st of December is indeed a very quick time in which this commission is to report. There are so many things that these gentlemen must make themselves acquainted with. For instance, they must make themselves acquainted with the community of interests, with the natural features of the country, and with the various divisions into which this country is divided.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They did not take that much trouble when you were in power.

Mr. COOPER: If I remember rightly, they consulted the Secretary for Agriculture, at any rate.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They treated me quite all right.

Mr. COOPER: If I am not mistaken, they consulted the present Treasurer on the matter.

The TREASURER: They did not.

Mr. COOPER: I may have put it the wrong way. Probably the Treasurer consulted them, which is a different matter. Be that as it may, the 1st of December is a date on which the commission may not be able to report; and, if it does not report by that date, it means an extension of the date, by which the matter is to be finally adopted. I can see no possible hope of the Government going to the country before July or possibly August next. Of course, the Attorney-General does not say that this Bill has been introduced solely for the purpose of lengthening the period of office of the Government. I cannot see any reason unless I adopt the views of hon. members on this side; and reason compels me to accept it, namely, that there is something ulterior in the introduction of this measure.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*) [7.15]: This is a proposition which will make an already city Government more and more government by the city. We have the words of that excellent statesman, the hon. member for Carnarvon, to the effect—

Mr. MAXWELL: Hit him when he is not here!

Mr. BEDFORD: I'll hit you while you are here. (Laughter.) After getting past this unseemly interruption of the hon. member, who is old enough, if he is not intelligent enough, to know better. (Laughter.)

Mr. KELSO interjected.

Mr. BEDFORD: I am not speaking to old gins—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! I would draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that, while I am in the chair, he cannot refer to hon. members as "old gins."

Mr. BEDFORD: The continuous claim has been made from the other side that they represent democracy, which they must know is untrue. They have misrepresented democracy very successfully during the last two and a-half years. The old tale was that democracy insisted on one vote one value. That altogether disappears under this Bill. The hon. member for Carnarvon—I trust I shall not be called upon to withdraw the fact that he is a great statesman—has already stated, being well inside the Government counsels—that the rearrangement of the seats will not affect the Darling Downs. Naturally it has been put on the great pastoral areas, which are irrevocably the property of Labour representation. The old idea of one vote one value was kept to under the old scheme, consistent with the fact that the man representing a distant electorate, with his constituents far from the seat of Government, could not expect to get the same results as members living continuously round the city. That has been felt so much

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in Victoria—the whole of the State of Victoria is only a few thousand square miles greater in area than my own electorate, and some 18,000 square miles less than the electorate of the hon. member for Gregory—

Mr. KELSO: Look at the population.

Mr. BEDFORD: What has population to do with this fact? Population is against you. In Victoria the city is cut up into electorates of 24,000 electors, while the country seats can go down to 6,000 electors. With the great railway system of Victoria, representing an area smaller than the electorate of Gregory and but little larger than my own electorate, one can see, if the Victorian Act is necessary in order to give the country proper representation, how far this Bill fails. Everyone must know that the duties of a member of Parliament on the far-western edge of this country are immeasurably greater than those of city members.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: If you had a city constituency, you would alter your opinion.

Mr. BEDFORD: I cannot have a city constituency because I do not sing "God Save the King" often enough. This has been forced on the Government like every change of its loan policy—if they ever had one—by the lowest class of newspaper advice. The Government continually change their views as they change their clothes consequent on the last blast of flatulence from the offices of newspapers, mostly interpreted by morons in deplorable possession of printing presses.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They are very kind to you, all the same. You do well out of it.

Mr. BEDFORD: I do not do well out of it. There are newspapers and newspapers, Attorneys-General and Attorneys-General, Treasurers and Treasurers, and saints and saints—but I will not make any further invidious comparisons. Part of the reason of this general attack on Parliament and members of Parliament is, first of all, an inferiority complex, which hates to find anybody else in authority, no matter that they have been elected by the votes of the people. But there is also a general objection to members of Parliament as such, mostly voiced by the people who want to get into Parliament. Have the Government ever considered that this newspaper demand for a new Legislative Council comes from small spoilers of paper and ink, who decide that they may represent the great voice of nobody in an Upper House? On the one hand, we have the demand for economy—which amounts to nothing—by the cutting out of ten members, nine of them with Labour seats; so that, as I said in a question to the Premier some time since, I sincerely believe that I described this Bill properly in saying that it was a Bill to attempt to reduce Labour representation in Parliament without first consulting the electors, and that the proposition emanated from certain small journalists from Pig Island that Australia should change her habit, which has obtained in this State for the last forty years the number of seventy-two members having been fixed really because of the difficulty of representation of outback electorates. The number of members of Parliament was fixed at seventy-two more than forty years ago, when this country had not half its present population.

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One can see that a Government that will yield to any wind however foul, a Government that can yield to the last demand from some little rag which only lives by the credulity of the advertisers, and the leading articles in which are only read by members of Parliament—and they are only read by me for the purpose of making nasty remarks about the general want of sense in them.

Mr. KELSO: You are afraid of Mr. Reading.

Mr. BEDFORD: I am not afraid of any old gin.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BEDFORD: One can understand that by and by parliamentary representation will be whittled down until it comes to the omega of all these parliamentary reformers. We never, for instance, hear of any demand for the rejection of the vote for the King; we never hear of any demand for a reduction of the vote to the Governor; and we never hear of any demand for a reduction in regard to all those people who are so highly placed and highly paid because they are on the side of the vested interests which these rags represent. We have heard no storm of annoyance, we have heard no resentment from the newspapers as to the action of Lukin, who has taken for some years a retiring allowance from this State, and then was made a Federal judge at the behest of the Bruce-Page Government—which engaged as many duds as this Government would if they were in office long enough—but they will not be in office long enough, as the Bruce-Page Government was.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Judge Lukin had nothing to thank your Government for.

Mr. BEDFORD: Lukin should never have been appointed to a judgeship.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in referring to a judge in that strain.

Mr. BEDFORD: This Bill is said to have been brought in from the point of view of economy. The number of members is to be reduced from seventy-two to sixty-two in order to make some ridiculous saving. The idea of government that consists in reducing the number of members from seventy-two to sixty-two, then to fifty, from fifty to forty, from forty to thirty, from thirty to twenty, and from twenty to ten, would probably end by telling the House that the ideal form of government would be Hancock, of Renown Rubber Company renown, who, in spite of Renown Rubber, was appointed by the Government to juggle figures in the Mungana case; or we might get a more ideal form of government by lessening Parliaments numerically and interpose between Governments and the government little oligarchies of Hancock and Walsh, and, maybe, Sleeman and Macartney, and then in disgust we might have Fascism, a dictatorship, or an absolute monarchy.

Some little time ago we had an alteration to the Constitution Act by which the salaries of members were raised from £300 to £500. There were only twelve of the Opposition who voted against that increase, although they all talked against it, and they all took it. Then in 1926 we had the increase from £500 to £750, when twenty-three of

them voted against it, and all of them grabbed it with both hands.

Let us see what this economy comes to. On the one hand this Government has slaughtered State enterprises by throwing them out at any price because of its insensate hatred of the principle.

As a matter of fact, they offered to the Renown Rubber Company for £250 a year land which they valued at £13,000. They slaughtered these State enterprises, and started another with a derelict meatworks. They killed the Nonconformist conscience by continuing the "Golden Casket," even though their Treasurer is the hon. member for Wynnum, who certainly did get something back from the Margaret Marr Memorial Hall some months after the gaff was blown. They cut down the old men's rum at Dunwich. They cut out the nurses' tea. They cut down State children by 1s. a week. They sweated the wages of the waitresses in the parliamentary refreshment-rooms. They wiped out all their rural awards and all the pastoral awards until married men in my electorate working on stations—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I shall have to ask the hon. member to resume his seat unless he deals with the question before the Committee.

Mr. BEDFORD: We differ on that, but I must obey your ruling. They spent £35,000 on a useless economist. These are the statesmanlike actions of men who now want to juggle quotas and boundaries, and disfranchise men who have always had the vote in an effort to retain office. These are the actions of men who would disfranchise voters who have families living in Charleville, for instance, and have to travel for three months in the year. Yet, although they can alter these things, there is one thing they cannot alter; they cannot avoid the wave of unpopularity that is going to annihilate them. They may change their name, just as the keeper of a disorderly house adopts other aliases when the police "chivvy" him from suburb to suburb; but it will not help them, any more than in the Federal arena their imaginings that their pernicious anaemia is going to be temporarily alleviated by a transfusion of blood from the latest Labour rat will help them. I reserve my more poignant remarks for the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*) [7.30]: The resolution contains these rather remarkable words, "to make provision for the better representation of the people of Queensland in Parliament." It is most significant that, when hon. members opposite and the party with which they are associated engage in any political fight, they endeavour to cover up their actions by such phrases as I have just quoted. I certainly think that the prophesy uttered by the hon. member for Warrego will come true. It will not matter what alterations are made in the electoral boundaries or what other things are done by the Government, political annihilation will come their way.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: You were lucky at the last election.

Mr. KIRWAN: I was lucky at the last election, and I have been lucky at many other elections.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: You were abnormally lucky last time.

Mr. KIRWAN: I am here, and I am the only representative in this Chamber who came in in 1912 for the first time. I have seen a few faces come to this Chamber, and I have seen a few leave again. I shall also see the defeat of the Secretary for Labour and Industry at the next election. Prior to the last elections in Victoria the Tory Party introduced a redistribution scheme having a similar purpose to that contained in the scheme now under discussion. Mr. Allan, Leader of the Country Party, was the Premier, and he anticipated that by an alteration of electoral boundaries and the fixing of a quota of 26,000 for city electorates and 6,000 for the country his party would be returned with a majority. The redistribution was so unfair and inequitable and the deliberate purpose for which it was brought forward was so patent to everyone in Victoria that it brought about the defeat of the Allan Government.

When the people of Queensland realise the full portent of this measure, the Government of this State will meet with a similar fate. In looking back over the political history of Queensland it is rather strange that anti-Labour Governments have attempted to stem the onward march of the Labour movement in the past. I can remember when the first fifteen Labour men came into this Parliament in 1895. One of the first Bills dealt with by that Parliament was a Bill to amend the Elections Act with the deliberate and avowed purpose of disfranchising thousands of voters in Western Queensland in a similar manner to that achieved by the passage of a Bill last session. It was anticipated that the amendment of the electoral law in that direction would bring about the defeat of the Labour men in the western portions of this State. However, that was not the result. Ever since then, when the party opposite have been in a tight corner, they have attempted to interfere with the electoral law of the State.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What have you to say about the fact that your electoral seat contains the smallest number of electors in Brisbane?

Mr. KIRWAN: I do not care who constitute the redistribution commission. I did not worry them on the last occasion, because, no matter what they do, they cannot do me any harm. The Attorney-General wants to know why the number in my electorate has been reduced, and I will tell him. The construction of Barry parade was instrumental in depriving me of something in the vicinity of 1,000 votes by the resumption of a number of houses in the locality, chiefly boarding-houses, accommodating an average of from twelve to twenty people. A number of houses were resumed prior to the construction of the new Grey street bridge, and another 200 to 300 electors were sent about their business. Those two factors contribute largely to the decrease in the number of electors in the Brisbane electorate, and to some extent account for the increase in the number in other electorates.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY: It shows the necessity for a redistribution.

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. gentleman is very much concerned about a redistribution; but, if it is to be for a particular purpose, as outlined at the end of this resolution—for "the better representation of the people of Queensland in Parliament"—there may

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be something in it; but we know from the methods adopted by the Allan Government in Victoria and the Bavin Government in New South Wales, and from the political records of the party he is associated with, and the policy it stands for, what system of redistribution will be attempted in Queensland. When the redistribution scheme has been arrived at, it will be found that nine or ten Labour members will be without seats. That is why hon. members opposite are so anxious to bring about a redistribution of electorates. They are not concerned with economy, because, if they were, they would not have spent £20,000, as they did quite recently. That is the position.

No one can deny that a redistribution is necessary; but, as already pointed out, there is no more merit in reducing the number of members to sixty-two than in adopting the amendment moved by the hon. member for Rockhampton. To-night we had the spectacle of hon. members opposite swallowing their principles. They voted against the amendment of the hon. member for Rockhampton; yet, when we increased the number of members of Cabinet by one, they contended that the number of members of Parliament should be reduced from seventy-two to fifty, although, as the hon. member for Gregory reminds me, the need for economy at that time was not so strong as it is now. Hon. members opposite went to the electors, and said that, if they were the Government, instead of increasing the number of members of Cabinet by one, they would reduce the expense of Parliament by reducing the number of members from seventy-two to fifty. Now they have the opportunity of putting those political principles into operation, but they stop at sixty-two members. There is no questioning the fact that their reason for doing so is to enable them to give a more effective system of redistribution which is an attempt to save them from the wrath of the electors when they are compelled to face the music next May. It will probably be found that, with the exception of one member, all members on the Government benches will have their seats and electorates, and immediately the redistribution is over the Government can spring an election, because, so far as they are concerned, everything will be ready, while nine or ten members on this side will be looking for seats by virtue of the fact that their present seats will be obliterated. It is rather strange that, in dealing with this proposed legislation, the "Courier" said that possibly five seats in the West, three in the coastal belt in the North, and possibly two in the Central district would be affected.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: What do they know about it?

Mr. POLLOCK: The Premier has dropped a few hints.

Mr. KIRWAN: The "Courier" seems to be able to get some inside information as to the intentions of the Government. Quite recently, when the Government caucus was discussing the re-establishment of the Upper House, the "Courier" on the morning following the decision said, "These are our ideas. That is the way the matter ought to be fixed up." Earlier in the debate the hon. member for Toombul interjected something about "poetic justice."

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Nemesis will overtake you yet.

[Mr. Kirwan.]

Mr. KIRWAN: That is what could be expected from the hon. member, who, in this Chamber, last session preferred to give votes to brick and mortar rather than to the men and women of this city. He assisted by his vote to deprive hundreds of men and women in this city of their undoubted right as citizens to exercise the franchise in the local authority elections. But if a woman had a 12 by 12 room in the T. and G. Building, the hon. member for Toombul would give a vote, not to the woman but to the room. If that woman had a house at Asot, she would be entitled to another vote in respect of that. I remember the hon. member addressing a meeting in his own electorate, and saying that one result of the alterations of the municipal franchise would be the wiping out of the Labour Party in municipal politics. What happened? Out of fourteen Nationalists who stood for election thirteen were consigned to political oblivion. The defeated Nationalists complained most bitterly of hon. members opposite, who, they said, were responsible for bringing about a change in public opinion. At the first opportunity the people of this city dealt with the Nationalist Party in the effective way they did. The extraordinary fact is that the only hon. member who had the courage to support a municipal candidate was the hon. member for Enoggera, and Alderman Lanham, the candidate concerned, was the only Nationalist who won. Some of the remarks of the defeated Nationalists would not bear printing in a respectable journal like the "Courier."

Mr. KELSO: They were not Nationalists.

Mr. KIRWAN: Just imagine the hon. member for Nundah endeavouring to repudiate these men! Surely the hon. member would admit that ex-Alderman Watson, the then Acting Mayor of the city, was a Nationalist!

Mr. KELSO: He was not endorsed by the Nationalists.

Mr. KIRWAN: I do not desire to be drawn off the main principles of this Bill; but I may say that on one occasion the present Speaker of this Parliament, the Treasurer, the hon. member for Warwick, and the hon. member who has just interjected were expelled from the Nationalist Party, and were generally known as "The Rump." The hon. member for Nundah would not surely consider that he was any less a good Nationalist on that occasion than ex-Alderman Watson was at the last municipal election. I shall reserve any further remarks on this Bill until the second reading stage.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murillo*) [7.43]: It is amusing for one who has been in this Parliament as long as I have to listen to the squealing and the squirming of hon. members opposite, knowing what I do know of the redistribution that took place during the term of the Labour Government. They appointed a temperamentally fitted Commission at one period. Why did they appoint it? Because at the time they only had a majority of two in this Parliament and were afraid to go to the country without a redistribution that would suit them. They got the redistribution, but they ignored the Act which was passed. When the provision concerning the 20 per cent. above or below the

quota was put into the Act, it was with the idea of protecting the country electorates, so that the city and suburban areas would not have over-representation. I am one of those who think that it is only right that there should be a larger quota in the city and larger areas in the country. When the redistribution to which I have referred took place, it was found that Brisbane, embracing one-half square mile of country, had between 5,000 and 6,000 electors, while an electorate such as my own and others, embracing 18,000 to 22,000 square miles of country, had 1,000 more electors. Hon. members opposite complain that the Bill we are introducing will make a few little alterations practically similar in every respect to what were made previously.

The last redistribution under the Labour Government wiped out five farming electorates. If we take the different electorates, we find that in Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville, and other city electorates the number of electors is 20 per cent. below the quota. When we come to the farming electorates—and it is well known throughout Australia that, generally speaking, farming electorates do not support Labour—it is found that in many cases the number of electors is much above the quota. In the far-western portion of the State, which is practically wholly represented by Labour, the number of electors again is 20 per cent. below the quota. I have no objection to those far-western electorates containing 20 per cent. below the quota; but hon. members opposite rigged the electorates, and now they are squealing and complaining that we are going to do the same thing.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: What are you complaining about?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am complaining because one hon. member gets up and claims that there should be equal representation, and that all votes should be of equal value. He represents a city and suburban electorate. Then we get another member of the same party representing a far-western electorate claiming that there should not be one vote one value. Personally, I approve of the principle that all votes should not be of the same value. If all votes were of the same value, you might as well hand over the whole of the government of the State to the city and suburban areas; but this Bill provides, as was the case from 1910 to 1923, for fair representation for both the cities and the country. In the redistribution under the 1910 Act the spirit of the Act was adhered to, and city and suburban areas were cut up into electorates containing 20 per cent. above the quota, whilst semi-city and country areas, which might include a town containing 2,000 or 3,000 inhabitants and a certain portion of country lands, were cut into electorates containing the quota of voters, and the large western electorates were below the quota. The Bill provides for three classes of electorates, and, if the redistribution is made under those conditions and is made fairly and squarely, we shall have nothing to complain about. Unfortunately, that was not done under the Labour Government; yet hon. members opposite are now squealing because something is going to be done to bring about a better state of affairs. Let me prove what I contended in regard to this matter. On

31st December, 1930, according to the official figures, Brisbane contained 4,742 electors. I do not think the hon. member for Brisbane has one State school in his electorate. I do not think it has been necessary for him to go to the Department of Public Instruction once during the whole of the time he has been a member. There is no necessity for him to go to the Department of Agriculture, nor to the Department of Public Lands, because he has nothing to do with them. In fact, there is no department except the Railway Department that the hon. member for Brisbane is interested in.

Then we have the big metropolitan papers lauding Brisbane, and pointing out continually what Brisbane should get from Parliament. Then we have the Brisbane City Council looking after the Brisbane electorate, and attending to the roads, bridges, and streets therein; but, notwithstanding all that representation and the influence they can bring to bear through the press and through the City Council in other ways, there are only 4,742 electors in the electorate. Is that fair? Can hon. members opposite justify that? (Opposition interjection.) It is a scandalous state of affairs, and the quicker it is altered the better. We know that there has been a little fluctuation since the redistribution in 1912, but Brisbane never had the 20 per cent. margin above the quota.

Let me now deal with country electorates. The Burnett is a very large electorate, consisting principally of farmers. On the same date it had 8,168 electors—almost double the number in the Brisbane electorate. Can hon. members opposite justify that?

MR. POLLOCK: That is ten years after the redistribution. What were their numbers when the last redistribution was made?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: When the last redistribution was made the Act provided that the city and suburban electorates should contain 20 per cent. above the quota.

MR. POLLOCK: No; it said they could contain it.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Act does not definitely specify it; but that is the principle which has been carried out. Everybody knows that the reason why the provision as to 20 per cent. below and 20 per cent. above the quota was made was to enable representation to be given to the sparsely populated centres.

Then take Charters Towers, which at one time was a fairly large town, practically comprising only the town area. On 31st December, 1930, with the surrounding district, it only had 3,922 electors. Against that Cooroora, a country electorate, containing practically all farmers, had 9,129 electors—100 per cent. more than Charters Towers. Fortitude Valley, another electorate that is part and parcel of the city of Brisbane, contained 6,649 electors; Nanango, a farming electorate, 7,393. Paddington, a city electorate, contained 5,950, as against Wide Bay, a country electorate, with 8,842. Again, the city electorates of Rockhampton and Townsville had an enrolment of 5,315 and 4,847 respectively, whereas in Toowoomba, a farming centre, there were 8,224.

Then take the Murilla electorate. At the time of the election there were a little over 6,000 voters, but at the time of which I speak, the end of last year, the number of

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voters on the roll was 5,355. Murilla is the sixth largest electorate in Queensland, comprising just on 20,000 square miles; yet, in spite of that fact, it will have to take in additional country in order to bring it up to the 20 per cent. below the quota. It contains now more voters than the city of Brisbane; but 1,000 voters will have to be added to it in order to comply with the provisions of this Bill. Although in size it is amongst the biggest electorates, additional country will have to be added to it, just as additional country will have to be added to other electorates in order to bring about the division of the State into sixty-two electorates; but, so long as the distribution takes place in a fair and square manner, there is no reason to complain.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: Who will be on the commission?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We do not know who the commissioners will be; but there has never been an election in which some old representatives have not gone to the wall. That will happen again. I have seen a few elections—I think there are only four or five older members in the House than I—and I have never known an election where that did not happen.

MR. DUNLOP: Did you not vote on one election for fifty members?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member quoted from a very good speech which I made on one occasion. (Laughter.) On that occasion I did advocate fifty members, and I did so honestly; but, when matters come before a party, one must be satisfied by what is done by the majority. My view may still be that fifty are sufficient; but I am one of those who believe that, when we go into a party meeting and decide upon a particular measure, we should be prepared to stand by the decision of the majority, notwithstanding the fact that my party is not a party which would be likely to make it warm for anybody who did not. With the hon. member for Rockhampton I recognise that half a loaf is better than no bread. I am also like the hon. member in this respect—I admit that, when I came into this Chamber as a young member, I thought I was going to turn the whole place upside down. (Laughter.) But I had not been here for six months before I realised that I was only one of seventy-two and that I had not as much political influence as many other hon. members. We often think at first that we are going to do wonders, but we find that we cannot, and we have to be content with doing our level best. The Bill that it is proposed to introduce will be practically on all fours with another measure introduced for a similar purpose. A commission will be appointed to view the matter from all aspects. All I desire is a fair and square redistribution, and that is all that is desired by the Government.

MR. STOPFORD (*Mount Morgan*) [8.0]: I do not know why the Secretary for Railways occupied the time of the Committee at all. All that he desires is a fair redistribution of electoral seats. He quoted figures to show how the position in Queensland has altered since the last redistribution. Withdraw the Bill, and we are all of the one opinion. We all want a redistribution of seats. We quite realise, as those who

went before us realised, that in a State like Queensland where the population varies, where new industries develop and old industries decline, that a redistribution of electoral seats automatically becomes necessary in order to meet the situation, and to endeavour as far as possible to retain the quota laid down in the Act.

The Secretary for Railways has advanced no argument in favour of the reduction in the number of members constituting this Parliament. He stated that the Government were justified in providing for an alteration of electoral boundaries, because the Brisbane electoral district contained some 4,000 electors whilst a country electorate contained a number of electors in excess of the requirements of the Act. There is no need for legislative action to remedy that anomaly. The Elections Act enables the Government to appoint a commission to redistribute the boundaries at stated intervals without consulting the House at all.

MR. KELSO: Why did your Government not do it?

MR. STOPFORD: The Labour Government did do it. I think the Elections Act was passed in 1910, and a redistribution of seats was made. In 1922, after the expiration of a period of about ten years—that is the recognised period—the Labour Government carried out a further redistribution; so that the Government are doing nothing wrong in suggesting a redistribution of seats at this stage. Long before this Parliament was consulted, and when the Government's broken promises began to show clearly the writing on the wall, the newspapers supporting hon. members opposite insisted upon the Government giving effect to something that they could do without consulting Parliament. Those newspapers have urged the Government to gerrymander the electorates of this State. They have insisted upon the Government amending the constitution of this Assembly so that their party may have a better opportunity of escaping the result of their maladministration. When the Attorney-General rose, I expected some justification, other than the lame excuse he offered on the plea of economy, that would warrant this House saying at this particular period, when the people of Queensland are looking for an opportunity to judge his Government on the promises they made and on their accomplishment, that some real necessity prevailed for the impending action of the Government. It has been shown clearly that many years ago, when the population of this State was half what it is to-day, the strength of this House was equal to what the Government are now attempting to reduce the number of members of this Assembly to.

The Secretary for Railways informed us that he objected to the varying quotas provided for the city and country electorates, and said that, while he was in opposition, he attempted to have the quotas varied. I believe that he is honest in making that statement, and that he is also honest in believing in one vote one value. In a country like Queensland which has so many seasonal industries there are certain periods of the year when the workers gravitate to the cities, therefore, there must be a preponderance of voters in the cities as against the country. What is to overcome that evil, if an evil it be? The Government have

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definitely carried forward the same quota; and, if we are to accept the forecast of the press as being correct, nine of the ten seats that will be dispensed with will be Labour seats. It is a matter of extreme importance to my electorate and to the electorate represented by the hon. member for Rockhampton that the majority of those seats will come from the North and Central Queensland. That is why I cannot understand the hon. member for Rockhampton asking for a still further reduction in the representation of Northern and Central Queensland.

Mr. DUNLOP: I have always stood for a reduction of members.

Mr. STOPFORD: The hon. member may do so; but I cannot understand how he advocates the reduction of members on one occasion and decentralisation on another.

Mr. DUNLOP: I do not believe in cutting out nine Labour seats. It would be fairer if five Nationalists and five Labour seats were cut out.

Mr. STOPFORD: The only plea put forward by the Attorney-General for this Bill was that of economy. When the hon. gentleman was speaking in South Brisbane during the election campaign, he had a brain wave, and said that, if his party were returned to power, they would reduce the salaries of members of Parliament, and that the £18,000 saving thus effected capitalised at £360,000 would employ 10,000 men. It is a coincidence that the saving proposed to be effected in the salaries of hon. members is about the cost of the Mungana case. The £18,000 saving effected there is gone, and we have no result from it. To-day we are told that, if we reduce the number of members by ten, and in the process deprive Queensland of most able representatives like myself—(laughter)—we shall effect a certain amount of economy. I fail to see where that advantage comes in. I view this matter merely as an effort on the part of the Government to use the machinery of Parliament to escape their answering the same tribunal that gave them a mandate to enter Parliament and legislate for them. The Government assumed office on very clear-cut pledges.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Redistribution of electorates was one of them.

Mr. STOPFORD: But there was no suggestion of a reduction. The Government made certain promises to the electors, and the electors in the constituencies now in force placed emphatic confidence in them, and passed a vote of no confidence in us. The Government have been administering the affairs of the State for two years. No one ever thought that we would escape a redistribution of seats, because a Federal census was close at hand. Personally, I realised the change in my electorate was such that even with seventy-two seats I would be amongst the "also rans" when a redistribution took place. I had no illusions or heartburning, nor have I to-day; but the position is that hon. members on the Government side, fearing the wrath of the people and recognising that the redistribution made by Labour was a just one (Government laughter)—

Mr. BLACKLEY: Do you seriously suggest that?

Mr. STOPFORD: Can the hon. member show me one part of the Bill dealing with the machinery of redistribution of seats apart from the reduction of members that did not exist when the previous amendment was made? The Government have not altered the margin of 20 per cent. so far as city and country electorates are concerned. The Government must recognise that a free and unrestricted hand was given to a commission appointed to redistribute the electorates, and that under that distribution they were given power. If the Government merely carried on the work as the Act prescribes, and, by executive minute, appointed a commission, they would have no chance of being the Government again. But they have laid the ground carefully by an amendment of the Elections Acts which makes it possible for a man's name to be struck off the roll if he goes to an intermittent relief camp and is absent for one month.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You made it impossible for him to be taken off if he was in another State.

Mr. STOPFORD: I would rather be guilty of that than of the charge I am levelling against the Government. If a man leaves Brisbane to work on intermittent relief work at, say, Redcliffe, and he is absent for a month, his name is removed from the roll, and the police get twopence for doing it. That man cannot be enrolled again until he is resident for three months in the locality to which he has gone on relief work. Under the intermittent relief scheme it is most unlikely that he will be allowed to stay for three months, so that he has no chance of becoming enrolled as an elector. Every nomadic worker is going to be gerrymandered off the rolls by the alteration of the Elections Acts passed by the present Government. The Government are not satisfied to trust the people who trusted them. They cannot go to the people and say, "Judge us on the work we have done since last we appealed to you."

At 8.15 p.m.,

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

Mr. STOPFORD: They want a change from a common to a special jury. They want a jury stacked so that they can get an alteration of the electorates that will return them to this House. This Bill is one of many actions characteristic of the Government of the day, who recognise they have not fulfilled their promises to the people, and they fear the wrath of the people. There is no need, and there is no justification for the Bill.

Side by side with this plea for economy comes another attack upon the democracy of this State. That is the introduction of a second Chamber so that, even if the people in their wrath are able to destroy them as a Government, the appointed Chamber may nullify the efforts of democracy for years to come. This Bill is clear evidence that the Government, seeing the writing on the wall, are afraid to go back to the people to whom they made these promises, and say, "Judge us on what we have accomplished." I admit that they have had a difficult task. I am

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going to admit that many promises were made without due consideration of the conditions then existing in Queensland. Any Government or any individual may make such mistakes; but an honest Government, having entered into that contract, would not attempt to evade their responsibilities owing to changed conditions without the consent of the tribunal which elected them. The Government realise that they have fallen down on their job. They have had a stranglehold on one section of the community right from the first day they took charge of the Treasury benches. During the last six months they have recognised that squeezing the worker and robbing the submerged crowd of every protection they had can never rectify the position of Australia. They have at last been compelled by stern necessity and by the advocacy of forces they cannot overcome to ask for an equality of sacrifice from others. They recognise, as we on this side recognised all along, that their original plan was impracticable and could lead to nothing but disaster. They know to-day that, as a result of their administration for two years even the business people of this State, who were in a flourishing condition, have been compelled by their poverty campaign to deflate their employees, and to-day the political supporters of the Government are recognising that deflation may be carried too far.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask the hon. member to deal with the question before the Committee.

Mr. STOPFORD: I am trying to show that economy may be practised too much.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must address his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. STOPFORD: The Attorney-General stated that, by reducing the number of members by ten, the Government would save £5,000, and thereby assist in rehabilitating the finances of Australia. This policy of reducing wages, this policy of depriving the workers of the protection of the Industrial Court—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member to address his remarks to the Bill under discussion. He is too old a parliamentarian not to know that he is not in order.

Mr. STOPFORD: I object to the term "old," and I would ask you to withdraw it, Mr. Maxwell. (Laughter.) If you object, I will desist from endeavouring to show the Committee what I have been attempting to do.

Two years ago the Government of the day made certain suggestions, and the Opposition made other suggestions, and we went to the country as seventy-two members. No one suggested that there should be a reduction of members. The Government have carried on the State for two years. They have nearly broken the State, while we tried to save it, and they think they can get in for another three years by simply wiping out ten electorates represented on this side of the House. They introduce this Bill in order to bring that about. The only justification they have for the measure is that they say that Brisbane has only 4,000 electors, while Burnett has 8,000. We ask why there is all this stir when they are going to have a commis-

sion to carry out the work. We say, "Why reduce the number to sixty-two? Why not appoint your commission and redistribute seventy-two seats?" The Government are so afraid of going to the tribunal of the people that they are seeking every possible means to avoid getting a fair verdict from them. We all recognise that they are afraid to face the people who elected them to their present position.

Mr. DUNLOP: Will you be there?

Mr. STOPFORD: I will not be there unless I can beat "Tommy." (Laughter.) Economy is not going to be effected by this measure, and, although I recognise that even if seventy-two members were still to be maintained, I possibly would not be here owing to the reduced number of electors in my electorate, yet I say that the Government Party show evidence of cowardice, and seek to escape the just judgment of the people, which has prompted them to bring in this measure.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL (*Toombul*) [8.24]: I do not propose to follow the extravagant statements made by the hon. member for Mount Morgan. The main issue is whether it is advisable to reduce the number of members. The hon. member for Mount Morgan says that the tribunal of 1929 is the tribunal that we should appeal to for support at the next election. We must not forget that when the Australian States federated—although I do not admit that there was any promise made on behalf of Queensland that we should reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly—it was current talk and was generally agreed to that, as the Federal Parliament would assume many of the departments of the various States, the States could do with considerably fewer members than existed in 1901. Queensland has the same number of members as she had at the inauguration of federation, and no one can conclusively prove, in spite of what the Leader of the Opposition has said in this debate, that the responsibilities of the State Parliament are greater to-day than they were in 1901. The issues may be larger, but the responsibility is not greater to-day than it was then. As a matter of fact, the responsibility resting on the shoulders of members of Parliament and Ministers of the Crown is comparatively less, for the reason that the Federal Government have gradually absorbed many of the powers of the State Governments. For years a conflict has been going on between the States and the Commonwealth as to what powers the latter shall take from the States. From year to year the Commonwealth has assumed more power, so that our responsibilities are comparatively less than in 1901; and there is not the same justification for the continuance of a Chamber of seventy-two members as there was in 1901. To be honest with ourselves, we must admit that every Queensland Government since 1901 has evaded its responsibilities by not tackling this question. Really, the only question with which we are faced is whether we shall have seventy-two members or less.

The hon. member for Mount Morgan said we should face again the tribunal of electors who elected us; and he also stated that this Government had amended the Elections Act. In reply I would remind the hon. member that the party opposite, election after election, had deliberately moved electors from one electorate to another in order that they might secure the return of their

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candidates. How did they win Port Curtis? How did they win Eacham? By transfers of a great number of men to railway works in those electorates. (Opposition dissent.) The facts are there. What is the use of denying them?

Mr. POLLOCK: You are robbing the nomadic workers of the right to vote.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: We do not rob anybody of the right to vote. A man has to be three months in an electorate before he can register; but we do not remove him altogether from the rolls. He is still an elector of Queensland, and has a vote on some roll. No man is deprived of his vote, but hon. members shifted electors about from one electorate to another to vote for their candidates, and in that respect I say that our measure is much superior to theirs.

As to the hon. member's remarks regarding the tribunal which elected us in 1929, this party was returned with a very sweeping majority, despite the fact that the electorates had been gerrymandered against us. There were glaring anomalies, and it is a wonder to us even to-day that we were able to get back with such a great majority. We were kept out election after election by the tactics of hon. members opposite. We shall endeavour to remove those anomalies, and see that the quota in the electorates is put on a fair basis. It is idle for any hon. member to say that we are devising a scheme to put out ten Labour members. Who knows what is going to happen? The whole thing will be in the hands of the commission, and hon. members opposite must have guilty consciences if they really think that ten Labour men are going to be wiped out. If that opinion is the result of their dealing with the electorates, then they will deserve the fate that will overtake them.

One must be struck with the glaring anomalies that exist. The hon. member for Mundingburra said that this was an attempt to rob the workers of their votes and of their representation. Let me remind the hon. member that the strong Labour seats in Queensland are over-represented, according to their numbers. I shall give him a few cases to prove my statement.

Mr. MULLAN: Every one of those seats had the prescribed number when the last redistribution took place.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: I shall take the position at the time of the last election; but the position to-day is very little different, as reference to the figures which appear in to-day's "Votes and Proceedings" will prove.

Nobody will deny that the twelve strongest Labour seats in Queensland to-day are Brisbane, Buranda, Fortitude Valley, Ithaca, Paddington, Cairns, Mackay, Mundingburra, Townsville, Rockhampton, Bremer, and Bundaberg. We cannot omit the Rockhampton electoral district, because the election of the hon. member for Rockhampton was quite an accident. Those twelve strongest Labour seats contain 79,602 electors, or a quota of 6,633. I will contrast those figures with a few of the strongest anti-Labour seats held by this party to show the enormous difference in the two quotas. The main anti-Labour seats are probably in the suburbs of Brisbane; the

total number of electors in the Brisbane area is 175,724, returning twenty members, or a quota of 8,786, dividing the total number of electors by the number of members. Out of those twenty seats there are fifteen anti-Labour seats, for which the quota is 9,500. There is an anomaly that must be remedied.

I have given hon. members opposite a list of the strongest Labour seats in Queensland with a quota of something like 3,000 less than the quota required to elect a member for the suburbs of Brisbane. Surely it must be admitted that the time has arrived when these anomalies must be removed. Hon. members opposite had that opportunity election after election; but they shut their eyes to it. They had no intention whatever of putting the Act into operation, as should have been done years ago. As I said before, the main issue to-day is, what number of members is required to represent the electors of Queensland? All sorts of propositions are advanced; but, after all, there is no virtue in sixty-two any more than in fifty-two or thirty-six members. The main consideration is, what is an adequate number to represent the people of Queensland, taking into consideration the main factor which should obtain in every electorate—the community of interest? The Government have decided that sixty-two will be ample to represent the State, at the same time preserving the main feature of all representation—community of interest.

Mr. POLLOCK: How was that number arrived at?

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: That number has been arrived at after a great deal of investigation, and taking into consideration the various factors that must govern all systems of representation. For instance, it was necessary that the agricultural districts should be divided so that they would return members in accord with those industries; the same with the mining industry, with the industrial centres, and with the pastoral centres. In arriving at a just distribution of seats we have to take into consideration, first, a fair unit of population. Those people who have a community of interest demand one representative. The Government have been actuated by that one desire. Their purpose is to establish that unit of population which will be thoroughly representative of that community of interest, and that community should be represented by one member. That is the basis of the Bill. While hon. members opposite may jeer at the idea of economy, still the Government are justified in adopting every means possible to effect savings in every direction. While economy in this direction is not very great, still we are not justified in continuing a House of seventy-two members in the face of our responsibilities. There is a clamour throughout Australia for economy in government, and, although this Bill will effect only a small saving, nevertheless it is a step in the right direction.

The speech of the Leader of the Opposition was the worst he ever delivered in this Chamber. As a rule he is logical, but he was most illogical this afternoon. He tried to make out that the responsibilities of Ministers have increased so much that we are not justified in reducing the number of members. On the other hand, he gave an

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inking to the Chamber that he, himself, was rather prepared to confer greater powers on the Federal Parliament, as he favoured some system of centralisation. The Labour Party stands for unification, and the conferring of a greater measure of centralisation on the Federal Government. They are truly illogical. They come here and ask us to retain the same number of members of Parliament as we have to-day; but, if greater powers are to be conferred on the Federal Parliament, there will not be the same necessity for the retention of a House of seventy-two members. I, personally, hope that the States will refrain from conferring greater powers on the Federal Government. I am absolutely opposed to unification; and I hope that the people of this State will not allow themselves to be dragged at the chariot wheels of large industrial centres like Sydney and Melbourne. We shall be wise in preserving our independence as much as we can. One reason why I do not wish to see the number of members of Parliament reduced below sixty-two, is because the population in this State is on the increase. If we refuse to grant additional powers to the Federal Government, preserving the rights of the State, it will be unwise to reduce the number of members of this Parliament below the figure now proposed. This is a large and growing State, possessing diversified interests; and we must spend our energies in every possible way to bring the State out of the present morass. It would be a big mistake to reduce the number of our members below a reasonable figure. We do not desire to hand over our destinies to a bureaucracy. Every day in the press we read of objections to any system of government by a bureaucracy in Australia.

The hon. member for Rockhampton, as usual, made some very wild statements about the Chambers of Commerce having expressed an opinion regarding a reduction of members. The Brisbane Chamber of Commerce has refused to enter into this controversy. It recognises that the question is one that is not within its sphere, and that it would be unwise for it to enter the realm of politics. The Brisbane Chamber of Commerce confines itself to commercial subjects.

With reference to the argument of the hon. member for Rockhampton, I am not tied by any previous Parliament; one Parliament cannot bind another. I definitely refuse to be bound by the opinion of previous Parliaments. I hope the Committee will agree to this measure; indeed I know it will. Those hon. members opposite who are afraid of their seats must recognise that this punishment has been long delayed. For years they held the reins of Government with a minority. In justification to ourselves we are entitled to put this business on a proper footing—to see that the

electorates are properly placed according to their boundaries and community of interest, and to see that the proper ratio is preserved between town and country. Under the Bill the quota for a city will be 20 per cent. higher than the quota for a town, and the quota for towns will be 20 per cent. higher than the quota for the country. I think the people of Queensland will acclaim that.

Mr. O'KEEFE (*Cairns*) [8.41]: After hearing various speakers on both sides, I am quite satisfied that hon. members of the Opposition have proved their case that there is no necessity for the Government introducing a measure of this description. The plea put forward that this is a Bill of economy is pure moonshine. In actual fact the Bill is merely cloaked with the suggestion of economy in order that the Government can introduce a second Chamber, which will be more expensive to the country. The hon. member for Toombul practically stated that in the course of his remarks.

In various parts of the Commonwealth there have been attempts to economise by the reduction of members of various bodies. For example, in Sydney in 1927 it was decided to reduce the number of aldermen to nil, and to govern the city under three commissioners. The term of office of these commissioners did not exceed three years, and at the first opportunity the policy was reversed. The commissioners were displaced, and no less a person than Jock Garden was elected as an alderman of the city of Sydney.

Mr. KENNY: Do you object to that?

Mr. O'KEEFE: I do not object to it; but I merely mention the matter to show that the people generally do not want any alteration in the extent of their representation. In Queensland we are no more expensive in our government than any other State of our size. As a matter of fact, many other countries of the world with less population and a lesser area have more representation and of a more costly nature. The various hon. members who spoke from the Government side merely made it plain to the public that they are endeavouring to preserve their own political skins at the next election. They have already made various attempts to do that; and, as has been pointed out on this side, they follow the dictates of the local press. They realise the feeling of the people outside, and, in order to remain in power after the next election, they are introducing this Bill to reduce the number of members of this Assembly, knowing that it will be Labour members who will be cut out.

The following table will show the cost of parliamentary government in Queensland as compared with the cost in the other States and in other countries of the world.

	Number of Members.		Population.	Area, Square Miles.	Salary.	
	Assembly.	Council.			Assembly.	Council.
Victoria	65	34	1,531,000	87,884	£ 500	£ 200
Queensland	72	Nil	927,000	670,500	500	..
New Zealand	80	41	1,408,000	103,569	450	450

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Now take Canada. The Parliament of the Dominion of Canada consists of two Houses—the House of Representatives and the Senate.

	Number of Members.		Population.	Area, Square Miles.	Salary.
	Representatives.	Senate.			
Dominion of Canada . . .	240	96	8,788,000	3,504,688	4,000 dollars
Common. of Australia	76	36	6,373,000	2,974,000	£1,000

The cost of parliamentary government in Australia compares very favourably with that of Canada, while the cost of parliamentary government in Queensland compares more than favourably with the cost in the Canadian province of Alberta.

	Number of Members Assembly.	Population	Area, Square Miles.
Alberta	63	607,584	255,285

The cost of administration in Queensland is far cheaper, although we have a greater population and three times the area.

In British Columbia the total number of members is sixty-eight, comprising forty-eight members of the Legislative Assembly, six members in the Senate, and fourteen members in the House of Commons of Canada. The population is 591,000, and the area 312,630 square miles. Queensland compares more than favourably with that province.

In Manitoba there are fifty-five members in the Assembly, six in the Senate, and seventeen in the Canadian House of Commons, or a total of seventy-eight. The area is 251,000 square miles, and population 639,000.

In Quebec there are eighty-five members in the Legislative Assembly and twenty-four in the Legislative Council, or a total of 109. In addition, the province has twenty-four senators and sixty-five members in the Dominion House of Commons, making a grand total of 198 parliamentary representatives. The population is 2,361,000, and the area is 594,000 square miles. Taking the area into consideration, we also compare favourably with that province of Canada.

Queensland has not too many members, as will be realised from the figures, which show that the population here doubles itself every forty years; yet the Government propose to have fewer members than they had thirty years ago. Hon. members on this side have shown that the effect of this proposal will be to reduce the representation of the people in the far back places of the State. The people in the far northern, western, and central portions of the State will not have the representation they are entitled to. I repeat that the people in the cities will have a greater representation than other centres have. There are twelve out of twenty metropolitan seats with over the quota suggested in the Bill—as a matter of fact, there will be an extra seat in the city area, so that, instead of having twenty representatives, there may be twenty-one.

Taking next the United States of America, in Alabama, with a population of 2,646,000,

and an area of 51,998 square miles, the number of members in the State Legislature is 153—106 in the House of Representatives and 35 in the Senate. Its representation in the National Congress is two senators and ten representatives.

Arizona has seventy-six members, fifty-four in the House of Representatives and nineteen in the Senate, and three in the National Congress. The area is 113,810 square miles, and the population 470,000.

In Arkansas the number of members is 144—35 in the State Senate, 100 in the House of Representatives, with 9 members in the National Congress. The area is 53,335 square miles, and the population 1,944,000.

Then take Brazil. The National Congress consists of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The Chamber of Deputies comprises 212 members, and the Senate sixty-three members. The area is 3,275,510 square miles, and the population 40,272,650.

The figures I have given show that the cost of government works out favourably to the States of Australia, and especially the State of Queensland, as compared with other countries; yet we have the Government using the argument that they want to make this country a paradise, and to do that they are going to consider their own particular interests as members of this House by attacking seats at the present time held by Labour. They realise that they have broken every promise they made to the people of the State, and that there is no chance of their getting back upon the Treasury benches if the election next year takes place under the same conditions as those which prevailed in 1929. To make their return sure they have already tied the hands of thousands of Labour voters, and prevented them from exercising the franchise by altering the qualification laid down in the Elections Act and making it necessary for a voter to reside in an electorate three months before he can get his name on the roll. That is going to help the Government Party to a very great degree; but, since that is not sufficient, they are now attempting to throw dust in the eyes of the electors and in the eyes of members of this party by saying that they are introducing this Bill on the score of economy. In that they are not telling the truth, for it is well known to the people outside and to hon. members here that their move is only a device to retain office, and that for that reason also they propose to restore the Upper House, and, as an excuse for that extra expense, suggest a reduction in the number of members in this House, which means a reduction in the number of Labour seats.

At 8.53 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. O'Keefe.]

Question—"That the resolution (*Mr. Macgroarty's motion*) be agreed to"—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 34.

Mr. Annand	Mr. Kerr
" Barnes, G. P.	Dr. Kerwin
" Barnes, W. H.	Mr. King
" Blackley	" Macgroarty
" Boyd	" Maxwell
" Brand	" Morgan
" Butler	" Nimmo
" Daniel	" Plunkett
" Deacon	" Russell, H. M.
" Duffy	" Tedman
" Dunlop	" Tozer
" Edwards	" Walker, H. F.
" Fry	" Warren
" Grimstone	" Wienholt
" Hill	
" Jamieson	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Kelso	" Costello
" Kenny	" Russell, W. A.

NOES, 23.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Mullan
" Bedford	" O'Keefe
" Bruce	" Pease
" Conroy	" Pollock
" Cooper	" Smith
" Dash	" Stopford
" Foley	" Wilson
" Hanlon	" Winstanley
" Hanson	
" Hynes	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Jones, A. J.	" Bow
" Jones, A.	" Brassington
" Kirwan	

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Moore	Mr. Wellington
" Atherton	" Collins
Mrs. Longman	" Bulcock

Resolved in the affirmative.

The House resumed.

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

ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*): I beg to move—

"That the resolution be now agreed to by the House."

Question—"That the resolution (*Mr. Macgroarty's motion*) be agreed to by the House"—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 34.

Mr. Barnes, G. P.	Dr. Kerwin
" Barnes, W. H.	Mr. King
" Blackley	" Macgroarty
" Boyd	" Maxwell
" Brand	" Morgan
" Butler	" Nimmo
" Costello	" Plunkett
" Daniel	" Russell, H. M.
" Deacon	" Russell, W. A.
" Duffy	" Tedman
" Dunlop	" Tozer
" Edwards	" Walker, H. F.
" Fry	" Warren
" Grimstone	" Wienholt
" Hill	
" Jamieson	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Kenny	" Annand
" Kerr	" Kelso

NOES, 23.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Mullan
" Bedford	" O'Keefe
" Bow	" Pease
" Brassington	" Pollock
" Bruce	" Smith
" Conroy	" Stopford
" Cooper	" Wilson
" Dash	" Winstanley
" Hanson	
" Hynes	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Jones, A. J.	" Foley
" Jones, A.	" Hanlon
" Kirwan	

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Moore	Mr. Wellington
" Atherton	" Collins
Mrs. Longman	" Bulcock

Resolved in the affirmative.

FIRST READING.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, *South Brisbane*) presented the Bill, and moved—

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

Question—"That the Bill be now read a first time" (*Mr. Macgroarty's motion*)—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 34.

Mr. Annand	Mr. Kerr
" Barnes, G. P.	Dr. Kerwin
" Barnes, W. H.	Mr. King
" Blackley	" Macgroarty
" Boyd	" Maxwell
" Brand	" Morgan
" Butler	" Nimmo
" Costello	" Plunkett
" Daniel	" Russell, W. A.
" Deacon	" Tedman
" Duffy	" Tozer
" Dunlop	" Walker, H. F.
" Fry	" Warren
" Grimstone	" Wienholt
" Hill	
" Jamieson	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Kelso	" Edwards
" Kenny	" Russell, H. M.

NOES, 23.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Mullan
" Bedford	" O'Keefe
" Bow	" Pease
" Brassington	" Pollock
" Bruce	" Smith
" Conroy	" Stopford
" Cooper	" Wilson
" Dash	" Winstanley
" Foley	
" Hanlon	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Hynes	" Hanson
" Jones, A. J.	" Jones, A.
" Kirwan	

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Moore	Mr. Wellington
" Atherton	" Collins
Mrs. Longman	" Bulcock

Resolved in the affirmative.

Second reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

DECEASED HUSBAND'S BROTHER MARRIAGE BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*) [9.15]: I am rather anxious that this Bill, which is non-contentious, should be passed as soon as possible. As hon. members know, a case has been before the court, and it will receive further consideration at the sittings of the Full Court which commence next week, and I think it will be just as well

to dispose of the matter and have it wiped off the list of matters before the Full Court. At the introductory stage I fully explained the Bill, and I do not think it necessary to give any further explanation now.

The attention of the public was very sharply drawn to this matter by Mr. Justice Macrossan, S.P.J., earlier in the year, and I would like to give a short quotation from a report of the case which appeared in the "Daily Mail" of 28th March, 1931. This report is headed—

"HE WON'T GET IT.

Judge's Comments.

Suit for Nullity.

Existing Law Criticised."

The report reads—

"Severe comment upon the existing law in Queensland which permits a man, after having lived for many years with a woman with whom he has gone through the recognised forms of marriage, to come into court and claim that the marriage was null and void, thus making the children illegitimate, was made by His Honour Mr. Justice Macrossan, S.P.J., in the Supreme Court yesterday. His Honour refused to deal with the case until the Legislature had had an opportunity of deciding whether or not the law should be amended to meet such cases. With that object in view he adjourned the matter for six months."

We decided to accept the invitation of His Honour and deal with the matter by legislation.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: It was a most unusual course for the judge to take.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Hon. members will agree that it is an exceptional matter.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: The principle of your amending Bill is sound; yet it is an extreme attitude to take.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I quite agree with the hon. member, but it is a matter which requires immediate action. The man in the case referred to is married to a woman—the widow of his deceased brother. It is a legal marriage up to a certain point, but it is voidable at any time during the life of the parties. He marries this woman and lives with her for thirty-six years. He has four children, whose ages range from thirty-five to twenty-five; and now, if a decree of nullity is granted, as His Honour says, he wants to make those children illegitimate.

Mr. W. FORGAN SMITH: It would be an outrage.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Of course it would be an outrage. I do not desire to delay the House, and I formally move—

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

Mr. MULLAN (*Flinders*) [8.21]: This Bill is introduced in connection with a man who married his deceased brother's widow, and is complementary to the Deceased Wife's Sister Marriage Act passed by this Parliament in 1877, and that passed by the Imperial Government in 1907. A similar measure to this was passed in 1921 by the Imperial Parliament. Marriages such as

those are valid for civil purposes until they are challenged in the court. A former Chief Justice, Sir Pope Cooper, laid it down in a case some years ago that the court could only grant an application for nullity of marriage in a case of this kind. The result, of course, is disastrous to the children, who become illegitimate, and to the wife, who very often becomes homeless.

The case referred to by the Minister as the particular reason for this Bill is a very sad one. It is a case that came before Mr. Justice Macrossan. The parties were married thirty-six years ago. It was a shocking case, showing the necessity for the Bill. The judge in that case refused to grant the application for nullity until the Government and Parliament had had an opportunity of amending the law. Though, perhaps, the decision of the judge might be regarded as pardonable under the exceptional circumstances of the case, as no one can have sympathy with a man who acted like the man who was applying in this case for nullity. I nevertheless think that a dangerous precedent has been made by His Honour in practically appealing to Parliament to alter the law as it affects a case that is sub judice before giving his judgment.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Do you agree or disagree with him? What is your argument?

Mr. MULLAN: I am going to deal with my case in my own way, regardless of the interjection of the Attorney-General. The point I want to make is that this case is sub judice. "May," in this connection, says at page 271—

"A matter, whilst under adjudication by a court of law, should not be brought before the House by a motion or otherwise."

Yet we now have a special Bill dealing with this matter. "May" also says—

"Matters awaiting the adjudication of a court of law should not be brought forward in debate."

This case is sub judice. I am not asking for a ruling from the chair, as I do not want to take exception to legislating under these circumstances; but I want to point out the position the Government are in; and that they may find at a later stage that they are confronted with similar difficulties. The Bill undoubtedly deals with a matter that is sub judice, because there is a special clause in it making the Act retrospective to meet that particular case. In fact, there is only one such case, so that it must be this case, and there cannot be another once the Bill has become an Act; therefore, the Bill deals specifically with that case.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: There may be any number of cases in which marriages are voidable at present.

Mr. MULLAN: The point is that the case with which this Bill deals is sub judice. Will the Minister deny that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What would you do?

Mr. MULLAN: I shall tell the Attorney-General what I would do when I am over there.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What is the principle involved?

Mr. Mullan.]

Mr. MULLAN: A very important principle is involved. The oath of office of a judge is to this effect—

“I will at all times and in all things do equal justice to the poor and rich and discharge the duties of my office according to the laws and statutes of the realm.”

Not according to public opinion or what Parliament may do in the future, but according to the law as it stands! If I were in the position of the judge in this case, I probably would do just as the judge has done.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Do you want me to withdraw the Bill?

Mr. MULLAN: The hon. gentleman can do what he likes; I am entitled to my opinion. A very important principle of parliamentary and judicial procedure is involved, and the Bill itself is a very important one. Here is a point that may have some interest for the Attorney-General. When I go to a solicitor in future for legal advice, he will say, “At the moment the law is so and so, but, of course, when you take the case to court, the judge may think that public opinion is against the law and postpone the case until Parliament alters it.”

Mr. BEDFORD: They altered it in the Mungana case.

Mr. MULLAN: As my friend interjects, that was done in another way in the Mungana case by the amendment of the Crown Remedies Act. The law as it stands is one thing and public opinion is another thing; and it is a question whether the courts should be governed by public opinion or by the law. Take a case of sedition. The Criminal Code may provide for certain things. A man may be quite within the law when he does a certain act. A judge may say, “Public opinion will not stand for this sort of thing, although it is actually the law. I will adjourn this case of sedition to see what Parliament has to say about it.” Parliament might do as it is doing to-night—alter the law to make an act of innocence yesterday an act of sedition to-morrow. I am, however, in favour of the principle of the Bill, and I give it my blessing.

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*) [9.29]: I agree with the principle of the Bill in that it proposes to right what is a monstrous wrong. It is almost unbelievable that there can be any man so mean that, after having had association with a lady for all these years, and having raised a family, at the last moment he seeks to escape his obligations. I do not believe that there are any illegitimate children except sick children, just as I do not believe that there are really any illicit marriages except unhappy marriages. The Attorney-General interjects that this is a Bill to prevent an alleged man from bastardising his children. I object to the words. If the world had a few more bastards like Erasmus and Leonardo da Vinci, the world would be much happier than if there were a few more millions of loveless marriages conceived as Shakespeare said—

“Gotten between cold sheets;
Got between sleep and wake.”

The House adjourned at 9.30 p.m.

[*Mr. Mullan.*