

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 1942

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. E. J. Hanson, Buranda) took the chair at 11 a.m.

QUESTIONS.

ILLEGITIMATE BIRTHS, OCTOBER, 1942.

Mr. J. F. BARNES (Bundaberg) asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

“How many single women in Queensland have given birth to children during the month of October, 1942?”

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (Hon. T. A. Foley, Normanby), for **The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS** (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Ithaca), replied—

“The information is not yet available.”

MACKAY HOSPITALS BOARD ACCOUNTS.

Mr. J. F. BARNES (Bundaberg) asked the Premier—

“Considering that the Auditor-General’s report adversely commented upon irregularities connected with the accounts of Hospitals Boards at Mount Isa, Cairns, and Atherton, will he inquire and advise this House—

1. Whether there were serious and extensive irregularities in the accounts of the Mackay Hospitals Board?

2. Whether the late secretary of the Mackay Hospitals Board (Brooks) was allowed by the board to resign?

3. Whether the said Brooks, the late secretary in question, is a brother-in-law of the ex-Premier now Minister without Portfolio?

4. Whether the Auditor-General will make available to hon. members the last audit report on the books and accounts of the Mackay Hospitals Board?”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo), for **The PREMIER** (Hon. F. A. Cooper, Bremer) replied—

“1. The report of the audit inspector in relation to the matter raised by the hon. member is as follows:—‘As a result of an investigation by the chairman and a member of the Board, the secretary was found to have falsified two vouchers amounting to £3 11s. He was asked for his resignation, which was received dated 22 December, 1941. It was stated that the secretary had in his possession a number of blank invoice forms which he had obtained from various local firms, and which he had used on the falsifications mentioned in the above paragraph. In order to eliminate further defalcations of this nature, the Board directed that all future purchases must be supported by an official order form. I have instructed the present secretary that:—(1) All duplicate order forms and vouchers must be

cross-referenced; (2) Evidence of delivery, checking of prices, and extensions must appear on all vouchers; (3) Divided control of stores to be eliminated.'

"2 and 3. The matter was dealt with by the Mackay Hospitals Board, which under the law has complete authority within the ambit of the Act. No request was made to the Government for an investigation of any kind. Audit reports covering the years 1938-39, 1939-40, and 1940-41, commenting on the manner in which the accounts have been kept state:—In respect of the first year (1938-39), 'the books of account are as required by the regulations under the Act and have been very well kept'; in respect of the next year (1939-40), 'Vouchers were produced in good order, properly certified to and acquitted. Disbursements were found to have been duly authorised by Board minutes'; and in respect of the last year (1940-41), 'Duly acquitted vouchers, properly certified to, were produced in support of disbursements.'

"4. I am laying on the table of the House a copy of Mr. Audit Inspector H. E. J. Holmes' report on the books and accounts of the Mackay Hospitals Board from 3 April, 1941, to 18 February, 1942."

Paper.—Whereupon, Mr. Bulcock laid upon the table of the House a copy of the audit inspector's report referred to.

CASES OF VENEREAL DISEASE.

Mr. J. F. BARNES (Bundaberg) asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

"1. What was the total number of venereal disease cases reported in 1919?"

"2. What was the total number to 30 June, 1942?"

"3. Will he get the figures from the Federal authorities of the number of venereal disease cases in the army since the war began?"

"4. How many cases were notified in the first four months of this year?"

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (Hon. T. A. Foley, Normanby), for **The SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS** (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Ithaca), replied—

"1. 2,003.

"2. For the year ended 30 June, 1942—893.

"3. The army authorities have promised the information, which is not yet available.

"4. 212."

TESTS FOR BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS.

Mr. CLAYTON (Wide Bay) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"1. Is tuberculosis testing still being carried out by his department?"

"2. Has synthetic tuberculin proved efficient in the detection of tuberculosis?"

"3. What percentage of the veterinary staff engaged in tuberculosis testing has joined the military forces?"

"4. Will he undertake to carry on tuberculosis testing to the limit of available staffs during the war period?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo) replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. Synthetic tuberculin, which is a newly-evolved preparation, is much more satisfactory than the tuberculin previously in use. It has a greater degree of accuracy. The method of using it is such that a greater number of animals can be tested in a given time. Its use is now general in Queensland, officers having been instructed in its use.

"3. All the field veterinary officers carry out tuberculosis testing as part of their duties in disease control work. Twenty-five per cent. of these officers are now serving with the military forces.

"4. Tuberculosis testing will still be undertaken by the department to the limit of available staffs and to the extent which other pressing duties, arising out of war needs, permit."

WORK OF CHILLAGOE SMELTERS.

Mr. L. J. BARNES (Cairns) asked the Secretary for Mines—

"1. Have any permanent hands at the Chillagoe Smelters been paid off recently? If so, how many?"

"2. Is the Government considering the closing down of the smelters when the ore at grass has been treated?"

"3. Will he give an undertaking that the smelters will continue to operate during the present financial year while ore for smelting is available?"

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. V. C. Gair, South Brisbane) replied—

"1. I have no knowledge nor have I been advised that any permanent hands have been paid off recently at the Chillagoe State Smelters.

"2. No.

"3. The Government has no intention of ceasing operations at the smelters while sufficient ore is available for treatment, and I refer the hon. member to my statement which appeared in the 'Courier-Mail' on 17th instant."

DEMURRAGE OF STOCK TRUCKS.

Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny) asked the Minister for Transport—

"What was the total amount of demurrage collected in 1941-42 on account of cancelled stock trucks—(a) cattle wagons; (b) sheep vans; (c) other trucks?"

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. J. Lacombe, Rockhampton) replied—

“I regret the information is not available, and it would divert clerical labour from more important work to prepare it at the present time.”

HEADERS FOR QUEENSLAND WHEAT INDUSTRY.

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba), without notice, asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

“What progress has been made in respect of the shipment of headers from southern ports for use in the wheat industry in Queensland?”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo) replied—

“In consequence of representations by the hon. member and others, I took up the question with the Commonwealth Government and succeeded in getting a number of headers. This morning I am in receipt of information to the effect that the balance for Queensland’s requirements is being shipped to-day.”

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table and ordered to be printed—

Report of the Commissioner of Main Roads for the year 1941-1942.

Report of the Commissioner of Taxes on Income Tax and Land Tax for the year 1941-1942.

AUDITOR-GENERAL’S REPORT.

BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL ACCOUNTS.

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Auditor-General of a special report on the books and accounts of the Brisbane City Council.

Ordered to be printed.

ELECTIONS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. D. A. Gledson, Ipswich): I move—

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Elections Acts, 1915 to 1940, in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Brassington, Fortitude Valley, in the chair.)

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. D. A. Geldson, Ipswich) (11.12 a.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Elections Acts, 1915 to 1940, in certain particulars.”

It is proposed to take the introductory stage of this Bill before the Resolutions from Committee of Supply. Further consideration of it will be postponed to a later sitting, when the Bill will be taken to the second reading. We will proceed with the Committee stage to-morrow. That is the arrangement that has been made.

I do not propose to say a great deal upon the initiatory stage of this Bill. It is a simple one, so simple that any hon. member can understand it when it is circulated.

Mr. Yeates: We want to know something about it now.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I was about to say that any hon. member can understand the provisions of the Bill when it is placed in his hands.

There is only one principle in the Bill and a subsidiary matter relating to the printing of forms. Some thousands of election forms are printed for each election, including scrutineers’ forms and “How to vote” forms, which are displayed in courthouses, absent vote forms, and postal vote forms. It is proposed to allow forms at present printed to be used notwithstanding that there has been an alteration in the years of the Act, such at 1913-1926, 1913-1940, or 1913-1942, as the case may be, thus saving not only man-power in the preparation of new forms, but postage and transport. It will further save a considerable amount of paper that would be necessary if the forms were reprinted. There will be no alteration except with respect to the dates as I have outlined.

The only other matter in the Bill, which is the principle of the Bill, is a simple amendment allowing every elector when recording his vote to simply place the figure “1” opposite the name of the candidate he desires to vote for. When the elector does that his task will be completed.

Mr. Yeates: Are you not ashamed of the business? (Interjections.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Yeates: You ought to be.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Yeates: You ought to be ashamed. (Interjections.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask hon. members to listen to the Minister’s explanation of the principles of this measure. I will not tolerate any deliberate interruptions.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I was endeavouring to give the Committee an explanation of the principle contained in the Bill. If hon. members do not want to hear me then I do not want to hear myself talking, as I should prefer to listen to other people. (Opposition interjections.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. J. F. Barnes: You ought to say straight out that this is a compliment to Barnes.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If the Committee does not want to hear me, I will not take up its time in trying to explain the simple amendment contained in the Bill. It merely allows every elector to place the figure "1" before the name of the candidate he wishes to vote for. That will make for simplification and will obviate his placing the figures 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10—out, as at present. (Interjections.)

Mr. Yeates: Echoes of Cairns and East Toowoomba.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am desirous of pointing out the principle in this Bill, and if the hon. member for East Toowoomba will only possess his soul in patience for a minute until I have finished, he can take the floor and give any reasons he likes against the measure. I am here to explain its principles. The reasons for the Bill are another matter altogether. I am privileged at this stage to explain the principles only. Any hon. member who knows the Standing Orders and rules of this House knows that is all that a Minister can do when introducing a Bill. The matter of reasons comes up at a different stage of the Bill. Each hon. member will have his own views, and he will be able to give his reasons for them, if he has any reasoning powers in him. The other clauses of the Bill hinge round the one single amendment to allow the matter to be dealt with by the electors so that they will be able to record their votes without having, as I said, a mess-up by having to record votes for other persons they do not want to vote for. (Opposition interjections.)

We are following the Mother of Parliaments, and we are providing for the same practice that operates in connection with the English Parliament and has operated there from time immemorial. The House of Commons elections have been carried out on that principle for more years than I care to remember. On that basis our Bill is similar to the English Act in operation at the present time.

There is no other principle in the Bill, and there is no need for me to say anything further. It is a simple measure that any hon. member who can understand anything should be able to understand.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba) (11.20 a.m.): The Attorney-General endeavoured to lead hon. members of the Committee to think that this was a simple measure. It is more than a simple measure; there is something more behind this measure than the Attorney-General would lead us to believe by his explanation of it.

As to the question whether we should make any alteration to our Elections Act, I say very emphatically indeed this proposed amendment is a retrograde step—

Opposition Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. NICKLIN: And one the Government do not deserve any credit at all for introducing at any stage, particularly in the dying days of the session,

A Government Member: You can talk about it for a week.

Mr. NICKLIN: We might talk about it for a week, too. I think the Attorney-General should give this Committee some indication as to the reason for this sudden change of electoral policy by the Government. I understand that in the early part of next year this Parliament is going to have a legislative session, and a matter of this nature could very easily have been left until then, if the Government thought it desirable to alter the Elections Act. There is something behind the bringing in of this amendment at the present time. (Interruption.)

Mr. Yeates: There is an ulterior motive.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I expect this debate to be continued on reasonable and sound lines. I would say to the hon. member for East Toowoomba that his interjections have been altogether too frequent, and I shall have to take drastic action if he persists.

Mr. NICKLIN: We have to examine the reasons why this amendment is being introduced. The Attorney-General did not give us any, and the only reason I can think of is that apparently the Government did not like the result of the Cairns election, and they face the possibility of another couple of by-elections in the near future, and perhaps they think this alteration may help them. I do not know whether that is the reason or not, but it is a very reasonable assumption on my part—a very reasonable assumption indeed. I say very definitely that when the people of the State realise the implications behind this proposed alteration of the Elections Act it may take more than the straight-out voting for which the Bill provides to save the Government from defeat in these two coming by-elections. I say that such phrases as "Rights of the people," "Principles of Democracy," "The Will of the people," should henceforth be discarded for ever from Labour's political catch-cries. The effect of this measure is to thwart the will of the people in the interests of place and power at any price for political Labour. That is the only assumption one can arrive at after hearing the explanation of the Attorney-General. There must assuredly be some motive behind this move, and the only one we can think of is that the Government do not feel too safe politically, and are endeavouring to make their position as safe as possible.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: You ought to be rejoicing, then.

Mr. NICKLIN: I do not know why I should be rejoicing. The right to exercise preferential voting should not be taken from the people of the State. Queensland will be the only State in Australia that does not give to the people the right of preferential voting should this Bill go through. It is wrong that there should be two systems of voting, one in the State and another in the Federal sphere. It will lead to confusion at election time, despite the fact that the

Attorney-General stated that the Bill would simplify matters for the electors. It will lead to worse confusion in this State at election time. We have the Federal system of compulsory preferential voting and at State elections the electors had the opportunity of using preferential voting if they wished. That is a right to which they are entitled and the people of this State have appreciated it very much indeed in the past. The wiping out of the right of preferential voting and making State elections a straightout vote will lead to worse confusion.

The Attorney-General gave as one of his reasons for the Bill that he did not want to compel any person in this State to vote for anybody he did not want to vote for. Under the present system of voting, if an elector does not wish to use his right of preferential voting, he need not use it, but if he desires to do so the right is there to be used. There is much virtue in that right, although I am of the opinion that there should be compulsory preferential voting in the State elections.

Let us see how a system of preferential voting works out as compared with the situation that might arise if the method of straight-out voting is adopted. This is a simple illustration: Of every 1,000 votes, A gets 262, B gets 254, C gets 244, and D 240. Under this system, A is elected although of each 1,000 votes, 738 are polled against him. Actually he represents a small minority of the people. If contingent votes were allowed he might be easily the least popular candidate.

Mr. Moore: You would be giving one individual say three votes and giving another only one.

Mr. NICKLIN: Nothing like that exists at all. I say emphatically that where there are a multiplicity of candidates the will of the people can be properly ascertained only by allowing contingent voting. The result will be that if this amendment is passed people will not be able to express their opinions definitely and finally, and we shall more than likely have a man returned for an electorate who represents the minority of people in that electorate. It is unquestionably a retrograde step and this Bill is being introduced by the Government only because, apparently, they are frightened of the political situation in Queensland at present and are looking forward to losing the two by-elections that will be held in the near future if they do not endeavour to make things safe by the introduction of this measure this morning.

Mr. L. J. BARNES (Cairns) (11.29 a.m.): Mr. Brassington, it is not my intention to defame hon. members. I have entered this Chamber for the purpose of unity. After sitting in the gallery for years past, I am of the opinion that too many personalities are introduced into debates here. It is my intention, therefore, to make use of political abuse but not personal abuse. I say that if a man stole a pig 10 years ago that has nothing to do with his politics. So you can assure your Government, Mr. Brassington, that it

is not my intention to endeavour to defame hon. members of this Assembly personally.

It was not my intention to speak to this amending Bill in my maiden speech, as the scope it offers to me is not wide enough, but let me say that I fully realise and appreciate the trust that the people of Cairns have placed in me. I realise, too, that the present Elections Act is deserving of ridicule. At the outset I take hon. members back to about four or five weeks ago when I was sitting in the privileged visitors' gallery. On that occasion I heard an hon. member make the statement that if the brother of the hon. member for Bundaberg won the Cairns by-election, he would resign.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! That is slightly away from the motion under consideration.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: Quite so. I shall deal with that later.

Let me now release the first bomb in connection with the Elections Act. On page 44 of the Elections Act we read the following words:—

“or received by post by such returning officer on which the postmark clearly indicates that such envelope was posted on or before polling day.”

That actually conveys the information that people can vote after the results of the election are known. It happened in Cairns, and I challenged the returning officer on it. He said, “I must obey the Act.” I find that the Act provides for that, that it provides that after the approximate results of the elections are known people have the right to vote. I ask the Government why they do not look into the Elections Act and deal with the cause instead of the effect?

Let us go a little further: some of those envelopes were stamped 10 o'clock, 8 o'clock, and 11 o'clock at night. So long as they have a postmark on them bearing the date on which the election is held the people who use them can vote after the approximate results of the election are known, if they happen to be given out by 10 o'clock.

The Secretary for Mines: They can be put in a pillar-box by 9 o'clock in the morning.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: I have already stated that a letter can be posted at 9 o'clock at night; so long as it is posted before 12 midnight, even if it bears the stamp 11.55, it can be taken as a legitimate vote.

Let us go a little further back to the time when this Act was last discussed in Parliament in 1939. We find the following in a speech by the then Premier, the present Minister without Portfolio, on page 507 of “Hansard” of that year—

“The law as it stands is perfectly satisfactory. It gives absolute freedom to the elector to vote for one man or exercise his preferences if he so desires.”

In another part of his speech he said—

“If a man has a second choice, let him exercise it.”

Let him exercise it! What has changed the opinions of these men?

Let us read further. Let us see what the then Attorney-General thought of this. On page 423 of “Hansard” for 1939 we find the following statement by that hon. gentleman—

“Compulsory enrolment is all right—that principle is sound. So is compulsory voting, so long as preferential voting is optional.”

Two years later we have contradictory statements. What has changed the mind of this Government?

Mr. J. F. Barnes: Me, sir!

Mr. L. J. Barnes: Let us go a little further and see what our present Chairman of Committees, Mr. Brassington, the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, had to say. He is reported on page 426 of “Hansard” for 1939 as having said—

“I believe that as we live in a democracy it should be the right of every citizen to exercise a free and untrammelled opinion. Under the system of optional contingent voting, citizens are entitled to do that.”

In other words, they will not be entitled to it under this amending Bill. In two years the Government have altered their opinions to that extent.

I assure hon. members that I have not come here to abuse them but to talk politics, and, Mr. Brassington, believe me, I am going to talk them. My object is to maintain the sacred principle of democracy and to ensure that the will of the majority shall prevail. In my opinion that is what democracy really means. But I know that throughout the democracies of the world there never has been a Government controlled by the majority. The majority do not guide the destinies of the Government, it is always the minority, but let us at least have the largest minority we can get. If we cannot have majority control, which is supposed to be the principle of democracy but which it is utterly impossible to have in a democracy, then let us have the largest minority we can get. At present we have a Government representing the smallest minority they can get. I want to see the country governed for the benefit of the people, in the interests of truth and justice. I do not want to be a member of Parliament; I prefer farming. However, I prefer to be in this Parliament while it is being carried on as it is at the moment.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. L. J. Barnes: Let us realise what is happening. Things like these happened in Russia, and it was such things that brought about the revolution there. If the Government should cause a revolution in Queensland I cannot guarantee the life of any hon. member.

Mr. Devries: Yourself included.

Mr. L. J. Barnes: Yes, myself included. I appeal to hon. members opposite to reconsider the Bill and to think of matters other than personal gain. It is quite plain that the purpose of the Bill is to keep them in their political seats.

Let me go a little further. We know that there is a way of choosing candidates for political honours but they cannot be taught the art of government in that way.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. L. J. Barnes: I would suggest to the Government—

Mr. J. F. Barnes: He is in order; give him a break.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. J. F. Barnes: You heard what I said.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Bundaberg is guilty of a very grave reflection on the Chair. I ask him to withdraw and apologise.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: I withdraw and apologise.

Mr. L. J. Barnes: I, in common with other hon. members on this side of the Chamber, am of the opinion that the Bill is undemocratic. It is not the policy of Labour to represent democracy. If the Bill is passed, then I ask them to send a cablegram to Hitler calling him a sissy. This is no more than a dictatorship Bill. I can tell hon. members opposite of a way in which they can maintain their seats in Parliament—to represent truth, love, and justice. There is no need to amend the Elections Act to enable a small minority of people to govern the country. I urge the Government to reconsider the Bill, to try to understand the horrors of it, because if they do not they will drive the people to revolution.

Mr. BRAND (Isis) (11.40 a.m.): Only a Government with a fear complex and with a perfect understanding that they had lost the confidence of the people would have the audacity to bring down a Bill such as this and have it explained in such an apologetic way as the Attorney-General did. It would have been different if the Minister had had the courage to say fearlessly that the purpose of the Bill was to take from the people the right of contingent voting, which they have enjoyed ever since the establishment of responsible government in Queensland.

I cannot understand how a Labour Government can take such a right from the people. The people had the option to exercise the right; they were not compelled to exercise it. The right has not been forced upon them. There may be some objections by hon. members opposite to a system of compulsory contingent voting, but some of our great democratic leaders have hailed the principle of voluntary contingent voting as a great democratic measure, and if we are to set up a truly democratic Parliament we must give the people the right to return the biggest majority by exercising the contingent vote.

We are aware that it is possible for a Government receiving only a minority of votes cast to be in power in this State. The people have the opportunity, however, should the electors desire to exercise their right to contingent voting, to elect a Government gaining the majority of those votes. We had an illustration of that recently in the Cairns by-election, which several candidates contested. We found that through the exercise of the contingent vote, which was optional, we were able to get an intelligent vote that indicated that the majority of the people of Cairns desired a certain representative. Had it not been for contingent voting we should have had elected as the representative of Cairns a candidate who did not get one-third of the votes of the electors. Therefore, to abolish preferential voting will lead only to a state in which we shall have in power a Government elected by a minority of the people. That is a position to be deplored.

We must not interfere with the rights of the people. I ask the Minister in charge of the Government: what is wrong with the people's expressing their opinion by a majority vote? What is wrong with it? Do hon. members associated with the Labour Party say that they do not believe in majority rule? Are they not inspired with the principle of introducing legislation to obtain the greatest good for the greatest number? Have this Labour Government departed from their political principles? Are we to expect in the future a Government that will not be elected by a majority of the people? The Government, in their fear complex, will not rehabilitate themselves in the confidence of the people by passing such a Bill as this. The people will understand that it is an attempt to take away from them a right they have enjoyed under our democratic system and that enabled them, where more than two people submit themselves for judgment at an election, to exercise the preference vote voluntarily. There is nothing wrong with that principle. I urge the Government to withdraw the Bill. After all, we went to the electors two years ago for the purpose of allowing them to elect a Government. They did so, and during the life of this Parliament surely we are not going to alter the Elections Act under which this Parliament was elected? Because a particular man won the Cairns seat, are we going to say: "This will prevent him from winning the Mackay and Barcoo seats"? Surely the Government do not want the electors to take that as a Labour Government's view. They will take that view if the Government persist with the Bill.

This Bill will put a halo around the head of the hon. member for Bundaberg. That is all the Government are doing.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: Thank you! That is correct.

Mr. BRAND: The Government provided a halo for the hon. member for Bundaberg before he went to conduct the by-election at Cairns by throwing him out of this House without pay—the first member of Parliament in this State to be suspended without pay.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BRAND: Now we find the same Government providing a halo for him in another way.

The Secretary for Public Lands: You voted for it.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. gentleman does not know what he is talking about.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to confine himself to the principles of the Bill.

Mr. BRAND: I am confining myself to the principles of the Bill. I am pointing out that the Government are bringing down a Bill that the people of Queensland will not welcome. No-one would think any more of the Government if because of their failure to win the Cairns seat they deprive the electors of a privilege they have enjoyed for many years—a privilege that has been regarded as a right, and should so remain.

Mr. Devries: It might operate for the benefit of your party.

Mr. BRAND: I am not concerned about whether the Bill favours my party; I am concerned with the fact that we are dealing with a right of the electors, and that the electors should have this right, whether it acts for me or against me. I do not want Labour to govern without the support of the people of Queensland. The hon. member for Gregory is giving us the real reason behind the Bill.

We want to see that the people's will is paramount. In this Chamber a few days ago we had a debate in which the Federal Government were charged with attempting to do something that would take away rights from the people of this country. Who led the debate? The Government of this State—hon. members of the front Government bench. They challenged the Federal Government for attempting to do something that took away the rights and privileges of the people and denied them access to the High Court. Now this morning we are deliberately discussing a Bill that has been deliberately brought down for the purpose of taking away the rights held by the electors of this State.

Mr. Healy: Rarely exercised.

Mr. BRAND: It matters not whether it has been rarely exercised. They have held this right throughout the years; why should hon. members opposite want to take it away from them? We are elected by the people, and we have no right to take away their rights. We have not been given a mandate to do it. The people have those rights, and they should be allowed to hold them. I cannot understand why the Government fear what may happen in the future. Let them stand where we stand—on an expression of opinion of the majority of the people, for majority rule. I think if they stand boldly for that instead of approaching the issue with a fear complex they will get more confidence from the people of Queensland.

Progress reported.

SUPPLY.

SEVENTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY—RECEPTION OF RESOLUTIONS.

The Resolutions reported from Committee of Supply on Wednesday, 18 November, were presented and, on motion of Mr. Buleock, received.

Adoption of Resolutions.

The Resolutions being taken as read—

The ACTING PREMIER (Hon. F. W. Buleock, Barcoo): I move—

“That the Resolutions be now agreed to.”

Mr. SPEAKER: I shall proceed to discover what Resolutions hon. members desire to discuss.

And hon. members indicating a desire to discuss certain Resolutions—

Resolution 1—Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the Governor, His Excellency the Governor—Balance of Vote, Executive Council—agreed to.

Resolution 2—Legislative Assembly—

Mr. PIE (Hamilton) (11.56 a.m.): Mr. Speaker, I feel that the future of the Queensland Legislative Assembly depends on upholding the Constitution of Australia. The Queensland Legislative Assembly is faced with a very serious threat in the proposed alteration of the Australian Constitution. In my speech on the Commonwealth constitutional proposals I mentioned, before you called me to order, a sect known as Jehovah's Witnesses. This organisation is, in my opinion, a threat to the Queensland Constitution and the future of this Legislative Assembly.

Mr. TAYLOR: I rise to a point of order. What connection have Jehovah's Witnesses with the Constitution of this State of Queensland and the Queensland Parliament?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! At present I am unable to say, so I proposed to hear how the hon. member develops his argument, but I would point out for the information of hon. members that we are now dealing with the administration of particular departments, and very wide latitude is allowed in such discussions. This is a resolution dealing with the Legislative Assembly, which is certainly a department of State.

Mr. PIE: As I was saying, before I was interrupted, this sect, which I consider a threat to the Queensland Constitution and the future of this Assembly, was declared illegal and subversive by the Commonwealth Government on 17 January, 1941. In other words, it was not permitted to hold meetings throughout Australia. I feel that the Queensland Government, in an endeavour to uphold their Constitution, agreed with this. The sect appealed to the High Court against being declared unlawful, and the appeal has not yet been determined. On 11 March, 1941, I understand, instructions were issued by the Director of the Commonwealth Criminal

Investigation Branch to the Queensland police that no further raids were to be made on its premises without reference first to the Commonwealth Criminal Investigation Branch. This instruction, combined with the National Security Regulations, overrules the Queensland Constitution and the rights of this Assembly. On 24 December, 1941, instructions were issued by the Commonwealth Attorney-General permitting meetings of this sect—where proceedings were pending after it had been declared unlawful. I invite any hon. member to ask responsible Queensland police officers appointed under the Queensland Constitution, on which this Assembly is based, what they think of this sect.

In my speech on the constitutional proposals, I mentioned that Dr. Evatt acted, purely professionally, for this sect before he was appointed Attorney-General, a sect that had been declared unlawful by the Commonwealth Government and one directly against the Queensland Constitution. On Sunday, 1 November, Dr. Evatt rang me at my home at Chermside. He told me that someone had communicated with him informing him that I had stated that he had acted for and was connected with this sect, which, in my opinion, having been declared subversive by the Commonwealth Government, was directly opposed to the Constitution of Queensland on which our Assembly is based. He said that my statement was partly correct, that he had acted for it in a purely professional capacity, but that he was not connected with it in any manner. A confidential wire was sent by him to me suggesting that I should make a statement on the question of his professional association with this sect, which I say, it having been declared subversive, was in direct opposition to our Queensland Legislative Assembly. Later, his secretary rang me informing me that Dr. Evatt thought it would be better not to make this statement to the House, but to the “*Courier-Mail*.” As I had not made this statement, and as I was not previously aware of the information with which he supplied me, I wired him as follows:—

“Dr. Evatt, Commonwealth Offices, Martin Place, Sydney. Nothing said by me in Parliament makes it proper that I should make statement suggested by you. Stop. You will appreciate this on reading the ‘*Hansard*’ report of my speech.”

As far as I am concerned, I strongly oppose the present Commonwealth proposals because, as I said, in my opinion they affect the Queensland Constitution and our Assembly, and I feel that no restriction should be either suggested or imposed upon free speech.

Another point that I desire to make is that I understand that many people, not only in this Parliament but also outside it, who are opposing Dr. Evatt's constitutional proposals, which affect the Queensland Constitution, have received telegrams of this nature, whereas people who have supported him are reported to be receiving letters of congratulation and personal invitations to be present at the Constitutional Convention.

The only reason I bring this matter before the House is that I say free speech should be allowed, and anything I say in this House I mean. What I think, and nobody—neither Dr. Evatt nor anyone else—except you, Sir, will under our present Constitution stop my saying what I think.

Mr. J. F. BARNES (Bundaberg) (12.3 p.m.): The only matter that I should like to talk about is that a building as fine as this, that has ceilings as high as these, that has three floors that take up a height that would be taken up normally by four or perhaps five floors in other buildings, should be equipped with a passenger lift. The fact that there is no such lift is another indication to me of the lack of initiative on the part of the Government. If I owned this building and was conducting it as an ordinary commercial institution I should not expect my staff to walk up three flights of stairs, which are the equivalent of four flights in any ordinary building; I should have a lift installed in the building. Forgetting the convenience of members of Parliament for the moment, I say there should be a lift in a building such as this for the benefit of the staff. I believe that there was a lift here years ago, but that it was transferred to some other building. Those people on the top floor of this building who have to walk up the three flights of stairs here have my deepest sympathy; in fact, they have more than that. They have my support in getting a lift installed not only for ourselves but also for them. It is high time a building of the height of this one had a passenger lift.

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) (12.5 p.m.): I wish to bring up only one matter at this stage. It concerns the private rights inherent in hon. members of the Legislative Assembly, and it arises out of the discussion that ensued when we were dealing with the Railway (Capital Indebtedness) Reduction Bill. I refer to the passage at arms that took place between the Minister for Transport and the hon. member for Oxley. As I say, it affects the private rights of hon. members of the Legislative Assembly. I do not want to reopen that incident in any way whatsoever, but I deprecate such happenings in the House. Hon. members of this Assembly are entitled to be protected from the acts of Ministers in bringing their private affairs with Government departments into the Chamber.

The Secretary for Public Lands: They are invited to do so by hon. members on the other side of the House who charge them with falsification and dishonesty.

Mr. MAHER: The Opposition has a public duty to discharge. It is entitled to offer constructive criticism or destructive political criticism, as it may wish. If hon. members have what they believe to be a clear case of public duty they will not hesitate to discharge it. In the case of the Railway (Capital Indebtedness) Reduction Act, there was reasonable ground for criticism of a public act of the Minister, but there is a clear line of demarcation between criticism of a public act of a Minister of the Crown, or a

member of Parliament, and devastating personal criticism. There is a difference, too, between an hon. member of the Opposition's criticising the public action of a Minister and the Minister's bringing into Parliament private transactions between hon. members as private citizens and his department, and exposing them to other hon. members and the public. If there was anything unlawful in the hon. member for Oxley's dealings as a private citizen with the Railway Department, the Commissioner had his remedy. If the hon. member for Oxley, as a grazier, signed a declaration on oath that was false the Commissioner had his remedy. If the Commissioner is satisfied that any citizen, including a member of Parliament, has made a false declaration, he should take action to uphold the law. That is a matter between the Commissioner and his clients, and not one for determination by Parliament. It was quite wrong for the Minister for Transport to bring the private affairs of the hon. member for Oxley into this House. There are members of Parliament who have private transactions with many Government departments. Would it be right, because of a bitter debate in Parliament involving public affairs, that the Minister concerned should bring into Parliament the private dealings of an hon. member with his department? For instance, would it be right for the Minister in charge of the Public Curator's Office to bring into Parliament some financial dealing with that department by an hon. member as a private citizen? Would it be right for an hon. member who had made a will and left it with the Public Curator to have something contained in the will brought into Parliament and exposed to the gaze of the House and the country?

The Secretary for Public Lands: The hon. member for Oxley did that also.

Mr. MAHER: Would it be right to bring into Parliament any transaction with the Department of Public Lands, the Department of Agriculture and Stock, and other departments of State dealing with the private affairs of an hon. member? An hon. member is entitled to protection from a Minister in a spirit of pique. While hon. members are in Government they can do as they like, but how would they like it if they were in Opposition and a new Government started to rake through the files of Government departments to find something to injure an hon. member? I should be strongly hostile to any such thing if I was an hon. member of the Government. There is a clear line to be drawn in these matters. I do not think that strong public criticism in this Chamber should be met by tactics whereby the private affairs of hon. members in their dealings with departments of State are brought under the scrutiny of hon. members of this House and made available to the public.

The Secretary for Public Lands: Did not your party have a look through the income-tax papers of Labour members some years ago?

Mr. MAHER: I am not aware of it.

The Secretary for Public Lands: Of course they did.

Mr. MAHER: I do not stand for that either, wherever it occurs. Two wrongs do not make a right. I do not want to speak in an antagonistic spirit but rather to appeal to the sense of fair play of Ministers of the Crown who are in control of private transactions between hon. members and the departments over which they preside. No matter how hard the Minister feels the sting of public criticism, he should not retaliate by bringing matters of a private nature into Parliament. If the hon. member for Oxley committed a wrong, the Commissioner had his remedy. If he felt that the hon. member for Oxley transgressed the law, then he had his right of action.

Mr. Mann: The Commissioner condoned it.

Mr. MAHER: If the Government thought the Commissioner condoned an unlawful act, they have their right of action against the Commissioner. That is the correct procedure. It is certainly wrong for the Minister for Transport to revenge his feelings on adverse criticism by introducing into the debate private matters relating to the hon. member for Oxley. I want to protest against it. There should be some controlling authority in the House, such as yourself, Mr. Speaker, who should have the custody of the rights and privileges of hon. members, and who would be able to exercise power to prevent a Minister from thus injuring the reputation of an hon. member in this House.

Mr. LUCKINS (Maree) (12.13 p.m.): Privileges of Parliament should be jealously guarded. According to May's "Parliamentary Practice" and our Standing Orders, hon. members must not read their speeches, but there is a growing tendency in this House for hon. members to resort to that practice. That to me is delivering a speech by proxy. The hon. member who reads a speech may be expressing the opinion of someone other than himself. The practice has been allowed in this Chamber. The hon. member for Mackay gave an explanation as Premier on the matter. He set out that Ministers of the Crown hold responsible offices, and when making statements of importance to the State in connection with legislation or otherwise should exercise the privilege of reading them, but we should enforce the Standing Orders and not allow hon. members to read their speeches. I notice with some concern that speeches are read in this Parliament. That conveys to me that they are nothing more nor less than propaganda for the opinions of someone other than hon. members themselves. I hope my representations will be considered when the next session commences, and that hon. members, whether privileged or not, should only be allowed to address the Chair without reference to someone else's opinion.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is reflecting on the Chair in a very serious way. If the hon. member is not doing so intentionally, there is an implied reflection. I would point out that there have been times when I have prohibited hon. members from

reading their speeches. The practice to which the hon. member refers is the practice not only of this Parliament but of the House of Commons and other Parliaments also. Hon. members are permitted to make their speeches by referring to copious notes, which I frankly admit is very close to reading them, but I cannot determine whether they are reading them in fact. They are too clever for that; some hon. members are cleverer than others. The line will have to be drawn somewhere, but the remarks of the hon. member for Maree reflect on the Chair and I hope it was not his intention to do so.

Mr. LUCKINS: I should like to withdraw any reflection on the Chair that can be inferred from my remarks. I did not wish my remarks to be taken in that way at all.

Mr. TAYLOR (Enoggera) (12.13 p.m.): I wish to address myself on the question of hon. members' privileges on Private Members' Day. Private Members' Day has been given over more or less to discussing a general motion moved with the consent, mostly, of the Government, and debated for the time the Government have seen fit to devote to it. Private Members' Day was instituted in the House of Commons to give hon. members an opportunity of bringing before the House matters of interest that the Government thought could be better discussed in that way than on legislation. I understand that next year the parliamentary session will be divided into two periods. It may be competent for you, Sir, to consider whether Thursday morning of each week should be devoted to Private Members' Day in order to accord to hon. members the privilege to which they are justly entitled to under the Constitution. That would be preferable to discussing a set motion as in the past. I ask the House to give some consideration to my proposal.

Resolution 2—Legislative Assembly—agreed to.

Resolution 3—Premier and Chief Secretary's Department—

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba) (12.18 p.m.): Although Ministers are not compelled to answer questions, I strongly object to a refusal to supply information for which hon. members ask. The motion I moved on 26 August last, asking for a return of Ministers' expenses for the year ending June, 1942, was carried. That is a matter of public interest, irrespective of which party is in power. Why are these things not supplied? It was customary in the past to do so. It was not supplied in regard to the year ended 30 June, 1941, but I sent for it afterwards and I was supplied with it. I should not have to write for it. So let us have it to-morrow.

The Secretary for Public Lands: Do you suggest the Chief Secretary's Department deals with that?

Mr. YEATES: The Secretary for Public Lands implies that it is not the Chief Secretary's job. I should like that return tabled to-morrow morning. I represent almost

20,000 men, women, and children, and I am going to have the information that I want.

The Auditor-General's vote comes under this heading. I am not satisfied with everything that is being done in the Auditor-General's office—the McCaffrey case, for instance, and the Railway Renewals and Replacements Reserve Fund, which was shown in the Auditor-General's report for some time. It seems to me that the Auditor-General's office is not as I thought it was—on the same plane as the Supreme Court. I look up to the Supreme Court; it seems to me it is the only independent institution in Queensland to-day that we can depend on. I want the Auditor-General's office to be right up to the same standard. I go away from this Parliament to-morrow, all being well, feeling that I have no faith—no real faith—in the Auditor-General's office, and that should not be. Let us do something about it.

Mr. RIORDAN (Bowen) (12.21 p.m.): I do not think the criticism of the hon. member should be allowed to go unchallenged. I think the attack by individual hon. members upon the integrity of the Auditor-General is one that is unwarranted. It appears to me that recently there has been an organised campaign, not only in this Chamber, but outside, also, to discredit the Auditor-General of this State—a man of very brilliant attainments; a man beyond any political bias. I think there has been an organised attempt to try to link up the Auditor-General with political bias in favour of this Government. I know why it is—because of the dismissal of McCaffrey. The whole of the criticism has centred round that point. McCaffrey has some powerful friends in the Opposition and they have tried to discredit Mr. Ross, the Auditor-General, for the purpose of building up the case of McCaffrey. I say that is distinctly unfair, particularly when he is an officer to whom Parliament has to look and everybody else looks to do the correct, decent, and honest thing. I maintain that the criticism of hon. members opposite is unwarranted and untrue.

Mr. Yeates: I disagree with you.

Mr. RIORDAN: The hon. member is entitled to disagree with me as much as he likes. Fortunately, nobody takes much notice of the hon. member.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: The boot is on the other foot.

Mr. RIORDAN: Nobody takes any notice of the hon. member for Bundaberg. The Auditor-General's Department is doing its job too thoroughly for some people. It has brought down a report that has been ordered to be printed here to-day. It has been necessary for Mr. Ross, who has been a sick man, to return to his office to refute sinister allegations made by hon. members opposite, and some people outside who are trying to pull Mr. Ross down. In an attempt to discredit this Government in some way they try to make out that Mr. Ross has been used for an ulterior motive. The statements of the hon. member should not be allowed to go unchallenged. Any hon. member who has had experience with local authorities, hospital

boards, or anything else that the Auditor-General or his department has had anything to do with knows that their work has been a credit to this State.

Mr. POWER (Baroona) (12.24 p.m.): Like the previous speaker, I want to say that there have been many determined attacks on the Auditor-General. The hon. member for East Toowoomba said he was not satisfied that the Auditor-General's department was doing its job. I suggest to the hon. member for East Toowoomba that if he has any evidence that the Auditor-General's Department has not done its duty he, as a member of Parliament, give that information to the Government so that suitable action can be taken. It is easy enough for hon. members opposite to make idle statements in this House, statements without foundation, and attack a very excellent officer of Parliament. The Auditor-General is an officer of Parliament. He is not controlled by any Minister of the Crown. He is doing very good work and doing it well. Mr. Ross has no opportunity of defending himself against these attacks on him, which have been made for a long time—evidently, by those who are opposed to him, and those who would go to no end of trouble to have him removed from his office.

The Auditor-General's Department has done very excellent work. It has exposed many things that would never otherwise have seen the light of day. Its ramifications have been extended and I was very pleased that some time ago Parliament decided that the council of the city of Brisbane should be brought within the ambit of the work of this department, but I regretted very much to read in the Press the other day of an attack made by the Brisbane City Council on the Auditor-General because he sought certain information from that local authority. It is rather interesting to note what has been asked for. It is information in regard to certain happenings, and it is only right and proper that that information should have been supplied to the Auditor-General. An attempt has been made to discredit him. A resolution was moved and carried at a meeting of the Brisbane City Council endorsing the attitude and the action of the Lord Mayor, but I hope that the Government will, at least, see that the information required by the Auditor-General from the Brisbane City Council is supplied.

I am particularly interested in some of the complaints made. One of the most glaring things discovered by the Auditor-General is that quotations have been received two and a-half hours after the time for the receipt of quotations. The Auditor-General also requires some information in regard to a special allowance of petrol for a certain motor car in the Brisbane City Council and the reason for the departure from procedure in the carrying out of certain works by that local authority. The works mentioned were proceeded with without an authority from the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works. What is the use of the Government having a Co-ordinator-General and his deciding what work shall be done if a local governing body sets itself up

as a dictatorship and refuses to carry out an instruction and eventually refuses to supply to the Auditor-General, who is responsible for the auditing of the accounts of the Brisbane City Council, information as to why the work was done.

There is an ordinance of the Brisbane City Council that when an estate is subdivided the responsibility for the making of the roads on it is that of the vendor, but on one estate we find that part of the roads were constructed by the council. I am willing to accept the statement of the Auditor-General that the council paid for the cost of construction of these roads on a private estate, a cost that should have been paid by the vendor. If that state of affairs exists and the Brisbane City Council is to be allowed to spend money in an improper manner and when explanation is sought by the Auditor-General, refuse to give it, it is quite time suitable action was taken.

I resent very much the attacks made on a very competent officer who has given excellent service. He has kept himself free from party politics, but because his investigations and his audit do not perhaps suit certain people, unwarranted attacks are made on him in this Chamber. I resent such attacks and I take this opportunity of defending him.

Mr. DECKER (Sandgate) (12.28 p.m.): There is no question that the Auditor-General is doing excellent work, but, unfortunately, trouble sometimes arises because of misunderstandings between members of Parliament or members of local authorities as to the power of the Auditor-General.

The Secretary for Public Lands: They are very wide powers.

Mr. DECKER: The unfortunate happening that occurred the other day, the Lord Mayor criticising the actions of the Auditor-General, the aftermath of which is a report being tabled this morning, occurred because of lack of appreciation, if I might put it that way, of the responsibility of the Auditor-General, that of the Lord Mayor, the council, and the people. We must be very careful to preserve our democracy. We must not forget that the council is an elected body, the Lord Mayor being the head, and it is unwise to have the Auditor-General usurping powers that should be really those of the council. The audit of the books and accounts of the Brisbane City Council is conducted by the Auditor-General's Department and I think it is unfair to go back to the happenings of two years ago and investigate what really are, after all, questions of policy.

We do not want to enter into a fight between the Auditor-General and the Brisbane City Council, nor do we want to annoy the Auditor-General in any way, but we should have the right to criticise and make suggestions. My suggestion is that the Government should be very careful to lay down a definite line of demarcation so that the Auditor-General will not trespass on what should be the Brisbane City Council's work. I feel that the council will always

be very helpful and do what it can to help the auditor who is making the daily audit. I have never yet heard of any opposition by it to him except when it came to a point of policy.

That is a question that has to be defined. Things are coming to a bad state if we give power to a State officer that is virtually total direction over the duties of an elected local authority, and that is what we see happening in the city of Brisbane.

I think these difficulties are brought about by the Auditor-General's being too strict in what he considers to be his duty in relation to the activities of the Brisbane City Council that he is supervising. We have to remember that the Government appointed Mr. Robinson as liaison officer between the Government and the Brisbane City Council to watch the actions of the Council and preserve the interests of the State Government, and when we consider what an imposition that is to an elected body of people who are charged, after all, with the carrying out of the City of Brisbane Act, it seems to me that the Government are gradually taking away from local authorities all rights and powers—usurping them—by restricting the activities of these bodies. Such a policy is indeed bad. We should get away from that, and let these elected bodies have more or less a free hand, provided they act in conformity with the Local Government Act or the City of Brisbane Act.

Mr. Dunstan: Do you know the reason why Mr. Robinson was appointed?

Mr. DECKER: Yes. I know that the Jones Administration brought that happening about, and I think the Government are happy that there was a change of power there. We have to be broad in our views and give more representation to these people so that they will be able to carry out the duties they have been elected to carry out. We should restrict interference to the minimum because, after all, they are the entrusted representatives of the people. I do not think the Lord Mayor or the aldermen of the Brisbane City Council come into any disrepute. They are doing a good job in the best possible way they can. They are not trying to be an embarrassment to the Government or to the Auditor-General's Department. It must be remembered that once we break through a certain line and trespass upon fields that the aldermen of the City Council should cover, we are asking for trouble, and I think that is where we are making the mistake.

I repeat that I have every confidence in the Auditor-General's Department. I recognise the good work the Auditor-General is doing, and I emphasise that when we are criticising the department we are not criticising the Auditor-General personally, but some phase of his department's work that does not conform to our ideas of justice.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. J. Larcombe, Roekhampton) (12.34 p.m.): The hon. member who has just resumed his

seat said he was not criticising the Auditor-General, but that he was criticising some of his actions from a non-personal point of view. I regret to say that personal spleen and viciousness have been introduced into the debates recently in an attack upon the Auditor-General. We recall that tendency and that action when we remember a motion put forward to pass a vote of censure on the Auditor-General because of alleged condonation of the falsification of accounts. That is a scandalous motion to submit to any Parliament without evidence. There is a prescribed means by which the Auditor-General can be impeached, attacked, criticised, and brought to account, if there is evidence to show that there has been any irregularity or dereliction of duty. Instead of a direct motion, all kinds of innuendoes and improper suggestions have been made against him in this Chamber, and that by some hon. members who have no record for honesty in commercial or political life.

I want to express appreciation of the Auditor-General's work. I can say honestly that he has not intruded party politics into the administration of his work.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: He is not game to, for a start.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw that statement against an officer of Parliament, who cannot reply.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: I withdraw the statement.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: That is another important point—the Auditor-General is not here to reply to the charges levelled against him. There is no charity nor even fairness in the attacks made against him. In some quarters, apparently, there are some people who would have used the Auditor-General, if he was willing to be used. But he is a capable and fearless officer who has carried out his work conscientiously although at the same time he has been abused, maligned, and attacked in a disgraceful manner. It is time that hon. members from both sides expressed their resentment at such attacks. I know there are hon. members on both sides who resent them, and they should speak and defend the Auditor-General. I want briefly to express my appreciation of his work, his ability, his fairness, his conscientiousness, and as a member of Parliament to denounce the malicious and vicious vendetta that has been pursued against him by those who cannot use him.

Mr. COLLINS (Cook) (12.38 p.m.): The Auditor-General is an officer of Parliament and a man holding a very high and important position of State. He owes a very important duty to Parliament and the people. When we bear in mind the huge sums of money subject to his supervision in Government departments, local authorities, and commodity boards, we are forced to the conclusion at once that his scrutiny of accounts cannot be too severe. He stands as an independent officer between the elected representatives of the people—I believe that in 99

cases out of 100 those people want to do the fair and proper thing—and the unscrupulous bookkeeper or ledger-keeper or some other person employed by those publicly elected representatives to see that the accounts are carried out in a proper way. That applies to Government departments, local authorities, and commodity boards. My only complaint about the Auditor-General's department is that it is not directly responsible for the audit of all local-authority accounts, although I know that indirectly it is. From my somewhat limited experience of the department I know that it has given a splendid service to local authorities and commodity boards.

Mr. Decker: And hospital boards.

Mr. COLLINS, Yes, hospital boards, too. These publicly elected representatives have little knowledge of proper systems of accounts and they are not expected to have that knowledge. Therefore, we look to the Auditor-General to exercise close scrutiny of the accounts so as to detect immediately any misuse of public funds. We have seen from time to time how careful and strict he has been in this connection. I cannot understand why the Brisbane City Council should object to the giving of all possible information to the Auditor-General. I hold the view that the majority of men on the Brisbane City Council are thoroughly honourable, and in their own interests and the interests of the public, too, should welcome any searching inquiries into the accounts by the Auditor-General. The Auditor-General exercises a close scrutiny simply to see that the funds are not being misused, and they are not used to the detriment of the people who elect the various bodies whose accounts they audit. I have been a member of commodity boards, and I know the practice of the Auditor-General in sending his inspectors along to make a close check of the various accounts. They provide a safeguard against dishonest transactions and the faking of accounts that could not possibly be detected by the elected representatives on the boards. I know that a number of transactions have been brought under the notice of the boards that otherwise would not have been detected. I have in mind particularly the Northern Maize Board. Had it not been for the action of the Auditor-General a number of matters would not have been brought before the notice of the directors. The audit inspectors have been responsible for a proper accountancy system, which has been in the interests of the representatives on the board and the people they represent. The officer who carries out these onerous duties must be fair and yet fearless. He must be untrammelled in discharging his duties. Presumably the Brisbane City Council is afraid that something will be exposed when it refuses or virtually refuses to give the Auditor-General the information he requires and resents his criticism. Why be afraid of anything? Why are they not willing to give him all the information he requires in his public position? To my mind, Mr. Ross is a great officer of the Government. He has done very excellent work. The office that he represents is one that should be above criticism, unless he is

not doing his job. Then the House would have the privilege of drawing attention to that fact. How can any honest elected representative of any public authority criticise a department like this when he is only wanting information to which the public are entitled? It is beyond my comprehension. The Auditor-General is an excellent man and is doing his job very well.

I should like to see the Auditor-General's department audit the books of all local authorities. At present they are audited by some local auditor. In some cases the local auditor gives them a reasonable review. In fact, I know of cases where the local auditor has done excellent work, and I know of others where only a cursory review of the books and accounts has been made. I have one local authority in mind. The local auditor passed all its accounts as correct at a given period. Four months elapsed before the next audit was made. The ensuing audit revealed that in that period on 27 different occasions two cheques had been paid for the same account.

Mr. Massey: That was also done in the old Brisbane City Council.

The Secretary for Public Lands: It has been done in this one, too.

Mr. COLLINS: I am not saying anything about what has been done. That was one case that came under my personal notice. It is hard for me to believe that if an audit inspector could find such glaring mistakes in a four-month period the whole of the accounts in the previous period should be correct. That auditor passed those accounts previously, because he did not make the searching inquiry into them that he should have made. For that reason, the Auditor-General's department should take over the audit of all local authorities. Officers of that department would spend the time necessary, whether it was two weeks or two months, to investigate the books and accounts thoroughly, and as a result would be able to give a correct report. They are not tied to any particular fee. I have known Government auditors from time to time unearth mistakes in the different hospital boards' affairs, as they have done in all Government departments.

I have the highest respect for the Auditor-General personally. I regret that his health is not the best at the present time, and I hope it will soon be restored. I have the greatest respect for the high office he holds.

Mr. MASSEY (Toowong) (12.46 p.m.): I have followed this debate very keenly. I have nothing against the Auditor-General, and I know of no wrongs that he has committed. When we hear a Minister of the Crown, like the Minister for Transport, stating that the Auditor-General has been maligned by certain hon. members and that officer has no opportunity of replying, then in the interests of the Auditor-General himself he should be brought to the Bar of the House in order that he might be asked any questions and make his explanations.

Mention has been made of the affairs of the Brisbane City Council. As far as the

Press has been able to give us the information, I take it that the present Lord Mayor has not refused to allow any books to be produced for the inspector of the Auditor-General's Department, and that the difference between the inspector and the Lord Mayor is in connection with matters of policy. After all, it is within the right of the inspector to ask for any books or accounts in order to inspect them.

Mr. Collins: If words mean anything, the Lord Mayor has resented his inquiries.

Mr. MASSEY: Sometimes a great deal hinges on the way a man asks for information. I know nothing for or against the persons concerned. I am not defending the Lord Mayor, or aldermen, or audit inspector, but I do think that all an intelligent, responsible, and efficient audit inspector requires is the books and accounts of the Brisbane City Council, and he should not want to know from the Lord Mayor why he did this or did that.

The Secretary for Public Lands: The books may be incomplete.

Mr. MASSEY: Then the books should be completed.

The Secretary for Public Lands: That is all the audit inspector wants.

Mr. MASSEY: The books should be brought up to date, but he should not, if he is a competent man, have to ask somebody to explain the whys and wherefores. The Auditor-General's Department has the privilege of laying down a policy as to how the books should be kept. If he is inefficient and cannot lay down a proper system of book-keeping, then the fault lies with him. If a system is not right it should be put right, and we should not have this party-political spleen backwards and forwards in connection with the Auditor-General's Department. It should be above party politics. It does not matter which side brings the matter up, the Auditor-General should be protected up to the hilt, and the matter should be dealt with on the rights and wrongs of the case. A proper auditor should have no difficulty in getting the proper vouchers to check his books. They have the right to have the system they require in local authorities or in the Brisbane City Council; the books are there for inspection and the receipts have to be shown, and if anything is wrong the auditor can lay a charge. This innuendo is more damaging to the Auditor-General than anybody else and I think if necessary he should be brought to the Bar of the House to explain the position.

Mr. Power: The Lord Mayor refused to give an explanation. Why did he not want to supply it?

Mr. MASSEY: There again is party bias. The matter is not apparent. It is all by innuendo. It should be clearly a case of checking the books. When it comes to the policy of the council whatever party is in power has the right to lay down a policy and carry it out but it should be in conformity with a proper inspection and a proper audit.

The party in power lays down the policy in this House and rightly so but we have every right to criticise that policy. To think there is something wrong with the Auditor-General's Department because I am against the policy of the Labour Party would be wrong. We should protect the Auditor-General, and the Auditor-General should have the right to protect himself against any aspersions made against him.

Mr. Power: Do you not think the Auditor-General had the right to ask certain questions of the Lord Mayor?

Mr. MASSEY: From what I have seen in the paper I do not think the requests he made were necessary for the purposes of making an audit. If the Auditor-General, who has the right to lay down a proper way of keeping books, is incompetent then it is wrong, and if he is competent he should be able to lay down a proper system of book-keeping.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. D. A. Gledson, Ipswich) (12.51 p.m.): The matter that has been raised is a very important one and one that this House must take notice of. The officer who has been attacked by the Lord Mayor is an officer of this House and is responsible only to this House. Parliament appoints him and receives his reports. Parliament appointed him as an auditor under the City of Brisbane Acts, to audit certain books—to find out what the position of the Brisbane City Council is, and make a report on it. I think hon. members should give very serious consideration to the point that has been raised, and when any officer is attacked it is the duty of this House to look into the matter and defend that officer, as long as he is doing the right thing.

We saw a Press report that stated that the Lord Mayor said that the Auditor-General was not going to be allowed to shape the policy of the Brisbane City Council. The Lord Mayor brought the matter before the council and had a motion carried because he had the majority of the council behind him; there was opposition to the motion, but it was not sufficient to defeat the motion. The resolution passed by the council amounted to an attack on the work of an officer of this Parliament. That is the position when we come to look at it and find out what it means. It means the Auditor-General, through one of his auditors, in going through the transactions of the council, so as to be able to place his signature upon the accounts and transactions of the council, wanted to get information that would enable him to sign as to the correctness of the transactions. Certain information was refused by the Lord Mayor because he said it had nothing to do with the Auditor-General. Suppose a Minister of this Parliament who was running a department refused to give the auditor auditing the accounts the right to see the transactions that would give him the information that would enable him to audit them? The Auditor-General has to include that information in his report, which is presented to you, Mr. Speaker, and not to a Minister This

Parliament could deal with any department or Minister who refused to give information to the Auditor-General to enable him to do the work he was appointed by this House to do and so complete his report. The Auditor-General contends, Mr. Speaker, that as he was appointed to do this work he has a perfect right to get the information refused him.

So far as the Auditor-General himself is concerned, I think he is capable, competent, and well able to defend himself, but that is not the point. Certain hon. members opposite have maintained that the Auditor-General was going beyond the powers conferred on him, and he had no right to delve into and ask for information on transactions that were not concerned solely with actual figures. In his report on the public accounts, which is tabled, he deals with all matters that concern the departments, and if the transaction of a ministerial department is not in accordance with the rules or the Acts of Parliament under which the department is working, he draws attention to that. He reports to you, Mr. Speaker, if a Minister or Government department does anything that is not in accordance with the laws and the Acts that have been passed by this Parliament. The same applies to the Brisbane City Council. That council was given a charter. As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, an Act of Parliament gave the Brisbane City Council full and absolute powers in certain matters, but with those powers certain obligations also were imposed. They are not permitted to go outside that Act or give Tom, Dick, and Harry instructions on matters beyond its scope. For instance, if the Act makes certain provisions about the calling of tenders for the letting of and the payment for contracts, those provisions must be complied with, and the Auditor-General has a perfect right, in fact it is his duty, to see that the council does these things in accordance with its charter. As has been said by hon. members opposite, the Brisbane City Council was elected by the people of this city, but has not, as was suggested by hon. members opposite, the right to do as it likes. Certainly, it has certain rights. It has the right of administration but not of legislation. It cannot pass an Act to permit of its doing things that are not right. All the Auditor-General has done in connection with the auditing of the books is an endeavour to keep the council within the charter given to it by an Act of this Parliament, and in doing this he is carrying out his work efficiently.

Hon. members opposite should help the Auditor-General in the carrying out of the work they have asked him to do under the Act passed by this Parliament. Instead of criticising and condemning him, they should stand behind him and give him any protection it is necessary for him to have to carry out the work they have asked him to do.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. E. J. Walsh, Mirani) (2.15 p.m.): The resolution under discussion now is necessarily a very important one, covering a very wide range of governmental activities. During the

debate hon. members appear to have dealt mainly with the vote for the Auditor-General's Department. There is not the slightest doubt that in recent years a considerable amount of attention has been paid to the Auditor-General. Hon. members opposite in particular seem to be very critical of the present Auditor-General, but I do not know the reason why. I cannot say that I know Mr. Ross very well personally. He is virtually a stranger to me. I can speak of him only as I know him in connection with those of his duties that come before me in my position as Minister, and his activities on many investigations into the affairs of State over many years.

I do not think it can be denied that in every instance Mr. Ross has given abundant evidence that he has dealt with the matters that come under his notice in a completely impartial manner, that he has taken the view that public interests are more important than political interests.

It is interesting to note that in the history of our Parliaments apparently Governments of the past thought this office was of sufficient importance to justify them in placing the officer who held it outside the ambit of political control altogether and to make him an officer of Parliament, and hon. members of this House should remember that at all times. Having that in mind, it occurs to me that it is worth while reminding hon. members not only of this Parliament but of various public bodies, and the public in general, that the Auditor-General may be looked upon as the watchdog of public finance, and it is essential therefore that he be given protection against being assailed simply because he makes a correct report on any matter that may be brought under his notice.

I notice that a good deal of attention has been attached to the present occupant of the office. As I say, he is a stranger to me, but as I have followed these things since I have been in Parliament I think I am entitled to ask myself why all this attention should be directed to Mr. Ross.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: Do you not ever think for yourself?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I shall give the hon. member for Bundaberg the lead in. He probably has not given the matter as close an examination as I have. It appears that a good deal of the criticism of the present occupant of the office of Auditor-General is associated with the dismissal of a man named McCaffrey. I suppose Mr. McCaffrey does not matter two hoots to Mr. Ross, except that he expected Mr. McCaffrey to carry out his duties in the way in which the public expected them to be carried out, and he was only one of the many officers attached to the Auditor-General's Department.

Despite the attempts of hon. members opposite to link Mr. McCaffrey's dismissal with the railway affair, the fact remains that he was dismissed for the misuse of public funds. Having that in mind, we have to remember

that the criticism that has been levelled at the Auditor-General to-day in connection with the Brisbane City Council is simply brought about because the audit inspector who is entrusted with the investigation of the finances of the Brisbane City Council was obviously of the opinion that sufficient information to enable him to report correctly to his superior officer, the Auditor-General, was not being supplied to him.

Why this interest in Mr. McCaffrey? Why all this interest from the Opposition side? Should I be correct in saying that at last one of the touts of the Opposition has been removed from his position? (Opposition dissent.) I do not know the gentleman, therefore I speak disinterestedly in this matter so far as the personal aspect of it is concerned, but I do know that many years ago the present Leader of the Federal Opposition, who was then an hon. member of this Assembly, was in the habit of getting up and relating in this House figures that no other person than one attached to the Auditor-General's Department would have knowledge of.

Mr. Luckins: Would that be the reason why he was dismissed?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member for Maree knows as well as I do that Mr. McCaffrey was dismissed in the regular way, as provided by the laws of this State. He had an inquiry board, and an appeal board presided over by a magistrate, and does the hon. member mean to suggest that all those gentlemen were partial to the Government of the Day? He had his own representative on the board. I am putting it to the House to-day that the Opposition's main interest in this gentleman appears to go back over many years. Before I became a member of this Assembly I used to read the debates of Parliament very carefully. The figures that were prepared for the then hon. member for Kennedy, the Hon. A. W. Fadden, now Leader of the Opposition in the Federal House, and displaced for the electorate of Kennedy in the State House by Mr. Jesson, were prepared in such a way as to get the then hon. member for Kennedy deeper into trouble. I do not know why the Opposition should be interested in Mr. McCaffrey any more than they should be interested in any other officer who has been dismissed for a misdemeanour or misuse of public funds. I have no desire to go into these matters, but I know that there was considerable "pull" to get Mr. McCaffrey a position in the Federal Public Service. It would be an astounding thing if an officer who had been dismissed from the Government service for misuse of public funds should be taken into a position with another Government.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: What was the amount involved?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member talks a great deal of hooey. Let him get up and make his own contribution; I am making mine.

The Auditor-General has charge of public finance and it is not for the Lord Mayor or

the chairman of a hospital board or a local authority or any other public body to deny the Auditor-General any information he requires to enable him to compile his reports in a proper way. We have some very interesting facts related in the special report by the Auditor-General upon the affairs of the Brisbane City Council and tabled by Mr. Speaker to-day. Those hon. members who have perused the report will see that the Auditor-General kept within his province in demanding information on the many matters that have a very important bearing on the use of public funds. The hon. member for Toowong suggested that it was not for the Auditor-General as such to interfere in matters of policy. That is a bald, general statement, but I go so far as to say that it is the duty of the Auditor-General to question matters even if they are matters of policy when they relate to the misuse of public funds. No Government and no local authority, nor any public body, has the right to set up a policy that will in some way permit of the misuse of public funds. After perusing this report, I am quite satisfied that the Auditor-General was right in the action he took.

In the first place, the Auditor-General details an inspector to audit the accounts of the Brisbane City Council and it is he who brings these matters under the notice of the Auditor-General. I can say that in my position as Secretary for Public Lands, many accounts have been submitted to me by the Auditor-General with his notings relating to some irregularities on the part of certain officers. He has also drawn the attention of the Chairman of the Land Administration Board to many other irregularities as they appear to him. Then the Chairman of the Land Administration Board and the responsible officers are expected to give an explanation to the Auditor-General that will enable him to submit his report to Parliament in the way he is expected to submit it, that is, truthfully. It is all very well for the Lord Mayor and others similarly situated to complain that the Auditor-General has set himself up as a kind of dictator. May I tell them that the Auditor-General has power to demand any information he may require in the course of his public duties from even a Premier, and any Minister of the Crown? So that the Lord Mayor need not think he is being very drastically handled because the Auditor-General has asked him for information relevant to his audit.

The special report by the Auditor-General in connection with the Brisbane City Council affairs says—

“The submission to me by the council for the approval of a new expenditure voucher form presented an opportunity for the incorporation therein of a certificate, to be made by suppliers, providing for certain conditions that have arisen owing to the war.”

The certificate reads—

“The prices tendered herein (or included in this invoice) for declared goods under

the National Security (Prices) Regulations do not exceed the maximum prices fixed under these Regulations. The prices for non-declared goods do not exceed maximum prices approved by the Commonwealth Prices Commissioner, or if prices have not been approved, maximum prices calculated in accordance with the principles of Prices Regulation Order No. 100.”

A similar certificate is used in connection with Commonwealth activities. It has also been used in connection with State governmental activities. I see no reason why the Auditor-General should not demand from the Brisbane City Council some explanation with respect to that matter.

Mr. Edwards: You are only stonewalling.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am not; I am just giving these points because there seems to be a definite and concerted attack by certain hon. members opposite on the Auditor-General. I do not think the hon. member for Nanango would be associated with it, but I can go so far as to say there is a good deal of urge from other directions to do so.

Mr. Edwards: You know you have a suspicious mind.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is very handy at times, because it leads to an investigation and then certain things are revealed. As a result of my suspicions over a long period in regard to certain hon. members I have been able to unearth a good deal of information.

Mr. Edwards: That is your imagination.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We find this report states—

“A request to the Lord Mayor for explanations and advice on matters arising out of the report of the inspector engaged on the audit of the accounts of the council for 1940-41 was refused, apart from a general statement that he had very carefully gone through the inspector's report and the many matters raised therein had been suitably dealt with. I did not consider this was a satisfactory and reasonable attitude to a report on an audit of an institution involving the receipt and expenditure of approximately £5,000,000 per annum, and again requested that the explanations and advice sought be furnished. The Lord Mayor did not comply therewith.”

Then the Auditor-General proceeds—

“The matters on which explanations and advice were sought included:—”

I invite hon. members' attention particularly to those matters. If they give them that attention, they will be in a position to answer for themselves as to whether the Auditor-General was not strictly in his rights in asking for the information he required. The matters covered are—

“Departures from approvals of the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works for

the carrying out of certain works in the city area;”

I assume that in regard to those works certain Government finance would be affected. No doubt, having regard to the fact that the works were approved by the Co-ordinator-General, it would be reasonable for me to assume that Government finance might be attached to it. Is it not a reasonable thing, apart from any other phase of the subject, that the Government themselves should be advised as to funds they allocated to the Brisbane City Council in the form of subsidies or otherwise, even if they were expended in the public interest?

The next matter was—

“Inadvisability of incurring costs in obtaining title deeds to valueless land acquired by the council on account of arrears of rates;”

It appears to be quite a simple matter. I do not know why the Lord Mayor and members of the council should get so hot under the collar over supplying information of that kind.

Mr. Luckins: Some of the land is not worth taking a title out for.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Auditor-General has asked for the information and he should be supplied with it. Here is another matter—

“The carrying out of work in connection with ferry approaches and landings and equipment for golf links without requisite authority;”

Another is—

“Admission and acceptance of a quotation received approximately two and a-half hours after receipt of quotations closed;”

There is a gross irregularity. Here we find that the council thought fit to receive a tender approximately two and a-half hours after the closing time for tenders. Again, I see good grounds there for the Auditor-General’s demanding the information desired, as this Parliament wishes him to demand it.

Another matter on which he sought information was—

“Failure to have necessary stamp duty affixed to documents.”

Mr. Luckins: Were there any other tenders in?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:

The Auditor-General would not know if any other tenders had been submitted. As he was not supplied with the information asked for, he has to continue to demand that explanation.

Here is an instance in which public funds are affected. No matter in what capacity a public officer might be employed by the Crown, if he sees documents that are not stamped according to law, it is his duty to draw attention to the fact.

Another matter was—

“Charging to the Council of excess expenditure on an estate road;”

The Auditor-General has just made a bald statement there, but it might be that there was some expenditure of public funds by the Brisbane City Council on a private estate.

Mr. Luckins: It might be due to bad estimating by an engineer.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:

It does not matter whether it is due to bad estimating or not.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much noise in the Chamber.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:

I hope the hon. member for Maree is not trying to shift the blame or the responsibility that rests on the council to the engineer.

We go further and we find—

“Petrol issues on account of a particular council motor car.”

The hon. member for Maree agrees with me that in each case the Auditor-General should have been supplied with the information; if he takes his job seriously, I cannot see how he can object to the Auditor-General’s asking for that information.

The Auditor-General goes on to point out—

“In accordance with the law, the report in question is made to me by the inspector and a copy thereof is forwarded to the Lord Mayor. It is the invariable practice to address the mayor or chairman of a local authority on matters arising in an audit report, and no exception is made with respect to the accounts of the Brisbane City Council.”

Why should it be treated any differently? Here we have a body controlling an expenditure of something like £5,000,000, and since the law provides for a proper audit and inspection of the accounts annually, why should the Brisbane City Council be treated any differently from the Quilpie Shire Council?

Mr. Luckins: You will find the Brisbane City Council’s accounts are correct; it is an honourable administration.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:

Nobody in this House has suggested that the council’s accounts are incorrect, nor do I think the hon. member for Maree or any other hon. member is in a position to say they are correct or not until they have been satisfactorily examined and investigated completely by the Auditor-General and his officials. When we have a certificate from the Auditor-General to that effect, then I shall be prepared to agree with the hon. member for Maree that the Brisbane City Council’s accounts are in order, but not before.

The Auditor-General goes on to say that the refusal to furnish advice on costs arising in the matter of the audit is unprecedented, and in view of the attitude the Lord Mayor

and his staff adopted, the Auditor-General has seen fit to bring this matter under the notice of the Government. The Government cannot afford to ignore the fact that the council obtains a very large part of its money from public funds, either through the Commonwealth Government or through the State Government, as the case may be.

This charge of dictation on the part of the Auditor-General appears to have arisen only recently, because we find the point was raised first in correspondence in April of this year. A copy of the audit inspector's report of 1940-41, with the Auditor-General's request for costs and advice on the matters raised, was sent by the Auditor-General to the Lord Mayor on 2 January, 1942. On 5 January the Lord Mayor acknowledged the receipt of the report, and, far from indicating any hostility to the Auditor-General's request for costs and advice, expressed his willingness to attend to all matters mentioned therein on his return from a visit outside the State. The Auditor-General goes on to quote the letter received from the Lord Mayor as follows:—

"I thank you for the copy of the audit inspector's report on the books and accounts of the council for the financial year ended 30 June, 1941.

"I am leaving for the South to-morrow morning, and expect to be away approximately one week.

"Any matters requiring attention will be dealt with immediately on my return."

It can be taken, therefore, that the attitude of the council on that occasion was not particularly hostile to the Auditor-General's request. Apparently, as time went by, they found probably that there were some implications in regard to the Auditor-General's request for further detailed information, and then, so as to obtain what might be regarded as a little public sympathy, they came out to make a statement that was tantamount to a charge that the Auditor-General was interfering with the council's property. I previously intimated that the Auditor-General even has power—it is a necessary power—to question the wisdom of a policy that involves the misuse of public funds.

I hope hon. members will have due regard to the position of the Auditor-General, and remember that Parliament has given him the protection he enjoys, so that he will be able to carry out his duties in a proper way and be free from political control by any party, irrespective of its political colour. Since that has been the case, I think the hon. members of this House, rather than condemn or criticise the Auditor-General, should be willing to sustain him.

Mr. MOORHOUSE (Windsor) (2.39 p.m.): I particularly wish to make my position clear in regard to one matter that has just been referred to by the Secretary for Public Lands.

Some mention is made in the Auditor-General's report of an inaccuracy in relation to contracts. I should like it to be known

publicly that on one occasion—and I presume it is the occasion that is referred to in the Auditor-General's report—it came to my knowledge that when the tender box was opened a certain tenderer did not have his tender in that box, but it was laid on the table some time afterwards. In support of my claim that there was something wrong I had my informant supply me with two statutory declarations. I took these to the Lord Mayor and made the claim that fresh tenders should be called, as the present tenders were not correct. He brought in the Town Clerk and wanted my declaration, which I would not give up. He had copies taken of them, and as a result a high officer was suspended but later reinstated. When the contract came before the council for letting I opposed it.

The Secretary for Public Lands: What contract was that?

Mr. MOORHOUSE: The carting contract. I presume that is the contract the Auditor-General is referring to in his report because that is the only instance that has come to my knowledge in which anything was wrong. I thought it was seriously wrong for a tender to be received after the closing hour. That is exactly what occurred in the cartage contract. I do not wish anybody to think that I was a party to anything that was not absolutely correct, and I welcome this opportunity of explaining my position and also supporting the Auditor-General as to there being something wrong with the letting of the cartage contract.

The Secretary for Mines: Who would be responsible for that?

Mr. MOORHOUSE: The Stores Board.

Mr. Collins: Acting on its own initiative?

Mr. MOORHOUSE: The Stores Board is not under the control of the council, the elected representatives—not to my knowledge. Obviously, something was wrong, because after I had drawn the Lord Mayor's attention to this happening an alteration was made in the method of handling tenders, but he did not call for fresh tenders, which he should have done. A tender received after the closing hour was received and considered with the others.

Mr. Jesson: Was it accepted?

Mr. MOORHOUSE: At the moment I cannot give the hon. member that information, but I am explaining the position. Immediately after that incident the council adopted a different policy in relation to the receipt of tenders.

Mr. LUCKINS (Maree) (2.43 p.m.): I have not had an opportunity of going into the merits of the dispute between the council and the Auditor-General, but I am of opinion something is wrong somewhere; either the Auditor-General is endeavouring to control the council or he is acting in a different capacity from that adopted towards a previous administration. The information given by the Minister recently does not give the whole of the facts. It gives one side of the

matter only, and it would be advisable, in the interests of the administration, at least to hear what the Lord Mayor has to say before coming to a decision. In the past there have been peculiarities and the Auditor-General has played a very prominent part in pleasing the Administration by avoiding drawing attention to certain acts done by a previous council. There is the matter of passing repairs and alterations to golf links to the extent of £2,500; when the new administration obtained control it was found that public money to an amount of over £7,000 had been expended on the golf links without the permission of the council. It might be very interesting to ask the Auditor-General why he passed that item when the consent or the approval of the council was not obtained.

The Secretary for Public Lands: The present Auditor-General would not be in that position then, and you know it.

Mr. LUCKINS: He was in the position. The Auditor-General has been auditing the accounts of the City Council for the past eight years, and I am speaking of a matter of three years ago.

The Secretary for Public Lands: Do you say that Mr. Ross was in the position eight years?

Mr. LUCKINS: I do not know. I am speaking only of the Auditor-General. I am not dealing with any individual; I am dealing with a department that has a very heavy responsibility. I want to know whether the Auditor-General has been brought in at this late stage to try to bring a certain amount of ridicule on an administration of civic affairs that bears the hall-mark of 100-per-cent. public approval? We must be fair in this, and so long as hon. members are using the privilege of Parliament to make attacks on the Lord Mayor and aldermen of the council I am going to defend them until I know the true circumstances surrounding the case. It was very convenient for the Secretary for Public Lands to have the first shot at this proposal when hon. members on this side had not even had the opportunity of perusing the Auditor-General's report.

The Secretary for Public Lands: It has been on the table all the morning.

Mr. LUCKINS: I have been dealing with other matters during the morning, and under the Standing Orders our time for discussion is very limited. Because of the peculiarities of this Government, the Brisbane City Council is bound by a law passed by Parliament for the good government of the city. How is it that the Auditor-General is in conflict with the Lord Mayor, when the Department of Health and Home Affairs has a permanent officer at the council to approve of every item of policy that goes through the council? Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that the Government have appointed a permanent officer from the Department of Health and Home Affairs to review everything concerning policy, expenditure, and any other matters affecting the wellbeing of the citizens of this city as dealt with by the Brisbane City Council? If Mr. Robinson, the man who is occupying that

office at the City Hall, is not drawn into this dispute, then it looks to me as if this were merely a little political propaganda that was being indulged in by an insincere Government. It has been suggested that public attention must be drawn to the administration of the Brisbane City Council. That is suggested by hon. members opposite merely because the present administration of the council is not of their political colour. An endeavour is being made to impute sinister actions to the Lord Mayor and the aldermen, and I say that it is bad policy to do that.

The Secretary for Mines: What have they got to hide?

Mr. LUCKINS: I can guarantee that the present administration has nothing to hide. It has the approval and good will of the city of Brisbane and has retained it ever since the election when the Labour administration was heavily defeated for its mismanagement of civic affairs during its six years of office. Many things were done by that administration. Among other things, approval was given to leasing the old Town Hall to a certain person without calling public tenders for it. Why did not the Auditor-General call attention to that?

The Secretary for Public Lands: That was a matter for the Department of Public Lands.

Mr. LUCKINS: Why did not the Auditor-General call attention to the granting of £90,000 of the ratepayers' money to a wealthy shipping company?

The Secretary for Public Lands: That is untrue.

Mr. LUCKINS: The Adelaide and Musgrave wharf scandals will live long in the memory of the citizens of Brisbane. They will long remember the granting of £90,000 of the ratepayers' money for from 40 to 80 years at the same rate as the council was paying for it. That was a very fine gesture, indeed, on the part of the council to a wealthy shipping company! That administration had no qualms about granting that £90,000 to that company, but the Auditor-General did not draw attention to that. Again, the Auditor-General failed to draw attention to the fact that the City Council lent the lessees of the old Town Hall £15,000 of the ratepayers' money for 30 years without interest.

Mr. Mann: Ask the hon. member for Toowoong. He will know something about that.

Mr. LUCKINS: I do not know whether he will, but it is time an investigation was made into those things. I should welcome an investigation into the affairs of the Brisbane City Council, especially under the regime of the past administration, for then public attention would be directed to misrepresentation and mismanagement of a very high order, and to the fact that the Auditor-General was very silent about that, because Labour had control, and it seems to me that it is very convenient now, when an anti-Labour administration is controlling the

council, that misdemeanours are being suggested on the part of the Lord Mayor and the aldermen, when in fact these charges are unfounded.

We come now to this policy of taking out a title for land resumed for rates. The council took over 15,000 allotments for non-payment of rates, and the Titles Office insisted that the council take out a title for each of those blocks. It might interest hon. members to know that it cost the ratepayers 25s. for the title to each block, plus another £1 for registration of the title, and some of the land involved was not worth 2s. Why should the ratepayers be compelled to take out titles on such worthless land? Why should they be compelled to pay stamp duty on those transactions? When land is put up for sale it is not compulsory for the purchaser to take out a title.

The Secretary for Public Lands: You are talking of land generally.

Mr. LUCKINS: It is a shame to think that the ratepayers should be put to the expense of paying for all these titles when the land is worth nothing by comparison. The ratepayers have to pay stamp duty in accordance with a valuation adopted by the Crown. If the land is worth only twopence or threepence it must have a minimum valuation of £30 according to the Government, which attracts stamp duty amounting to 10s., plus £1 5s. for a new title. I do not blame the council, because I think it is time an investigation was made into these petty pin-pricking tax burdens as they are applied against the council.

The Government are not concerned about the ratepayers. They impose a charge on the council in respect of electricity control through the State Electricity Commission. There are many other factors calling for urgent consideration. There are about 330,000 people in Brisbane, of whom just under 100,000 are ratepayers. Look at the heavy impost put upon them when they are asked to pay the extra charges inflicted on the council by the Government. I commend the Lord Mayor and the aldermen for standing up to the Auditor-General, because it is time we had a showdown with this department.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo) (2.54 p.m.): This House has been engaged for some hours in examining a question concerning the Auditor-General, Mr. Ross, and his association with the Brisbane City Council. There is a principle at stake that might for the moment be examined.

I suggest to hon. members that it is undesirable to attack administrative heads associated with the Government. It is unfair and unjust, but charges have been hurled across the Chamber that may or may not have a basis in fact. There is apparently an increasing tendency to use the privilege of this Chamber to make partisan attacks on men who are non-partisan. One of the most remarkable utterances was made by the hon. member for East Toowoomba, who said, "I do not know Mr. Ross." It is a great pity he did not know

Mr. Ross, because he is an example of what a public servant should be. He is a man of unimpeachable integrity, he is a man with very lofty ideals of public service, and in addition he has an unswerving devotion to duty in the carrying out of the functions of this Parliament and the Parliaments that have gone. If Mr. Ross had failed to carry out the things that Parliament had charged him to do, then indeed he would have earned the impeachment of this Parliament. You, Mr. Speaker, receive a document from Mr. Ross, an officer of yours, or of this Parliament, in which he welcomes the suggestion that a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into the charges that have been made.

Mr. Massey: It would have to be a bit wider than that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: Mr. Ross has made a certain suggestion. If a Royal Commission was granted its terms of reference would have to be considered in relation to the questions involved. Mr. Ross has done the right and proper thing. It must be remembered that he is not able to defend himself in this Chamber. Of course, Parliament could call him to the Bar of the House—the majority of hon. members could call him to the bar of the House—but I believe that is not desired nor desirable, unless there are specific charges of a very grave character against the person concerned. The point I take is one of principle. We have in the main been justly proud of the integrity, ability, and loyalty of the public service in Queensland and their willingness to serve the State. I believe there is no better public service in Australia, possibly no superior public service in the world, than the public service of Queensland. With all its magnitude and ramifications, how seldom do we hear even of minor transgressions by public servants? If public servants are to be subjected to continuous attacks, continuous libels, and unfounded charges under the cloak of privilege, we are going to weaken our public service materially. Many men in the public service could do much better in what we term outside service. The remuneration of public servants is not comparable in many instances to the remuneration that they with their ability could attract outside.

Mr. Macdonald: They have security of tenure.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: I admit that, but there is something greater than that in the minds of public servants. We hear much of the ideal of public service. Many of us justly claim it as our ideal. Every hon. member has an ideal of public service. I believe that many hon. members would not remain here unless they were actuated by it. We all apply that principle to ourselves; we are here as public servants charged with a very definite responsibility. Surely we can agree that highly placed public servants have equal fidelity, equal ideals, and an equal will to serve ourselves!

What is attempted to be laid at the door of Mr. Ross? The crime, as I see it, is

insisting that the law be fulfilled. That is a very serious charge, but is one that if analysed justifies the action Mr. Ross has taken. Mr. Ross has asked the Brisbane City Council to supply certain information. The Brisbane City Council has not supplied that information. I understand that the Lord Mayor, Mr. Chandler, has said that it would be very difficult to obtain this information. I have not been present during the entire debate, but I have heard hon. members opposite offer an explanation to some questions that Mr. Ross has asked. If hon. members in this Chamber can answer the questions that Mr. Ross courteously asked Mr. Chandler to answer, surely Mr. Chandler has equal knowledge of the affairs of the council as hon. members opposite!

Mr. Luckins: It is not our responsibility.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: The point I am trying to make is that hon. members opposite found themselves competent to answer certain questions, yet Mr. Chandler finds it impossible to do so.

Mr. Brand: Who answered those questions?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: Surely there is a paradox. There is an example in the hon. member who just resumed his seat. He answered one question.

Mr. Luckins: About the title deeds?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: That is so, about titles that Mr. Ross desired some information upon.

What is the fundamental duty of an Auditor-General? Why is an Auditor-General appointed? Why do we maintain the services of the Auditor-General's Department? We maintain the services of that department in order that public expenditure shall be subjected to proper scrutiny. Mr. Chandler raised the question that it would to some extent stultify democracy—or he used some other glowing term—if he admitted the right of Mr. Ross or his officers to ask certain financial questions associated with the administration of the Brisbane City Council. Will that argument bear analysis? I maintain it will not. This institution is a broader democratic institution than the Brisbane City Council. This Parliament represents all the people within the State. The Brisbane City Council represents only a section of the people within the State. We, from the Premier down, willingly acquiesce in the system adopted in the examination of public accounts.

Mr. Massey: The franchise is different.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: The difference in the franchise does not enter into the question; it is the principle I am trying to discuss. We have in the Brisbane City Council the counterpart of this Chamber. The principle is similar, though the activities of the Brisbane City Council may be limited. The principle is equal and based on the same democratic

principle used to constitute this Chamber. I repeat that from the Premier down we acquiesce in the principle of public examination of public funds. Parliaments for years have given very wide and very extensive powers to the Auditor-General. Those powers are only given as necessity reveals that they should be given. I do not know how many years ago the Audit Act was passed. I do not know how frequently it has been amended—I did not have time to look such things up—but I do know the Audit Act is a very old statute and an Act that must be respected, because it is an Act that guarantees either the fidelity of public servants and institutions or the punishment of those who fail to give that fidelity. Is it logical to argue that a subordinate organisation like the Brisbane City Council—the creation of this Parliament; I helped to create it, and I see some hon. members sitting opposite who helped to create it—

Mr. Luckins: You are always amending the Act.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: That may be so. Is not that a healthy sign? Is not the amendment of an Act a healthy sign of a progressive democracy? The hon. member has an entirely wrong view in regard to the alteration of an Act. The alteration of Acts represents progressive public opinion.

Mr. Brand: Sometimes.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: As a general rule. Let us accept that as a general principle, and we come back to the consideration of the two features of the argument I am endeavouring to submit—first, the wisdom of attacking highly placed, responsible, and respected public servants and so endeavouring to subordinate an independent public servant to the opinion of this House; second, suppose the Government were to refuse the Auditor-General, an officer of Parliament, an answer to any question of a financial character that had been submitted to us. What would happen? I say that Parliament could not live under those circumstances. That is a thing hon. members would not tolerate in this Chamber because it would destroy Parliament; it would destroy the faith people have in Parliament; therefore we maintain our Audit Act with great scrupulousness. Will hon. members argue that a thing that is insisted upon in regard to the highest institution of the land shall not be applied to a subordinate institution? All that Mr. Ross has done in his relationship with Mr. Chandler has been to ask Mr. Chandler to assure him in respect of certain transactions that the law has been complied with. Mr. Ross has that right; he must have that right. Mr. Ross has to protect the finances of the State and the finances of public institutions, and if you look at that statement of Mr. Ross's that was tabled this morning and ordered to be printed you will see that Mr. Ross has suggested that there are certain outstanding questions. They are all of a financial character, and the finances of the City Council are directly or indirectly

contributed by the taxpayers of Brisbane, and the taxpayers of Brisbane obviously have the right to be assured that there is no malpractice in the administration and expenditure of this finance.

Mr. Brand: Have not the Government some power in the matter?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: Should the Government have to exercise those powers? As a matter of fact, might I say that Mr. Ross has been particularly patient in this matter? Does the hon. member realise that so wide and extensive are the powers of the Auditor-General that he could by process require Mr. Chandler to attend at his office for examination? I suppose hon. members also know that the Auditor-General could put any Minister, including the Premier, "on the mat" in respect of financial matters. Can hon. members argue that Mr. Chandler is to be placed beyond the law? Can hon. members argue that the system that has worked for years in relation to the public accounts of this State should not be applied to the public accounts of an organisation that is of a semi-public character as far as its relationship to the direct control of this Parliament is concerned?

Mr. Brand: How are you going to get the information that he wants?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: If Mr. Chandler were wise then he would supply the information. I advise Mr. Chandler to supply it. I believe Mr. Chandler would be wise to supply it. I should like to say I respect Mr. Chandler. He is the elected representative of the people, and is therefore worthy of the respect of the people—if we believe in democracy we must hold those sentiments—but I do believe public opinion will range itself against Mr. Chandler, and in sinister ways we shall hear the statement, "What has Mr. Chandler—what has the council—got to hide?" Public bodies cannot afford to hide anything. They have to be open and honest in all their transactions and all their financial relationships with the public. I think that Mr. Chandler has been guilty of an error of judgment in this matter.

Mr. Luckins: There is no charge of misappropriation of money, is there?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: I should not say that there is.

Mr. Luckins: I am saying there is not.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: I do not believe that Mr. Chandler would be a party to misappropriation.

Mr. Massey: Wrongful expenditure?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: Wrongful expenditure might be different.

Mr. Massey: If it is, it should be probed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: I do not wish to depart

from this point: it is not my function to defend or condemn Mr. Chandler, it is not the function of this House to defend or condemn him, but equally it is not the function of this Parliament to condemn a highly-placed, reliable, and efficient public servant unheard. If the tendency, evident of late, of bitter partisan attacks on public servants is to continue, then I can predict only a material and substantial weakening of the public service that will not react satisfactorily to the people of this State.

The hon. member who resumed his seat immediately before I rose made some suggestion of partisanship. I really think that is unworthy, and I might remind the hon. member that Mr. Ross was a very scathing critic of the previous administration in the council. The hon. member admits he was?

Mr. Luckins: They deserved it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: Unheard? The suggestion is that Mr. Jones and his administration deserved it, but Mr. Chandler, because he happens to be an administration more closely associated with hon. members opposite, does not deserve it?

Mr. Luckins interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Hon. members must stop these interruptions. They are not permitted by our Standing Orders, and I hope that the hon. member for Maree will cease; if not, I shall have to deal with him.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: You know, Mr. Speaker, that you cannot have it both ways. I hope that this thing will be satisfactorily adjusted. I wish to state before I resume my seat, that I have had many years of association with Mr. Ross. He has not hesitated to ask the most searching questions about the accounts in my department, and I am perfectly satisfied that he asks equally searching questions about the accounts in other departments, and that is as I would have it. One cannot argue, and one is not justified in arguing, and hon. members will not be permitted to argue, that Mr. Chandler shall be placed in a sheltered position.

Mr. Brand: Nobody asks that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: The debate has suggested that.

Mr. Brand: No.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: Mr. Ross has been attacked on the ground of his administration. I appeal to hon. members to be quite sure of their facts. If Mr. Ross is in the wrong, it will be made known in due course, but to rush in precipitately and attack the integrity of an officer who has given to the State the service Mr. Ross has, is distinctly unfair, not only to Mr. Ross but to the public service of which he is a worthy representative.

Resolution 3—Premier and Chief Secretary's Department—agreed to.

Resolution 4—Department of Public Lands—agreed to.

Resolution 5—Department of Health and Home Affairs—

Mr. J. F. BARNES (Bundaberg) (3.14 p.m.): Parliament amended the Liquor Act last year with a view to bringing in something that was sound. Hon. members opposite praised the Act of 1935 to the extent that they said no better Bill had been introduced than that. How ridiculous were their statements! Despite this so-called modern Liquor Act, hotels—under a gentleman's agreement—were allowed to trade to 11 p.m. and later. However, pressure brought by the hon. member for Bundaberg caused an alteration of the Liquor Act. The trading hours for hotels were extended from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m., but with that provision the former Premier, the hon. member for Mackay, strongly disagreed.

So much was this so that he introduced an amending Bill when he came back from the South by which section 78A was included in the Act, and it was included for no other reason than to satisfy the ego of the then Premier of Queensland. Section 78 provides that "in the event of any emergency arising or being expected to arise throughout the State or within any part of the State or for any other cause or circumstances whatsoever existing or being likely to come into existence whereby the peace, order, welfare, good government, safety or civil-defence of the State, or such part thereof is or is likely to be imperilled, any hotel can be closed by two justices of the peace or any police magistrate." That section was brought in simply because the then Premier, the Hon. W. Forgan Smith, the hon. member for Mackay, the would-be dictator of Queensland, was defeated for the first time by caucus. He said to himself, "They are not smart enough to beat me," and they were not, because he then introduced his section 78A. We found in the morning papers that the hotels were to open at 10, which they did, and in the afternoon papers it was announced that they were to close again at 8, which they also did, so losing two hours. Of course, caucus disregarded him so many times after that that he was eventually compelled to resign as Premier. We are now left with an Act that was introduced to rectify faults found in the liquor question. This Bill provides that people may get drunk during the day, that they may drink as many pots as they wish, but the man who knocks off work at 5 or 6 in the afternoon and who wants a couple of drinks before he goes home is denied them, because there is no beer left. The Government should be proud of that, I do not think. The present liquor law gives adequate power for the complete control of hotels, but to give it a little extra touch, I suggest that the law be amended. Here we are, in the closing hours of the session and there has been no amendment of the Liquor Act. The whole of Queensland, in fact, the whole of Australia, has been crying out about the wrongs of the Liquor Act, yet this Parliament could not see fit to introduce a Bill to amend it, but it

could see fit to bring in the "Barnes" Bill to abolish contingent voting. They can introduce Bills to deal with questions that are less important to the people of Queensland, yet they cannot bring down legislation to deal with a question that is very important to the people.

The Secretary for Labour and Employment: You are the only one who wants an amendment of the Act.

Mr. J. F. BARNES: I am not. The people of Queensland generally want the Act amended.

The Attorney-General: This department does not deal with the Liquor Act. That is under the Department of Justice.

Mr. J. F. BARNES: The Liquor Act is dealt with under the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs.

The Attorney-General: It is under the Justice Department.

Mr. J. F. BARNES: The Liquor Act provides a minimum penalty of 5s. for being found drunk. If that penalty was increased to £20 and the penalty of the hotelkeeper for serving a drunk with liquor was increased from £20 to £100, and if the Act was then enforced, you can believe me that the people of Queensland would say, "12 pots makes me drunk. I will stop when I get to 8 or 9," and in that way you eliminate the whole of our drunkenness. It is the minority in Queensland that is causing all the upset to the majority.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member indicate which particular vote he is discussing?

Mr. J. F. BARNES: The Department of Health and Home Affairs.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! It covers a good many sub-departments. I want to know the particular one to which the hon. member is referring.

Mr. J. F. BARNES: I have not gone through it, but I am speaking about the control of liquor.

The Attorney-General: The control of liquor is under the Justice Department.

Mr. J. F. BARNES: The control of liquor is not under the Justice Department; the administration is.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I am glad the hon. member made that admission, because he has been dealing with proposed legislation up to the moment. Please deal with the administration of the Liquor Act.

Mr. J. F. BARNES: I have been dealing with an amendment of the liquor question.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! That is not in order.

Mr. J. F. BARNES: The fact remains that this department has control of the Police Force, and, according to the Act, they must arrest every drunk they see. Last year I asked for figures as to how many drunks

were arrested in the previous year and I was told they numbered 9,000. You can believe me, Mr. Speaker, that if the Police Force, under the jurisdiction of the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs, was directed to enforce this Act, there would be 900,000 people arrested if the fine was allowed to stand at 5s., but the day is coming quickly when that fine will be increased and the police will enforce the Act, and then we shall get over this difficulty of the minority's causing inconvenience to the majority.

The Attorney-General: Do you want to put people in gaol for having a pot of beer?

Mr. J. F. BARNES: I do not want to throw people into gaol for having a pot of beer, but I should keep them from getting into gaol by making them control themselves so that they do not get into such a state that they are thrown into gaol. A man's wife, mother, or sister can walk down the street to-day, and in passing a hotel door may have a drunk thrown out on top of her by the publican or some other person there, because when people are drunk in hotels considerable arguments crop up, they think it is a stadium, and they start to box on. That is also going to be altered. The day is coming when the Liquor Act will be enforced by the police properly and the people will be so afraid that they will not use the hotel as a stadium. They will control themselves properly while they are in hotels. Why should we have such a state of affairs as this—a child five or six years of age goes down the street and a drunk comes out of an hotel and vomits all over her? I saw that happen in Queen street, and on another occasion to a woman. That happens because the Government allow them to get drunk and do these things.

I have a book here called, "Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion." Let us see what it says about the question. It is a document of the International Jews. It was stolen from the pocket of an international Jew in Paris in 1901 and printed in Russia in 1905. The penalty for anyone found in possession of it was death—shot on sight. Naturally, the book died a natural death, but it was resurrected in England in 1920. The London "Times" and other London papers said of the book that it must be fiction because it was too true to be other than fiction. Henry Ford said of the book—

"It is a remarkable document, and all I say is it fits in with what has happened and is happening now."

In 1935 the publisher in Switzerland was taken to court by the international Jew, who claimed that the book was a forgery and won the case. The publisher took the matter to appeal in 1937 and won.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to deal with the resolution under consideration.

Mr. J. F. BARNES: I am pointing out what they had to say on the liquor question. In 1937 it was ruled that the book was authentic, that it was a genuine article. This is what Protocol No. 6 has to say about the liquor question—

"By accustoming the workers to anarchy and to drunkenness and side by side therewith taking all measures to extirpate them from the face of the earth all the educated force of the Goyim . . ."

Goyim cattle, that is what the 300 international financial Jews call us.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member can discuss only the Police Department, and he certainly is not doing that.

Mr. J. F. BARNES: I am discussing the administration of the Police Department.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not dealing with that. If he does not do so, I shall ask him to resume his seat.

Mr. J. F. BARNES: I will resume it in a minute whether or no. The police are not allowed to carry out their duties.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. J. F. BARNES: They are assisting drunkenness for the same reason as it is helped by international Jewry. They want to keep the people drunk so that they will not ask that society should be placed on a proper economic basis. The laws are being ignored and the police are not carrying them out. It is just as serious for the police not to carry out the law as it is for Mr. McCaffrey to over-charge 8s. 11d. for expenses and be fired from the department. It is 10,000 times more serious. However, the day is coming when legislation will be introduced to control the weaker people who are injured by liquor. It is our duty to help them, but instead of helping them we are hindering them. We are encouraging them to get drunk. There is no harm in drinking; the only harm is in the abuse of it. The time is also coming when the Government will be forced to bring in a sensible liquor law. That was endorsed by Bundaberg and again by Cairns.

Mr. POWER (Baroona) (3.25 p.m.): I should like to bring an important matter under the notice of the Minister in charge of the Department of Health and Home Affairs in the absence of the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs. It concerns certain policemen serving overseas in the Australian Imperial Forces, whose wives have been authorised to collect their pensions from the department. Under the regulations, before the wife of such a man can collect the money from the Superannuation Fund it is necessary that a voucher be signed and presented by the wife, and there must also be some evidence of the fact that the person who has signed the voucher is still alive. Very often it is extremely difficult to get evidence that the man concerned is still alive. I have in mind the case of a lady whose husband is serving overseas who has not collected any money from the Superannuation Fund since June last because she has not been in a position to present the voucher. Her husband gave her the necessary authority to collect the money accruing to him from the Police Superannuation Fund before he went overseas. In some cases the man concerned may

be serving at the battle front and it is impossible to get his signature. I have discussed this matter with Mr. England, the secretary to the Commissioner of Police. He informs me that the fault is with the Audit Office, which says it cannot accept a voucher signed by anybody but the recipient. Common sense should apply in a matter of this kind. I suggest that the Minister make investigations into the matter. I understand there are several such instances. The signature of such an authorised person should be sufficient to acquit the voucher. This is a very burning question. If the superannuated policemen were serving with the forces in Australia contact could be made with them, but this man is serving overseas with a section of the army that does not come into contact with civilisation for some time. He may be away from a centre for several months at a time. He would have no opportunity of signing a voucher. Is it fair and reasonable that the wife of this man should be unable to collect the superannuation payment because her husband is serving overseas and is unable to complete the voucher? Under such circumstances the authority left behind by the soldier-husband should be sufficient to acquit the vouchers.

I want very briefly to pay a tribute to the excellent work performed by the various hospital authorities. I want particularly to refer to the services rendered by Dr. Pye, Superintendent of the Brisbane General Hospital. The Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board was very fortunate in obtaining a man with such high qualifications and temperament to fill that position. Dr. Pye devotes the whole of his time to his duties and often works very long hours to attend to the sick and suffering. Some time ago I took up with him the case of a certain patient and asked him if he could give that patient special attention. I subsequently discovered that through his interest in the case no fewer than 13 doctors had been called in. When we find a man in such a high public position willing to give service of that kind it is only right that his virtue should be extolled publicly.

Recently the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board lost the services of its secretary, Mr. Bolton, but we were fortunate in getting in his place Mr. Anderson, who had previously given excellent service in another Government position. The work accomplished by the board speaks volumes, not only for the management but the co-operation it has been able to get. When the hospitals were districted strong criticism was levelled at the Government, but the policy of the Government has brought our hospital service up to a high standard. It was suggested that the maternity hospital was too big, yet to-day we find it is inadequate to meet demands. It is one of the finest institutions of its kind in the world, and a striking monument to Government policy. We have given the people of the State a service they are justly entitled to. It is a State-wide policy. It is only right that the people in the outback should receive similar consideration in planning their medical services as the metropolis. Results

have proved the soundness of the Government's hospital policy. As a result of it we have a large number of excellent hospitals distributed throughout the State. There has been a shortage of medical staff due to military call-ups, but the various boards are doing their best under the circumstances.

I want to refer, too, to the excellent work our medical men are doing, and particularly to the difficulties under which they are working. Through the shortage of medical men many of our private medical practitioners are working long hours. I suggest that the Minister should confer with the British Medical Association with a view to introducing some system of zoning whereby the night calls will be distributed over all the medical men in the district. Owing to the shortage of doctors, it has been difficult for patients to get medical attention at night. I think the suggestion is sound and workable and that it would relieve the medical profession of a good deal of the hard work they are doing at the present time. I am prepared to discuss with the Minister what I have in mind, and suggest that he confer with the association in connection with the matter. We may be able to arrive at a solution of the trouble as a result of the shortage of medical men, and thereby lessen their night work. These men are certainly entitled to some consideration after working all day. We have an excellent band of medical men in this State, and we should help them in every way possible.

I wish to pay a tribute to the excellent work performed by the Police Department. We are exceedingly fortunate in not having a greater number of accidents in Queensland as a result of the black-out, which has made motor transport at night-time difficult. This has been accentuated as a result of the terrible state of the footpaths, owing to the inactivity of the Brisbane City Council, which is drawing heavy rates from the people, but giving them little in the way of service. In many suburbs the footpaths are so overgrown with weeds that one is unable to walk on them with safety. The result is that at night-time people use the road and expose themselves to the danger of being struck by a vehicle. It is also difficult for drivers of vehicles because they are more likely to be involved in an accident when people walk on the roads. I know we have an officer of the Government in offices of the Brisbane City Council and he has certain responsibilities. If this gentleman has not full information on what is being done—and I do not know whether he has, certain information has not been supplied on another occasion—perhaps consideration should be given to the question whether it is of any value to allow that officer to remain in that position. We should call upon the Brisbane City Council to make the footpaths traffickable so the people can use them at night-time, thereby eliminating the danger of being struck with a motor vehicle through having to use the roadway.

The Police Department has done excellent work. The Traffic Department, under Inspector Smith, is very efficient. I regret very

much that the Queensland Police Force lost a very valuable officer. I refer to the passing of the late Jim Toohill. He gave splendid service to the force. He rose from the rank of a constable in a short time to the high and important position of chief inspector. He gave a lifelong service to the force, and his place will be hard to fill. He was diplomatic, courteous, and played a prominent part in the administration of the Police Force and in effecting improvements. I regret his passing, and extend my deepest sympathy to his widow and family in their great loss.

For a number of years detectives and plain-clothes men, who perform the same class of work, have not received the same pay. I maintain that when we have two men doing the one class of work, they should receive the same rate of pay, but the difference between the rate of pay for a plain-clothes constable and a detective is 1s. 6d. a day. Everybody knows that these men go on duty and work in pairs, and it is a common thing for a detective-sergeant or a constable to take out with him as his mate a plain-clothes man. They are both doing the same class of work, but they do not receive the same remuneration. The Criminal Investigation Branch under Inspector Jessen is being run effectively and it is doing excellent work. I know the administrators of the force believe the plain-clothes men should do a period on probation before they are promoted to the rank of detective. I have known cases of men being in the Criminal Investigation Branch as plain-clothes constables for a long period. Some still remain in that position, and others have been transferred back to the uniformed section of police. I make the suggestion to the Minister that after a man has served six months as a plain-clothes constable he should be able to apply for the position of detective or be sent back to the uniformed police.

It is unfair to ask men who have given long service as plain-clothes constables to do the same class of work as detectives and not receive the same remuneration. This matter has been given much consideration by members of the Police Force. The request for the same rate of pay is reasonable and should be granted. Hon. members well know that the Police Force have many extra duties placed on them. Recently the Secretary for Labour and Employment was able to remove much of the administration of unemployment relief from the police stations, but because of war conditions a very large amount of additional work has been put on policemen, and I maintain that because of the conditions under which they now work as a result, the work of plain-clothes men is similar to that of detectives, and the request of the Police Union that the two rates of pay be equalised should be acceded to.

Mr. EDWARDS (Nanango) (3.41 p.m.): I sincerely trust that the Minister in charge of the Department of Health and Home Affairs while the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs is absent and that Minister also, will take notice of what I have to say

about the sale of liquor. The queues that form daily at a certain hotel would make it appear that we were more or less an uncivilised community. It is stupid and ridiculous, considering what is expected of us, that most mornings in the week there can be seen at the approaches to this hotel a queue extending down Burnett lane and along George street. I estimated it on one occasion to be nine chains long. Another queue forms in Adelaide street. All classes of people are to be found in these line-ups. They are interfering with the pedestrian traffic and they are wasting hours of their own time. Some were actually standing in the rain one Saturday morning. Are we going to permit this thing in this country? What is wrong with the Government that they do not take a stand and endeavour to alter the position?

Mr. J. F. Barnes: It is a monopoly.

Mr. EDWARDS: I do not know what is the reason, but it is a disgrace to Queensland, in fact, a disgrace to civilisation. I do not know whether it is correct, but I am given to understand that the majority of the hotels have gone on strike, deciding not to sell bottled liquor. I do not know whether that is true.

Mr. Healy: It is not.

Mr. EDWARDS: However, it is definitely wrong in principle.

Mr. Healy: No, they cannot get it.

Mr. EDWARDS: Then how does this hotel get it? Where does this hotel obtain its stock? How can this licensee get it and others not? I am sure no Minister or hon. member can countenance this sort of thing. We hear and read of the shortage of man-power, we are informed that women are being called up, but there are people of both sexes standing in queues for hours. There is this aspect, too, that the health of the people who have to stand there for hours is affected. The Government should do something immediately. They should take a definite stand.

The Secretary for Public Lands: What do you suggest should be done?

Mr. EDWARDS: If that is the best that can be done, well, stop it. Let these people go about their business. That would be the better method.

The Secretary for Public Lands: I do not think you would say that if you knew the facts.

Mr. EDWARDS: There can be no excuse for it. Surely to goodness, the Government and the authorities can think of some better provision, such as opening the hotels and allowing these people to get in and get their drink. Would not that be better than their having to form queues in the street in the way they are doing at present? There is this aspect to be considered: that respectable people visiting the city wonder what on earth is wrong. They come to the conclusion that we are all drunkards, people hanging round hotels in long queues and waiting to get in and get drink. It takes a good deal of explaining away. In addition, young children

see this thing and wonder what it is all about. It is a shocking state of affairs.

Mr. Healy: It is the only place in town where you can get a drop of brandy for a sick person.

Mr. EDWARDS: What are the Government doing about it? Why do they not adopt a scheme of distribution? It has been going on for a long time.

The Secretary for Public Lands: The Customs control the distribution of liquor.

Mr. EDWARDS: It is absolutely shirking the issue to say that, because the Government control the police and the other services connected with the control of the liquor trade in this State. If the Minister can show me that the state of things to which I have referred is in accordance with the Liquor Act, then I say, with the hon. member for Bundaberg, "For goodness sake, alter it, because it is a disgrace to civilisation."

Mr. Healy: Queues line up outside the picture theatres morning after morning.

Mr. EDWARDS: There is no analogy whatever between the two cases. Even in the olden days a licensed victualler would not be allowed to have queues outside his premises. The matter about which I am complaining is a disgrace. After all these years of endeavour to straighten out the liquor question, it is shocking to see this state of affairs. It should not be allowed to continue, for it does damage to the morale of the population, of the children in particular.

I wish now to refer to our hospitals. Our nursing staffs throughout the State are working under grave difficulties. Patients are likely to be brought in at any hour. Places that had only about 2,000 people a while ago have more than double that number now, and I do hope that every consideration is given by the Government to hospital staffs. They are doing wonderful work in the interests of the people, and I suppose it can be said with safety that they are making greater sacrifices than most other people. If extra patients come in, no matter how many there may be, the staff cannot walk out. They carry on, and it is up to the Government and the people, but to the Government in particular, to see that these nursing staffs and hospital staffs, generally, get every consideration and a well-earned rest as soon as possible. I have studied the position and I know that it is a serious thing if the nursing staff of a hospital is overworked.

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba) (3.49 p.m.): First I respectfully suggest that in future the headings of the various votes be printed in large type alongside the respective number, so that they may be picked out readily by hon. members.

I join with the hon. member for Baroona on this occasion in expressing my deep regret at the passing of Chief Inspector Toohill. He was a very fine public officer, a courteous diplomat; he saw to it that everyone did his duty, and the State has suffered a great loss by his passing.

I notice that during the session there are sometimes several young policemen about Parliament House. I am sure that they are no more than 30 years of age. It is an easy job down here, there is nothing to do, and I suggest to the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs that when he is short of police he call in some of the older men who have been retired for one or two years, give them the easy jobs like this one down here, and send the young men out walking about, getting on with the job. He could send some of them out to Windorah to learn something about dealing with cattle-duffers, if there are any; they could be riding horses, they could learn to become bushmen and so help the back country.

Again, I refer to my very respectful suggestion the other day to the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs in connection with the health of school children. I suggested that the Department of Health and Home Affairs should co-operate with the Department of Public Instruction and get out a handbook containing lectures on biology. My answer is always "Yes" to the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Every one of us is. Let us set an example to the rest of the people. I am taking my full share of the blame. We are guilty of criminal neglect if we do not watch the interests of the rising generation, many of whom are morally weak because they lacked proper parental control. About three years ago I was asked to write an article for a weekly paper along the lines of "If you were managing Australia, what would you do?" Under one heading I pointed out that if there were any girls under the age of 17 years walking the streets at night they should be taken home by the police. I heartily agree with the opinion of Archbishop Duhig that in war-time there should be a curfew for these youngsters under the age of 17 years.

Now let me deal with the trading hours of hotels. I expect someone to say that subject does not come under this resolution. It was not under the department the other day, so where in the name of goodness does it come? Some time ago Parliament passed an Act to say that the trading hours of hotels should be between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. I am not speaking now as a wovser; I want to deal with the matter in a broad way. In these days of war I suggest that the powers that be co-operate with the Federal Government and close the hotels between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. and if there are to be eight hours of trading in the large centres, then allow them to open at 9 a.m. Why should there be loungers in hotels every hour of the day in war-time? If people want to have a night out in peace-time, well and good.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is on the wrong resolution.

Mr. YEATES: I am sorry. Will someone please tell me under what department or resolution I can discuss the subject of hotels? Anyway, I shall leave it at that. I have said all I wanted to say.

Mr. A. J. SMITH (Carpentaria) (3.54 p.m.): I want to raise a matter that concerns good government at Thursday Island and in Cape York peninsula, which are in my electorate and come under the control of the State Government. I want to refer particularly to the conditions that existed at Thursday Island before the advent of Japan into the war and afterwards. When Japan entered the war last December it was thought that she would make towards the northern coast of Australia, and so the residents of Thursday Island were asked to evacuate to the mainland. They were given notice by the garrison stationed on the island that they had to be off the island within a certain time; that they could not take very much with them; that all they need do was to lock up their private belongings in their homes and take just enough clothing to enable them to reach the mainland by aeroplane and boat. They were given the assurance that their homes and belongings would be properly cared for, but I have received information in the past few weeks to say that this is not being done; that their property has not been taken care of by the military authorities as they promised to do. Their homes have been broken open and certain articles, some of them especially dear to womenfolk, such as wedding presents and articles that go to make for comfort in the home, have been sent to other parts of the country, probably to New South Wales and Victoria. The Minister for the Army called for an official report on the matter, but so far those inquiring have come up against a stone wall. The people concerned have come to Brisbane to try to get some compensation from the hiring authorities here, but the hiring authorities have told them in reply that they, the residents, left Thursday Island of their own accord. The fact is that the military authorities told them they had to get out and that they could not take any of their possessions with them. These people evacuated Thursday Island at the request of the commander of the garrison.

I received a visit the other day from a former resident of Thursday Island. He informed me that a military officer had written and told him that his house had been broken into and that he should allow him to live in it in order to take care of it. This resident made inquiries as to what compensation was payable for the destruction of his property. He was informed that as he had allowed a military officer to occupy his house he had automatically disqualified himself from consideration. Happenings have occurred at Thursday Island in the last six months that need ventilation. I have been nonplussed as to how to ventilate them. The Federal Government and the Island authorities have been communicated with, but we have been referred to this quarter and that quarter, with the result that the former residents of Thursday Island have received no satisfaction. One resident left four or five motor trucks on the island and they were transferred to other centres. These are matters that should be investigated. To-day I voice a protest on behalf of the residents of Thursday Island against their treatment.

Similar occurrences have happened at the mining townships of Wenlock and Coen. The mineowners at these places were told by the military authorities, "You had better get out of here, as the demolition squad will destroy all equipment." The miners evacuated. They have discovered that their machinery and pumping-plant were removed by the military authorities and their mines flooded. These people would not complain if their equipment was used in the war effort, but they do desire to know where it has been removed so that when peace comes they will be able to recover it and work their mines again.

I suggest that the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs should obtain an uncensored report from the local police officer as to the condition of property of evacuated persons at Thursday Island, Wenlock, and Coen. We might then get somewhere. It is only by ventilating the subject that we can achieve anything. The evacuated persons have been told by persons returning from this territory that their homes have been pillaged. I understand that furniture has been taken from the homes of these people at Thursday Island over to Horn Island to furnish certain buildings. Other property, including crystal sets, and wedding presents, have been sent south by persons travelling from Thursday Island. I reiterate that the residents of Thursday Island do not mind if their property is used to further the war effort, but they do strongly object to their homes being pillaged and their property sent south. I understand that the former shire clerk at Thursday Island has been appointed town marshal there. There are no civilians on Thursday Island, so I do not see the need for a town marshal. I have also been informed that an army captain has been appointed assistant marshal by the commander of the garrison. He is now receiving the salary of a major, and in addition supplies the army's meat requirements. I hope that as a result of the inquiries of the Minister or Commissioner of Police, I shall be able to convey information to these people on behalf of whom I complain.

I understand, too, that a number of pearl-shelling boats were sunk at Thursday Island to prevent their falling into the hands of the Japanese and that the owners have not yet received any compensation. All this property was not abandoned and should never have been allowed to be pillaged.

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (Hon. T. A. Foley, Normanby) (4.3 p.m.): I regret that the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs is not present to take a personal note of the matters raised by hon. members; but I assure hon. members that some of those that I am not conversant with will be brought under his notice on his return, and they will be investigated.

The hon. member for Carpentaria raised a matter that appears to be under the control of the military authorities. Naturally he expects someone to intercede on behalf of the citizens, who he contends have been affected by the operations of the military authorities. The matter will be brought under the notice

of the military authorities to see if it is not possible to compensate people where it has been established that they have lost property as a result of action taken by them.

Reference has been made to the loss sustained by the State in the death of Inspector Toohill, who died recently. I think every hon. member will agree with me that Queensland has suffered a definite loss. He was a very diplomatic gentleman—one whom I should describe as the perfect policeman. He was a man anyone could approach and to whom anyone could state a case, and even if you did not get what you were seeking, at least you went away satisfied you had got a good hearing and the matter would be thoroughly investigated. It will be a difficult task for the Government to find a man of equal calibre to fill the position.

The necessity for signing vouchers for superannuation payments, in regard to policemen who go overseas, was raised, and it was asked whether the department was making arrangements whereby the wife could get payment weekly. I made inquiries and I found there was only one case—the case of McInnes, in which £4 11s. a week was drawn as military pay for a period up to 30 June last. The reason for the cessation of payment is not too clear. It is not known whether the husband is withholding the necessary vouchers or whether he is in some isolated place overseas to which the mail cannot get. Naturally there are legal technicalities concerning this matter and no provision is made in the Act for payments to be made unless the individual gives an order for such payments. If circumstances necessitate it, an effort will be made to overcome the difficulty referred to.

The question of the zoning of the medical profession—I am not too clear on the point raised by the hon. member for Baroona—will be referred to the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs on his return.

The danger to pedestrians and drivers of vehicles during brown-out conditions has been raised. I agree that there is a danger to both parties. I have experienced it from time to time when driving home in the dark. If one is driving on a bitumen road one cannot see persons dressed in black walking on the road until one is almost on top of them. It is only by travelling at a snail's pace that one can avoid serious accident. That is difficult to overcome under existing conditions. The object of the brown-out regulations was to prevent the reflection in the sky of city and other lights and thus deprive enemy bombers of a guide they would otherwise have. To the extent that we reduce the glare, we increase the difficulties of enemy raiders. Whether the committee controlling the brown-out conditions will allow alterations in the present regulations remains to be seen.

Some reference was made by the hon. member for Nanango to the queues of people seeking liquor from one of the city hotels, which he remarked were a disgrace on the city. I point out to him that the hotel in

question is one of the best-conducted businesses in the city. The licensee is an outstanding licensed victualler and makes provision for supplying bottled liquor to the public instead of serving it in glasses to his customers at the hotel and thus making a higher profit. He gives a home-supply service that is not given by any other hotel in the city. I think it was during the discussion on his department that the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs pointed out that as a result of negotiations with this licensed victualler an endeavour was being made to make an arrangement so that his clients should receive a disk or chit identifying them so that they could attend at a certain time on a certain date and get their supplies, instead of having to attend on one or two days only and wait in queues. There are certain difficulties, but I can assure hon. members that Mr. Stewart, the licensee, will go out of his way to reduce the evil referred to.

Reference was made to the splendid work of the hospital staff during the last year or two. We all agree on that and must give credit to hospital staffs for the sacrifices they make because of the shortage, particularly, of nurses. In this respect also the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs intimated some time ago that efforts were being made to speed up the training of nurses as far as possible. For instance, recommendations have been made to the Nurses and Masseurs' Registration Board that the period of training be reduced from four to three years. The suggestion is to obtain a greater number of nurses to staff hospitals throughout the State. The hospitals in the district in Central Queensland that I represent in this Parliament are having difficulties from time to time in getting nurses. One hospital's trained staff was reduced to one certificated nurse. It had to make the best of it and carry on with help obtained from outside. As I pointed out, the Minister is seized of the need of speeding up the training of certain nurses and has already made representations to the Nurses and Masseurs' Registration Board, and if that body falls into line with his suggestion some redress can be expected.

The hon. member for Bundaberg is the only hon. member who struck a discordant note as regards the Police Force. His principal bugbear appears to be the police. It is noticeable that he has developed an obsession. He maintains that everyone in the force is out of step with him. I think it can be taken for granted, and it is generally agreed, that we have an efficient force in Queensland and one that can be compared favourably with any other force in the Commonwealth or any other part of the world, but the hon. member for Bundaberg persists in his view, and that cannot be helped. The high standard of the police service will continue in the future as in the past.

I can assure hon. members that all matters brought forward by them will be placed before the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs on his return and will receive the attention that is their due.

Resolution 5—Department of Health and Home Affairs—agreed to.

Resolution 6—Department of Agriculture and Stock—

Mr. WILLIAMS (Port Curtis) (4.15 p.m.): This morning I intimated that I wished to speak to this resolution because, during the discussion on the Chief Office vote in Committee, several hon. members made reference to the reduction in the production of cotton, suggesting that there was probably some reason for it, and partly blaming the State Government for not giving sufficient attention to this particularly important national industry.

That is not so. Some time ago the Minister supplied me with figures indicating the extent to which the State Government had made money available to farmers and sharefarmers in an effort to encourage them to prepare new land and to go in for production of cotton on a greater scale. That opportunity of expending money in the interests of the country, in the production of cotton, has been very largely availed of, but I still think there should be some investigation into the reasons for the present more or less unsatisfactory feeling towards cotton-growing as a profitable industry. One is constrained to ask, "Is it the poor price that is being paid for cotton?"—I blame the Commonwealth Government, both past and present, to a very great extent—"or is it because of the lack of sound cultural methods, or is it lack of interest on the part of State and Federal Governments?"

At 4.17 p.m.,

Mr. RIORDAN (Bowen) relieved Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Mr. WILLIAMS: I have answered the last question in that while the State Government have done that all it is possible to do by way of financial aid, the inducement offered by the Federal Government by way of bounty and so forth is very poor.

I still think that more research is needed before we can expect greater production of cotton. America sets us a very fine example of what research into cotton-growing can do, and certainly shows us the value of intense investigation in the production of this national requirement. I think there should be a move towards the standardisation of one or two of the more suitable types of cotton for all classes of soils and growing conditions. The argument will be put forward by some hon. members who know something of agricultural matters and the producing qualities of various soils, that soils differ and that no standardisation of one or two varieties of cotton is possible. That may be said in any part of the world where agricultural commodities are produced, because there is, to a great extent, variety of soils in all parts of the world. It is not peculiar to this State by any means.

I do think that more research work is necessary, that greater attention must be paid to giving more encouragement to those who

produce cotton to adopt better cultural methods. I admit that much has been done in that direction already, but more must be done. I think, too, that the possibility of standardising one or two types should be investigated by the Department of Agriculture and Stock as soon as possible.

Mr. L. J. BARNES (Cairns) (4.19 p.m.): I wish to congratulate the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock on his effort to increase production to a high pitch. Considering the opposition with which he has to contend, such as the statement that appeared in the Press about five weeks ago by our Prime Minister, that if he had to choose between man-power for the army and man-power for food production he would prefer the former, the Minister is deserving of every credit for his effort. That statement by the Prime Minister is only what might be expected of a five-year-old child. All hon. members here know that an army must have a full stomach to fight on, yet our Prime Minister makes that childish statement.

Let us deal with the vegetable and the milk questions. I had the pleasure of calling on the matron of the hospital in my electorate, and she told me that the American army had brought pressure to bear, that they had held a gun at the heads of dairymen to the extent that she was being asked to pay 2d. a gallon more for milk, and by the time I left the electorate they had been successful. The matron also told me that the patients who are lying there sick are without green vegetables. I say that we must fight for the release of man-power in order that vegetables might be produced, because we can never be sure when this war will end. It might even end within a few months, and when our men come back they will have probably £100 or £150 deferred pay in their pockets, and, that being so, they will not be willing to start work immediately they get back; they will want to walk about and spend that money. If we do not have the food to give them for their money, we shall have this bloody revolution. I ask the Government to bring all the pressure they possibly can to bear on the powers that be to release the man-power required for food production. Only a few weeks ago the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock was asked to increase tobacco production by 100 per cent.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock:
By 300 per cent.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: What a ridiculous request! Do they think the Queensland Secretary for Agriculture and Stock is a superman? Tobacco is not essential. I have a cigarette, but there are little children who cannot get enough of the right food to eat. Let us grow the vegetables. Never mind about increasing tobacco-production by 300 per cent. Let us increase essential food production by 300 per cent. My sympathies are with the farmer, but he has to prostitute his family's labour to earn a living. He has to place his wife and daughters into the industry for 12 to 16 hours a day to earn a living, but in industries to which awards apply, a living can be earned

by working only eight to nine hours a day. In times of war the dairy-farmer perhaps gets an increased price for his product, but not so in peace-time. I remember when cream was down to 7d. It is physically impossible to make a living with cream at that price.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: That is a long time ago.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: It is.

Mr. Taylor: What were the wages?

Mr. L. J. BARNES: I remember the time when butchers' wages were £4 19s. a week and rump steak was 7d. a pound, but to-day butchers' wages are £5 9s. and rump steak is 1s. 4d. a pound. According to the increase in the price of meat, the wages should be £9 a week, but where is the master butcher who can pay an employee £9 a week? I am in favour of the worker. I am in favour of justice for all.

I have argued that the pig is a parasite, and I can prove that he is. I can conserve dairy produce and give them to human beings. Does the pig give us back as much food as we give him? No. To the pig that takes about six months to mature we give approximately 600 lb. to 700 lb. of really good food. I am not going to debate the nutritional value of pig-meat. We give a pig 600 lb. of milk, corn, or pumpkins over a period of six months, and he gives us back 100 lb. of pig-meat. Do not forget for a moment that I do not want to throw the pig out, but the day will come when human beings will eat the food pigs are eating now. We can use skimmed milk, and one day we shall pick up skimmed milk in the same way as we pick up cream to-day. The day is fast coming when we shall have to think along those lines. I am going to say that we can speed up evolution. We cannot break the farmer by making him throw his pigs away. However, the pig is a parasite, and I have yet to see the figures to disprove my contention.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: I can disprove your contention concerning the quantity of food given to pigs.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: I said that the amount was approximate, but I am satisfied that it is not far out. We must bear in mind that we must feed the sow and the boar, too. I have had an accountant on these figures, and I think he knows a fair bit about it. Again I say that the pig is a parasite. I have figures to prove it, but ultimately we shall have to go out of pig-production or find a much cheaper way of feeding the parasite.

Mr. Healy: There will be no Christmas ham for you.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: I do not eat pork, and that is where I think international Jewry is right for once—the Jews do not eat pork. I ask hon. members to protest as much as possible to the Federal authorities so as to help our Secretary for Agriculture and Stock to increase production. We have the rich land and all else that is needed but man-power, and we must have man-power to produce vegetables.

Mr. Nicklin: You could not give beans away yesterday.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: As the hon. gentleman interjects, beans could not be given away in the market yesterday. While we were in Cairns we were able to obtain in five weeks only 2 lb. of beans at 1s. 4d. a lb., and a cabbage. I sent to Burrell, Fenton and Company 22 dozen heads of lettuce for sale and received 15s. 1d. in return. Yet lettuce were selling for 5d. and 8d. a head the next day! It is time there was some control of these prices. I realise that I shall not be in order in discussing prices under this resolution. It is undeniable that a hen gives us an egg every day, the cow gives us milk, but the pig gives us a baby to carry. I do not make this remark in any sense that is derogatory to the pig-raisers.

Mr. BRAND (Isis) (4.29 p.m.): The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock has stated publicly that there is an impending crisis in children's foods. During this war difficulties have arisen in food production. The hon. member for Cairns has referred to the difficulty in connection with vegetables. Can the Government not do something in the direction of stabilising prices so that beans will not bring 1s. a lb. in the markets one week and be unsaleable next week? It is quite possible that a few weeks hence the people will be without beans, as no-one will wish to produce them. Many of our Federal public men are looking to a different system of payment for primary produce. They favour the adoption of the subsidy system so that prices can be pegged, and producers can carry on profitably. The producer should be given a reasonable price for his product.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock will soon take over a responsible position in the Federal sphere. He will have control of agricultural products in Australia during the war period and in that connection will lay down certain plans for the guidance of the people. I hope he will not adopt the attitude that certain manufacturing industries only must receive all the increases they demand and that the primary producer is not to be allowed any increase at all. The great primary industries in this country have not been allowed any increase in price since the outbreak of war. Their price has been fixed at the rate prevailing in August, 1939, notwithstanding the increases in the cost of living and production. I protest against the differential treatment meted out to the primary producer as compared with the secondary producer and the tertiary services. Those engaged in the tertiary industries to-day fix their own prices. It appears to me that any price can be fixed in that industry and that any charge can be made to the producer for those products. There is no equilibrium between the price received by the producer and the price charged to the consumer. This is a matter that can be approached by the Government. Primary producers are having their hearts broken and have no desire to go on producing. The people in country districts are doing a great service. Why should our primary producers

be compelled to threaten to strike for better prices? They are only deterred from striking because of the seriousness of the war position. Here you have a body of men who are talking of striking to gain their ends. Surely our Government have enough sympathy with them to stretch out the hand of friendship to them?

Mr. Power: Eliminate the middleman.

Mr. BRAND: I do not know whether the middleman is responsible. I want to know where the difficulty lies. So far Governments do not seem to be able to solve the problem. No class of primary producers desires that the consumer should pay an exorbitant price for the products they are producing; but I believe the great mass of the working people are demanding that the farmer should get a fair price for his commodity. Wherever you go, among the industrialists or the primary producers, you will find a bond of sympathy exists between the two sections of the people, and they try to better each other's conditions. Workers have struck for a reasonable return for their labour and as a result they have obtained the measure of security they were entitled to. I do not object to that nor does the primary producer object to it; but while those engaged in the secondary and tertiary industries are getting an increase for their production surely the basic man of all—the farmer, the man on the land—is entitled to some consideration? I appeal to this Government and to the Federal Government to rise above political hatreds and to look upon the farmer as a friend of this country and to give him fair consideration. Surely we can expect that to-day, when this country is torn with war and when we all wish to pull together and do the best we can?

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock is quite aware that to help this country in its time of need many primary producers are engaged in growing many foodstuffs they have not grown previously. We could grow abundant potatoes in this country, but the civil population to-day are not allowed to buy them because all we are producing are required for the armed forces, although some in the outback camps are unable to get potatoes. The reason for the shortage is that we have not given sympathetic treatment to the man on the land.

Mr. Taylor: The reason is racketeering in everything.

Mr. BRAND: I can assure the hon. member the farmer is not racketeering. Produce may be up sky-high to-day but to-morrow it is down in the depths. Those are factors in the business of a farmer. All he wants is a reasonable price throughout the year, and I urge the fixing of a reasonable price for our primary products. The Government will find the funds to buy them with and throughout the year the man who is producing will receive a fair reward for his labour.

Mr. Jesson: The socialisation of farming.

Mr. BRAND: I do not give a continental what you call it so long as we reach our

objective. I read the article by the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock, I think, yesterday, and every hon. member in this House is concerned at the position. We must be concerned, and we must realise that we have to bend our energies to bringing about a rectification of the causes of the position. Surely we can rectify it? I believe we can. I believe we could get over the whole of those difficulties on the price factor. Men on the land have produced those commodities they could afford to produce, but they have not grown those that they could not afford to grow.

I hope there will be co-operation between the State and Federal Governments. I admit frankly that I think it is the responsibility of the Federal Government to-day, as the war has brought about so much dislocation of ordinary development, and they and the State Government should get together and see if they cannot overcome the difficulty arising from the scarcity of products by drawing up a plan that will ensure sufficient production to maintain the people and our military forces.

At 4.40 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS

(Hon. E. J. Walsh, Mirani) (4.40 p.m.): The hon. member for Isis brought up some very important points that naturally exercise the minds of hon. members. The Department of Agriculture and Stock is charged really with the organisation and supply of foodstuffs throughout the State, not only in times of peace but in times of emergency such as this. In that respect it may be said that since the war started no department of State in any part of Australia has rendered such a valuable service in that direction as the Department of Agriculture and Stock of the State of Queensland under the supervision of the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock, who has worked very painstakingly to see that the best results were forthcoming. Unfortunately, he has been somewhat hampered in his activities by Southern influences. I believe that with the best intentions they set up plans that eventually drift away and nothing worth while is achieved. Apart from these phases of the subject, the department has been a great assistance to primary producers generally, especially on the scientific side, which covers a wide range of investigation, such as the propagation of suitable crops according to the types of soil in different localities.

Mr. Clayton: And the climate conditions.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:

Yes. Unfortunately, in this respect for many years there was amongst the farming community a feeling that there was no need to pay attention to the scientific side, but gradually that prejudice has been broken down and there is no better example than the sugar industry of Queensland. Years ago the farmers in that industry ridiculed the use of fertiliser, but the department, by its activities at the Sugar Experimental Stations, which are subsidised by the Government to a limited extent, has been able to gather very valuable information for the industry.

That reminds me, Mr. Speaker, that this department was very actively engaged in the growing of crops for the production of power alcohol many years ago. In 1925 or thereabouts the department imported cassava, a plant growing very extensively in Java and other countries, with the idea that we might be able to cultivate it here with a view to its being used in the production of power alcohol. The department interested itself in sorghum also. Over the years investigations were made to ascertain their possibilities in the economic production of power alcohol.

I might correct an erroneous impression that is abroad in respect of the use of power alcohol in petrol. The Leader of the Opposition referred to it the other day, as did other hon. members, and to the possibility that the production of power alcohol in Queensland would be reduced. It would be a pity if the valuable work of the Department of Agriculture and Stock in years gone by had to be cast aside. From time to time statements have been made that the addition of power alcohol to petrol has been the cause of gumming. These statements were made to damage the power-alcohol industry in this State, despite all that the Department of Agriculture and Stock has done to build it up. I might draw the attention of hon. members to extracts from the annual report of the Smithsonian Institute, dealing with gumming in petrol, and referring to the operations of the Iraq Petroleum Company. The report has this interesting reference—

“This company drilled many wells in the extensive area south and north of Mosul, and, although large amounts of oil have been encountered, its quality, owing to high specific gravity, viscosity, and sulphur content, proved such that its export is not an economic possibility.”

There you will see that reference is made to viscosity, and so on. In another part of the report I find this—

“Synthetic organic chemicals find numerous important applications in the manufacture and use of petroleum products. As you know, cracking processes had the effect of doubling our oil reserves as far as gasoline is concerned. On the other hand, however, cracked gasoline on storage has a tendency to develop gums which would lead to clogging of the motor and fuel lines. Through the use of certain organic chemicals, however, this tendency to gum formation is substantially eliminated. The amount of an antioxidant, such as isobutylpara-aminophenol, necessary to stabilise cracked gasoline so that it may be stored for several months, or even a year, costs only 2 or 3 cents to the barrel of gasoline. This is of interest, not only to the motorist, but also to the refiner, since before the advent of gum inhibitors it was not unusual for cracked gasoline which had been stored for some time to require redistillation before it was sold.”

That proves conclusively that gumming takes place without the addition of power alcohol. It is now disclosed that where this petrol has been stored without the addition of any alcohol whatever, it has been necessary to redistill it before it could be used in a motor car.

I quote that this afternoon to refute the statement that has been spread far and wide that a mixture of power alcohol has been the cause of gumming. I cannot discuss the matter to the extent that I should like on this resolution, but I do say that it is very difficult for me to understand why large distilleries should be built in the southern areas for the production of power alcohol while at the same time we are told that production in Queensland will have to be reduced. I say emphatically that I think the oil companies are still trying to pull the wool over the eyes of the Government of this State and that the power-alcohol industry of Queensland is not getting a fair deal.

Mr. JESSON (Kennedy) (4.48 p.m.): I rise to take part in this debate because of my interjection to the Leader of the Opposition when he stated that beans could not be sold to-day, while a week ago they were bringing from 1s. to 1s. 4d. a lb. In the North they were bringing 1s. 6d. a lb., and in other places they were unprocurable. As has been stated by myself and other hon. members on previous occasions, the trouble is brought about by lack of proper distribution. The Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing in the South has given attention more to the retail side than to the distribution side of fruit and vegetables produced by Queensland growers. That cannot be denied, for it is the truth. The reason why beans are plentiful at the present time is that most people here have back-yard gardens and the beans are starting to come on, with the result that the demand here is decreasing.

Mr. Clayton: And the shower we had recently.

Mr. JESSON: The rain has helped. There are still no beans in North Queensland, and I should like to know whether the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing has made any effort to dispatch these beans by train to Townsville, Cairns, and other places at which troops are stationed.

Mr. Nicklin: Go and have a look at the fruit train to-morrow afternoon.

Mr. JESSON: I might see a few bags of beans consigned to some greengrocer who has sent down an order for a couple of bags.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: There will be 460 tons of fruit and vegetables going north.

Mr. JESSON: That is not such a great amount.

Mr. Nicklin: It is more than one train can pull.

Mr. JESSON: The point is that the civil population will not get much of that, in any case.

Mr. Nicklin: Of course they will.

Mr. JESSON: They will go to the army. Storekeepers will sell them out at the price of 1s. and 1s. 6d. a lb. instead of 6d. I seriously request the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock to watch the movements of the beans going north to see whether the people of Townsville and other places there are being exploited so far as the price is concerned. If beans can be bought here for 1d. and 2d. a lb., the people of the North should not be asked to pay more than 6d. a lb. for them. I ask both the Minister and the Commonwealth Deputy Prices Commissioner to watch that position closely.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: Do you think the Committee of Direction is getting it?

Mr. JESSON: No, the Committee of Direction is not getting it. The beans are sent up to storekeepers, Chinamen, and others, who rake off huge profits. I know the facts, because I was in the business for many years. I know that when we bought goods in Brisbane for 1d. or 2d. a lb. and sold them at the reasonable price of 3d. or 4d. a lb. in the North, the other storekeepers up there would accuse one of scabbing on them for not charging 1s. a lb. and for not making as much profit as possible.

Another reason for this shortage—and it has been mentioned in this House previously—is that no effort is being made to establish a dehydration plant here. I have not yet seen any evidence that steps are being taken in this direction. Is there any evidence that some of the beans are being canned now that there is a glut? One day the papers tell us that there are no vegetables and next day that the market is glutted. What is being done to can or dehydrate vegetables? It appears to me to be so much wind and very little substance. Again I ask, what evidence is there that they are being canned or dehydrated?

Mr. Nicklin: You can rest assured that they are being canned.

Mr. JESSON: What quantity of them? I know that the Leader of the Opposition is connected with the Committee of Direction.

Mr. Nicklin: No.

Mr. JESSON: Well, he used to be on the board and he does not like his pet industry being pulled to pieces. The Committee of Direction has never operated in the interests of the consumer and the farmer. From its very inception it developed a retail business. I could give a number of instances against it but I do not want to drag out dirty linen. I know this thing backwards. I was with the Committee of Direction for a month and I know exactly what it is doing. It was making a rake-off at that time, and a pretty big one, too. The Committee of Direction should be able to ascertain by telephone how many bags of beans are coming to Brisbane from Beenleigh, Tamborine Mountain, and other districts, and, again by telephone, arrange that so many bags be sent to Townsville, so many to Rockhampton, so many to

Cairns, after estimating the requirements of Brisbane. That would enable the growers to get a fair price. The Federal Government should see that the bodies that have the power to function, do function properly.

Then we have the Apple and Pear Board. It has the power to do its job but in many cases it has fallen down on it. I read in the paper that no good apples were available. When I visited Adelaide about 18 months ago I saw thousands of apple trees heavily laden with fruit but the growers were not allowed to pick it because there was no market for it. The board did not try to find a market. It interfered with the domestic arrangements that had existed between agents, storekeepers, and growers for over 50 years. It interfered with the arrangements for distributing apples throughout the countryside and it was responsible for the infliction of considerable loss on the growers. I know of instances where growers have complained to me in the markets that when they ordered half-a-dozen cases of Granny Smiths, half-a-dozen cases of Jonathans and, say, four cases of Delicious apples, they could not get them on a particular day because those types were not released that day, and instead they were sent 18 cases of New York Pippins, which they did not want. Scarlet Permains will not carry to North Queensland because when they reach the hot climate the skins burst and they are useless. This means not only a monetary loss but a loss of the commodity, too. These matters must be properly planned. I am satisfied that when our Secretary for Agriculture and Stock goes South to take up his position as Director of Agriculture, he will establish a sensible organisation that will bring about a considerable improvement in this respect.

Again I say that these things must be planned. When a man asks for a suitable type of apple that he knows suits the requirements of his district why should someone else decide to send a type of apple to Charters Towers, Cunnamulla, Charleville, or Cloncurry that is absolutely unsuitable and will not carry in those places? It all means a loss to the agents, a loss to the grower, a big loss to the consumer, and a tragic loss to the children in the western and northern parts of the State who require the food urgently. These are tragic blunders that I am confident our Secretary for Agriculture and Stock will remedy when he goes South to take up his new position. The important thing is to determine that the fruit shall be properly handled and that the right class of stuff is sent to each place.

I want to take this opportunity of thanking the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock not only for all his endeavours to meet the need as to fertilisers in the North, but for arranging shipping facilities to transport them. The work of the Minister in organising food supplies for the North is also commendable. The Minister is deserving of the congratulations of the whole of the people for this work. As a matter of fact, this Government are too modest for they do not tell the people enough of their doings.

(Laughter.) What do hon. members opposite know of the arrangements for accumulating foodstuffs throughout the length and breadth of Queensland to meet the exigencies of war?

Mr. Yeates: I understand all that, but I am not going to talk about it.

Mr. JESSON: The hon. member will not talk about that work, because it is something in our favour. What of the organisation work it entailed? The job was an immense one and had to be done by the Minister and his staff with promptitude. He was fortunate in having a band of such excellent officers as meat inspectors, agricultural inspectors and instructors stationed throughout Queensland. They just dropped their tools and undertook the task of organising foodstuffs for the civilian population. The work was done so efficiently that the military authorities drew on these accumulated stocks for their supplies. The organising ability and foresight of the Minister was of great value to the military authorities.

Resolutions adopted under Standing Order No. 307 and Sessional Orders.

At 5 p.m., under Standing Order No. 307 and Sessional Orders, Mr. Speaker put the Resolution under discussion and the Resolutions not already agreed to.

Resolution 6—Department of Agriculture and Stock; Chief Office—agreed to.

Resolutions 7 to 19, both inclusive, agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS.

OPENING OF COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Brassington, Fortitude Valley, in the chair.)

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo): I move—

“(a) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1942-1943, a further sum not exceeding £10,376,298 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(b) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1942-1943, a further sum not exceeding £7,262,558 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

“(c) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1942-1943, a further sum not exceeding £886,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(d) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1941-1942, a supplementary sum not exceeding £2,342,458 12s. 2d. be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(e) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1941-1942, a supplementary sum not exceeding £2,882,611 4s. 6d. be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

“(f) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1941-1942, a supplementary sum not exceeding £576,807 18s. 5d. be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(g) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1943-1944, a sum not exceeding £2,500,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(h) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1943-1944, a sum not exceeding £3,000,000 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

“(i) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1943-1944, a sum not exceeding £500,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.”

Motion agreed to.

Resolutions reported, received, and agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL, No. 2.

FIRST READING.

A Bill, founded on the Resolutions reported from the Committee of Ways and Means, was introduced and read a first time.

SECOND READING.

The ACTING TREASURER (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo) (5.8 p.m.): I move—

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

This is the final Appropriation Bill and covers the Estimates in Chief for the financial year, Supplementary Estimates for the last financial year, and, following the usual practice, the vote on account of the next financial year, which have already been passed in Committee. This appropriation will provide Supply for the remainder of the year and for a short period in the next financial year.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba) (5.9 p.m.): The Acting Premier, the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock, during his long period as a Minister of the Crown, has had the honour of introducing many Bills to this House, but this is the first occasion on which he has brought down an Appropriation Bill. Many of the Bills brought forward by the hon. gentleman on previous occasions have been of a controversial nature and have been debated very freely. I am afraid that on this occasion it will not be possible for us to move an amendment to be thrown out or agreed to,

as the case might be, by the hon. gentleman. However, I take this opportunity of congratulating him, as he will be leaving us very shortly, on closing his ministerial career as Acting Premier, by introducing an Appropriation Bill.

The principal feature of the State's finances at the present time is their remarkable buoyancy, but I observe that the Bill provides for a larger appropriation than last year. At the moment, I do not know exactly why that should be, as with the exception of the Railway Department, the expenditure in most departments is lower than previously. We shall have the opportunity of hearing from the hon. gentleman the reason for the increase this year.

The Government must be more or less embarrassed with riches at present, and it will be a miracle if the surplus of £39,000 budgeted for by the Treasurer is not very largely exceeded. From a study of the comparative statements of expenditure and receipts furnished by the Treasury Department for the first four months of this year and the comparable period last year we find a remarkable state of affairs—

	1 July to 31 October.	
	1941.	1942.
	£	£
Receipts	5,952,000	..
Expenditure	6,506,000	..
Receipts .. .. .	..	8,319,000
Expenditure .. .. .	..	6,595,000
Excess of expenditure over receipts	554,000	..
Excess of receipts over expenditure .. .. .	..	1,724,000

This is the result of the remarkable position of the Railway Department, although a number of other departments are showing considerable increases in receipts. Of course, this year, taxation receipts are coming in regularly each month, in contrast with previous years, in which the greater part of taxation revenue only came in towards the end of the financial year, but even that has not made a tremendous difference in the taxation receipts for the period; other receipts do show an appreciable increase. There is the amount of money received from licences, succession and probates duties, and there is a decrease in stamp duties. Totalisator and betting taxation show a decrease, but the amounts received under the State Transport Act are approximately the same. The Railway Department's figures, however, show that for the first four months of last year the receipts totalled £3,153,000, as against £5,468,000 for the current year.

There has been a remarkable increase in the miscellaneous receipts also. "Miscellaneous" is a general term that covers a multitude of sins, and the increase we find under this heading is remarkable. The miscellaneous receipts for October, 1941, amounted to £5,655, whilst for the corresponding month of this year they have risen to £54,070. In the first four months of 1941-42 they amounted to £67,000, and for the

corresponding period this year they have jumped to £121,000, an appreciable increase, and I think we are entitled to ask for the reasons for it.

As to railway finances in general, I should like to endorse the remarks made by the hon. member for West Moreton and other hon. members yesterday about the need for action to reduce railway fares and freights. The Railway Department is receiving higher revenues than it has ever enjoyed in its history, and at a time like this, when it is essential that we should do something to help our great primary industries in particular, the department offers an excellent avenue through which this aid can be given. The policy of the department should be to help these great primary industries by granting substantial reductions in freights, and the travelling public also should receive some relief by way of reductions in fares.

I notice that £562,000 is to be allocated to the Railway Department from the loan programme for this year. Yesterday a Bill was introduced in this Assembly to provide that appropriation shall be made from the earnings of the department for renewals, replacements, and various other matters—in fact, some of its provisions are all-embracing—and this would cover everything necessary for renewals and replacements, such as those for which I take it this loan appropriation is made. That being so, I question the wisdom of allocating such a large sum of money to the Railway Department out of Loan Funds when that department's revenues are in such an extremely buoyant state that this £562,000 might well be provided for out of revenue and the Loan Fund Account thus relieved of the burden of that huge expenditure. This would mean that £562,000 less would be spent of loan money, and that there would be a correspondingly less increase in the debt of the State. I cannot see the need for increasing the State debt by spending moneys out of Loan Funds when the department concerned has such a great surplus of revenue from which this expenditure could well be provided.

It is not as if it were necessary to spend large sums of money on employment-giving at the moment; the present problem is not to find work for men but to get men to do work. Under those circumstances the loan appropriation for the Railway Department this year might well be held over, and any necessary work in the department could well be financed from its buoyant revenues.

We find a number of necessary and useful works in the Government's programme for the current financial year, but the buoyancy of the revenues of the State lead me to believe that the Government are going to find it very difficult indeed to spend the moneys they will receive. That is quite a good state of affairs, and I am not complaining about it, but I am suggesting that as it is so we should take this opportunity of making provision for the rainy day that will surely come.

Mr. Collins: It is exactly what the Government are doing.

Mr. NICKLIN: There is no evidence of it in the Budget or the other financial figures available or in the actions of the Government during the past financial year. Although the Government received revenue in excess of their expectations, they took great care to use all the additional money, although they showed a surplus of only a little in excess of that for the previous year. At the present time the Government have more money than they can use, because they have not the manpower and the material with which to carry out work calling for the expenditure of large sums of money. Therefore, why not adopt the businesslike plan of putting some of the money into a trust fund for reconstruction and repatriation purposes after the war is over?

Let me suggest one fund in particular. It has been the practice of the Government for a number of years to transfer £250,000 annually from the Main Roads Fund to consolidated revenue and they are still doing it, although they do not need the money. Why not allow the £250,000 they transfer annually to remain in the Main Roads Fund to form the nucleus of a fund to be available to the Main Roads Commission for reconstruction work when the war is over? The same could be done with other funds. For instance, over £500,000 has been allocated to the Railway Department from the Loan Fund Account. Why not set this sum, too, aside for work after the war and carry out all the necessary railway work from the buoyant railway receipts?

Let me pass from matters of financial interest to another that is concerning many people to-day. It is our object to obtain a 100-per cent. war effort by getting every section of the community behind it. At the present time there are many people, young women in particular, who are eager to help their country in this time of need by joining the Women's Land Army and similar organisations doing work previously done by men. As soon as these girls go on the job, they are asked to take out a union ticket. I am not complaining about that, because I believe in unionism. I believe that all those who work in industries to which awards are applicable should be unionists. I am in a farmers' union myself. I belong to an organisation of fruit-growers. It is not an industrial organisation, but I am proud to belong to it. However, I think that sympathetic consideration should be given to these girls. Instead of compelling them to take out a union ticket for 12 months, why not allow them to take out a ticket for the period they are employed?

Mr. Collins: They are going to be employed all the year.

Mr. NICKLIN: If they are employed all the year there is no objection, but if they are to be employed for a shorter period, say, three months, why compel them to make a year's subscription to the union in respect of work that will last only for three months? It has been explained by way of justification that the union rules will not permit of the acceptance of a subscription for less than 12 months, but I do not think that the rules of any

union would prevent it from giving back to the girls three-quarters or half of their subscriptions as an act of grace.

It would be a good gesture and one which we should expect from a union that was 100 per cent. behind our war effort. I am afraid we have not had from some of the union organisers that desire to do everything possible to help that we should have had. That results, unfortunately, in stoppages of work arising from petty differences and disputes that should be settled amicably.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: It is not always the union organiser who is at fault.

Mr. NICKLIN: Let me develop my case. I am not saying that the union organiser is always at fault, although very often he is; sometimes it is the fault of the employer. We had an incident recently connected with a munition works in which an endeavour is being made to work three shifts a day. These works are producing a large quantity of war materials that are urgently required. Immediately an endeavour was made to work the establishment continuously for 24 hours a day opposition arose from some of the union organisers that was a great detriment to the Australian war effort. I am going to make a suggestion, which I admit is not original, as it was carried out during the last war—that is, that the Federal Government form parties representative of union officials and employers' organisations, particularly those associated with the production of munitions, put them in an aeroplane, and send them to New Guinea, where they could enter the front lines and see for themselves the conditions under which our boys are fighting in Kokoda, Milne Bay, and Buna.

Mr. Taylor: What about putting a politician in the party?

Mr. NICKLIN: Yes, that could be done. That was done in the last war by the trade unions, which sent a delegation of trade-union leaders to France. These men went into the front line and the experience they gained of the conditions there forced them to use every effort on their return to preserve industrial peace and get an increase in production.

Mr. Maher: A very valuable suggestion.

Mr. NICKLIN: It would take only 48 hours to travel from here to the front line in New Guinea. Three days could be spent in the front lines, and the party could then return. These representatives would be absent from Australia only a week. They would see for themselves the conditions with which our boys have to contend, with the result that many of the petty disputes now hindering Australia's war effort would disappear. I make this suggestion for what it is worth. Personally, I believe it would be of great value if it obviated the differences that now lead to stoppages of work. The advantage to the nation, as well as to our boys fighting overseas, would be incalculable.

There is another problem we must tackle in the near future concerning our primary

industries—namely, a proper control of seasonal workers. Work in the sugar industry will peter out in the near future. Most of the shearing will also cut out, and shearers and shed hands will have a little break before shearing recommences next year. There is a shortage of labour in some of our industries at present, and we cannot afford to allow seasonal workers to be unemployed for any time. The organisation of man-power in this State should be such that as work ends in one seasonal industry the workers are transferred to other industries requiring man-power. The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock fully appreciates this need, and I know he has the matter in hand. I trust he will give it his very earnest and urgent consideration. I can visualise a great difficulty in some of our seasonal industries in the near future if our seasonal workers are not properly organised so that they can be transferred from one industry to another and the labour shortage thus diminished.

I want to take this opportunity of paying tribute to those men in the city areas who give up their week-ends to go out into the farming districts to help in the harvesting of the crops.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. NICKLIN: They are doing a particularly valuable national work. They are doing a job that has enabled us to market products that otherwise would have gone to waste. That is the spirit that will help us to achieve victory.

I do not wish to monopolise the whole of the limited time available to hon. members on this Bill, and I conclude by expressing the hope that the Government will use their present buoyant revenues to build up reserves to enable this State to be better equipped financially to deal with post-war problems.

Mr. COLLINS (Cook) (5.34 p.m.): I was interested in the proposal of the Leader of the Opposition not to use loan money, but to use revenue to defray the cost of public works, in order to improve the future position of the State. At first glance the hon. gentleman's argument would appear reasonable, but on looking into the matter a little more deeply one finds that is not so. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition knows quite well the position that has obtained on the Loan Council up to the present set of circumstances which have arisen owing to the war.

Mr. Nicklin: The Government are spending large sums that they are not getting from the Loan Council.

Mr. COLLINS: The State's allocation of loan money is based on the amounts they received in the past, and for that very reason alone it is desirable to use the available Loan Funds and so improve the position of the State for the future. It is obvious that if we did not use them, this State, with all the tremendous development it needs, would not have the money available when we wanted it in the future. I think, therefore, that the argument of the Leader of the Opposition

is untenable. The Treasurer is wise in using the loan money he has because we know that consolidated revenue has suffered tremendously because up to the present the fares and freights on the railways never pay the cost of the service given to the public. When the Government of whom the hon. member for Murrumba was a member were in power they realised that fact, because they wrote down the indebtedness of the railways to the extent of £28,000,000, but that does not relieve this State of the need for finding the interest and redemption on that £28,000,000. I do not think the hon. gentleman's argument that we should forego these Loan Funds at the present time and dip into revenue is sound, because it would inevitably have an adverse effect on our future borrowings, which have never been sufficient for the development of the State. If we do not continue the practice followed by the Minister for Transport, our future will be jeopardised to the extent that we do not use the available loan moneys, whereas meeting these charges from loan certainly does improve the position of the State to the extent that it conserves funds and eases the present burden on consolidated revenue.

At to the reduction of fares and freights to the people on the land, that, too, sounds a good argument and one that I should like to use as one who knows the position of the farmers probably just as well as any hon. member of the Opposition. We know that the Minister for Transport has always been sympathetic with the primary producers, and during times of drought and flood he has carried their starving stock and fodder for virtually next to nothing.

Mr. Edwards: After all, that is a State matter.

Mr. COLLINS: I know it is, and the Government have stood up to their responsibility.

Mr. Edwards: Nonsense!

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member for Nanango knows that the freights and fares on primary produce in Queensland are the lowest of any State in Australia, and I believe lower than any country in the world, considering the distance it has to be transported.

Are we fair in everlastingly asking the Railway Department to reduce charges when we know that the cost of the service being paid for by the people who use it is to the extent of only half the interest bill? The argument will not stand analysis and we should be, and I know that the primary producers in general are, very appreciative of all that has been done by them in connection with low railway freight charges to the primary producers generally, especially in times of stress. Like any other service, the railways ordinarily should pay their way, but we cannot take into consideration the railways only, inasmuch as they are closely linked with land development and the basis of the prosperity of this State is the land in some shape or form. It is obvious that if we do not get back the cost of the service, the service is

disadvantaged. Supposing we are able to do it at this particular time because the railways are carrying excessive war freights, I remind hon. members that there is always a great inclination to retain a higher freight rate when things get back to normal. It would be wrong to upset the position that exists in respect of railway freights. I know of no section of farming, pastoral, or agricultural industry that is not enjoying reasonable prices for its product. Perhaps the dairying people have a difficult row to hoe but no less a sum than £2,000,000 has been set aside by the Federal Government to assist dairying and, generally speaking, they are enjoying an excellent season. Rains have been exceptionally good, with the result that pastures are good and production high, but I have no doubt that if conditions were reversed and a drought existed in the principal dairying areas the Minister would take the same sympathetic view that has always been taken by this Government when considering freights.

Mr. Edwards: You want to take a trip up the Brisbane Valley.

Mr. COLLINS: Take a trip anywhere to-day and you will find good seasonal conditions prevailing. Recently they had 3½ inches of rain at Roma. That is something that is almost unprecedented for this time of the year. Goondiwindi was in a similar position. That has a very great effect on the prosperity of the people in those areas.

If railway freights were reduced land rents would be automatically raised because the land then would have greater value to the people using it, so that fixation of land rents is one of the things we must be very careful about, because they have to be fixed over a long period rather than from year to year. The State must ever be a good landlord. It must not be, and it has not in the past been, a grasping, greedy landlord. We must not upset the balance that has been arrived at over a long period, particularly when nobody is suffering any undue hardship. The principal hardship being suffered at the present time is the shortage of labour, and that is most acute in the farming industries, but I am pleased to be able to say that great efforts have been made by the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock, and consideration has been given to his proposals by the Federal Government and they are doing all that is humanly possible, having due regard to the war situation and the demands for labour necessary for the successful prosecution of the war, to meet the needs of our industries.

I am pleased to be able to say that the Women's Land Army is giving an exceptionally good service in the many spheres in which it is operating. The girls are doing a grand job. They are rendering a national service to the country and are very proud of being able to take their place in the war effort. I know that work in the fields is not congenial to a great number of women, but they are sacrificing their fair complexions and their nice smooth skins for the sake of doing something that is worthy of a national war effort. The Leader of the Opposition complains that

they should not have to pay full industrial union fees.

I know that the Leader of the Opposition is not opposed to unions in general, but what is being done to-day has always been the practice. The Australian Workers' Union does not sell a ticket for a quarter or a half year; it issues a ticket for the whole year, and the cost is small when we take into consideration the great service industrial unions have rendered to the employees in our industries. What is 12s. 6d. or 25s. a year for membership in an institution that has put hundreds of thousands of pounds into the pockets of the employees in the various industrial spheres? I do not believe the girls who are working in the cotton field and the peanut factory object for one moment to being asked to buy a union ticket. It is my opinion that some of the people who hate industrial unions are raising this objection. It is inadvisable at this time, when we have great peace in the industry, to try to raise these bogies in order to cause discontent. The girls working in the peanut factory at Kingaroy have been advantaged to a great extent by the union activities just as the girls working in the sheds grading tobacco in North Queensland have been advantaged. So far as I know, there is no objection by the girls who are grading tobacco to taking a ticket in an industrial union because, even though they may not be grading tobacco for the whole year, they probably will be working in some other calling that has been advantaged also by the operation of an industrial union.

Mr. Nimmo: They are compelled to take tickets, you know.

Mr. COLLINS: And they are not objecting, because they know that it is to their advantage. I repeat that hundreds of thousands of pounds have been put into the pockets of the workers by the unions. The girls realise that the small cost of membership is repaid probably every week to them in the extra remuneration they receive as compared with what would have been paid had there been no industrial unions to fight their cause. Take the amount of work done by unions in getting just payment from unscrupulous employers for the girls. I am glad to say there are not many bad employers in the State, but it is the close watch that is kept by union officials on these bad employers that prevents them from paying the low rate they would like to pay in some cases.

Mr. Power: £22,000 that had been short-paid was collected last year.

Mr. COLLINS: There is an illustration. Probably they would have had no possible chance of getting that £22,000 if they had not had some organisation to approach the court on their behalf and to get justice for them. It is very bad policy indeed at the present time to drive a wedge of unrest into those people who are enjoying all the privileges that have been brought about by the activities of industrial unions. I feel sure that no hon. member of this Assembly would

like to destroy an institution that has been of such benefit to the workers of this State.

I am pleased to be able to say that the dairymen to-day appreciate industrial unions. They realise that until they can pay the same wages to their employees as are paid in secondary industry, they cannot obtain suitable labour to work their farms. They have been suffering the handicap of inferior unpaid labour ever since dairying has been an industry and they are not happy about paying their men anything less than is paid by the cane-farmer to his employees or anything less than the factory workers receive. They know their employees work long hours, that they have to be diligent, and that they have to have a considerable knowledge of farm work in order to be satisfactory workers.

What is the position to-day? Immediately they are attracted to other primary industries, to the cane fields or to the pastoral industry, where the wages are very much better than they are in the small agricultural industry. The farmers know they cannot restrain their employees from going, and they have come to realise that if they pay proper award wages they will be in a position to have labour of the same high quality that is available to other industries, and, in addition, that they will be able to make a better case to the Federal Government for a higher price for their butter. An increased price will enable them to pay their employees better wages and give them conditions in keeping with those of other industries. I think most hon. members opposite agree that it would be to the benefit of the farming industry if it could pay those wages and give those conditions, and most people in the dairying industry realise, too, that until they put their industry in order and until they pay good wages and give good conditions to their employees they cannot make out the best case to the Federal Government for a price for their products commensurate with the cost of production.

Mr. Edwards: The Federal Government let them down.

Mr. COLLINS: The farmers are entitled to a good price for their product. I want to tell the hon. member for Nanango that the Federal Government have not let them down. They have given the primary producers more help and greater encouragement than were ever given by a Nationalist or Country Party Government. The Nationalist and Country Party Governments have had a splendid opportunity to help the primary producers, because they have been in power in the Federal arena almost continuously since the establishment of federation, but, apart from the sugar industry, where they were forced to give some help because of the pressure exerted by the Labour Government in Queensland, the Federal Nationalist and Country Party Governments have done nothing to help the primary industries. They have not done one thing to try to raise the primary industries to the level to which they should and to which I hope they will be raised. Every credit is due to the present Federal

Government for the help they have given to the dairyman. Of course, I am not saying that it has been enough, but at least it is an attempt to solve a very acute problem, and at a time when the finances of the Commonwealth have never been more strained. I am sure that in the course of time the Federal Government will see that the farming industries of Australia and of Queensland in particular enjoy the same good conditions as apply in secondary industries.

Mr. TAYLOR (Enoggera) (5.53 p.m.): The Bill provides for an expenditure of £5,000,000 in Queensland on behalf of the Federal authorities during the year in connection with the war effort. In Queensland we are fortunate in having the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, Mr. Kemp, a very efficient officer, and, I suppose, one of the best at his work in Australia. In carrying out work on behalf of the Federal Government in connection with their war effort he has displayed the same boundless energy and wonderful experience that he did for so many years for the State Government as Commissioner of Main Roads.

In dealing with the Allied Works Council and its kindred bodies I should like to mention that when I was in the South during the year I investigated proposals that I believed would be of value not only for war purposes but also to meet the general needs of the State in the future. I have in mind the construction of barracks, army huts, and temporary workers' homes.

When I was in Melbourne in April last I had occasion to visit a friend of mine who was interested in the manufacture of gypsum. He showed me a cottage that had been constructed in Melbourne by the Australian Gypsum Products Company, with the object of being tested for the temporary housing of workers engaged in war work. I was surprised at the cheapness of the building, together with its efficiency and utility. I really saw two buildings, one in April and one later in June. The weather in March in Victoria was the wettest experienced in 50 years. People will tell us that gypsum board or fibrous plaster cannot be used for building purposes because when used externally it will not stand up to climatic conditions. I was in one of those buildings in April on one of the wettest days experienced in Melbourne. I inquired why such a type of building had not been introduced into Queensland, particularly in the distant parts of the North and West, where buildings of that type would be especially useful. They combined efficiency with comfort, two important factors to be considered when providing buildings for workers who were compelled to live in the tropics and sub-tropics. I was informed that the manufacturers of the gypsum board had been unsuccessful in getting introductions to the proper authorities so that they might place their proposal before them. When I returned to Sydney I met a friend in the Masonic Club. He, too, was interested in this class of building, and he told me that he had plans of a building that he was going to submit to the Federal authorities. He said

that he had for three weeks been trying to obtain an introduction to the proper authorities, and that he had been "held out." I said, "Well, let us have a look at the proposal, and if it is worth while I will see that you get introduced to the Minister for the Interior." I had a look at his plans and examined the proposal. I was quite satisfied that this man had something useful to offer the Government. I said, "Drive me out to Canberra and bring your plans with you." He did so. I introduced my friend to Senator Collings, the Minister for the Interior, who was so impressed with his proposal, that he sent us across to the Chief Architect in the Patents Office. From there we returned to Senator Collings, and eventually he asked me to take the matter to the Chief Director of Works in Melbourne, Mr. Coles. I have with me to-day some plans and specifications, together with prices, that will astonish hon. members. I guarantee that if buildings of this material are erected as part of the war effort, they can be subsequently used by the Government wherever they have workers massed in post-war reconstruction. It is a proposal that should receive careful consideration.

The Allied Works Council is constructing thousands of army huts in Queensland, and we are building them of various manufactured materials, as well as timber. We also have to realise that the supply of timber is running very short in Australia, and unless we can get something to take its place we shall be in a bad way in the very near future. Reforestation is held up owing to the call-ups for the Allied Works Council and the army. To my knowledge there have been several experiments with gypsum, and the experiments were made under a set of conditions caused by the war, when the fibre reached the highest price it has reached since 1916. That fibre can be grown in Queensland. As a matter of fact, there is a patch of it at Marmor, this side of Rockhampton, that they cannot destroy. They tried to burn it and turned the cattle into it. They did everything possible in an endeavour to destroy it, and tests have proved that it is better than the fibre imported from South Africa or Malaya. If it will grow so prolifically without attention, one can imagine how it would develop with attention.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: What is the name?

Mr. TAYLOR: Sisal. When these experiments were made the price was £41 10s. to £42 10s. a ton, but I think we could produce it in Australia for £33 a ton and pay the wages we have to pay for white labour. The people engaged in industry in Australia must realise that after this war they will not be able to exploit the black-labour countries to the extent they have been able to do in the past, and we must therefore make provision to supply our needs by home production.

I have here a sample of a $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch board, which is equal to 1-inch timber dressed. That board stood up to all the tests applied to it in Melbourne. I also have here a photograph of a house constructed of this material.

Mr. Edwards: How would it resist fire?

Mr. TAYLOR: I will give hon. members the results of the fire test directly. I was inside this house in Melbourne built of this material during one of the wettest seasons in 50 years, when $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches of rain fell in two hours, which was a fairly heavy fall for such a short period, and it never penetrated the material because it was dressed with terolas, which is a bitumastic material that can be got in any colour other than white; it is not possible to get it in white because it is a coal-tar product. The tests were worth while and showed that this material would be ideal for North Queensland and the hot climates of the Central-West and sub-tropical areas.

The following is a statement about the testing:—

"The following relates to the design and materials used in military, naval, and R.A.A.F. hutments or cantonments. These have generally been erected along orthodox lines. Safe limits have often been exceeded in order to reduce costs. Inferior materials have frequently been adopted—all with one purpose, to lessen cost and provide the necessary shelter."

That is a well-known fact, because the architect in control of the Patents Office at Canberra told me he knew the huts were being erected in Victoria for the army out of third-class timber at a cost of £380 to £400 each. That was why he discussed this proposal and sent it to the Minister to be sent to the Director of Works in Melbourne.

The statement continues—

"With an intimate knowledge of what has been done during the last three years in New South Wales and a real realisation of what is wanted, the following proposed scheme is submitted. Two features are introduced—(a) a new design, and (b) an entirely new gypsum roof and wall slab. This scheme is designed to overcome three factors:—

1. Present high cost of hutment.
2. Shortage of skilled labour.
3. Material shortage."

Passing through Sydney on my way back from Melbourne I met a member of the Housing Commission and asked him if he had seen this proposal. He replied that he had not, but that he had a proposal that had been submitted to the Housing Commission in New South Wales for the purpose of building huts at places at which there are munition works. He acquiesced in my suggestion that he meet a deputation from the people interested, but said that he did not think there was much chance of doing anything, as there were only 24 hours in which to decide on the housing scheme, which had been published in the "Sydney Morning Herald," at a cost of £350 a house. However, I obtained the services of a member of the New South Wales Parliament and introduced this scheme to the Minister for Housing, who asked that the proposal

be left with him and he would have the Housing Commission decide the next morning on what they thought of it. We saw the Housing Commission the next day, and the plans submitted to them were identical with those published in the "Sydney Morning Herald" the week previously, but the price was £90 less. The job was of the same efficiency.

If that could be done in the South, what could be done in Queensland when one realises the discomforts of fettlers and cane-cutters in galvanised-iron buildings, the heat of which annoys the inmates well into the night. This proposal may be valuable, particularly as it can be worked on fabricated steel. For the benefit of hon. members, I will exhibit the plans of a hut 60 feet by 18 feet, the recognised size. That can be constructed for £230. I have here a statement by John Stubbs and Company, one of the largest building contractors in Sydney, to the effect they can build the hut in question, using 9-inch by 9-inch brick piers for the sum of £230, or using 4-inch by 4-inch stumps with an 8-inch by 2-inch plate base for the sum of £228. That suggests that something might be done with this material in the housing of workers in our war and post-war work at such places as the Stanley River Dam or on other irrigation projects. It is comparatively free from white ants, especially when fabricated steel is used. One could leave the building without finding it eaten out by white ants when one returned. The quantity of timber ordinarily used in army huts of the size I mentioned is 1,800 superficial feet, whereas a hut such as this requires only 450 superficial feet. When using steel the weight is only 200 lb. a rib, and there are only six ribs in the hut.

The question was raised whether it could stand up to heat. This was tested very efficiently, and it has been found that the material is shatter-proof and fire-proof. This piece of material that I show to hon. members was subjected to a test of 8,000 to 9,000 degrees Fahrenheit, and it took 88 seconds to burn out that hole that I point out to hon. members. The ordinary oxywelding heat took 15 minutes to mark the fabrication in this way, and this piece of material is masonite, a product of the largest monopoly in Australia, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company Limited. It is an American patent, but that company has the Australian rights, and much of this material is being used to-day. It is almost double the expense of gypsum board, and it took the test only eight seconds to burn through at that point. It took 88 seconds to burn through the gypsum board. Tests were made at the Sydney University and the result is stated thus—

"Adopting the U.S. Bureau of Standards, heat transmission of 26 g. galvanised iron .018 inch thick—638 B.T.U.'s per hour per square foot. Heat transmission of ¼-inch thick gypsum sheeting—10.8 B.T.U.'s per hour per square foot."

The heat transmission of a gypsum sheet ¼-inch thick is only 10.8 B.T. units per hour per square foot. Imagine if that is with a

¼-inch sheet! The sample I have here is ¾-inch thick, and the heat transmission in that is reduced by almost another two-thirds. Normally, therefore, this is a good board for a tropical climate, especially a climate in which the heat is intense for the full round of the clock.

On being tested for strength and reliance, it was found to be satisfactory. The principles of testing were sound. They were based on the fact that curved sections give maximum strength and less wind resistance. Anyone who knows anything about building construction knows that you cannot face anything square up to the wind, but anything that is at an angle to it gives less resistance and consequently stands up better.

This product is used in America and is widely used by the army in the Panama and other subtropical areas, but what appealed to me more than anything else was the fact that it could be both waterproof and weather-proof. When you can keep the weather out of it you have something that is virtually everlasting.

Mr. Massey: You have a cool house, too.

Mr. TAYLOR: I have seen two places built with this material. I understand that a place has been built for the New South Wales Housing Commission quite recently on the beach at Sans Souci, and it has stood the test, no weather having penetrated it at all. I have yet to see the plans of that building, but I have another set of plans that was submitted to the Housing Commission in New South Wales, and I understand that that Commission has accepted contracts on the basis of that plan. I have here a photograph of the finished house if hon. members care to see it.

The problem facing Australia to-day is how to get the greatest possible value for the taxpayer's money. I have no pecuniary interest in this matter at all. I do not hold any shares in any company concerned in it, and I am not concerned about holding shares in anything, but I am concerned in the value people can get for the money they pay in taxes. As proof of the soundness of this scheme I have statements here by well-known architects. The bitumastic emulsion, terolas, which costs 1s. 5d. a gallon, can be diluted with one-third of its weight in water, and that was the paint applied to this dwelling of which I have a photograph, to waterproof it. That reduces the cost of painting, for that material can be produced under war conditions at 1s. a gallon.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Where does it come from?

Mr. TAYLOR: The Shell Company produces it. As to the strength of the gypsum board; the sample I have here was tested with a revolver bullet fired through it by one of the police of the A.R.P. section. We asked them to come down and see how it would stand up to bomb blast. We thought that a .32 revolver bullet fired at it from a distance of 6 feet would give as great a shock as a machine gun bullet fired from a

distance of 100 yards. That revolver bullet went through it without shattering it. The only damage done was to break the surface at the back where the sheet was standing against a brick wall. That damage can be repaired with about a farthing's worth of plaster. If anyone has any knowledge of the information received from Darwin about the damage done to the dwellings there constructed of fibro-cement sheeting he can understand the value of this material from the point of view of bomb blast.

Mr. Jesson: What about weight?

Mr. TAYLOR: This material is only half as heavy as a fibro-cement sheeting. It would be impossible to handle a fibro-cement sheet 10 feet by 6 feet, and $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick, as this sample is, yet the building I saw constructed had a span of 10 feet, then a frieze of 2 feet, with a top plate. A sheet of fibro-cement 10 feet by 6 feet and $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick would be too heavy to handle.

The main point is that this is something that can be produced in Australia. There are hundreds of thousands of tons of gypsum in the Commonwealth, and we know that under war conditions extremely heavy costs have to be borne. We know, too, that we can grow sisal hemp here, which produces a fibre unequalled by anything that has been imported into this country. I had some of it sent from Marmor, near Rockhampton, to Melbourne for testing. I took a man up there and he obtained the right to cut the stuff that is there. What he had done with it since I do not know.

The main thing to recognise is that when this war is over it will not be possible to exploit black labour. We must also realise that we shall have to provide the best comfort in the dwellings of the producers of the future. The heat test proved the gypsum board to be the finest article for use in the tropics. I was astonished to learn what could be done with plaster of paris. Science is making great strides. Of course, we have to realise, too, that we cannot be exploited by an organisation like the Colonial Sugar Refining Company much longer, either. The events of the last few days, particularly in Labour circles in the South, show conclusively that time marches on, and that intelligence will have to be displayed by the representatives of the workers. We shall have to do something for the comfort of people who will have to live in the tropics. I hold in my hand a piece of steel the same thickness as the gypsum board that I previously showed to hon. members. The same heat test was applied to this piece of steel $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick, and it took just exactly 35 seconds to burn the small hole that can be seen through it. There we have the difference of 35 seconds and 88 seconds in favour of the gypsum board. Those tests convince me that the gypsum board is heat-resisting. Six inches away from where the flame was being played on the gypsum board there was little or no heat, but 18 inches away from where the flame was played on the piece of steel, you could not put your hand. That, too, proves that gypsum board is a non-conductor

of heat. The Queensland Railway Department has a problem on its hands in connection with the homes of fettlers, and the Government will have many other problems to solve when the war is over. We shall have to develop country that up till now has hardly been trodden by the foot of man. We shall have to extend our transport system into those areas. We shall have to build a railway line from Bourke in north-western New South Wales to Darwin through the Barkly Tableland and that part of the State of Queensland near the Northern Territory. Many problems will have to be overcome and the important problem will be to combat termites. Homes will have to be constructed for fettlers, for other Government officials, and for people generally. The gypsum board will solve the problem. We shall be able to use the fabricated steel frame and the gypsum board as cheaply as timber. Stubbs have quoted a price for wooden and fabricated steel houses for the Housing Commission in New South Wales. I believe we can grow the fibre in Queensland, because sisal hemp has grown here fairly prolifically. On one patch that I have mentioned it could not be destroyed. Large quantities of gypsum are to be found in the State, or at least the Department of Mines has told us so in its reports from time to time. If we can produce the material, all that is necessary is to apply the labour to manufacture the board. Of course, I realise that under the system of capitalism, which I know cannot last much longer, we cannot produce the article cheaply, but under an economic system in this and the other States whereby we shall be able to harness everything in the interests of human beings, we shall be able to do something along the lines I have suggested.

In 1935 I discussed the subject of linking up the outback railheads in Queensland, and I argued that the Government should extend the railway line to Darwin in the Northern Territory, where it would also be very valuable as a defence unit. I repeat those arguments to-day. While the other countries of the world have been forced to develop their transport systems because of war conditions, we in Australia are in the main using only those that already exist.

Quite recently a review was made between the East-West railway and the Broken Hill-Sydney railway, the idea being to continue the 4 ft. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. gauge down to Port Pirie, into Whyalla, and other centres. That was made necessary by the activities of submarines off the Australian coast, and was only a war measure. The Government of the day could not complete the work quickly enough. Naturally, they had to take some action to meet conditions that were developed suddenly by the war in order to tranship ore that was carried on the narrow-gauge railway in South Australia onto the broader gauge. About £400,000 was spent on a transhipment plant at Broken Hill. Transport is one of the bugbears of the future. It is not much use remaining static. Only flexibility of thought will be successful in the future. We must realise that existing forms of transport will

have to meet severe competition from air transport. Air transport is going to be a valuable contribution to the passenger transport system of Australia and to a degree to freight transport.

I observe from recent statements in the Press that the Commonwealth Transport Commission intends to place a new type of locomotive known as the Garratt locomotive on the railways in Queensland. This is supposed to be one of the finest types of locomotive that can be employed on a 3 ft. 6 in. gauge. There has been some difference of opinion between the State authorities and the Commonwealth authorities on this point. The Minister might tell us what was the objection of the Queensland authorities. Is it due to the bridges? Everyone knows that the bridges constructed in the sub-tropical and tropical districts of Australia, particularly in Queensland, are low-level bridges to allow flood waters to carry the debris over them. Engine-drivers and firemen on these runs tell us that they have to hit these bridges at a certain speed in order to cross those rivers, and give them the necessary momentum to ascend the opposite side of the river. The B18½ is the largest type of engine than can be used with safety on those bridges. Can this Garratt engine do the work it is supposed to do? If it can be used on the existing tracks in Queensland we should seize every opportunity to do so. If, as is claimed, this engine has a drawbar pull of 72,940 lb. on the Yorkshire hills on the London and North-Eastern railway system in Britain, surely we can develop and increase our transport drawbar by the adoption of this type of locomotive.

The Minister for Transport: It is suitable on some sections.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Garratt locomotive has a boiler pressure of 180 lb., a grate area of 49.5 square feet, a total heating surface of 2,830 square feet, a tractive effort of 42,750 lb., and a working weight of 179½ tons. It may be that the general transport system in the railways of Queensland will not permit that type of locomotive to be used. Perhaps the Minister and Commissioner know their book. At least they should. It is a tragedy if we are going to continue for any length of time working on the present system.

I want to pay a tribute to the department for the magnificent work that is carried out on behalf of the war effort under what I believe to be the worst conditions possible. Are we going to continue that? Are we going to take into consideration the propaganda that has been used in Australia for the last 10, 15, or 20 years by the Labour Party and other persons with progressive ideas that we should have a uniform gauge and increase the capacity of tonnage per truck and then decrease the time used travelling between various termini?

I recognise the very valuable work that is being done by the Railway Department. I do not think anyone knows it better than I do, because I travelled from Rockhampton

recently. We could not get back in the plane because the American officers jumped the plane, so we came back in an empty passenger train that was returning from the North and it took us from 5.40 p.m. on Sunday night to 11 p.m. on Monday night to reach Albion, because we were on the side lines every hour to allow military trains bound for the North to pass. I know by that one trip the enormous amount of traffic that had to be handled in the space of 24 hours on that Northern line. Believe me, there has been a terrific strain on the staff, particularly the running staff, and it is time we took notice of the fact that these men have given yeoman service to the war effort in our transport system. Are we going to continue it? Are we going to revert after this war to a sit-down-and-do-nothing idea? If we do not wish to get on with the job, then the people should put someone in our place who will. We should make use of the knowledge we have gained as a result of this tremendous strain on the railways because they have to handle everything that has come from the other States, on the Eastern coast at any rate. We realise—those who know anything about the matter—that the strain on the men cannot go on for ever. If we realise the meaning of the future at all, we cannot allow it to continue after this war. I suggest that the committee appointed by the Government to study post-war problems and to offer suggestions to the Government in this Parliament in regard to post-war problems should in the next session of Parliament bring forward some practical proof of the job they are doing. They should take into consideration the question of dealing with the transport system of the State, because without a modern transport system future development and settlement will not be of much account. There is very little land left of any consequence on the well-known roads, and development will have to take place in country with a good transport system. When passenger traffic is handled by air—the Minister for Transport will have to go into that matter—goods and produce can be carried on the railways. Let the committee I speak of deal with those problems and show this Parliament in its next session what practical schemes they have to offer as a result of their deliberations on post-war problems.

Mr. L. J. BARNES (Cairns) (7.50 p.m.): First I should like to congratulate the hon. member for Enoggera on his enterprise in finding a substitute for timber. I might mention that I have not done much for the timber industry—I probably shot a woodpecker once. However, as I said this morning, I do not intend to try to pull this House down; my intentions are to try to erect a new one. I am of the opinion that we get too local. It is not my intention to represent Cairns only, nor even Queensland or Australia. I maintain that we must get interested in the world—in the city of mankind. We must realise some day that given the grace of God we must give equality of opportunity to all, ascetic and Aryan alike.

I have been asked why I represented King O'Malley in the Cairns by-election. In Cairns it was said that we did not have the authority of this grand old man and that we were using his name without authority. If any hon. member cares to come with me to my locker I will show him a telegram from the Hon. King O'Malley. It was he who wished to change the jockeys, and I was given the mount representing the true Labour Party King O'Malley finance.

That is the true Labour Party's finance. We all know that in the last war, under the governorship of Sir Denison Miller, approximately £700,000,000 was raised without interest to finance the East-West railway, agriculture, and other things. It is our intention to endeavour to get the Commonwealth Bank to function again.

When we speak of money we are not speaking of something that is infallible. Money is man-made and can be man-altered. We know that we cannot alter the law of gravity. Take cricket. If it suited cricket better to say that a man was not out when he was caught in the slips we should alter the present law of the game to say that that man was not out, but if we try to alter the law of gravity to make a ball fall outside the boundary when gravity decides that it will fall inside we fail. That law is not man-made and so cannot be man-altered, but, as I said, money is man-made and can be man-altered. Money is now the master of man, but one day it will become the servant of man. We cannot eat money, wear it, or sleep on it, unless we are abnormal.

When this bank functions nobody will get anything for nothing. National credit does not mean allowing people to get something for nothing. All will have to work, but there will be no dole. It will be a disgrace to the Government to give a dole not to the man who has to take it, as it is to-day. This day is fast approaching, and I ask hon. members to let us speed up the process of evolution and not allow it to come by revolution. Hon. members know the old story of the goldsmith. People took their gold to him and he issued receipts for their gold. They found that they could trade with these receipts without going back to the goldsmith. They traded amongst themselves by using the receipts, buying cows and horses, and so on. The goldsmith discovered that nobody was bringing back the receipts, so he decided that he would issue more receipts.

That is how the present banking system functions to-day. It started as an accident, but since then the international financial Jew has extended it. There are 300 of such people in the world. I heard an hon. member opposite mention that "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" as an Aspro book. I pardon the hon. member's ignorance. I have inquired from the librarian and discovered that this book is missing from the library. It has never been in it. I cannot give a definite promise to the hon. member, that I can obtain a copy, but I should like Mr. Speaker to see that a copy of the "Protocols" is placed in the library.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: I will lend you my copy if you are so interested.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: I thought the hon. gentleman must have read the "Protocols," as he appears to be very humane.

Now, to return to the question of money. The time will come when we shall bow to a higher God. It will be no longer dishonourable to be an honest worker or craftsman, but it will be a lasting disgrace to be an inefficient statesman wasting God's day and filching bread from a needy public. I came into this Assembly with one intention, to represent all the people. The 300 international financial Jews intend to kill your goyim. The 300 international financial Jews want to kill their own brethren. They will ride roughshod over them. They will not care whether they are capitalists or labour. They will ride roughshod over us Gentiles unless we unite and find a way to have a programme the same as these international Jews.

Let us read a little about the Press. They say—

"It is often vapid, unjust, mendacious, and the majority of the public have not the slightest idea what ends the Press really serves. We shall saddle and bridle it with a tight curb; we shall do the same also with all productions of the printing press, for where would be the sense of getting rid of the attacks of the Press if we remain targets for pamphlets and books."

Let us read this extract, in which they say—

"They shall not be trained in the arts of government."

They are conveying the information that we hon. members are not trained in the art of government. Unless one has read the protocols and studied them, one cannot be trained in the arts of government. Every book contains 10 per cent. of good—the other other 90 per cent. can be thrown out—but this book contains 100 per cent. of reading. They go on to say—

"We shall raise the rate of wages which, however, will not bring any advantage to the workers, for at the same time we shall produce a rise in prices of the first necessities of life, alleging that it arises from the decline of agriculture and cattle-breeding."

Let us read a little further, for then we find that Protocol 12 reads—

"Let us turn again to the future of the printing press. Everyone desirous of being a publisher, librarian, or printer, will be obliged to provide himself with a diploma instituted therefor, which, in case of any fault, will be immediately impounded. With such measures the instrument of thought will become an educative means in the hands of our government, which will no longer allow the mass of the nation to be led astray in bye-ways and fantasies about the blessings of progress."

Let us read further still. Let us read where Communism came from. The foundation of Communism is here. The international Jew is 100 per cent. behind it, although there are blind followers of Communism. We have definite proof that Communism is better than the hypnotism that we have here to-day. It has produced 10 times more, but that does not prove that it is right. But I challenge any hon. member to deny the fact that Communism is founded by 300 international Jews.

At 8 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Under the provisions of sessional orders agreed to by the House on 26 August last, I shall now call upon the Acting Treasurer to reply, if he so desires, after which I shall put the question now under consideration and every question necessary for the passage of the remaining stages of the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo) (8 p.m.): We have had 17 days of discussion of the finances of the State, and during those 17 days many valuable contributions have been made to the debates and many valuable suggestions offered, which is justification, I think, for the time that has been spent on perhaps the most important deliberations of this Parliament—the control of the public purse. We come to-night to the final stages of our deliberations in this respect, and it is remarkable that so few questions of material importance have emerged. With the exception of the speech of the Leader of the Opposition, virtually no questions have been raised. The Leader of the Opposition certainly has raised some questions of material importance, but not of paramount importance so far as the finances of the State are concerned.

The hon. gentleman submitted a series of questions and asked that they be answered. Perhaps the most important question he submitted was that associated with the increased expenditure compared with the appropriation of last year. I do not think it requires a great deal of research, still less 17 days of debate, to discover the reason for that. The reason is obvious if hon. members will examine the Estimates. There are, of course, certain obligations that this State has to meet but it would not be called upon to meet in the piping days of peace—those days that seem so far away from us—those days that seem so distant when we gaze into the future. For instance, one very big factor contributing to the contemplated increased expenditure this year is the £250,000 for one department alone—the department under the control of my colleague the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs. It is obvious that the States have to eat into their own financial resources for the purposes of prosecuting the war.

The Commonwealth has certain obligations and the State, too, particularly in regard to the protection of the civil population and buildings. That involves fire brigades, their equipment, the expansion of hospital facilities, air-raid shelters, and the materials necessary for the care, welfare, and protection of the

civilian population. Police are required, and many other bodies and materials call for expenditure. All those items are clearly exhibited in the Estimates. I do not believe that there is one hon. member who grudges the increased expenditure. After all, it is a very small insurance for the safety it gives, and it is one of the prices we have to pay for war. The Government would be wanting in their duty if they did not make these provisions to protect the people over whom they have jurisdiction. Provision has accordingly been made for civil-defence expenditure to the extent of £250,000.

Some question has been raised concerning the Railway Department.

Mr. Yeates: Heavy revenue is coming in now.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: I am afraid the hon. member has looked at the revenue side without a due knowledge of the true position and all its implications. I shall be very happy to give the hon. member some information that perhaps he does not possess.

Mr. Yeates: Give me half an hour, because I could not get the call on the second reading of the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: That is very unfortunate for the hon. member, but he had ample opportunity during the 17 days on the Estimates to examine all these questions that are of paramount importance to him.

One of the highlights of the debate has been the unanimous eulogy extended to the railwaymen and the railway system, from the Commissioner down, for the very loyal job they did under the most trying conditions ever experienced in the Railway Department. (Hear, hear!) The Railway Department, under the jurisdiction of my colleague, the Minister for Transport, has done a magnificent job. Hon. members only have to go to North Queensland where one sees unfolded what I believe to be a modern miracle. I do not think anyone believes that the Railway Department was capable of doing the job it has done. I think we were all afraid that the railways would break down, but it is a magnificent tribute to the Minister for Transport and the Commissioner, Mr. Wills, that the department excelled itself in the discharge of a duty that has very largely contributed to the present safety of this State. We all owe an obligation to those associated with the railway service for the wonderful job it has done in very trying and adverse conditions. But all these things cost money, and here again we have another explanation for the increased Budget. More trains have to be run and more costs have to be incurred.

Mr. Brand: And more revenue.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: The hon. member knows that under our system of budgeting we make appropriations against revenue for the maintenance and conduct of the railways. That is our system of bookkeeping. The railways have made a tremendous contribution to the safety of the State.

Mr. Yeates: Why not reduce the freights and fares all round by 15 per cent.?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: For many years I have listened to the dulcet tones of the hon. member for East Toowoomba and I have heard him express many opinions about the railway system. I have heard him instruct the Minister and the Commissioner on what should be done, but neither the Minister nor the Commissioner, unfortunately, regards the hon. member as being an authority on transport, and so all the suggestions he makes necessarily fall to the ground.

The whole question so far as increased expenditure will be found in the very complete, adequate, and comprehensive statement made by the Treasurer during the Budget debate. I do not want to be redundant or to repeat his arguments. I suggest that if hon. members want to know the reasons for the increased expenditure they might turn to the "Hansard" on the table. There they will find all the information that is required.

The Leader of the Opposition made a very pertinent point that the public debt should not be increased during a period of buoyant revenue. The hon. gentleman made that suggestion without full knowledge of the facts of our present system of finance and the contribution this Government have made, as they were bound to make, to help the Commonwealth Government in the war effort. The hon. gentleman will recollect that a certain agreement was entered into as between the States and the Commonwealth. The hon. member for Mackay, our ex-Premier, was one of the first Premiers in Australia to give the Commonwealth a wholehearted and unre-served assurance of absolute combination and co-operation of effort for the conduct of this war.

Obviously, one of the most important questions is that associated with finance. You will recollect, Mr Speaker, that it was agreed that the State should receive no allocation from public loan issues and loan expenditure was to be financed entirely from domestic raisings, Loan Fund repayments, and cash advances from the Commonwealth when urgently required. This practice is being continued through the current year and the State's cash balances are being utilised to the fullest possible extent at the request of the Loan Council. Both the Premier and Treasurer of the day subscribed to that principle. The State's cash balances are also being utilised to redeem Treasury bills, in accordance with an arrangement with the Commonwealth Treasury. These redemptions naturally make in the final analysis a very big contribution towards the reduction of the loan indebtedness of the State. Therefore, I feel quite sure that the Leader of the Opposition would not have made that suggestion had he realised that its application would have necessitated Queensland's requiring some share of loan moneys and thus handicap the Commonwealth financially in the most gigantic task ever thrust on our national Government.

The finances of the State are buoyant in certain directions—it is excellent to know that they are—but the time is coming when revenues will not be so buoyant. Nobody is blind enough or stupid enough to believe that the future system of finance can be the system of finance as we understood it prior to the war. He would be a venturesome man who would make any suggestion as to what relation finance would bear to production, say, five years after this war. I should not like to make any prediction along those lines. Frankly, we are all in a fog, in our speculation in trying to find some datum point on which to base a conclusion. Therefore, it behoves the State not only to provide adequate services at present but to take care of the future. That may lie in the much more superficial question of that vehicle of exchange which we call money. I am not one of those who believes that something can be created out of nothing. People who evolve fantastic panaceas for the salvation of this world, based on some new financial structure, fail to realise the truth of the saying that there will be a day of reckoning sometime, somewhere, and somehow, and that somebody has to pay. There can be no system of finance that will enable us to escape our obligations.

These people who talk about creating something out of nothing—like the conjurer producing a rabbit out of thin air—that is all, to use a colloquialism, just tosh and nonsense. Somebody has to pay. For instance, let us get down to a real basis. Can the farmer produce without receiving the quid pro quo for his produce? Can the manufacturer sustain his effort without getting a quid pro quo for the things he produces? We do come back to the axiom that human labour will always have to be recompensed. The manner of recompense remains with the future. I make this prediction for what predictions are worth—usually they are not worth very much; and the man who poses as a prophet usually fails to find honour in his own or any other country—

Mr. J. F. Barnes: After he dies he does.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: I do not know. I make this prediction: there will be material and radical changes in our financial relationships, and if we are wise we will hasten the course of evolution; if we are not wise we will allow the course of evolution to move slowly, to take its own course, and I believe that chaos will result. All this talk of a new world has to be based on one fundamental principle, and I do not think we need consult economists' brains or the financiers of the world, nor indeed need we consult any living authority on the basis necessarily to be adopted for a new order. I believe the basis of that new order was very clearly laid down by the world's greatest leader just about 2,000 years ago. I believe if we can go back to that simple, easily understood, easily comprehended doctrine, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," the building of a society that metes out even-handed justice to all its members, if we produce for use and not for speculation—we

shall need no modern prophets or modern philosophers. All these things have been clearly demonstrated, clearly laid down, clearly enunciated in one of the oldest but at the same time one of the most powerful philosophies that have ever swayed the destiny of the world.

Before I conclude, I should like to say a word or two on a matter on which I am more at home.

Mr. Brand: What about the Leader of the Opposition's suggestion as to the transfer of £250,000 from the Main Roads Fund?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: The paradox of the hon. member's argument is that the Leader of the Opposition said you could not spend, therefore, why not leave it there? If you could not spend it on main roads, why not transfer it to a vote that could be spent? The thing is obvious. What is the good of having money lying idle in a fund that cannot be employed when the self-same money could be active in a direction that is essential to the prosecution of this war?

Mr. Yeates: Will you promise to open a reserve fund?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: I will promise nothing.

Mr. Yeates interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for East Toowoomba is becoming a nuisance.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: I am sorry the hon. member is leaving the Chamber; I suppose he feels duly chastised. May I suggest that the hon. member is not regarded in the financial circles of this State as being an authority on finance any more than he is regarded as being an authority on railway matters; therefore I should be extremely loth to commit myself to acquiescing in any suggestion made by the hon. member. However, there is one question I necessarily and obviously feel more at home in talking about than I do in connection with these intricate questions of finance. It is the matters that have been raised by hon. members concerning rural labour. Rural labour is a very important thing. It is a truism that our food front is equally as important as our military front. I am not happy about, nor do I acquiesce in, certain suggestions that have been made which, carried to their logical conclusion, would deplete the second front in order to meet the needs of the first front.

We have a real second front here, not one of those nebulous, hypothetical, speculative fronts that certain people talk about in some unspecified part of the world. We have a real second front right here in our own country. That second front is the food front, and we have to man it, because if we do not we cannot feed our army. But we must make the reservation—and I think hon. members will agree with me—that the manning of the second front must be as efficient as possible. We cannot afford to have and we must not

allow inefficiency on this second front. We must organise our second front with the same meticulous care that we hope is being exercised by our army authorities in the organisation of their primary front. It is a colossal task, and it is made more difficult by the fact that the farmer, the producer, is more instinctively an individualist than any other section of the community. I suppose his isolation and his feeling of comparative freedom from interference and that sort of thing have, through the years, tended to make him an individualist, and, in some things, he is a very long way behind urban communities. That adds to the complexity of the task, because war is not an individual thing. War is a collective thing, and the producer—the farmer, the grazier, the pastoralist—has to be taught to realise that this is a collective undertaking, requiring efficiency on his part, and therefore he must acquiesce in some system, whatever it might be, that will make a material contribution to the efficiency of the second front, which, in turn, is reflected in the efficiency on the first front.

Mr. Brand: Do you not think he is doing it?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: In reply to the hon. member I remind him that quite recently my Government appointed a royal commission to discover ways and means whereby we could produce efficiency in the industry in which he is interested. It is not a question of unwillingness, mainly, on the part of the individuals concerned, but a matter of requiring the necessary lead. It is a question of building the individual mind into the collective mind and getting a composite, co-operative spirit rather than an individualistic spirit. I believe that it can be done. I believe that in view of the tremendous commitments and obligations that confront Australia it has got to be done, and that those people who stand in the way of the accomplishment of this very necessary task are both anti-social and anti-Ally. I believe it can be done, and that is one of the reasons why I was constrained to accept the appointment that I have recently accepted from the Commonwealth Government, and I believe that with co-operation and help the task will be accomplished.

Mr. Yeates: I will help you.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: I know you will, Herbert. (Laughter.) I believe that with that co-operation, good help, good will, and understanding, this task can be accomplished to the lasting glory of Australia and to the benefit of those people who are voluntarily defending those rights that in our hearts we all stand for.

Motion (Mr. Bulcock) agreed to.

COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Brassington, Fortitude Valley, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 to 8, both inclusive, schedule and preamble, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING.

Bill, on motion of Mr. Bulcock, read a third time.

ELECTIONS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Brassington, Fortitude Valley, in the chair.)

Debate resumed from 19 November (see p. 1225) on Mr. Gledson's motion—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Elections Acts, 1915 to 1940, in certain particulars.”

Mr. DART (Wynnum) (8.30 p.m.): I rise to oppose the proposed amendment of the Elections Acts. I gather from the Attorney-General's remarks that it is proposed to amend the Act by deleting section 65, subsections (1), (2), and (3), which give to the people of Queensland the right to exercise the contingent vote. If that is the intention, then I certainly oppose it. If such an amendment is carried we deprive the people of Queensland of the main principle of true democracy, a majority vote and majority rule.

Mr. Power: You got in on a minority vote.

Mr. DART: The Attorney-General has stated that whoever has been returned to Parliament under the Elections Act has enjoyed the majority vote of the people of Queensland, and if any hon. member is not here on the vote of the majority of his electors then I have yet to hear of it.

Mr. Power: You are one of them.

Mr. DART: I should like to inform the hon. member that I was returned about two years ago with a majority of 1,200 over the Labour candidate and an absolute majority over all the other candidates. That is not a minority vote. Every hon. member should be returned with an absolute majority. The people have been allowed to enjoy the privilege of exercising the contingent vote for the past 50 years, but apparently the young hon. members opposite do not know how long it has been in existence. They are too young to know that, but now they propose to alter the Elections Act, thereby destroying democracy and setting up an autocracy or a dictatorship in its place. As a representative of the people, I enter my emphatic protest.

There must be some motive behind the Bill. Why is it introduced in the dying hours of the session? Evidently something must have happened. The people have the right to exercise the contingent vote in South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria, and in the Federal arena, too. Why should the people of Queensland be victimised—deprived of a privilege that we have enjoyed for so many years? What has brought this about? I believe that a recent by-election has developed a fear complex in 25 hon. members opposite. I do not think

there were any more than 25 at the caucus meeting at which it was decided that the contingent vote should be destroyed in Queensland. Remember, too, that the Labour party in caucus uses the contingent vote for the election of Cabinet Ministers and officers. Why deny a right to the public that is availed of by themselves? The contingent vote seems to be a popular institution, and why should a paltry 25 people out of a population of 1,000,000 in Queensland be able to decide a matter like this. When the law is amended the people may have to submit to it for very many years, especially if a dictatorship is set up. Governments have made mistakes before. Hitler deprived his people of many privileges for his own personal gain. After the death of the President, Von Hindenberg, he abolished the presidency and set himself up as the dictator of Germany. Now we have 25 members of the Labour Party meeting in caucus, where they use the contingent vote themselves, and deciding to deprive the general public of the contingent vote in State elections. The people of Queensland will not stand for this. Has this come about because of the result of the Cairns by-election? I urged the Government to give the people of Cairns the opportunity to exercise their ordinary democratic rights. After a long time the Government gave them that right, but apparently they are afraid of the future.

I warn the Government that the people of Queensland may not support them much longer. Have not members of the Labour Party continually proclaimed that the will of the people should prevail? They are my sentiments, too, but the Government are taking care to see that the will of the people shall not prevail in the future. The Bill is the very antithesis of equity and justice.

The Secretary for Mines: You are the best argument in favour of the abolition of State Parliaments.

Mr. DART: I opposed the constitutional changes suggested by Dr. Evatt, but I said I believed in decentralisation in government. I still believe in it. I believe that Queensland should have its own Parliament. Parliament should be selected on a democratic basis. This Bill will take from the people their democratic rights. What did the Attorney-General mean when he said that when this amendment became law the people would only be required to put down “1” on the ballot paper, and that in doing so they would not be “messed up.” He never made any mention of the people using their second, third, and fourth preferences. He should have said that the intention of this Bill was to deprive the people of a preference vote. If he meant by “messed up” that the people got confused in exercising the preference vote I dispute it. The people have sufficient intelligence to write down more figures than “1” should it be necessary. It is wrong to alter the system of voting that has been in vogue over the last 50 years. This Bill seeks to abolish majority rule, that we have enjoyed in the past. It will mean rule by the minority.

That means that the majority of representatives will not mean a majority of voters.

The inference from the amendment is that we are place-seekers. It suggests that its authors are looking to themselves and not to the people. The Government should represent the majority of the people. I have not introduced party politics into this debate. I believe that the Labour Party is just as eager as it ever has been for democracy to rule. Why then should 25 members of caucus put their heads together to decide on this amending Bill? We want the votes of the majority of people not the votes of a few members of caucus. We on this side of the Chamber do not care what brand of politics a person may have, as we try to do the right thing by the people. It is evident that this Bill is the product of self-seekers who have their eyes on their own seats. I advise them to take their eyes off their own gains and think of the people as a whole.

It is not too late for the Attorney-General to withdraw the Bill. The little economy in printing he mentioned could have been effected without an amending Bill. The sole object of the Bill is a dangerous and retrograde step. I should be failing in my duty not only to my electorate but to the people of Queensland if I did not oppose the introduction of this Bill in the dying hours of the session. I hope that those who supported it in caucus will have sufficient courage to say why they did so, and why they wished to deprive the people of a privilege they have enjoyed for so many years. I suggest that the Attorney-General sleep over this Bill to-night, to think over his wrongdoing, and to restore to the people the freedom and liberty in the exercise of the franchise they have enjoyed for the last 50 years. If the Labour Party is becoming unpopular, this Bill will tend to make it more so.

Mr. BROWN (Logan) (8.45 p.m.): First I wish to congratulate the Minister for introducing this amendment to the Elections Act. I think it is long overdue, that it should have been brought in years ago. As a young man I was taught that a man should have one vote and a woman should have one vote, and one vote only, and I have always stuck to that principle. I did my level best to get this contingent vote abolished long before I came into public life. I thought it an unjust privilege that a man should have two votes against another man's one vote. I offer no apologies to the people for supporting this amending Bill; on the contrary, I am proud to be able to say that I am a strong advocate of the abolition of the contingent vote. Previous to the first Commonwealth elections in 1900 only men were allowed to vote in Queensland if they had a piece of property; if you were living with your parents you did not have a vote. At the first Commonwealth elections in 1900 it was a straight-out vote—first past the post. At that time six senators were required for Queensland, besides the representatives for the various electorates in the House of Representatives. At that time you had to vote for the six men you wanted and you did so

by putting a cross in the square opposite their names. There was no such thing as using the figures 1, 2, 3, because there was no preferential voting for the first four or five Federal elections. It was Billy Hughes who introduced preferential voting in the Federal elections, after he left the Labour Party. There was no growl from the Opposition when they had the system of "first past the post" in the Commonwealth elections—no growl about it at all. I support this measure because I believe the people in Queensland do not want the contingent vote.

Mr. Sparkes: They need not use it if they do not want it.

Mr. BROWN: It is not compulsory to use it, but a few do use it. I am satisfied the people of Queensland do not want it, because numbers of people will say, "Why should I give one vote for the man I want, and then give another vote to the second man, and the vote I give to the second man knocks out the man I want?" It is compulsory in the Commonwealth, otherwise the people would not use it there at all.

I have given this matter a good deal of study. When the Commonwealth brought in adult franchise—one adult one vote—you were entitled to vote if your name was on the roll. I had a sister who was the first woman to record a vote in the district I have been living in for 55 years. I am proud of that sister. An ex-member of this Chamber, Mr. R. M. King, was at the polling-booth on the morning of the first Commonwealth election and when my father pushed his eldest daughter in to record her vote—the first vote of a woman in that electorate—Reg King said to my father, "Well done, Brown; you have worked hard for this, and you have the pleasure of knowing your daughter is the first woman to record a vote in the district." That happened 40 years ago. I have been taking part in elections since 1894.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: Too long; you ought to retire.

Mr. BROWN: The people of the Logan and the various public bodies I belong to say, "You are not there long enough, John," and they return me with a big majority every time.

The Commonwealth was responsible for introducing adult franchise and then it was introduced into State Parliaments. A former Minister, the late W. H. Barnes, wanted to introduce in this Chamber a baby vote. He argued that if a man had two children he be entitled to two votes, but he made no provision for my father, who had 13 children. If one man was entitled to two votes because he had two children, my father was entitled to 13 votes because he had 13 children—better known as the baker's dozen.

Contingent voting was introduced by the late Mr. Barlow, a Minister without portfolio and a low Tory, but it has never been seriously availed of by the people. The only time it is any use has been when opponents of Labour wished to split the votes of the

Labour Party. They get somebody to stand as a candidate so that they will be able to use the contingent vote and thereby double up, the contingent vote to be given to the Tory.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: You do not read much, do you?

Mr. BROWN: I can read you out anywhere you like.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BROWN: I am glad this principle is to be put through to-night.

Mr. Yeates: No hope of it to-night.

Mr. BROWN: Or to-morrow. I do not care whether the House sits Saturday and Sunday, so long as this Bill goes through. That is all that worries me.

As an illustration of what may occur, I will take my election of 1938, in which there were four candidates for Logan. It was in the days when the sectarian issue was raised.

Mr. Yeates: Let us be done with that.

Mr. BROWN: The hon. member would not be sitting in this Chamber but for contingent voting in 1938.

Mr. Yeates: You said something about the sectarian business.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BROWN: I am showing how this contingent voting can be used, and it has no right to be used at an election. I polled 5,328 primary votes. My opponent, the Tory candidate, polled 3,451 votes, and therefore I had a majority of almost 2,000. Then the Protestant Labour man came into the field. He was not a Protestant Labour man; I was really the Protestant Labour man. I required only 83 more votes to give me an absolute majority, but the contingent vote then came into it, and the Tory Party and the Protestant Labour Party were working hand in hand. They got the candidate to split my votes. Of the contingent votes the Protestant Labour man got 1,043 and John Brown, really the Protestant Labour man, got 351.

It is not because of the Government's defeat in the Cairns by-election that this Bill has been introduced. It was the intention to bring it in many years ago—in fact, shortly after I entered Parliament—but it was shelved and shelved.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: It took you a long time to find out.

Mr. BROWN: The hon. member got in on a straight-out vote, but I told him when he first entered Parliament that he would never get in again.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: You would not like to make a bet on it.

Mr. BROWN: I should and I will hand the stakes to the Chairman to-night, the stakes to be given to any charitable institution the hon. member wishes to nominate. The wager is that he will not get into this Assembly next election.

Let us go back to the bitter Tories again, in 1931. Those gentlemen who are objecting to the abolition of the contingent vote to-night went back to the old days with their Act of 1931 dealing with local government and Greater Brisbane elections. By that Act they disfranchised thousands of men and women, for by it they introduced the property franchise. Under that system, if a man owned a piece of property in 20 wards he could record 20 votes. Let us go further. We find that when the Tories introduced this contingent vote they gave a man not one but 72 votes if he had a piece of property in 72 electorates in Queensland. These are the men who are objecting to the abolition of the contingent vote to-night. On my roll in the Coorparoo ward, which was looked upon as a Tory ward, but in which John Brown got there—he just made it, but still he got there—there were the names of 25 persons whose address was Singapore. T. M. Burke and other agents sold members of a rubber company some land out there that they had never seen, and despite the fact that those people had never been in the district, they were entitled to vote in the election of municipal representatives in the City of Brisbane. I have never heard of such legislation in my life, yet one of the Tory supporters, the hon. member for Wynnum, prates about the democratic system we have in Queensland. Why, he sits in this Chamber to-night on the contingent vote.

Mr. Yeates: Who is this?

Mr. BROWN: The hon. member for Wynnum.

Mr. Power: And you, too.

Mr. BROWN: Many hon. members opposite occupy their seats to-night because they were elected on the contingent vote. No wonder they want to hold on to it.

Mr. Sparkes: Is that why you want to get rid of it?

Mr. BROWN: We have always been against the contingent voting, because we are told to plump for the Labour man and the Labour man only. It is high time the contingent vote was abolished.

Mr. Brand: You are bringing it in now, as a matter of convenience, are you?

Mr. BROWN: Not a matter of convenience at all. Every man is entitled to a vote, but one vote only. Why should one man have two votes when another has only one. It is quite a different matter when you have preferential voting for Federal elections. There, it is compulsory to fill in all squares, but here the contingent vote is optional. The vast majority of people do not bother to exercise the contingent vote at elections, thus proving that the Queensland people do not want it. They want the system of electing the first past the post. Why, even election to the House of Commons is on the system of "First past the post." People who come out here from England are accustomed to using the cross in the square, and they become confused when they are asked to

put figures in squares. They cannot understand it. There is the first preference vote; then, after that, there is the second preference, and, by exercising that second preference, an elector might put out the very man he wants to put in. For that reason alone it should be abolished. I say that not only the contingent voting in the State but also the preferential voting at Commonwealth elections should be abolished, and I commend the Attorney-General for bringing down this Bill. The only thing I am sorry for is that it was not brought down years ago.

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) (9.3 p.m.): I am surprised at the views that have been expressed by the hon. member for Logan. It is obvious that he is like the troglodyte—prehistoric. It is remarkable to think that men who sit on the Government benches and profess to speak for the democrats of the country should introduce a measure so utterly undemocratic as to provide for the principle that men elected on a minority vote are entitled to be representatives of the people in Parliament.

There is not the slightest doubt that the measure has come forward because of the result of the Cairns by-election. One thing can be said in favour of the hon. member for Bundaberg. Even though his political methods are unorthodox, at least he has made history, by virtue of the fact that his brother has been elected for Cairns despite all the political strength of the Government of the day. If he was elected on a minority vote, at least he had a majority after the preferences were counted.

Honourable Members interjecting.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I want to make it quite clear to hon. members that I shall not tolerate this unseemly interruption much longer. An hon. member is entitled to make his speech without interruption.

Mr. MAHER: In the election of members of the Parliamentary Labour Party to Cabinet rank the system of preferential voting is adopted.

Mr. Mann: That is not true.

Mr. MAHER: It is done by way of exhaustive ballot, which accepts the principle of preferential voting.

Government Members: No.

Mr. MAHER: It is exactly the same thing. The obvious method to any man who is truly democratic in outlook is compulsory preferential voting. Then we should have a true expression of the will of the people. In the Cairns by-election the position on Wednesday, 5 November, was as follows:—

Mr. Crowley (official Labour nominee)	.. .. .	2,149
Mr. Barnes	.. .. .	2,098
Mr. Tucker	.. .. .	1,775
Mr. Griffin	.. .. .	846

There were 4,719 votes recorded against the official Labour nominee on the primary count, and those 4,719 electors of Cairns made it perfectly clear that they were opposed to

the official Labour nominee. When the preference votes were counted a sufficient number had exercised their preference to indicate that they favoured Mr. Barnes as the hon. member for Cairns.

I am willing to admit that the system of contingent voting has its defects, that it is not a true reflex of democratic thought in an election. There is only one answer for those who wish to see the opinions of the people truly expressed, and that is to introduce a measure providing for compulsory preferential voting in the same way as it applies in the Commonwealth Parliament. Everyone knows that when we vote for the candidates for the House of Representatives it is compulsory to use the figures 1, 2, 3, 4, in order of our preference. It is begging the question to suggest that an elector is forced to vote for a man he does not want. I remember a case in which a Communist was summoned by the Federal electoral authorities in New South Wales for failing to record his vote. He argued that he was a Communist, and as there was no Communist candidate in the campaign, neither of the candidates offering for political honours met his political beliefs, and so he claimed the right not to exercise a vote. However, he had acted in defiance of the law. Whilst his point of view is understandable, at the same time there is the point of view of the majority of normal people.

Even if two or three candidates do not meet the requirements of some discriminating elector at least he can choose the one that comes closest to his idea of what is a suitable representative in either the Federal or State Parliaments. That is sound and reasonable. That disposes of the argument that an elector is obliged to vote for someone he does not want. If there are four candidates he can put No. 4 against the man whom he wants to hinder from being a member of Parliament. If there are four candidates running, then a voter would be a very hard man to please if he was unable to give a straightout preferential vote to one man.

Every true democrat has the choice of one or two systems for the election of political candidates. No. 1 method is the compulsory preferential vote, while No. 2 method is that of proportional representation. The system now being offered to Parliament and to the electors is that which belongs to the bad old days, as hon. members opposite are pleased to term them. The "First past the post" idea is a relic of the past, of a time when wealthy organisations and wealthy individuals were able to nominate one or two independent candidates to split the vote in such a way that there could not be a true reflex of the voter's will. We are harking back to the worst phases of electoral law. I am astonished to think that a body of men, professing to be representatives of workers and democrats, should bring forward a measure of this kind, which is so limited in its effects. I can only come to one conclusion, namely, that it is a confession of weakness and that the Government are panic-stricken at the loss of the Cairns and Bundaberg seats, and

fear the results of the pending by-elections for Mackay and Barcoo. They fear that if they do not take a step of this kind they will lose their grip on political power. They are seeking to entrench themselves. They are emulating every dictator and every tyrant in human history. That action has been prompted by their unwillingness to let go the strings of power and office. They must hang on at any cost, even to the extent of defying the voice of the people. They cling to power like limpets to a rock, even on a minority vote.

The whole idea of this legislation is to enable the Government to hold power, not at the will of the majority of the electors, but at the will of the minority. Everybody who has studied the electoral position in Queensland for the last 10 years knows the position that has been created by the inequitable distribution of the electorates. That has resulted on more than one occasion in the Government's holding power with a large majority in Parliament when they were actually in the minority in the aggregate votes polled.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is drifting away from the principles of the Bill.

Mr. MAHER: The Bill is designed to enable the Government to hold power on a minority vote, nothing more, nothing less. (Interjections.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I appeal to the hon. member for Bundaberg and the Secretary for Mines to cease cross-firing.

Mr. Yeates interjected.

The Secretary for Mines (to Mr. Yeates): You are mental.

Mr. NIMMO: I rise to a point of order. I ask that the Secretary for Mines be made to withdraw the statement he made.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the Secretary for Mines to withdraw that term.

The Secretary for Mines: I should like to know what I have to withdraw.

Mr. Nimmo: You said he was mental.

The Secretary for Mines: If I said he was mental I flattered him.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the Secretary for Mines to withdraw the term.

The Secretary for Mines: I do not know what I have to withdraw. I withdraw. I am sorry if I flattered him.

Mr. MAHER: I am prepared to say that the Labour Party or any other political party is entitled to govern if it can show it has the complete confidence of the majority of the people of this State. If a party can bring in a majority of members to the Parliament based on an equitable distribution of the electoral divisions of the State—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no reference in this motion to the question of redistribution.

Mr. MAHER: It is all bound up in it. I am using that illustration in passing; if the Government can show that they have the complete confidence of the majority they have the right to govern. Where is the democrat in this State belonging to any political party who can say a Government are entitled to govern by a minority representation; yet that would be possible in these days if a number of candidates were to offer for selection. A position could arise similar to the position at Cairns, and instead of the King O'Malley Labour candidate the official Labour man could have won the seat by a narrow majority of about 30 per cent. of the voters if contingent voting was not in operation. Every constituency could send into Parliament men who were elected upon a minority vote to form a Government. That is not democracy as I understand it.

The Secretary for Public Lands: The hon. member for Cairns was elected on 36.5 per cent. of the votes.

Mr. MAHER: Under this legislation the official Labour nominee would have been elected and he had 58 of a majority on the primary votes. If this had been law at the time he would have been elected on a lesser percentage basis than the King O'Malley candidate, who was successful; therefore, I say that the Government are resorting to an undemocratic method to retain power—to hold power in Queensland against the express will of the electorates. I say they can only do that as an act of desperation. It is only people sailing out into unknown waters in a sinking ship who would resort to methods of that kind in an endeavour to hang onto power at all hazards.

It is rather interesting that as far as my research goes in the matter every other State in Australia with the exception of Tasmania makes provision for either compulsory preferential voting or contingent preferential voting. In Tasmania the system is proportional representation. So you see that in Queensland, which is held up by Labour speakers time and again as being the State of advanced legislation, of progressive thought, we have a retrogressive move that goes back to the old days and brings in a system that enables members to be elected to Parliament on the basis of "First past the post," which means on a minority vote and gives no opportunity to the people to exercise an intelligent preferential vote. I think the Commonwealth system is outstanding; and if the Government were sincere and truly democratic—sincerely desirous of giving the electors of Queensland an opportunity to decide who should represent them where a number of candidates offer—they would have adopted the Commonwealth method of compulsory preferential voting, which enables the public to exclude those they do not want. It brings the best man to the top and puts the inferior man at the bottom.

After all, it is the people who are sovereign. The people should be supreme, and I oppose this Bill because it is in line with the whole dictatorial attitude of the present Government over the past 10 years. It is in line

with their selfish desire to hold power at all costs, and to hold power for the good of themselves rather than for the good of the people.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. A. Bruce, The Tableland) (9.22 p.m.): We are accused of being undemocratic by our introduction of this Bill. I remind hon. members opposite that the Labour Party was doing very well on the existing Federal Senate system, but the Right Hon. William Morris Hughes, who belonged to the Tory Party, did not hesitate a moment to alter it in order to assist his candidates. The British House of Commons adopted the system that we are introducing. The British House of Commons and its laws are virtually adopted by the people of Australia, and I am surprised at the very un-British attitude of the Opposition this evening. As a rule, if they get the opportunity of bringing Great Britain into any argument, they are only too pleased to do it, but they have got far away from Great Britain this evening. The action of hon. members opposite in criticising the British House of Commons and saying it has an undemocratic system is entirely unwarranted. By their charge that we are undemocratic, they imply that the British House of Commons is also undemocratic.

Political parties do not come into being unless they have solid support from a large number of thinking people for the State or the Commonwealth. We have had here for some time three parties, but at present in Queensland we have four—including the Labour Party, the Country Party, and the United Australia Party. Of course, the United Australia Party has on innumerable occasions changed its name, but it has always been the same party. There is a party capably organised politically and industrially, the Communist Party. If the people desire to have such a party, well and good; but the system that has been in operation in Queensland recently has resulted in what?

Mr. Moorhouse: The defeat of this Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Not yet.

Mr. Moorhouse: The Cairns election.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The result of this system in this State has been to keep the Labour Party in power for the past 10 years. It has resulted in a small minority of Country Party members on the Opposition benches and a very small section of the United Australia Party. It has produced three or four good, solid, well-intentioned Independents and two yodellers. That is the total result of the system, and that being so and this being a Parliament it is much better we should have a system that will bring into this Chamber solid, sound, thinking men. The Australia's amateur hour conducted by a broadcasting station gives any amount of opportunity to yodellers. We do not want them in this House, and therefore I support the Bill brought forward.

Mr. NIMMO (Oxley) (9.26 p.m.): I am sorry that the Government have seen fit to introduce this Bill, particularly in these the waning hours of this session. Now that the new Premier has promised a legislative session somewhere about March, this Bill could very well have stood over to that time, when it could have been fully discussed. (Interruption.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is far too much cross-firing whilst the hon. gentleman is speaking. The debate is becoming—might I say?—more or less ragged, and I suggest that the hon. gentleman who has the call be allowed to make his speech.

Mr. NIMMO: I should have thought that the Government could very well have put off introducing this Bill until the legislative session that we have been promised in March. If that had been done, the Bill could have been fully discussed and considered. We all know that hon. members opposite are now hurrying to end the session.

Mr. A. J. SMITH: I rise to a point of order. It has been said by the Opposition that hon. members on this side of the Committee are hurrying up the session. I was led to believe the other day in this Parliament that because the Leader of the Opposition had been called to a conference in Canberra on the suggested constitutional reform he desired that this Parliament should terminate to-morrow so that he could leave on Saturday's plane for the South.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr. NIMMO: I should think that the Bill could have been discussed more fully during a quieter session when we were out to put through genuine legislation. When I saw an Elections Acts Amendment Bill tabled I was hoping that it would be one to provide for compulsory preferential voting.

A good deal has been said to-night about the British House of Commons. The Attorney-General, in introducing the Bill, quoted the system of election to the House of Commons as one of his main arguments in favour of the Bill. I think Australia—I know it is so of Queensland—has held itself up as being ahead of Britain in legislation. We know that things were far from satisfactory in our opinion so far as election to the House of Commons was concerned. We know, too, that for many years after we had given the women of this country a vote the British House of Commons strongly opposed giving the women in England the franchise. Hon. members will remember the great fight put up by the women for a right to vote at the election of representatives in the House of Commons. Even to-day they are not nearly so progressive or so far advanced as Australian Parliaments are. Even the Canadian franchise is much ahead of the system of election to the British House of Commons, yet despite all this the Attorney-General says we are going back to that state of affairs. The Secretary for Public Works says that we are going back to the system of election to the British House

of Commons and that is wrong, for it is certainly a retrograde step for this Parliament.

I have been wondering why the Government are eager to rush this Bill through, why they are so anxious to take from the people the privilege, indeed the right, that they have enjoyed for so many years. It is my honest belief that that right should be retained and strengthened and that we should have a true expression of the will of the people. Let them express themselves in the proper way. It would be absurd if five candidates were standing and the votes were divided amongst them and one man was returned by a narrow margin, having polled only 1,500 or 1,600 in a big constituency. The contingent vote provides a wise safeguard, one that allows the people to express themselves. I often wonder what the late hon. member for Bowen, the late Mr. Charlie Collins, a man who always stood for the will of the people, would think if he was here to-day and found that the Government he supported was going back to those days when people were restricted and prevented from saying fully just whom they wanted to represent them in Parliament.

Let us take the Commonwealth Parliament as it is constituted to-day. What would have happened to the present Prime Minister if compulsory preferential voting had been abolished? He would not have been in the Federal Parliament at all, yet here we have a Government in Queensland who are so reactionary—

The Secretary for Public Works: He led on the primary votes.

Mr. NIMMO: He had to rely on the contingent vote to put him in.

The Secretary for Public Works: He won on the primary vote.

Mr. NIMMO: He did not lead on the primary vote. It was the contingent vote that put Mr. Curtin in.

Mr. Power: It was the soldiers' vote that put him in.

The Secretary for Public Lands: It was a straightout contest if it is any news to you. A man named Lee was the only contestant against him.

Mr. NIMMO: The contingent vote in the electorate had to be counted and the result of that counting was that Mr. Curtin became Prime Minister.

At any rate, we should consider this matter very quietly and carefully. We must not do any wrong by the people. I do not want to do a wrong by the people. I should like to see the standard of Parliament raised and put on a higher plane so that we may discuss the question properly. Every hon. member is entitled to his opinion, but if hon. members are permitted to interrupt a speaker by making irrelevant interjections, Parliament is going to develop into a rabble. What is the reason for the introduction of the Bill in the closing days of the session?

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: You will be given every opportunity to debate it.

Mr. NIMMO: We have been told that we can sit until to-morrow morning, but the Bill must pass the first reading to-night.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Did I tell you that?

Mr. NIMMO: I do not know who told me, but hon. members have been told that the Bill must pass its first reading to-night. That shows that the Bill is being rushed. Anyway, it has to go through to-night. I should like to see the Bill discussed over a longer period. For what reason is it being put through this session? The answer is that the Mackay by-election and the Barcoo by-election are on the horizon. When the results of the Cairns by-election became known they were not quite satisfactory for the Government.

The Secretary for Public Instruction: Because your man got only 800 votes.

Mr. NIMMO: We had no man in the campaign. We had an endorsed candidate at the previous poll and he obtained over 3,000 votes, but on this occasion we stood loyally by the pact not to enter a candidate for by-elections. When the man did not run under our banner, naturally he got fewer votes. That is the only explanation I can make. The fact remains that the hon. member for Cairns is totally opposed to the Government. He nearly won the election on the primary count. There were 1,775 votes cast for the Communist candidate and I suppose they came from solid men working on the wharves and other places about the city. The contingent votes went to the man who was opposed to the present Government. One would naturally expect the Labour nominee to get 75 per cent. of those contingent votes. The writing is on the wall, and the Government are done. They are building all kinds of defences in the hope of holding on to office. This is the last desperate attempt by the present Labour Government to save themselves from annihilation. They are finding out at last that the powerful machine is breaking up.

Mr. Riordan: What machine?

Mr. NIMMO: The Australian Workers' Union that has controlled them so long. The machine is not functioning as effectively as it did in the past; the main break is in the Australian Workers' Union.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no reference to the Australian Workers' Union in the Bill.

Mr. NIMMO: I am sorry, but I was induced by interjections to make reference to the Australian Workers' Union.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman should address the Chair.

Mr. NIMMO: I do not want to labour the question. I shall conclude on this note, that the Government would be well advised to withdraw the Bill. It is the most reactionary piece of legislation ever introduced into this Parliament. It seeks to take something

away from the people that they already possess. It takes away from them a right they have enjoyed for many years. The Government instead should improve on our existing system and make this legislation provide for compulsory preferential voting.

After a general election has been decided the Premier of this House is selected by his party by means of an exhaustive ballot. The whole of the officers of his party, including the Cabinet Ministers, are selected by a similar ballot, whose principle is the same as preferential voting. (Government dissent.) The exhaustive ballot method arrives at the same result as preferential voting. The preferential system of voting gives a true expression of the people's desires. That is true democracy. We should be considering a Bill to provide for compulsory preferential voting, not abolishing voluntary preferential voting. If such a Bill was introduced it would have my wholehearted support.

Mr. MOORHOUSE (Windsor) (9.41 p.m.): This Bill has been discussed by the Labour Party from a party angle only. It has not taken into consideration the democratic point of view in any way. Therefore, I propose to move an amendment in order that this Bill shall retain some form of democracy. I desire to widen its scope. I therefore move the following amendment:—

‘Add the words—

‘and to provide for—

(1) The extension of the franchise to all Queensland people who have reached the age of 18 years and over;

(2) The production by all electors of his or her identification card at the polling-booth or other place prescribed by the Act for the purpose of exercising his vote.’

To-day the British Empire and the English-speaking race are in the most serious position they have ever been placed in. Yet we find that those who are supposed to know have decided that the best soldier is the boy or man from 18 to 25 years of age. It has been decided that men in Australia are to be conscripted for service outside the territorial boundaries of Australia. As a matter of fact, the Commonwealth Government are being forced by the military authorities to alter the Act that covers the defence of Australia in order to permit troops to be sent outside Australia, because our militia are to-day fighting in a country outside our jurisdiction. The national Government must so amend the law to legislate that fact. Our lads of 18, and our girls, too, are proving to-day that they are doing a man's job. Yet they do not have a vote in the Government of this country. If we are going to be truly democratic, let us extend the franchise to cover those people of 18 and upwards who do not have a vote and who are compelled by the law of the country to go here, there, and everywhere, according to the dictates of people who were not game to go to the last war, but now dictate where these people shall go. These

people should be enfranchised by extending the scope of the Bill, as I asked the Minister to do on a previous occasion. I spoke to the Minister before he introduced this Bill and asked him if he would consider an amendment on these lines; and his main objection was that this should be a Federal matter. Mr. Chairman, surely to God Queensland is not going to play tag to all the Southern States all its life? Once upon a time the Labour Party in Queensland did introduce progressive legislation, but to-day there is no progress in legislation under the rule of the Labour Party occupying these benches; the progressive legislation is only in the Labour Party's platform. Why do they not put their platform into operation in the interests of the workers, and not introduce a retrogressive Bill such as this?

Mr. Mann: You want to abolish the Queensland Parliament.

Mr. MOORHOUSE: I say there is a great difference between this Bill and the Bill introduced into the Federal House, and that this so-called Labour Party strenuously opposed here. Dr. Evatt introduced a Bill that is democratic and progressive, yet this retrogressive Labour Party opposed it.

In moving to have it provided that identity cards be produced before votes could be cast, I was actuated by the knowledge that at election time there is a great deal of personation at polling-booths. I approached the Minister and mentioned these identity cards, and he raised one or two ridiculous objections, but objections I could quite understand his raising. He has run his race, and we cannot expect progressive legislation from old age. I say that respectfully and not disrespectfully. If we want progress we must get it from the young. The Minister said identity cards would not be satisfactory because everybody did not have them. There is no possibility of any personation if the identity card has to be produced, because the identity card has to be signed by the owner and it must be witnessed, which definitely establishes the identity of the holder of that card.

If the Government oppose the amendment, they are telling the world that they have become retrogressive in their outlook, and there must be some motive that forces them to oppose the principle of the compulsory production of an identity card prior to the exercise of the franchise.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I rise to a point of order. I contend that the amendment is out of order as there is no provision by message from His Excellency for the expenditure to carry out the proposals if carried by the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I rule the amendment out of order on the ground that to accept the amendment would place a charge on the Crown not covered by message from the Governor.

Mr. MOORHOUSE: Will you tell me at what stage of the proceedings the amendment can be introduced?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! At no stage of this debate can it be introduced.

Mr. DECKER (Sandgate) (9.52 p.m.): I agree entirely with the saving of paper by the use for the next election of the forms already printed. Under war-time conditions we should make use of all those forms and not destroy them, if it means a saving of money to the State. No hon. member will object to that provision, but I do object to the provision that abolishes preferential voting. I remind the Government that during a debate that took place some time ago we all stood solidly for four freedoms. There is no need for me to repeat them, but I remind hon. members that one of those freedoms was freedom of speech and expression. If we believe in that freedom why should we at this stage of this session introduce legislation that will restrict the expression of the people in the selection of their representatives for Parliament? If we are really sincere we should encourage the people in freedom of speech and expression and so legislate that it can be amply used in the return to Parliament of the candidates desired by the majority of the people.

There is another freedom: the freedom from fear. If we want legislation to eliminate fear from the minds of the people of the State or the Commonwealth, we are going the wrong way about it in this Bill. Perhaps the Bill is the child of fear in the first instance, the result of the recent by-election, but it will instill fear into the minds of the people of Queensland because if Bills such as this can be brought down in the last hours of a session, what can be expected of a party with such principles? The decent principles of democracy are fleeing, and it is no wonder that the people register a protest against the Labour Party. It is deteriorating. That is proved by the legislation introduced into this Chamber and as a result of the actions of the Government, and the dominating attitude they are taking in impressing their demands on the people instead of working in their interests has caused the people of Cairns to register a protest by returning to this Parliament as their representative a man who is not a member of the recognised Labour Party. I know full well that if the Mackay and Barcoo elections take place and candidates stand of the same kind as at Cairns the people will protest again and return independent Labour men who stand for the principles of democracy that people expect from decent representatives. We are deteriorating to a great degree in this Chamber both in the conduct of debate and in legislation, and I register my strong protest against a Bill of this kind, which takes away the rights of the people, rights that they have enjoyed for half a century, just because of fear. It is designed expressly to exclude independent candidates from election in Queensland. There is no doubt about that. It is designed for that purpose. Organised parties will have preference over the whole field of elections, and it means that candidates can be elected to this Assembly on the minority votes of the people. (Government interjections.)

The Secretary for Public Lands: You got in on the contingent vote.

Mr. DECKER: I admit that I did, but I say that that vote was the wish of the majority of the people of my district. The majority of the people of my district expressed a preference for putting me here. Further, I gained my seat in this Parliament on a constitutional privilege that has been enjoyed by the people of this State for half a century, and I ask the Minister to remember that. A man can only be a representative in this Parliament if he wins an election under the Elections Act. He has gained it, he has earned it, it is the will of the people, and the will of the majority of those people, and it is no use saying anything to the contrary.

I am just as wide awake as any hon. member here. I have contested six elections in the past 11 years, and I am just as wide awake as any other hon. member in this Chamber. I know definitely that this amendment will favour me. It will favour every sitting member who is a member of a recognised party, but it will give no chance to the Independents. Apart from that, we are opening up the big question of the rights of the people, because if we abolish preferential voting we are opening the way for an unscrupulous man to be put up by parties—and I am referring to no particular party now—to rob a definite, some deserving or strong candidate of a first-preference vote with the idea of putting a weaker candidate in, and I challenge this Committee to say that that cannot be done. It has been a suspected practice of both sides for a number of years, but the Bill proposes to open the way for the illegal use of representatives to oust a strong candidate who would, on ordinary considerations, be elected.

Taking it by and large, we must be big. We have to live up to principles. We have to believe that a Government who take the opportunity so secretly—no-one knew anything about this Bill; it was secretly contrived in caucus and thrown into this Chamber as a bombshell—to upset the Constitution—are taking away the rights of the people. We are denying the people the standards to which we have been accustomed for almost the whole of our existence in Queensland. What is wrong with this system? Why should every State in the Commonwealth use the preferential voting? Why should the Commonwealth Government use it? Why should this State, which has enjoyed the preferential system of voting for so long, be the first to break away from it?

The Secretary for Public Lands: Why do you not use the same system as the House of Commons? What is wrong with the House of Commons?

Mr. DECKER: Again we hear the parrot-cry from the Minister. I, too, know how to put a little sugar on a crust to sweeten it, and that is all that is being done here to hide the real implications of the Bill. I ask the Minister why the Government do not use the House of Commons as a guide for all their actions. It is only when it suits them that

they follow the House of Commons. It is only then that they look to that wonderful institution for some guidance; in other matters they shun and avoid it. We know that the House of Commons includes the right of appeal in all its legislation, and that is something that has been eliminated by this Government from our legislation. Why go back to the House of Commons now, especially when the Government think they are ahead of the system there? Why revert to the House of Commons when we hold that our adult franchise to male and female electors preceded that granted by the House of Commons? Here we have voluntary preferential voting, and it is compulsory at Federal elections, but now, because there has been an upset in the parliamentary ranks by a happening at Cairns, the Government rush in to take away a privilege that the people have enjoyed for years, a privilege that, in my opinion, is their right, and I maintain that the people have the right to say whether the contingent vote should remain or go. It is all very well for a party of parliamentarians to get in here, then plan and plot for their own political interests, to the detriment of the interests of the people of the State, and that is exactly what is being done. I say emphatically that the people's interests are subordinated in the minds of our Government to parliamentarians' interests, and we are getting to a very low standard indeed. All our gentlemanly instincts are disappearing. We are getting down to the gutter-type of Government, and in my opinion that is wrong. The present Government will hang themselves by their own legislation, and the amendment that is put forward to-night is going to rebound on them in that the majority of the people of Queensland will assuredly register their protest at the next State election.

Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny) (10.3 p.m.): I should not have spoken on the motion if the hon. member for Sandgate had not made some gloomy remarks about Independents. I have not heard the Minister in charge of the Bill or any hon. member opposite say why it has been introduced. I heard the Secretary for Public Lands and the Attorney-General, and I believe the Acting Premier, justify it on the grounds that a similar procedure was adopted in connection with the House of Commons.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: I have not spoken on the matter.

Mr. SPARKES: I am sorry to have accused the hon. gentleman wrongly. However, the other two Ministers and many other hon. members opposite have advanced that reason by way of interjection. The Secretary for Public Works clearly said that we should adopt the practice of the House of Commons as our guide. The Labour Government have been in power for 27 years with a break of three years, and it has taken them all that time to decide that they should be guided by the House of Commons, and they have thought of it only on the eve of two by-elections and following the defeat of their candidate at the Cairns by-election. It is a poor recommendation from the brains of the other side

of the Chamber that it has taken them 27 years to think this matter out. Why, what sort of legislation are we going to get from them in the future? It took them 10 years, too, to deal with the Railway Renewals and Replacements Reserve Fund.

The Secretary for Public Works: We are slow but sure.

Mr. SPARKES: Extremely slow, but I should not say so sure. I am afraid hon. members opposite are not reading the minds of the people as accurately as they think. This Bill is likely to have a boomerang effect upon them.

The Secretary for Public Works: Why oppose it if you think it will put us out?

Mr. SPARKES: I want to see a Government of the people. As the hon. gentleman knows, I am willing to vote for any party that will govern for the benefit of the people. I have done it in this Chamber.

The Secretary for Mines: You were in and out.

Mr. SPARKES: Yes. I was in and out. I was returned at the will of the people, and I am returned again at the will of the people. I invite the hon. gentleman to come into my electorate and contest the elections with me.

The Secretary for Mines: And I invite you to come to my electorate.

Mr. SPARKES: I am afraid hon. members opposite will have to think of something else besides the House of Commons to justify the Bill. The Minister's argument about a little mark in the square was effective for a while, but it is useless now. The Commonwealth Labour Government and the State Labour Government in New South Wales would say that preferential voting should be compulsory. The Labour movement in Queensland appear to be out of step with the Labour movement generally. I am surprised at the attitude of hon. members opposite.

As when the Liquor Act was before this Chamber many hon. members opposite are not heart and soul behind this Bill. I shall be awfully sorry if they get the axe at the next general election because of an unkindly act forced on them by their friends. I am surprised that a Labour Government should bring down such an undemocratic Bill, particularly at the very death of the session. Last session the Acting Premier withdrew the controversial Buffalo Fly Control Bill. I hope on this occasion the Attorney-General will likewise ponder over this Bill and when the House meets to-morrow announce its withdrawal.

Mr. RIORDAN (Bowen) (10.12 p.m.): This Bill is a very interesting one. Hon. members opposite are more concerned with the defeat of the Labour Party than the defeat of this Bill. They express great concern about the repercussions that will follow its introduction.

Mr. Maher: You had a close shave at the last election.

Mr. RIORDAN: I want to remind the hon. member for West Moreton of something he said after the Bowen by-election. At the last general election I had only one opponent. Despite the fact that the organisation of the Country Party and its officials, even to distributing "How to vote" cards, were ranged on the side of my opponent, Mr. Paterson, the Communist candidate, or as he styled himself the Independent Socialist candidate, I was returned with a majority of over 400 votes. I wish to tell him also of a conference that took place on the Atherton Tableland that was attended by a friend of mine with Country Party sympathies. It was resolved at that conference that no Country Party candidate should contest Bowen. In fact, it decided to run only two candidates, namely, for the Tableland and Cairns seats. The secretary of the Northern Country Party, Mr. McDonald, reserved the Tableland seat for himself, as well as the available finance, as he described himself as a true Northern Country Party candidate. The conference also decided to support the Independent candidates in other electorates. His party did not select Mr. Griffin to contest the Cairns by-election because it alleged he did the wrong thing.

I will give another instance in which the Country Party supported a Communist candidate. Mr. Ford was the endorsed Country Party candidate at the 1938 Bowen election. When the preference votes were counted more than 300 of Mr. Ford's preference votes went to Mr. Paterson, the Communist candidate, the ratio being 2 to 1 against me. That was evidence of an organised arrangement between the Communist and Country Party candidates.

I am pointing these things out to bring home to hon. members some of the things they say have been in the past advantageous to the Labour Party. I bring to the memory of the hon. member for West Moreton, who was the Leader of the Opposition at the time I was first elected, the fact that on that occasion he put an advertisement in the paper over his name saying he expected every Communist, because he was opposed to the Labour Government, to give his second preference vote to the Country Party. He cannot deny it, because an hon. member produced the pamphlet in this Assembly. Here is the hon. member now crying out that he did not do it. It was a full-page advertisement calling upon the Communist Party, as it was opposed to the Labour Party, to give its second preferences to the Country Party. Let us see what happened. Mr. Paterson got 1,700 odd votes.

Mr. Maher: You agreed to exchange preferences.

Mr. RIORDAN: The hon. member cannot tell me what my preferences were, because I was at the head of the poll and they were never counted. Of his 1,700 there were 1,300 second preference votes and of those second preference votes I got 1,120.

Mr. Macdonald: Collinsville put you in.

Mr. RIORDAN: Not Collinsville, but the whole of the electorate; there were not

enough votes in Collinsville to give it to me. The hon. member for West Moreton is trying to pull the wool over the eyes of hon. members as to what the second preference votes mean from a democratic point of view. The only reason he is opposed to this Bill is not any fear of anything that may affect the democratic principles of voting, but because he thinks some political advantage may be gained by this party if an alteration of that preference vote takes place.

Mr. Sparkes: That is the reason you are bringing it in.

Mr. RIORDAN: It does not matter what reason we are bringing it in for, the hon. member need not shed crocodile tears as he has done to-night when he said, "There will be repercussions for the Labour Party if they go on with this, and I suggest at the last minute the Minister should drop it, as the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock dropped the Buffalo Fly Bill." The only reason the hon. member was glad the Secretary for Agriculture dropped the Buffalo Fly Bill was that it saved him 3d. tax. He is not concerned about what happens to this party as far as its political representation is concerned.

Mr. L. J. Barnes: I am concerned with democracy.

Mr. RIORDAN: The hon. member would not be concerned with democracy; he would not know what democracy means. If Cairns is a reflection of democracy, God help democracy.

The hon. member for Wynnum told us that he was opposed to the return of anyone to this Assembly by a minority vote, but he did not tell us that in 1938 he was here by a minority vote. Of course that did not worry him. He said, "The people have spoken, and I have come in here because I have headed the poll and not sufficient people have taken sufficient interest to cast contingent votes, so I was put at the head of the poll with 44 per cent. of the total votes and I come here as the true representative of the people."

Mr. J. F. Barnes interjected.

Mr. RIORDAN: The hon. member would not make a 4 per cent. representation of anything. In regard to the hon. member for Wynnum there is a great inconsistency in the whole thing, pure sham and hypocrisy.

An Opposition Member: What about 1940?

Mr. RIORDAN: In 1940 I was returned by a majority vote, but in 1938 I came back with a 48 per cent. vote. I did not cry about being here on a minority vote.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: What are you squealing about now?

Mr. RIORDAN: I am only squealing because where there are squealers one needs to squeal; the wheel that does the squealing is the one that gets the grease. If you keep squealing long enough you will learn a lot of things.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: I laugh at your ignorance.

Mr. RIORDAN: Ignorance is a virtue where you are concerned; it is a blessing in disguise.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: I shall show you when I get up.

Mr. RIORDAN: All that you can show this place is your own stupidity. Is it not remarkable that the preferences of the Communist candidate in Cairns, Corporal Tucker, went to the Barnes candidate three to one, but, notwithstanding this, they say that all the preferences of a Communist Party candidate always go to the Labour Party.

Mr. L. J. Barnes: They have.

Mr. RIORDAN: Mr. Griffin was a State Parliament abolitionist.

Mr. L. J. Barnes: So was I.

Mr. RIORDAN: You did not let anyone know about it.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: It was announced in the Cairns Press.

Mr. RIORDAN: Mr. Griffin came out as a straight-out State Parliament abolitionist. Prior to his doing that, as a Country Party representative, he got 3,000 votes, but as a straight-out abolitionist he got 700 votes. Of those preferences that were used by Mr. Griffin's supporters, some 300 were again in favour of Barnes, three to one.

Mr. L. J. Barnes: He must be a good man.

Mr. RIORDAN: He may be good. The people of Cairns, by their preference votes, have decreed that he is a good man. Hon. members opposite forget some of the occurrences of the past. This evening we had the hon. member for Windsor moving an amendment as though he had discovered something new. He introduced an amendment to give votes to people of 18 years and over.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: He maintained that if they were old enough to fight they were old enough to vote.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I draw the attention of the hon. member to the fact that the amendment has been disposed of.

Mr. RIORDAN: The hon. member for Windsor thought he had discovered something brand new when he suggested that the vote be given to those of 18 years and over, because, if they were old enough to fight they were old enough to vote. In 1919 a Bill was introduced by the late W. N. Gillies, the then Premier of Queensland, giving people over 18 years of age the right to vote, but it was disallowed by the friends of the Opposition in the Upper House, along the corridor. Hon. members opposite should be a little consistent and not run away with some strange fancies that all those things about democracy are children of their own brain. The hon. member for Cairns stated that he would fix me up at the next election. I hope to God he will send up a candidate, I do not care

whether he is an Andrew Fisher Labourite, a King O'Malley Labourite, or a King-Fisher Labourite. It might be doing me a good turn.

The Secretary for Public Works this evening drew attention to the procedure in the House of Commons, and it caused some concern amongst hon. members opposite.

An Opposition Member: I am surprised at your following the House of Commons.

Mr. RIORDAN: I am surprised at your following the House of Commons—the Tory Party. I ask hon. members opposite to remember that every law enacted has more or less had its genesis in the British Parliament.

The Secretary for Public Instruction: Like our Standing Orders.

Mr. RIORDAN: That is so. Hon. members opposite are always prating about the British Empire, but as soon as it suits them to forget, they discard the British Empire. They spoke of Mr. Curtin's making an appeal to America—

Mr. Macdonald: Squealing.

Mr. RIORDAN: "Squealing" to America to bring people here to defend Australia or asking for assistance. Hon. members opposite appear to forget that all this talk comes from them only when it suits their own particular purpose. An hon. member on the Opposition benches to-night stated that the Attorney-General who was introducing this Bill was too old for anything to originate from. He is not one day older than the greatest man in the British Empire to-day, the Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill.

Mr. J. F. Barnes: Winston Churchill's brains bring his age down 20 years.

Mr. RIORDAN: If your brains bring your age down you would finish up as a schoolboy.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Bundaberg has had a pretty fair deal to-night. He has had a good deal of latitude. He has been consistently interjecting, and it should not be necessary for me to remind him that he has been long enough in this Parliament to know better.

Mr. RIORDAN: The question is not what the Opposition say constitutes democracy, but what democracy means to the people, and any form of voting that allows a minority of the people to decide an election against the majority of the people is all wrong. Take the Cairns by-election as an example. On the primary voting Mr. Crowley had a lead of somewhere about 58 votes. About 300 or 400 people exercised a second preference vote, and they decided against the majority of the people in the Cairns electorate.

Mr. L. J. Barnes: I should like to know how many voted twice.

Mr. RIORDAN: If anybody voted twice I wager that they voted for Barnes. I have heard stories about that. They had a very

keen organisation in which plural voting did take place in a big way, and I believe that if there is any investigation into it, or if any disclosures are to be made, the Barnes-Andrew-King-Fisher candidate will not come out of it very well.

Mr. Edwards: This is the worst speech you have ever made in your life.

Mr. RIORDAN: That is all right. In conclusion, I wish to say that this measure should have been introduced many years ago. The whole sum and substance of the matter is that it has been part of Labour's platform. The hon. member for Bundaberg has often stated that we have forgotten Labour's platform. This is one of the things that we had forgotten. It has been provided in our platform that we should abolish contingent voting, and it is a sorry thing that we did not do that many years ago. If we had done it in keeping with Labour's policy, we should have done a great thing for Queensland, for we should have kept many people out of Parliament, especially people whom the Secretary for Public Works terms yodellers. I believe that the true will of the people is reflected only by a straight-out vote for a candidate. The person who gains the majority of the primary votes should be elected. A minority of 400 or 500 who choose to exercise their second preference should not be allowed to overrule the decision of the majority.

Mr. PIE (Hamilton) (10.31 p.m.): I very much regret the party spirit that has crept into this debate to-night. As an Independent I represent all the people in my electorate.

Mr. Sparkes: All the city people.

Mr. PIE: The hon. member for Aubigny interjects. He is an Independent when it suits him to be one.

Mr. Sparkes: I do anything at all when it suits me.

Mr. PIE: If he is an Independent then let him come out openly as one; if he is not, then let him stick to the party he is with at the present time.

I cannot understand the present Labour Government's bringing this measure forward at this time. For the past 10 years—in fact, for the past 27 years, with the exception of three years, they have held office in this Assembly.

The Secretary for Public Works: That is the only thing wrong. We should have done it long ago.

Mr. PIE: Why alter something that has proved so successful for 27 years with the exception of three years without giving any legitimate reason to this Assembly for doing it?

The Minister, as we know, has brought down many Bills during this session. I think I have remarked to him that this might aptly be called Gledson's session, but the Bill that he brought down to-day was introduced with a half-hearted smile. He did not have his

whole thought and mind behind it, as he usually does when introducing legislation.

The Constitution of Australia has been in operation since the year 1902, and we in this Chamber spoke strongly in favour of retaining that Constitution. Preferential voting has been in operation in Queensland since 1892, and the Government after 27 years have decided to abolish it without reference to the people. It is compulsory in the Commonwealth, Victoria, and New South Wales, and optional in South Australia, Queensland, and Western Australia. A Labour voter will not use his vote for any one but a Labour candidate, under a system of voluntary preference, so why has the Bill been introduced? It is not in the interests of the Labour voter, so it must be in the interests of the swinging voter who does not always know how he will vote. The Minister is wrong in bringing down the Bill, especially after the Government defeats at Bundaberg and Cairns, and with the two by-elections pending. Sections 65, 66, and 67 of the Elections Act clearly show that these are fair provisions; nothing could be fairer. It has been said that the independents will go. Let them go. What does it matter so long as hon. members are elected on a majority vote? The Government have acted wrongly in bringing down the Bill.

Mr. JESSON (Kennedy) (10.35 p.m.): I only want to nail the ex-Leader of the Opposition. I have the pamphlet that I have taken from the skeletons in the cupboard. This is what it says—

1. Page, S. K. (Herbert).

1. Ford (Bowen).

Both Country Party men! At the bottom, in long black letters, there are these words—

“If you vote Communist, you must be opposed to Labour, so fortify your desire with your No. 2 vote for the Country Party.”

I lay the paper on the table of the House for hon. members' perusal.

Mr. J. F. BARNES (Bundaberg) (10.36 p.m.): I suppose I should start by apologising to the Chamber for winning at Cairns, I have caused the Government so much cold inconvenience and this is austerity time. Look at the fear on their faces. The strongest argument the Secretary for Public Works could use was that we were two yodellers. At least he admits we are something. That is more than I can say about him. The hon. member for Bowen said hon. members should take no notice of me, that I was not “fair dinkum.” He is only kidding himself. The only serious speaker from the other side was the hon. member for Logan, who said that for years he had been trying to push this Bill through caucus and at last he had succeeded. Hooley! I have here a copy of the constitution and general rules of the Australian Labour Party for 1935. Section 55 says—

“Contingent voting shall be provided for in all cases where necessary when taking plebiscites, but its use shall be optional.”

Squirm out of that, you rats!

Mr. RIORDAN: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Bundaberg referred to hon. members on this side as rats.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Bundaberg applied the term "rats" to hon. members. I have already pointed out to him that he should know better. I ask him to withdraw the term. If his conduct does not improve and he offends again I shall not hesitate to take drastic action against him.

Mr. J. F. BARNES: I have pleasure in withdrawing that term. We have heard great speeches about minority voting. The Attorney-General introduced the Bill weakly. He camouflaged the issue by saying that it provided for the people's putting 1 in the square opposite the candidate they desired. He had not the courage of his convictions to say that the Bill was devised to eliminate preferential voting. The Bill is designed to abolish the democratic method of electing hon. members to this Assembly, and to provide for their election on a minority of votes. Under this amending law this result could happen in an electorate with six candidates standing: A, 1,007; B, 1,006; C, 1,005; D, 1,004; E, 1,003; F, 1,002; and G, 1,002. In other words A, with 1,007 votes, or 15 per cent. of the total votes cast, would be elected. We are supposed to have a democratic and level-headed Government. The only thing that was correct about their democracy was the middle syllable "moc."

The reason for the result of the Cairns by-election was that the hon. member for Mackay, the ex-Premier, and the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs were ruining the Labour Party.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to confine himself to the principles contained in the motion.

Mr. J. F. BARNES: Let us go back to what happened in Cairns. The vacancy for the electoral district of Cairns occurred in January last, yet no election was held until October! If the Government were "fair dinkum" democratic they would have caused the election to be held months ago.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. J. F. BARNES: This motion seeks to amend the Elections Acts, 1915 to 1940, in certain particulars. I cannot contemplate what "in certain particulars" means.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. J. F. BARNES: I move the following amendment:—

"Omit the words—
 'in certain particulars.'"

The Cairns by-election should have been held nine months ago. I won the Bundaberg seat on my merits and the ex-Premier had the intelligence to know I could win the Cairns by-election. In the course of my speech on the Budget I said that the hon. member for

Mackay was leaving a sinking ship and was leaving his successor with the responsibility of Cairns. I was suspended from this Chamber for a fortnight without pay and I decided I must take advantage of that period.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. J. F. BARNES: I therefore wrote to the Governor as follows:—

"7 October, 1942.

"Sir Leslie Orme Wilson, G.C.S.I.,
 G.C.M.G., D.S.O.,

"Governor of Queensland,

"Government House,

"Brisbane.

"Your Excellency,—I regret having to write in this strain, and realise that you do not understand the proper situation in reference to the Cairns by-election.

"Despite the fact that there is no specific time mentioned within which you have to call by-elections after the death of a member of Parliament, all courts of equity rule, where there is no specific time mentioned, that it has got to take place within a reasonable time after.

"At the time of the vacancy in Cairns, Cairns was not in the war zone proper. Now the Government are suggesting that they will hold both Cairns and Mackay the same day, which proves that the Government were holding the Cairns election up to suit themselves.

"I am reluctant to take action, but democracy is at stake. The Cairns people are without a representative, and if the by-election for Cairns is not called within a reasonable time I will be forced to issue a writ of mandamus.

"Yours faithfully,

"J. F. Barnes."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The matter the hon. member is discussing is outside the scope of the Bill. He must deal with its principles.

Mr. J. F. BARNES: I have moved an amendment that enables me to discuss the whole ramifications of the Election Act.

The Governor knows that when J. F. Barnes makes a statement he means it. The result was that I got the following letter from the Governor:—

"Government House,

"Brisbane.

"October 9th, 1942.

"Dear Mr. Barnes,

"I have to acknowledge, with many thanks, the receipt of your letter of the 7th October, which reached me yesterday. I have carefully read and noted the contents.

"With kind regards,

"Yours sincerely,

"Leslie Wilson."

The point is that the Governor forced Cabinet to bring on the Cairns by-election. Cabinet were not satisfied; they still had to beat Barnes, and from the time they announced the election till its completion was 16 days, but it was not enough for them. Believe me, you can make it seven days, but it will still not be too little for Barnes. I have three or four brothers.

Mr. Maher: You have the wind up them properly.

Mr. J. F. BARNES: I'll say! The usual thing is for a fortnight's notice and then a three weeks' election, but on this occasion, in order to beat the mighty Barnes, it was two weeks and two days, and they still cannot beat the mighty Barnes. To make matters better, I won that election without "How to Vote" cards or a table at the booths, or without a committee—I had a committee of two. I have here an advertisement that I inserted in the Cairns paper—

"Use your own discretion in reference to preference votes."

That is one of the advertisements that appeared. I was the only person who mentioned preference votes during the election. The hon. member for Bowen said that the Country Party man advised that his preferences be given to me. He did not. Here is another advertisement of mine—

"Preference voting is optional; use your own discretion."

I was the only person who advocated it. The position is this: they did everything possible to me and the book I had sent to Cairns was sabotaged. I should have had it six weeks before the campaign. I got it four days before the polling day—a book of 26 pages. I do not know who sabotaged it, but somebody did. It had nothing to do with the Government Printer, but with the censorship. In addition to those things, and despite the fact that the candidate was a total stranger—the Secretary for Railways would speak every day on the wireless and tell them to vote for the local fellow, to give the local fellow a chance and that Independents were undependent, &c.—I say without fear of contradiction, there has been no bigger victory in the history of Australia, let alone Queensland. Believe me, irrespective of what they do, I will win the Mackay seat. They can complete the election in a week and I'll still win. I do think now that the hon. member for Mackay's son will be selected under the Public Safety Act, and that is the only way they can defeat me. I do know the ex-Premier altered the Constitution two years previously to get himself a job as Chairman of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. J. F. BARNES: He went to Mackay supposedly to arrange with his constituents whether he would leave or not, but he went to Mackay to arrange for his own son Willie to go through without a plebiscite. I still think his son will go through under the

Public Safety Act without election or a plebiscite.

The Minister said that the amendment would eliminate confusion. The Attorney-General should know, if he does not, that at least 20 per cent. of the people vote with an "X." That is recognised as the primary vote, but this way it will not be a primary vote. This Bill provides that you must vote with a "1."

We know how many informal votes are recorded on polling day because people are confused at the polls. How much additional confusion will there be because of this Bill which, on the word of the Attorney-General, is brought down to stop confusion? The hon. gentleman knows that what I am saying is the truth.

The Government say that this system is based on that of the British House of Commons. Why did they not follow that example in connection with other Bills? As regards the Liquor Bill, they did not. As the hon. member for Aubigny said, it took them 27 years to wake up to it. It has taken them two years to wake up to me. They have awakened to me now but it is too late. And to make matters worse, Mr. Brassington, during the Cairns by-election they adopted mud-slinging tactics. They would read extracts from "Hansard," but by the omission of a few words would put a different construction on the context. The hon. member for Kennedy slung political mud, but I must state that during the whole campaign he never indulged in personalities, nor did I indulge in personalities against him. When the hon. member returned they tried to blame him.

Mr. O'Shea: What about the whispering about him?

Mr. J. F. BARNES: I never whispered anything about him, but I might state that he travelled in the police car from Townsville to Cairns, a distance of 200 miles.

The Prime Minister of Australia, the Right Hon. John Curtin, P.C., sent up three Federal members, Senator Gordon Brown, Senator Courtice, and Mr. Riordan, M.H.R., to stop the political dry-rot. The Premier of Queensland sent up messages to the people of Cairns, but they ignored him. The State Government sent along the Minister for Transport and the hon. members for Cook and Kennedy. In all, six big guns were sent up to the Cairns election. It was a great pity for the people that they were not real guns.

Two years ago the former Premier and the hon. member for Fortitude Valley were in favour of the contingent vote, but they have changed their minds very suddenly. I do not know the reason. This Bill will encourage bribery and corruption, inasmuch as prospective candidates may be bribed to stand or to withdraw. That is the great danger of the straight-out voting system. In a by-election for Wide Bay on one occasion under the preference system, although another candidate led on the primary vote the Labour preference votes put a Tory, Mr. Corser, in.

I was almost forgetting an important fact. I went to the registrar and checked the roll to see if three names were on the roll, and they were there, but they should not have been there. In three weeks approximately 900 names were taken off the Cairns roll. That was the initiative of the hon. member for Bundaberg. That was from 800 to 900 votes they lost. One person asked me who was going to get those votes. I cannot say, but I know just the same.

Much has been said about reform in Australia and in England in connection with elections, but I might mention that it did not matter which way the people voted at one time. The point is that Labour was not responsible for the reform. In England these terrible Tories brought in the reform. In 1832, £150,000 was spent on education, while in 1932 £55,000,000 was spent on it. The people were gradually taught to think for themselves. The Labour stalwarts can take credit for that.

My brother has pointed out that under the present Act people are allowed to vote after the election closes. That is so, and the hon. member has a right to prosecute if people vote twice. I have a list of people who did vote twice at Cairns, but why should my brother prosecute? Why should not the returning officer or the electoral registrar prosecute?

The Secretary for Public Lands: Let the hon. member for Cairns lay the complaint and they will be investigated.

Mr. J. F. BARNES: I have a complaint here, and I will table it straightaway. In conclusion, let me say that whatever they do to stop the progressive march of the Andrew Fisher-King O'Malley Labour Party, I will counter every move they make.

(Time expired.)

Mr. POWER (Baroona) (11.2 p.m.): After listening to the free entertainment provided by the hon. member for Bundaberg I propose to get down to some solid facts and give some information to the Committee that might be of value. I am entirely in favour of the proposed amending Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must discuss the amendment.

Mr. POWER: I am in favour of a system of "First pass the post" under the Elections Acts, and I propose to show that under the present system hon. members of the Opposition have been elected by a minority vote. At the Cairns by-election 6,955 votes were cast, Mr. Barnes receiving 2,536. The hon. member for Cairns got 2,536 votes or 36 per cent. of the total votes cast; 64 per cent. of the votes were cast against him. He is here on a minority vote.

At 11.4 p.m.

Mr. RIORDAN (Bowen) relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. POWER: In 1938 the hon. member for East Toowoomba received 4,198 votes, or

49.7 per cent., and 4,225 votes, or 50.3 per cent., were cast against him. He, too, was elected on a minority vote. He fears that the Bill will have the effect of defeating him at the next elections. If hon. members opposite really thought the Bill would have the effect of taking away Labour's support, they would support it wholeheartedly.

The hon. member for Wynnum got 4,671 votes as against 6,397 cast against him. He was elected on a minority vote of 42.2 per cent., while 77.8 per cent. were cast against him. He, too, is afraid of the Bill, because he knows that it will be "Exit Dart for Wynnum."

The hon. member for Sandgate got 4,915 votes, or 47.9 per cent., while 5,047 votes, or 52.1 per cent., were cast against him. He is worried about the Bill because he knows that it will mean "Exit Decker for Sandgate."

The hon. member for Windsor got 4,647 votes, or 46.1 per cent., whereas 5,430, or 53.9 per cent., were cast against him. He, too, is here on a minority vote along with the others I have mentioned. He realises that the Bill will mean "Exit Moorhouse for Windsor." He is trying to make it appear that he wishes to do something for the returned soldiers. I believe that he is, but he is behind the times. The Labour Party introduced a Bill to give votes to people over 18 years of age, but it was rejected by the Upper House many years ago.

The Opposition said that we were a minority Government, as we had been elected by a minority of voters. That is not so. At the last general election Labour candidates received an absolute majority of the votes cast over all other candidates of 14,685. It was also said it has taken us 27 years to abolish contingent voting. We have been engaged for a great number of years in amending and abolishing legislation passed by Governments represented by the Opposition. That is why the electors cast a majority of votes for us.

We have also heard a great deal about giving the people the right to vote. I recollect that when I first entered public life in 1929 as an alderman of the Brisbane City Council the Government represented now by hon. members opposite passed legislation disfranchising thousands of people in the Greater Brisbane area. Adult franchise was the accepted principle until then, and what was known as the property vote was substituted. The legislation was an attempt to defeat the working-class representatives and thus prevent them from having representation on the council. Only occupiers of homes were entitled to vote. No consideration was given to those who paid rent or board and thus contributed to the rates, or the users of the tramways or consumers of electricity. Everybody who had a tinpot office in the city for which a rent of 10s. a week was charged had a vote. Some persons had two offices each, one being in the name of the wife. In my electorate one person had as many as eight or nine votes. Notwithstanding this attempt

to shackle the working class, the number of their representatives on the council was increased. I defeated all of my five opponents with an absolute majority, and two of them forfeited their deposits. Many of the disfranchised voters played their part in the last great war to preserve this country for democracy. Yet some hon. members talk about giving the soldier a vote! The Opposition hon. members are the descendants of these people, yet they claim to be democrats! The time for a change in the system of voting is long overdue. When Billy Hughes ratted on the Federal Labour Party he altered the system of voting and introduced compulsory preferential voting, which created an enormous number of informal votes. I have had some experience of them, because I have been counting them for some time.

It is the object of the opponents of Labour to make voting as complex as possible so that the working people and the womenfolk will make their votes informal, but they see to it that the hard-headed Tories are well schooled up. In England we have the system of "First past the post." We have framed a good deal of our legislation on that of the Mother Parliament, and there is no sound reason why we should not go back to the old system of one man one vote. If there is one Labour candidate, one Communist candidate, and one Country Party candidate I object to having to record a vote for any man that I have no desire to vote for. I contend that it is democracy to leave the people to make up their minds and select their representative by placing the figure "1" on front of his name.

We have nothing to lose by bringing in this legislation and we have nothing to gain by it. It is all eye-wash to suggest that we wish to change the system of voting because we lost the Cairns by-election. It does not matter what any Government may do in connection with the franchise; if the majority of the people decide to have a change they will have it. I say that in answer to the suggestion we are trying to protect our own interests. We do it to give the people the right to vote for the first past the post. I support this motion and I leave the verdict as to whether our judgment is right in the hands of the people—which is democracy. They will decide who shall be the Government. I feel sure they will endorse everything done by this Government.

Mr. WALKER (Cooroora) (11.20 p.m.): I made up my mind many years ago on voting. It does not matter how you argue, the majority must rule. I do not think the Labour Party have any room for complaint about the present system. Take the last election. There were more than two candidates in 18 electorates and Labour won 13 of them. Labour should not be stamped because it lost Cairns. Cairns is one of those things that will occur.

We have not had many corrupt practices in Queensland in elections, but I am of opinion that this amendment will lead to corrupt practices by the parties running candidates. You may get a Protestant Labour man running

at Maryborough against a Labour man, and he may get £100 to run, and the Country Party or Nationalist candidate would get in, and vice versa. I do not think we have much to complain about as far as elections are concerned. They have been very clean.

Personally I know of only one prosecution for double voting. I think it was in the old Wide Bay electorate. An elector voted against me twice, first by an absent vote and then when he returned to Cooroy, his home town, by his personal vote. The Labour organisation was opposing me very strongly and it got him to record his primary vote against me. As I said, he was prosecuted, and had it not been for me, he would have been punished. He was from Finland and as he had not been very long in this country he did not know the electoral laws of the land.

I do not think the Government have anything to fear. The last by-election that took place proves conclusively that the system of voting now in force is all in the Labour Party's favour. But I would draw attention to the corrupt practices that can be indulged in when this Bill becomes law, and that is a very serious danger. It is positively wrong to run the risk of it. The present system of voting is in vogue in all the Australian States and the people now understand it. Of course, in the early days that was not so, and at times a blackboard had to be used to illustrate what it all meant. Nowadays we have very few informal votes and this proves conclusively that in Queensland the electors understand the preference system of voting very well.

The Labour Party does not believe in majority rule. It does not even carry that out here in this Chamber. In the past 10 years I cannot recall an instance of a Labour representative voting against his own party in this Chamber. He has been compelled by what has taken place in his party room to vote with the majority.

The Secretary for Public Lands: What do you do in your party?

Mr. WALKER: If it does not suit me I walk out of the Chamber or vote against my party. I always do and I always will. I always preserve my independence. Unless a man shows his independence he has no right to be here.

As I have previously stated, there is the risk of corruption under this Bill. It is a case of the party with the most money being able to win, particularly if there are unscrupulous people in the organisation.

Mr. LUCKINS (Maree) (11.27 p.m.): I oppose the Bill. The Government gave no indication until the closing hours of the session that they intended to amend the Elections Act. "One man one vote" is a fine principle, but by giving him the right to exercise a second preference we have the true ideal of democracy in that we make it possible for the people to give a true expression of their desires.

It seems strange that this Bill is introduced in the absence of the three leading lights of the Labour Party, who, I feel confident, would not favour it. Apparently, this Bill was brought before caucus yesterday, passed by the majority in the absence of those three leaders, and introduced here as the wish of the whole party.

Let me give some statistics as to the numbers of representatives in this Assembly since its inception. In the respective years they were—

	Representatives.			
1859 26
1863 32
1872 42
1876 43
1878 55
1885 59
1887 72

and the number was reduced to 62 by the Moore Government. In my opinion the number of representatives should be reduced still further. In view of the Commonwealth Government's proposals I suggest that the time is opportune for reducing the number of State members and abolishing some of the smaller electorates. Two of the smaller electorates could be merged into one with advantage.

At 11.30 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

The Government are at the cross-roads to-day. They are out of step with their supporters and the writing on the wall seems to indicate that we shall see very few of them in this Chamber after the next election. Their supporters are becoming concerned because the party has restrained its members to such an extent. The majority vote of caucus is evident in this Chamber, and in that way the true desires of the people are suppressed. It is wrong that the Government should seek to take away from the people a right that they have enjoyed for so many years. The ideal system is to follow the Federal method of giving one primary vote with the right to exercise a second preference, and that should be allowed to the people; it seems to be what they want, as no complaints have been voiced about the method of voting at Federal elections.

The Minister has stated that papers marked with a cross instead of the figure "1" have been allowed as votes in the past. Is it proposed by this amendment to declare such votes informal in future? I should like to see the cross still allowed because many old people have been voting that way for many years, and, so long as it clearly indicates their desire, there is no reason why the voter should be disfranchised for using it.

Mr. MASSEY (Toowong) (11.32 p.m.): The hon. member for Maree, in suggesting that the cross be allowed, reminds me of the man who was bitten by an Alsatian dog after having entered a yard on the fence of which was a "Beware of the dog" sign. Upon being asked by the householder whether he had seen the notice the man said that he had

seen it, but was unable to read. There may be some people in the Maree electorate who cannot read and who, therefore, cannot put the figure "1" on a ballot-paper.

The real question is whether it is morally right to introduce such a Bill as this, not whether it will adversely affect one party or another, particularly the Independent members. Let us not lose sight of the moral aspect of this matter. The distasteful result of the Cairns by-election for the Government has brought their moral cowardice to the forefront. They have developed an inferiority complex. Do they not use the exhaustive ballot in their caucus and in their plebiscites, because they know that it will mean the election of the man favoured by the majority?

The people have always regarded their election rights as inviolate, but attempt to take them from them and they will sternly resist. The Government are so drunk with power by having been in office so long that they are prepared to disregard the will of the people. I appeal to the Attorney-General to withdraw the Bill and await the return of wiser men from the South.

Mr. BRAND (Isis) (11.35 p.m.): The time has arrived when the Elections Acts should be amended to enable the people to elect a really democratic Parliament. Throughout history Governments have been imbued with the one idea to amend the Elections Act for their own personal advantage, which has had the effect of depriving the people of an opportunity of electing a truly democratic Parliament. That has been described as gerrymandering, in which a great industry has been built up by certain political parties. These frequent amendments to the Elections Acts discouraged the people from giving proper recognition to their representatives in Parliament. Surely we have reached the period when we must try to win the confidence of the people by governing this country in a spirit of integrity? What is the reason for the big current of opinion throughout the country in favour of abolishing State Parliaments? It is because party politics have received greater consideration than the welfare of the electors. The amendment seeks to give full and complete power to the people, as it seeks by a system of compulsory preferential voting to obtain a definite mandate from the electors. The Minister in charge of this Bill remembers that the President of the Q.C.E., when speaking at a Labour-in-Politics Convention, acclaimed the uprising of Communism in our country as a beacon light, a pointer to what the electors might expect when legislative enactments giving effect to their ideals were carried out by this Parliament. This Bill is the antithesis of those ideals.

Not long ago the Government deprived this State of the services of the present Leader of the Opposition, in the Federal House of Representatives, a former Prime Minister, by introducing 400 married men into the Mirani electorate.

They have disgusted the people of this country, and to-day we have the people wishing to abolish State Parliaments. Fadden

was deliberately sabotaged from becoming the member for Mirani. We know what took place. We have an opportunity to clean up that mess. We have an opportunity to say to the people: "There is no need for you to fear anything; true democracy will prevail through your Parliament." I ask the Attorney-General what is wrong with that. Is he prepared to say that is not good enough? The Minister's conscience must tell him that we must do these things. You, Mr. Brassington, who have been in public life for a long time, know that we have not treated the electors fairly in this respect.

I hope hon. members realise there is a very serious undercurrent operating in this State among the electors to abolish this Parliament. We discussed the matter this session and we have stated that another Government are wrong in trying to take away powers from us, and that we should maintain State Parliaments as long as we can. If we do the right thing by the electors—allow them to retain the full rights they now possess—we shall be doing a good thing for this Parliament. I urge the Minister to give the Bill his serious consideration and say that it is right to amend the law to make provision so that the people will have confidence in this Parliament. I urge hon. members to consider this matter seriously. Some hon. members may think we should take away from the people certain rights. We should so amend the Elections Act that we shall be able to say to the people who are our masters that it will ensure that they will be able to return to Parliament a majority of members to carry out their wishes during the ensuing three years.

Without delving into past history, we can agree that no doubt the people of Queensland have at times been misled, but let us now, as a Parliament give to them the justice that they are entitled to demand from any responsible member who represents them in their Parliament. To the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock, acting as Premier, I say that as this may be his last opportunity, he should see that the people of Queensland get a fair and square deal under his leadership, and that they will not be deprived of any of their rights.

The Secretary for Public Lands, who is always so desirous that the rank and file shall control in industry and in the affairs of State, should see to it that the great body of men and women who represent the rank and file do not lose any of the rights they enjoy under the Elections Act.

Surely we can get together as representatives of great parties and make this Elections Act the greatest in the Commonwealth. There is no need to go to the British House of Commons. We are the elected representatives of the people, we have initiative, and surely we are the masters of our own destiny.

I believe that hon. members on the Government side realise that if we are going to save this Parliament we have to trust the electors. They should realise that the things that have been happening recently to cause them so

much anxiety will not continue to happen in the future if we give the electors the fullest possible power. We have no right to take away from them privileges that they desire to have under the Elections Act unless we are willing to go before them with the proposal. If the Government go to the people and say they will do away with preferential voting and are returned, then they will have a mandate from the people to amend the Act, and I am not asking too much when I ask them to do that.

The present Labour Federal Government were elected under a system of compulsory preferential voting, and if it were not for that system many of those members would not be occupying their seats in that Government to-day. I say emphatically that if a similar provision was contained in our Act it would be of tremendous benefit to the people, even though it might be the means of returning a Labour Government to power.

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) (12.1 a.m.): I congratulate the hon. member who has just resumed his seat on his forceful speech in opposition to the Bill.

I wish to deal with a statement by the hon. member for Bowen in which he charged me with having authorised a pamphlet circulated in the electorates of Bowen and Herbert and in which it is stated—

"If you vote Communist, you must be opposed to Labour, so fortify your desire with your No. 2 vote for Country Party."

I should like to say that I did not authorise that pamphlet. The authority is on the bottom of the leaflet—

"Authorised by S. K. Page, Edith street, Innisfail."

Mr. Page apparently issued this pamphlet on his own initiative. It certainly was not referred to me, nor was it issued under my authority.

It is rather interesting to look at the heading of the pamphlet, because it says that—

"While Mackay gets the oranges, Innisfail and Bowen get the pip."

Public feeling is running very strongly against the States to-day, and to a great extent because during the past 10 years, since the Hon. W. Forgan Smith has been Premier of the State, there has been a disregard of the people's interests and an inclination to adopt dictatorial tactics and repose power in bureaucratic boards and so disregard parliamentary authority. It behoves those who desire to retain State Parliaments not to inflame the minds of the democrats in this country. A measure like this, which is so utterly unfair to political candidates—unfair to the public—will not help those who wish to retain parliamentary institutions. I regret that the Government have seen fit to introduce a measure containing a principle so repugnant to every honest democrat in the country. To-day we are fighting to assert the principles of democracy, to retain the rights of the people as free men and women who dislike

the idea of being ruled by dictators and tyrants and men who do not derive their power from the governed but from the armed might of the military forces they control.

Some hypocritical reference has been made to the fact that this measure is patterned on the procedure of the House of Commons. It was said that the by-election for Cairns was not held for a period of about a year because it was a hot spot and likely to be bombed. I should like to remind the people who put those stories about in support of the case for delay on behalf of the Government that the House of Commons sat and by-elections were held amidst the horrors of dive-bombing over the very heart of the city of London. Notwithstanding that the House of Commons was damaged by bombs, stout-hearted legislators sat there from time to time determining the problems of war and internal economy. Cairns certainly was in the danger area, and it has its problems associated with evacuation, A.R.P. work, the risk of invasion, and bombing. The Government were callously indifferent to the real needs of Cairns. For 10 months it was deprived of a representative in this Parliament because of the cowardly fear in the hearts of the Government that they would lose the seat. Finally, when an election was held, Mr. L. J. Barnes, who designated himself King O'Malley Labourite, was elected. This result, coupled with the fact that his brother had won the Bundaberg seat from Labour, showed that old-time Labourites were dissatisfied with present Labour administrators. The Cairns by-election result so struck terror into the heart of the Government that this Bill is introduced. The figures cast at that election disclosed on analysis that 4,719 primary voters showed their disapproval of the Government, whose official candidate polled only 2,149 votes.

When I spoke at the State elections in support of Mr. Griffin he polled 3,000 votes, but on this occasion he stood as an Independent. The Government have become alarmed at the drift, as indicated in Cairns and Bundaberg, and they fear a possible collapse in Barcoo and Mackay, and so to try to escape impending defeat they introduce this Bill. They have abandoned their old-time principles. I shall show that they have departed from the principle of contingent voting, as laid down in the constitution and rules of the Australian Labour Party on page 20, clause 55, which states—

“Contingent voting shall be provided for in all cases where necessary when calling plebiscites, but its use shall be optional. For further particulars see Appendix ‘B.’ ”

Appendix ‘B’ says that the use of contingent voting is optional. We find that the contingent voting they now propose to remove from the State electoral laws is contained in their own rules. Can we say that the Australian Labour Party in its internal affairs is wrong? Can we say the condition that has obtained in Queensland since 1892 is utterly wrong? Can we say that the principle of preferential voting in every State with the exception of Tasmania is utterly

wrong? Can we say the principle of compulsory preferential voting in the Commonwealth is utterly wrong? Can we say the principle of proportional representation in Tasmania is utterly wrong? Is the Commonwealth and every other State out of step? Is the Australian Labour Party in its internal affairs out of step and only the alleged Labour Party in Queensland in step?

I confess to amazement at hon. members who mouth the principles of democracy and give lip-service to democratic principles and at the same time want to hold power on a minority vote. This effort to hold power at any cost, even at the point of sinking their principles, is amazing. It is clear they no longer desire to rule by the will of the people, but by the minority of the people. Is it any wonder that the old-time supporters of the Labour Party have walked out on them and given support to the King O'Malley candidate or the Andrew Fisher Labourite? I am quite satisfied that other men will arise in Mackay and Barcoo to give allegiance to the old-time faith of the Labour Party and they will defeat the official Labour candidates despite this attempt to hold power on a minority vote.

The hon. member for Cooroora sounded a very important note this evening when he pointed out that by this measure any political organisation commanding funds or a wealthy individual could arrange with an independent candidate to run by putting up £100 or £200.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is using the argument used by the hon. member for Cooroora.

Mr. MAHER: The hon. member for Cooroora has no monopoly on that thought.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I should like to hear some fresh argument on this question.

Mr. MAHER: When the present Government Party were in opposition during the time of the Moore Government it was the custom for each member to follow the leader in parrot-like fashion. They had method in that as they said it was good tactics to drive home these things. Of course, an hon. member has the right to repeat an argument if he wishes, or what a previous speaker has said. He does not usually do it in the same words. (Time expired.)

Mr. MACDONALD (Stanley) (12.22 p.m.): Your ruling, Mr. Brassington, has rather cramped my style.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! To clarify the position to hon. members I draw their attention to part of Standing Order No. 141, which has a bearing on this question of tedious repetition, and after all the Standing Orders are binding on all hon. members of this Committee. There is no doubt there has been a good deal of repetition, and I ask hon. members to remember that Standing Order and assist the Chair.

Mr. MACDONALD: Listening to the debate, two things are evident. One is that hon. members opposite are undoubtedly imbued purely with altruistic motives. No

self-interest enters into their attitude to this question.

The other is the old saying that self-preservation is the first law of nature. That has been made very evident here to-night. Why all the unseemly haste in the introduction of this measure? What is the motive behind it? To me it is very apparent. One has only to remember what happened the other day at Cairns. It was due undoubtedly to two factors, one the utter disregard this Government have shown for the welfare of the people of Cairns, the other that at the present moment a spirit of rebellion against authority is abroad in our midst. I attribute what happened at Cairns not to the fact that there was any preferential voting there, but to the fact that the Government of this State absolutely ignored the representation that should have been given to the people of Cairns.

So far as I can see, you are going to disfranchise many of the people if you do away with contingent voting, in that if three candidates stand the first two come into the picture, but the people who voted for the third man are absolutely disfranchised.

We realise that abuses can take place with contingent voting. It has happened in plebiscites. There a man may not cast his vote according to the merit of the respective candidates, and in State elections it is essential, in these times especially, that we should maintain a statute that has worked so satisfactorily for 50 years. The Bill is a retrograde step, and despite the sophistry of the Government speakers I can only put it down to the fact that the Government is suffering from a frustration complex.

Mr. NIMMO (Oxley) (12.32 a.m.): I should like to say how much I appreciate the remarks of the hon. member for Cooroora. He gave the Government a splendid opportunity to withdraw this Bill. He gave excellent advice, as the Father of the House, and the man who knows all the little tricks, so to speak, of political life. He said the State Government had nothing to fear, that the Cairns by-election was just one of those things that might happen at any time, and he suggested that instead of the Government's being stampeded into pushing legislation of this kind through and besmirching their reputation it would be better for them to withdraw the Bill.

Contingent voting in Queensland has worked remarkably well and the Government should allow it to remain and derive advantage from it. Certainly they should not slip back to conditions that operated before the people were given this privilege.

In the British Parliament they are not as democratic as in the Australian Commonwealth Parliament. In Great Britain there is no compulsory voting at all.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind the hon. gentleman that that argument was used time and again.

Mr. NIMMO: I propose using it in a different direction.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman must use it in accordance with Standing Order No. 141.

Mr. NIMMO: Queensland and Australia have been more progressive politically than many places in the Old World, but the Labour Government in Queensland are prepared to put back the political clock 100 years. The electoral laws have been liberalised considerably here, but the Labour Government have stacked the cards heavily against their political opponents. The Constitution and General Rules of the Australian Labour Party provide for the use of contingent voting in plebiscites.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! That argument has already been used by the hon. member for West Moreton.

Mr. NIMMO: The Labour Party or the so-called Labour Party in Queensland is out of step with the Labour Party in the rest of Australia. New South Wales, the mother State of Australia, has had many Labour Governments, and they were returned under an electoral law that provided for the use of contingent voting. What is wrong with it? I advise the Government to do the decent thing by the people of Queensland and allow them to continue to enjoy a right they have enjoyed for half a century.

It has been said that men have been returned on a minority of votes. In 1938 the hon. member for Gympie came into this Parliament on a minority of votes.

The Secretary for Public Lands: That is not true.

Mr. NIMMO: Let me quote the official figures of the Gympie election in 1938:—

	Votes.
Mr. Millett	2,264
Mr. Taylor	246
Mr. Tozer	1,526
Mr. Dunstan	3,040

The anti-Government candidates polled 4,036 votes against 3,040 cast for Mr. Dunstan. Mr. Dunstan received 163 contingent votes, making his total 3,203. Therefore, he was returned on a minority vote. Other members supporting the Government were also returned on a minority vote.

The Attorney-General, in introducing the Bill, began by explaining its concluding provisions, and what would be saved in paper, printing, and transport, and then told us that another clause in the Bill made for easier voting by the electors who now were only required to place "1" in the square before the name of the candidate they wished to vote for. This leaves the way open for crooked practices. I was informed by a man who helped the Labour Party at a polling-booth that a certain individual always wore a signet ring and had inserted a piece of pointed graphite in it instead of a stone. When the voting papers were being assembled for counting he said they rubbed the graphite against the other side's name on the voting paper

when they had an opportunity and made it informal. That system accounted for the astonishing number of informal votes at elections.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock:

The last time you told me the story he was a member of the Country Party.

Mr. NIMMO: Probably this is what the hon. gentleman had in mind. A man came along and said he would help me in my election campaign. He had come over from Labour. He said he was full up of that party and did not intend having anything more to do with it. It was remarkable, by the way, to see the number of men who helped Government candidates at polling-booths in Government jobs when the elections were over.

This man was a great worker on the committee. He put his hat on at night and went down the street and canvassed the different houses. He said that was the usual Labour Party practice. It came to my notice on election day that this man had been advising the people they must put down "1" for Nimmo and "2" for Thieme. I said to the people, "You need not do that—there are only the two of us standing—but if he advised you to do that do it." I saw him and he said they must always do that, because at the count they put another "1" there and the vote was informal. That has been done. Why should we leave ourselves open to that practice. Why do the Government not go the whole hog and say, "We are going to rob the people of nothing, but we will put through a Bill giving the people full preferential voting and make it compulsory." If they did that the Labour Party could go out at the next election and say, "We have never robbed the electors of anything; we have given them the full franchise." That would be to their credit. We are not putting up this fight for our own protection. Every hon. member on this side knows that the swing of politics is our way and next election he has nothing to fear. This Government have everything to fear and that is why they are putting through this Bill.

Mr. DART (Wynnum) (12.50 a.m.): I rise to correct an error made by the hon. member for Baroona. He had the audacity to say I was here on a minority vote. I shall prove the hon. member for Baroona is here on a minority vote. I do not make false statements. He has made a deliberately false statement.

Mr. POWER: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Wynnum has accused me of making a deliberately false statement. I ask for a withdrawal.

The CHAIRMAN: Owing to a good deal of noise I did not hear the remark. If the hon. member for Wynnum made the remark, I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr. DART: I intended to say it was a misleading statement. If I said the other, I withdraw. I shall prove he has made a

misleading statement. The following were the figures for the Baroona election:—

Powell	2,539
Roper	2,103
Total	4,642
Power, W.	4,571

and therefore that hon. member is in Parliament on a minority of 71 votes. It is only fair that I should quote the Wynnum figures, to prove that I am here on a majority vote. These are for the 1938 election—

Primary Votes.

Dart	3,687
Ebbage	1,050
Greene	2,290
Total	7,027

Donnelly received 4,041 votes, therefore of the primary votes cast there were 7,027 against and 4,041 for Labour. I won the election by a majority of 373 votes. Of course, at the last election I was returned with a greater majority.

The hon. member for Gympie is here on a minority vote of 996. The Secretary for Mines was also returned on a minority vote of 46.

The Secretary for Public Lands: Those figures are entirely incorrect.

Mr. DART: It is all very well for some people to twist and turn figures to suit themselves.

The Secretary for Public Lands: Exactly what you are doing.

Mr. DART: It has been said that figures can lie and liars can figure.

If hon. members opposite make misleading statements we must put them right, but I trust such misleading statements will not be repeated.

At 12.55 a.m.,

Mr. MANN (Brisbane) relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. DART: It will be to the advantage of the people of Queensland to have this Bill withdrawn, and my greatest concern is that the people should get a fair deal and a Bill that is against the interest of the people should not be introduced to suit a minority in the Parliament.

We must work on the democratic lines for which Abraham Lincoln fought. It should be government of the people by the people for the people, instead of the dictatorship that is likely to be set up if this Bill goes through. I sincerely hope that after giving the matter further consideration the Minister will do the right thing and withdraw it to-morrow.

Mr. POWER (Baroona) (12.58 a.m.): I wish to correct the statement by the hon. member for Wynnum that I was returned by

a minority vote at the last elections. The figures were—

	Votes.
Sectarian candidate	2,539
Roper	2,103
Power	4,736

The percentage of votes received for me was 51.4 of the total votes cast, while the percentage recorded against me was 48.6.

Mr. Brand: He spoke of the 1938 election.

Mr. POWER: I was returned by an absolute majority at the 1938 election.

The hon. member has denied that he was elected on a minority vote in 1938. The total number of votes received by him on that occasion was 4,671, or 42.2 per cent. of the total votes cast, and the number recorded against him was 6,397, or 57.8 per cent. of the total votes cast. It is amazing that a man who obtained only 4,671 votes while 6,397 were polled against him should have the hypocrisy to talk about government of the people for the people by the people.

The hon. member for Oxley alleged that certain people were deliberately interfering with postal votes. I remind him and other hon. members opposite that the majority of postal votes were always cast against Labour candidates until the Labour candidates woke up to the organisation that was being put up against them. During one election I pointed out how certain votes had been altered and witnessed by Tory supporters, and they said at the time, "We have always done that. How did he find that out?"

Further, I have evidence that a certain place in my electorate was approached by one of my canvassers for the postal votes of the very old people there, and he was told that the postal votes had been fixed up—that Mr. Power had already called there. Under the Elections Act it is an offence for a candidate to solicit postal votes, and I ascertained that the man who called there was named Powell. I had not been there. Certain applications for postal votes were forwarded to the returning officer, who checked up the signatures and found that they were all written by the one person. The woman was warned that she had been doing something illegal. All those votes at that hostel were cast against me, but we had a number rejected because, on comparing the application for the vote with the signature on the envelope, we found that they did not agree. If the hon. member cannot study the figures properly, he should get someone to do it for him.

Mr. L. J. BARNES (Cairns) (1.4 a.m.): I went to the police station in Cairns for a permit to speak on a street corner. I went on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and again on Friday, but nothing doing.

The Secretary for Public Works: You were never refused.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: I was refused. I am a Britisher, and I claim the right to speak at election time. During those five days the

inspector and the sub-inspector adopted a policy of service before self. They really tried to get the permit for me, but the Government held them up. On the Saturday morning Sub-Inspector Roach said to me, "There is no permit for you. We cannot get authority to give you a permit." I said that it did not matter; that I was going to speak in any case. He advised me not to, and suggested that I should see the inspector, which I did. I told the inspector that I was going to speak; that I had promised 10,000 people that I was going to speak, and I would speak. I was not interested in 40 politicians. He advised me not to, and pointed out that he had to comply with the Public Safety Act. I told him that I was not interested in that; that he had his duty to perform, but I was going to speak. Later I met my brother down the town and he said, "You are not going to speak to-night. I will do the speaking. They have laid a trap under the Public Safety Act, and will hold you in gaol so that you cannot contest the election. I will speak and do the gaol." All that in the name of democracy! These are facts. Let them laugh that off, the cowards. My brother, the hon. member for Bundaberg, told the inspector and the sub-inspector, "You can tell the Government in Brisbane that my brother will not speak; that you will not hold him under the Public Safety Act. I will do the speaking and you can arrest me."

My brother also said to the inspector, "You know the people of Bundaberg have confidence in me and I have a reasonable control over my audience. I was able on that occasion to sway the people off the police, but in Cairns I am not so sure—I am a stranger—that I can do it. If there is a riot the Government will be to blame." At 3 o'clock that afternoon the inspector and sub-inspector came down to our flat, wearing a smile from ear to ear, and delivered a permit to us. That is a Government supposedly representing a democracy!

An amendment on this Bill was ruled out because no provision was made for it in the message from His Excellency. It would cost only about £5. Hon. members are ignorant of what they are doing. The Government will find it necessary to scrap 100,000 school books in consequence of this amending Bill. Those books, which were issued about two years ago, illustrated the use of the preference vote. The Government do not know that.

At 1.11 a.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: The Elections Act should be simplified to enable returning officers to adopt a uniform practice in determining the intention of voters. Let me illustrate what can happen in this policy of "First past the post." There may be 10 candidates for a constituency, and eight might each receive 10 per cent. of the votes. The "first past the post" candidate might receive 10.01 per cent. of the votes, and the second candidate 9.99 per cent. The candidate receiving 10.01 per cent. of

the votes would be elected. The Government should go and sleep on the measure. If they did, as believers in democracy, they would be ashamed of it and would tear it up. That is the principle they are advocating. Why not make it 1 per cent. and finish up with a dictator? If you had 63 or 64 independents in this House, believe me, it would be a majority Government. Here we have a minority all the time. In caucus there are about 40. If there are 20 for a motion and 18 against it, it means about 20 men govern this Parliament. I know democracy is minorities, but for heaven's sake let us get to the stage where we can get the greatest minority. The Government want to reduce it to 10 per cent.

In the 1938 elections, where there were more than two contesting any seat, we find 51 per cent. of the people used the preference vote, and the Government are taking that liberty away from them. In the Charters Towers and Townsville elections in 1939, 48 per cent. used preference votes. I heard an hon. member interject to the effect that the people of Cairns should be sympathised with for their actions. My constituents are as intelligent as his. I think it is a slur on the people of Queensland for a man to make a statement like that in this Assembly. We represent the people, after all. The Cairns people have supported this Government for 30 years, and because they decided to change you get slurs like that. My brother told them they would create history by voting for Barnes, and they have. To think the Committee is sitting at 20 to 1 in the morning over an amendment to the Elections Act because these men are afraid of losing their seats at the next elections! If they go back to the true Labour Party they will not lose their seats. I was talking to a man named Joe Langtry, who was afraid of losing his seat in the Riverina, but the contingent voting has assured him of his seat. There was nothing wrong with contingent voting until the Cairns by-election.

This extract, taken from the pamphlet sent up from Brisbane in connection with the Cairns by-election, is worth listening to—

"I submit to you a few reasons why you should vote to Parliament D. P. Crowley, the Labour candidate for Cairns. Because he is a local man and knows your wants and requirements. He Knows Ministers personally."

Mr. Riordan: What is wrong with that?

Mr. L. J. BARNES: If you do not know them personally you won't do much good!

The extract continues—

"His father-in-law was the late Hon. P. Pease, former Minister for Lands. Don't vote for a stranger from the South, or elsewhere, to represent you."

They forgot that Mr. McCormack was an importation, as was the late Mr. O'Keefe.

I will now read what they have to say in reference to Independents—

"Independents are of no use in the Queensland Parliament. An Independent would be a voice crying in the wilderness."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! This is more in the nature of an election speech or a manifesto. There is nothing in that connected with the Bill.

Mr. L. J. BARNES: It is signed, under the Elections Acts—

"Authorised by J. Graham, Secretary, Australian Labour Party."

We shall live to see the day when hon. members on the Government side will come back to the true Labour Party or be ex-politicians, and it is horrifying to be an ex-politician.

I can assure hon. members that at the next election they will be wondering why they put this amending Bill through. I ask the Minister to consider it carefully, to sleep on it, because, if he insists upon putting it through he is erecting a tombstone on the Labour Party.

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba) (1.30 a.m.): When the Attorney-General introduced this Bill I thought he looked nervous and ashamed. I feel that he was not giving it his own personal support, for I honestly believe he does not agree with it, and I am sure that many other hon. members on the Government side do not support it because they have sense enough to know that it is a retrograde step.

It is downright scandalous presumption to bring down a Bill such as this at this stage. With the exception of three years, the Labour Government have been in office for 27 years, and during that period they have had ample opportunity to amend the Elections Act if they thought it was not a proper Act. Some time ago, just after the East Toowoomba election, a strong rumour was circulating that the Elections Act was to be amended, but nothing was done, and now we have the subject revived. The present Act has been on the statute-book for 50 years this year, and in all their 27 years of office the Government have not decided to alter or amend it. This instruction has come from a sinking ship.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I shall be willing to hear some fresh argument from the hon. member on this question.

Mr. YEATES: On one occasion the Czar of Queensland, the former Premier—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! This, too, is repetition.

Mr. YEATES: You have not heard much about the Czar. (Laughter.)

The Secretary for Mines: I rise to a point of order. The term "Czar" is objectionable and repugnant to any democratic-loving person and its application to an ex-Premier of the State is unbecoming and should be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: The term was applied to an hon. member of this Assembly. The Standing Orders are clear upon the matter, and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr. YEATES: In deference to you, Mr. Brassington, I withdraw it. I really thought it would be an honour to be able to dictate to the whole lot of them and tell them what to do. All the public servants were absolutely frightened and dared not say "Boo," even the Auditor-General.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member suggested that the ex-Premier terrified the Auditor-General. That is unfair and repugnant and I ask that it be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw the statement as it is a reflection on the Auditor-General.

Mr. YEATES: In deference to you, Mr. Brassington, I withdraw it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! In view of the fact that the hon. member's remarks have been repetition from the start I ask him to resume his seat.

Mr. YEATES: Altogether? Oh, no. I have the right to speak.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I order the hon. member to resume his seat.

Mr. MOORHOUSE (Windsor) (1.35 a.m.): The action of the Government in refusing to accept the amendment—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The amendment has been disposed of and cannot be referred to again.

Mr. MOORHOUSE: The hon. member for Baroona said that the Government had introduced legislation about a quarter of a century ago to give votes to people over 18 years of age.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Baroona was called to order for pursuing that line of argument. The hon. member for Windsor cannot refer to that amendment again. It has been disposed of.

Mr. MOORHOUSE: The Bill will deprive the people of a sacred electoral right but that is typical of the Labour Government over recent years. The Labour Party is more concerned about a policy which wins them seats because of economic circumstances than amending the Elections Act to give the people the economic security they have been led to believe it believed in.

The people cannot understand the difference between the Federal and State Labour parties. Preferential voting is permitted in the Federal sphere and this Government are seeking to abolish it. The difference between the two Governments is also illustrated in the proposed Federal referendum. The Federal Labour Party accepted that proposal

because it would give the people social justice and economic security, yet the Queensland party opposed it. The amendment to Dr. Evatt's proposal, moved by the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs at the Federal Labour Party's convention in Melbourne was turned down.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MOORHOUSE: If the intention of the Government in bringing down this Bill is to give the people true democracy, why not insert in it the right of recall? That would ensure that the people would be able to govern members of Parliament.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Elections Act does not provide for the right of recall, therefore it cannot be discussed either on this Bill or the amendment.

Mr. MOORHOUSE: The Government have introduced the Bill because they are out of touch with the people. We know what the opinion of the people of North Queensland is of the Government. It is common knowledge that if there was a general election to-day the Labour Party would not win a North Queensland seat. That is because the Government are a reactionary party. They have not introduced any progressive legislation for 10 years.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We are not discussing general legislation now, but this Bill.

Mr. MOORHOUSE: Any further legislation of a similar nature to this would result in revolution.

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba) (1.45 a.m.): This Bill is not a sound democratic one. It is retrogressive. The Government are not game to provide for compulsory preferential voting. They are shivering with fright. I do not believe that the Minister in charge of the Committee believes in the Bill. He would have more sense than to initiate such legislation.

I should have liked to hear the inner workings of the caucus yesterday. The Labour Party has said for years that the majority rules. Supposing candidate "A" polls 2,000 votes, candidate "B" 1919, and candidate "C" 1,137, the number of electors disfranchised would be 3,056. The candidate with 2,000 votes would be declared elected, although 3,956 votes were polled against him. Is that not absurd? If the people do not want to use the contingent vote that is their business. If I had my way it would be compulsory preferential voting. The trouble with the Labour Party is that its members have to do what they are told in caucus.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The organisation of the Labour Party has no bearing on the Elections Act.

Mr. YEATES: A redistribution in the electorates usually follows the taking of the

census once in every decade. There was one in 1931.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The question of redistribution of seats has no bearing on the Elections Act; it is controlled by the Electoral Districts Act, an entirely different Act from the one under discussion.

Mr. YEATES: In the latest Encyclopædia democracy is described as follows:—

“Democracy; a form of government based on the theory of the equality of man. In practice it means the government of the State by the majority of the people, as opposed to its government by one (monarchy) or by a few (oligarchy). It has been accurately described as inverted monarchy, and historically it has come about, not by a gradual expansion of power through the medium of municipalities and guilds, as they existed in the middle ages, but by a direct replacement of the absolute power of a monarch, by the will of the major part of the community.

“Democracy, being, therefore, not necessarily incompatible with monarchy, may even work within the framework of a monarchy, as in the British Constitution; and it is to be remembered that the American Constitution, as also the French Republican Constitution, was drawn up by a people accustomed to thinking in terms of monarchy. In the words of Abraham Lincoln, democracy is defined as ‘the government of the people by the people and for the people.’

“The difficulties of democratic government on these lines, however, are so great that as Sir Henry Maine says, ‘In large and complex modern societies, it could neither last nor work if it were not aided by certain forces, which are not exclusively associated with it, but of which it greatly stimulates the energy. Of these forces the one to which it owes most is unquestionably party.’

“In a democracy a party governs only by right of representing the will of the majority of the community.”

The CHAIRMAN: Order! This is certainly repetition and I am very doubtful whether the quotation is within the ambit of the Bill.

(Time expired.)

Mr. NIMMO (Oxley) (1.54 a.m.): I should be very sorry for the Bill to go through until the Government have full opportunity of reviewing the full implications of their actions. The policy of the Government has always been to endeavour to keep in office by every means possible. The party has always clung to office. You will remember, Mr. Brassington, how in past elections large armies of workmen were sent out to different works on the eve of an election. The Willowburn railway works were started just prior to the election of

1920, and after the election the men were put off and the works remained idle till about the time of the next election. This practice went on for years.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The principles the hon. member is discussing have been referred to by at least three previous speakers.

Mr. NIMMO: Then I will not labour the question. I seriously plead with the Government to reconsider the position and scrap the Bill.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (Mr. J. F. Barnes’s amendment) stand part of the question—put; and the Committee divided.

AYES, 27.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Keyatta
“ Bruce	“ Larcombe
“ Bulcock	“ Moore
“ Clark	“ O’Shea
“ Collins	“ Riordan
“ Conroy	“ Smith, A. J.
“ Copley	“ Theodore
“ Devries	“ Turner
“ Dunstan	“ Walsh
“ Foley	“ Williams
“ Gair	
“ Gledson	Tellers:
“ Healy	“ Mann
“ Jesson	“ Power
“ Jones	

NOES, 15.

Mr. Barnes, J. F.	Mr. Nimmo
“ Barnes, L. J.	“ Sparkes
“ Brand	“ Walker
“ Dart	“ Yeates
“ Luckins	
“ Macdonald	Tellers:
“ Maher	“ Moorhouse
“ Massey	“ Pie
“ Nicklin	

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Cooper	Mr. Plunkett
“ Hanlon	“ Müller
“ Farrell	“ Clayton
“ Smith, W. Forgan	“ Edwards
“ Slessar	“ Decker

Resolved in the affirmative.

At 2.6 a.m.,

Mr. MANN (Brisbane) relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba) (2.7 a.m.): Let me continue to quote from “Hansard.”

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member can discuss only one principle now, and that is the amendment of the Act in connection with contingent voting.

Mr. YEATES The Government never thought about amending the law in this respect before, because everything was going well with them. They have been able to retain office by fixing the boundaries to suit themselves.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Question—That the motion (Mr. Gledson) be agreed to—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 27.

Mr. Brassington	Mr. Keyatta
„ Brown	„ Larcombe
„ Bruce	„ O'Shea
„ Bulcock	„ Power
„ Clark	„ Riordan
„ Collins	„ Smith, A. J.
„ Conroy	„ Theodore
„ Copley	„ Turner
„ Devries	„ Walsh
„ Dunstan	„ Williams
„ Foley	
„ Gair	<i>Tellers:</i>
„ Gledson	„ Healy
„ Jesson	„ Moore
„ Jones	

NOES, 15.

Mr. Barnes, J. F.	Mr. Pie
„ Dart	„ Sparkes
„ Luckins	„ Walker
„ Macdonald	„ Yeates
„ Maher	
„ Massey	<i>Tellers:</i>
„ Moorhouse	„ Barnes, L. J.
„ Nicklin	„ Brand
„ Nimmo	

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Cooper	Mr. Plunkett
„ Hanlon	„ Müller
„ Farrell	„ Clayton
„ Smith, W. Forgan	„ Edwards
„ Siessar	„ Decker

Resolved in the affirmative.

RESOLUTION REPORTED.

FIRST READING.

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Gledson, read a first time.

The House adjourned at 2.17 a.m.