

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 1953**

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THURSDAY, 26 NOVEMBER, 1953.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. J. H. Mann, Brisbane) took the chair at 11 a.m.

QUESTIONS.

TREASURY DEBENTURE LOANS, TOWNSVILLE CITY COUNCIL.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) asked the Treasurer—

“What is the total amount of (a) Treasury, and (b) debenture loans, applied for by the Townsville City Council from May, 1949, to date?”

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg) replied—

“Applications by local authorities for loan and subsidy provisions are almost wholly contained in submissions made annually to Co-ordinator-General of Public Works and are not necessarily specified as Treasury loans or debenture loans. The extent to which Treasury loans can be made available is dependent on the amount of State Loan Funds available for all purposes at the time of application. The total of such applications by the Townsville City Council for the period shown in the question is £2,352,698. This figure makes no allowance for duplications in many cases where—(1) the amounts applied for were reduced or deleted after review by the Co-ordinator-General or decisions of the Loan Council; (2) approvals not raised in the respective financial years; but which may have been included again in amounts applied for in subsequent years. Furthermore, no account has been taken of subsidy which may have been applicable thus reducing loan requirements. The removal of any such anomalies would entail considerable analysis of files by officers whose services could be more gainfully employed in other directions.”

INTEREST CHARGES, FISH BOARD.

Mr. HILEY (Coorparoo) asked the Treasurer—

“1. Is the sum of £3,846 shown in the accounts of the Fish Board for June, 1953, the gross sum paid for interest by the board or is it the net charge after deducting interest recovered by the board from its customers?”

“2. What is the rate of interest charged by the board on overdue and extended credit accounts?”

“3. What was the amount of interest charged in that year by the board to such debtors?”

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg) replied—

“1. The amount shown is for the financial year 1952-1953 and not the month of June, 1953, and is the net charge after deducting interest recovered.

“2. 5 per cent.

“3. £1,130 for the year 1952-1953.”

## FIRE RISK, ARGOON-CALLIDE RAILWAY.

**Mr. SPARKES** (Dalby), for **Mr. V. E. JONES** (Callide), asked the Minister for Transport—

“1. In reference to his reply on 12 November, relative to damage sustained by four farmers between Argoon and Callide as a result of a fire started by railway employees, has the investigation of this matter yet been completed and, if so, what was the nature of the report?”

“2. As the fire risk in the district in question is now abnormally serious, will he give consideration to supplying lengthsmen with suitable fire-fighting equipment?”

**Hon. J. E. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba) replied—

“The General Manager at Rockhampton who investigated this matter advises that no complaint has been received by him during the past two years from any farmer between Argoon and Callide that his grass has been burnt or that he has suffered losses of cattle or other damage through fire which started on railway property. Questioning of gangers on the section reveals that the acting ganger of the Biloela gang burnt off towards the end of September opposite property of Mr. Roberts who was present and assisted during the burn. A small fire reached the property of Mr. Roberts but the gang and Mr. Roberts extinguished it with little damage resulting. Later that day and night a fire is stated to have broken out in the property of Mr. Inch which adjoins the railway and is in the vicinity of Mr. Roberts's property. The acting ganger is definite in his statement that this fire did not originate on railway property as all fire which had occurred on railway property during the day had been extinguished prior to the gang ceasing work. No employee objected to burning off because of the risk involved and there was, therefore, no over-ruling of any such objection by an engineer. Instructions are being given for issue of knapsack sprays to gangers in this area.”

## IRON ORE DEPOSITS.

**Mr. COBURN** (Burdekin) asked the Secretary for Mines and Immigration—

“In reference to the answer of the Chief Secretary on 19 August last to my question regarding the building of a blast furnace to produce pig iron at Bowen, in which he stated that the Iron Range area would be first investigated because of favourable aspects of transport to Bowen,—

1. Has the investigation in question yet been completed and a report supplied to his department?

2. If so, will he kindly lay a copy of such report upon the table of the House or otherwise make it available to hon. members and other interested parties?”

**Hon. W. POWER** (Baroona—Attorney-General), for **Hon. E. J. RIORDAN** (Flinders), replied—

“1. The geologists who carried out this investigation returned to their headquarters at Charters Towers on 24 November. In view of the necessity to analyse samples and prepare plans, it is expected that it will be some weeks before the report is available.

“2. When the report is received, consideration will be given, in the usual way, to its publication in the ‘Queensland Government Mining Journal.’”

## PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Order in Council under the Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Acts, 1944 to 1951.

## DENTAL ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

## THIRD READING.

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

## STOCK ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

## THIRD READING.

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

## CITY OF BRISBANE ACTS AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

## SECOND READING.

**Hon. E. J. WALSH** (Bundaberg—Treasurer) (11.11 a.m.): I move—

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

I outlined the principles contained in the measure when I introduced it and there is nothing that I desire to say at this stage in extension of the remarks I made then. As I pointed out, the Bill seeks to amend the Acts governing the city of Brisbane. Most of the amendments are machinery. I should say that the most important one is that relating to the powers to be given to the Brisbane City Council in connection with the construction of a new bridge over the Brisbane River to replace the existing Victoria Bridge. I have pointed out that although other local authorities may have those powers already conferred on them under the Local Government Act—and this replies to the point raised by the hon. member for Coorparoo—the wording of the Act relating to the Brisbane City Council makes the amendment necessary.

It may be of interest to hon. members if I outlined the proposal for the construction of the new bridge that has been submitted by the Brisbane City Council to me as Minister in charge of local government. It has now been forwarded to the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works for examination by him and his technical officers. It involves

considerable realignment of the approaches to the existing bridge. Actually, it contains many principles that were suggested by Surveyor-General Harvey some years ago and if I outline them to hon. members they will have some appreciation of what is intended.

Of course, it does not follow that these proposals will be accepted. It is obvious that they will require to be examined very closely because, amongst other things, they involve the demolition of a few government buildings and the removal of certain other buildings.

The main features of the proposal and tentative design for the approaches to the new bridge include the construction of an underpass under the northern approaches to the bridge, somewhat similar to the underpass under the Grey Street bridge. On the eastern end, the underpass will join the top end of Elizabeth Street, and, in addition, the extension of Queen's Wharf Road will lead from the underpass to Margaret Street. On the western end, the underpass will join up with Adelaide Street which, for this purpose, is to be extended through to North Quay. The purpose of the underpass is to prevent the movement of traffic across Queen Street, that is, across the main line of traffic entering and leaving the bridge.

The purpose of extending Queen's Wharf Road is to allow busses and other heavy traffic to bypass the main city area bounded by Charlotte, George, Alice and Queen Streets.

It is proposed to widen Queen Street opposite the Treasury Building and North Quay from the Bridge to the Adelaide Street extension by a realignment 15 feet 6 inches back from the present alignment.

The proposal requires the demolition of certain State property, namely, the Police Court buildings, the State Children Department building, and certain small buildings behind the building occupied by the Department of Health and Home Affairs and the Department of Agriculture and Stock. It has been submitted to the Co-ordinator-General for examination by his officers and ultimately a report to me as Minister.

**Mr. Hiley:** Does that mean that the actual site of the bridge will be only a few yards upstream from the present bridge?

**Mr. WALSH:** That obviously would be so, as the approaches are to be realigned around the Treasury Building and North Quay. The impression conveyed is that that would be the obvious site.

**Mr. Hiley:** And on the southern side it comes into Victoria Place?

**Mr. WALSH:** I think the same thing applies there, too. I think hon. members will appreciate the importance of that at this stage.

The amendment to the Act will give the city council power to proceed with the construction of the bridge. Already the Prudential Insurance Co. proposes to build a very substantial building on the corner of North Quay and in discussing the matter with one

of its representatives the other day I was told that in planning the new premises it has taken into consideration the realignment.

The council's proposal no doubt will be an improvement, as I said, and one that will require very careful examination, because it involves the disturbance of many buildings. It may be that part of the scheme will be carried out immediately and the rest proceeded with as time goes on. I recall that Mr. Harvey, the Surveyor-General, made some submissions to me some years ago about a proposal for an underpass to relieve the position there and these proposals seem to be an extension of the principles contained in Mr. Harvey's suggestions.

When introducing the Bill I invited hon. members, before the principles were finally accepted, to discuss the Brisbane Town Plan. It is true that an amendment is provided for in the City of Brisbane Improvement Act so far as it applies to certain principles. The extent to which you, Mr. Speaker, will allow hon. members to discuss the Town Plan on the second reading of the Bill is, of course, another matter. I do not propose to go into it now other than to say that I should be happy if members on both sides expressed their viewpoint on the proposed plan. That would be of some help to the Director of Local Government in his examination of the plan when it is submitted by the council. For those who do not know I might say, too, that the plan has not yet been received by the Director of Local Government but I have no doubt that when it is received the numerous views put forward here by hon. members on both sides will be considered. They could be helpful in many respects.

The Bill has been in the hands of hon. members now for some time and they have had an opportunity of examining it and its effect upon the principal Act. I submit that they will agree to the second reading.

**Mr. MORRIS** (Mt. Coot-tha) (11.19 a.m.): This session has been rather unusual in that quite a few Bills have been submitted to the Chamber and in the debates on them, particularly on the first reading, you, Mr. Speaker, and the Chairman of Committees, have allowed hon. members a very wide scope. I believe this has caused quite a number of matters to be lifted above party politics and has brought about good and sound discussion and I congratulate both you and the Chairman on that result. I do not propose to expand on it, because I realise that this is the second-reading stage of the Bill. I make that comment merely because this is one of the Bills that have been very widely discussed on the initiation.

There are four parts to this Bill, the first part dealing with preliminary matters and the second with the replacement of Victoria Bridge. I was very interested this morning to hear from the Treasurer that it is intended to provide for an underpass to help to relieve traffic congestion in that section of the city. I think that is an excellent idea because it is an area where there is a great deal of congestion, which is greatly accentuated by

busses, particularly during the busy hours of the day. I realise that this will be a greater undertaking than merely building a bridge—it is intended also to relieve the present traffic bottleneck—and I am very glad to know that the council will have the help of engineers in the Department of the Co-ordinator-General in overcoming many of its problems. But there are places in Greater Brisbane where traffic congestion is even worse than it is in this area, and where I have in the past suggested the provision of roundabouts such as exist in England. However, this is a very good step in the right direction, and I know that all hon. members on this side of the House, and in fact all hon. members of this Parliament, will be glad to know that this effort is being made to overcome these problems.

The third part of the Bill deals with something that could perhaps be regarded as relatively unimportant, that is, the advertising by the council of its intention to resume land. When I read the Bill in conjunction with the Act, I find that previously, if the council intended to resume land, it had to advertise the fact in the "Government Gazette" and in two newspapers. The amendment cuts that down to one newspaper. I do not suppose there is anything to quarrel about in that, although there are two newspapers circulating in the Greater Brisbane area and some people read one exclusively and other people read the other exclusively. Personally, I think it would have been better to continue the existing practice of advertising in two newspapers, but I will not quarrel with the amendment because I do not think it is a very material point.

**Mr. Walsh:** We were not very concerned about it, but the council desired to reduce costs.

**Mr. MORRIS:** I appreciate that the proposal will reduce the council's costs, and from that point of view I suppose it is all right. However, the cost of the second advertisement would be so small that I think it would have been worth while continuing the existing practice, because of the advantage that would have been gained.

**Mr. Walsh:** As a matter of fact, the council's proposal was that these advertisements should be published only in the "Government Gazette."

**Mr. MORRIS:** That would have been a great pity, and I am very glad that the Treasurer did not succumb to any temptation to satisfy the council's wishes. Very few people read the "Government Gazette," but if notice of an intended resumption is published in one newspaper, most people who are interested will get to hear of it.

**Mr. Walsh:** The procedure of advertising in only one newspaper exists in many other Acts.

**Mr. MORRIS:** As I say, I am not quarrelling with the proposal. Although I think it would have been better to continue the practice of advertising in two newspapers, I do not think the matter is sufficiently important to warrant a difference of opinion.

I can see no cause for disagreement with the fourth part of the Bill. On the contrary, we think it is very desirable that that provision should be written into our legislation.

Reverting to Part III. of the Bill, one matter has occurred to me in relation to the City of Brisbane Improvement Act. Under the law the council is required to inform the public by advertisement in a newspaper that it proposes to resume certain land and it seems almost incomprehensible to me that the same procedure should not apply in the case of the sale of land held by the council. It would have been desirable to have a provision in this Bill requiring the council to follow the same procedure in relation to the sale of any of its land as it is now required to follow where it proposes to resume land. Land may come into the hands of the council through arrears of rates or by the exercise of its right of resumption for public purposes, such as the Green Belt or park land.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The Bill does not refer to the sale of land by the council.

**Mr. MORRIS:** That is the important omission that I have in mind.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! There is no such provision in the Bill.

**Mr. MORRIS:** That is just my quarrel and I am glad that you too have noted the omission, Mr. Speaker. It shows that your mind is on the debate all the time. It is a very sorry and notable omission and I should like your permission to elaborate my point because I think I shall be able to highlight the desirableness of having such a provision in the measure.

**Mr. Walsh:** Most local authorities, I notice, advertise the sale of their land as a matter of policy.

**Mr. MORRIS:** I agree that most local authorities do it as a matter of policy and as a matter of high principle, but because I know of certain cases where the sale of the land has not been advertised and thus a great deal of harm has been done, not only to the people in the immediate area but also to the good name of the city council concerned, I think that such a provision should be included in the Bill.

**Mr. Walsh:** To which particular city council are you referring?

**Mr. MORRIS:** As the hon. gentleman asked me I will tell him. I am referring to the Brisbane City Council. I have not access to the files of the Brisbane City Council.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** I hope that the hon. member is not going to develop his argument round something that is not contained in the Bill. It makes no reference to the need to advertise the sale of land by the Brisbane City Council. I have no objection to the hon. member's making reference to the fact but I cannot allow him to develop his argument round it.

**Mr. MORRIS:** I must confess to considerable disappointment because you will

not allow me to do that, Mr. Speaker. However, I think you have given your ruling in that way because you believe it to be correct and in conformity with Standing Orders. I do not question your ruling. I will answer the question by the Treasurer and then pass on to a consideration of the measure itself. My answer to his question is that I do not care a tinker's damn whether it was done by the present Brisbane City Council administration, the Chandler administration, or by anyone else. If I know that any administration is not carrying out the practice that has been adopted over the years of advertising the sale of council land, I shall criticise that administration. I now pass on to a consideration of the measure itself.

**Mr. Power:** An alderman of a previous Brisbane City Council got commission on the sale of council land.

**Mr. MORRIS:** It may be so. That is probably an attempt to get me off the track.

I believe that the Minister is seized of the importance of the points that I have made, and I have no doubt that he will look into this angle in the sale of lands and see that the practice they say is normal is adopted in all cases. Your ruling, Mr. Speaker, makes me believe that it may be desirable at a later stage of the debate to have the Bill amended to make it not only a practice but an obligation on the council—

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I should like to point out that when introducing the Bill the Minister said nothing about selling land, but that the council was giving notice of the resumption of land.

**Mr. MORRIS:** To recapitulate, I do not think there is any member on this side who disagrees with any part of the Bill. We think it is a major step forward to remove the bottleneck at the Queen Street end of Victoria Bridge. The other principles are small in relation to that one. None of them is undesirable, but I think that all of them could have been enlarged very considerably.

**Mr. HILEY (Coorparoo) (11.32 a.m.):** The Treasurer in his introductory speech set out to attract a wide and full discussion on certain aspects that were not dealt with in the measure, but were ancillary to its purpose. He treated the Committee so generously on that occasion that the most we can do on this occasion is to tell him that this measure is quite satisfactory and that we approve of it. This morning he followed up his good example on the initiation by making an important announcement about the progress made in the planning of the new bridge. He indicated that a broad plan has been prepared and it is now about to receive the consideration of the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works and his engineering staff. The details the Minister gave to the House encourage me to have a brief word on some of the things he said.

I am delighted to hear that one of the cardinal features of the plan will be the provision of a traffic underpass. It is the sort of thing that, if prepared for at the

outset of a scheme, can be done at tolerable cost and without reaching a prohibitive figure. Twenty or thirty years later the difficulties are so great and the cost so enormous that it becomes almost impossible. I ask the Minister to give consideration to a suggestion that as part of his proposal for a traffic underpass there should be provision also for pedestrian subways. I think it is inevitable that the river bank will be the loading point for a vast percentage of Brisbane's bus traffic and therefore there will be a string of pedestrians coming up from the city and wanting to cross to that point.

**Mr. Aikens:** Do you want a pedestrian subway under the river?

**Mr. HILEY:** Under the roadway. It is something that is not extremely costly, but it makes a tremendous difference to the safety and convenience of the pedestrian traffic.

**Mr. Walsh:** There is a lot to be said in favour of such a subway outside Anzac Square.

**Mr. HILEY:** There is indeed. And when I notice the congestion that occurs at the A.M.P. corner I am reminded that such a subway would overcome many traffic difficulties, especially at the peak hours of the day.

The Treasurer told the House also that it is proposed to realign the western side of Queen Street as far as George Street, I understood, by some 16 feet.

**Mr. Walsh:** 15 ft. 6 in.

**Mr. HILEY:** I realise that such a proposal is an important one. Such a work always confronts the constructing authority with resumption costs and the destruction of certain buildings. However, once the decision is made to realign the street, little more cost is involved in realigning it generously. If fronts of existing buildings have to be demolished and new buildings erected because a roadway is to be increased in width by 3 feet, it could with advantage be widened by 30 feet without a great deal more cost. I hope there will be no disposition to make the widening of that section of Queen Street the narrowest widening that may be made and that if there is any erring at all it will be on the side of a bold and generous widening rather than a restricted and narrow one. I have observed that the Treasury Building at the end of Queen Street is built back from the alignment of the street and there is a very generous width of footpath in front of the existing Treasury Building. I do not know the extent to which some part of that might, with advantage, be brought into the broad area but I offer that for examination and consideration by the technical officers.

**Mr. Walsh:** That would be only the middle of the building.

**Mr. HILEY:** I know that it is aligned back there, and even at the corner—I may be wrong—I always thought that the footpath there is more generous than farther down Queen Street. I may be quite wrong.

The next point is the position of the bridge. It seems to me that the position implied in what the Treasurer stated in this House this morning will preserve the essential character of Queen Street in relation to the city. As Adelaide Street has been widened for most of its depth there had been some doubt whether in the building of the new bridge Queen Street would lose its dominant character as the main artery of the city's traffic and would be replaced by Adelaide Street which leads down to the Civic Square and provides a fuller vista and a wider traffic lane. It seems to me that in this proposal the dominant character of Queen Street is retained. There may be an advantage in preserving it but I make that observation as one of the inescapable thoughts that flow from what the Treasurer told the House this morning.

I hope in planning the bridge thought will be given to making it generously wide and there will be at least six traffic lanes. I do not think that in the purpose it serves in the traffic of Brisbane a four-lane bridge would be sufficient. I should prefer to see the bridge have six lanes especially if two of these lanes are to be virtually taken up by rail traffic—trams running along steel rails. If there are trams running on steel rails it would inhibit consideration of the next suggestion I am about to make. I have noticed that some of the main thoroughfares of the world leading in and out of main cities are designed and managed in such a way as to take the load variation between the traffic in great bulk coming into the city in the morning and the denser traffic going out in the evening. I have noticed that in some cities of the world it is done by having a string of traffic lights with varying switches. Travelling into New York from New Jersey in the morning, as one drives in on the six-lane traffic road, four of the roads have strings of green lights at intervals of every 200 or 300 yards showing that these lanes are open for traffic coming into New York. Two of the lanes going out would have red lights over them, showing that traffic to New York cannot go along them. In the evening, they simply throw a few switches and there are four outgoing laneways to take the traffic out of the city and only two taking it in.

**Mr. Brosnan:** They do it also with paper cones.

**Mr. HILEY:** That is so. In Chicago they have a more elaborate method which I have never seen anywhere else. There they have the lanes divided by little ramps mounted on a kind of hydraulic gear. These ramps are lowered hydraulically to the level of the roadway and traffic is enabled to pass over them. If they want to open another lane, they drop the ramp in the next lane, and so on. These ramps are finished in white concrete and by raising or lowering them they are able to decrease or increase the number of lanes conveying traffic in a particular direction. I must confess that I did not see that system anywhere else, and I should imagine that plant such as that, with hydraulic gear, over a considerable distance, would be a costly method of regulating traffic

lanes. A method I saw working with great fluency and simplicity was that of the overhead traffic lights, such as they use on the Sydney Harbour Bridge and such as I saw on some of the main highways in and out of New York. I make the suggestion to the Treasurer that thought might be given to avoiding structural divisions between traffic and arranging the new bridge so that there can be some widening of the traffic lanes when the inbound load is heavy in the morning and the outgoing load is heavy at night. It may be that in that way a greater and more useful service can be given to the city.

I have another plea to make. I hope that in all these matters touching improvement of the planning of the city we shall always spare a thought for the beautiful things of nature that have come down to us through the ages. Listening to the Minister, it struck me that it is probable that this underpass will go across the strip of land which lies immediately above Hayles Wharf on the eastern side of the present bridge. If the Treasurer looks along there in two or three months' time he will see a collection of trees. These trees are not natives of Australia; they are natives of Madagascar. They are relatively rare in Australia. I understand these trees are the result of seeds planted from the only tree of this kind that came to Australia in the early days. There is a magnificent specimen in the Botanical Gardens right opposite the Botanical Museum. When it is in full blossom, it is a sight worth going miles to see.

On the river bank there are about six or seven young *colvillea racemosa* trees. They seem to me to be about 15 or 20 years old. They are not too big to stand removal. It would be a crying shame if somebody went along and put an axe into them or pushed these lovely trees out of existence with a bulldozer. They usually come into flower just after Christmas. They have orange flowers arranged on spines that extend outwards like the spokes of a wheel and would be about 2 feet to 2 feet 6 inches in circumference. They are delightful, and I make that plea for them. Any man who is a lover of nature would find some practicable way of saving them, of lifting them *holus bolus* and putting them on a fresh site. In recent years we have learned much of the technique of moving adult trees. At one time we had the idea that we could only lift seedlings and small plants. Nowadays, botanists who know their job will move a big tree. They go to work on it with great cranes, suitable trucks and lifting gear, and shift a mature tree to a new site.

**Mr. Power:** They shifted them from Countess Street to Sandgate not so long ago.

**Mr. HILEY:** That is so.

**Mr. Aikens:** When opening the Suez Canal 100 years ago, they transplanted orange trees in full fruit.

**Mr. HILEY:** I repeat that I think every citizen will thank the Minister for the very full opportunity that he provided to consider

these very important matters and I close with this further plea—and it will be a plea partly to the Minister and partly to the Press—that the proposal outlined might be the subject of a very full publication, supported by drawings, pictures, and impressions of what this is going to mean in the future life of the city of Brisbane. I am sure that that would encourage a wide understanding and very wide discussion among the citizens, which I should regard as being wholly good. I believe that a forum of public opinion would thus be invited to understand this measure and to discuss it fully and I think that the Treasurer might gain, through letters to the editors of the papers, through an observation here and a comment there, a great deal of information that he would be very glad to have in considering the proposal.

**Mr. Walsh:** The Lord spare us letters to the editor.

**Mr. HILEY:** It is true that letters to the editor can be a very mixed benefit; they often are; but there is an occasional gem amongst them.

**Mr. Power:** You're telling me. There was one on the Minister for Justice yesterday by a British migrant.

**Mr. HILEY:** I should not frown on the fact that it might attract some letters to the editor. My only regret would be that the public knew so little about it that no one was in a position to write even one letter to some editor.

**Hon. E. J. WALSH** (Bundaberg—Treasurer) (11.47 a.m.), in reply: I think hon. members have indicated their approval of the principles in the Bill. I should like to say that the proposal to construct a new bridge in lieu of the existing Victoria Bridge has been receiving the attention of the authorities for a considerable time. I think it is well to emphasise that it is not so much increased cross-river communications that is required as some adjustment to the approaches to the existing ones. I have to admit that even though the Story Bridge was constructed in what might be called comparatively recent times we cannot be very happy about its southern approaches, for example. A good wide roadway leads into it but the approaches could not be regarded as satisfactory, having regard to the enormous increase in traffic in residential areas on the southern side and the consequent increase in bus traffic, other motor-vehicle traffic, and so on, across that bridge. I think it serves a useful purpose, when proposals of this kind are being considered, if the fullest possible publicity can be given to them.

**Opposition Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. WALSH:** I can remember that even in my day as Secretary for Public Lands, when Mr. Harvey first submitted the proposals I mentioned earlier—I was taking a little interest in such matters while I was Secretary for Public Lands, and subsequently during my term as Minister for Transport—the same problem arose and recommendations and submissions were made to improve the entrances and outlets to the city. I recall that a census was

taken at the peak hours in the morning and the afternoon and that it showed something like 600 to 700 motor vehicles passed a given point in Queen Street. If that was so back in 1944, you can imagine what it would be like today, and it is growing worse every day. Consequently in any proposal to construct new bridges, apart from any other adjustments that may be made in the city proper, consideration must be given to the increases in traffic generally.

I will convey to the authorities who will be charged with constructing the bridge the suggestion of the hon. member for Coorparoo. I am a tree-lover myself, and I do not like to see good trees destroyed. However, we must appreciate the fact that if trees are likely to interrupt orderly planning, progress, and development, they must be removed, but the hon. member's suggestion is a good one and if necessary the trees can be removed to another site so that they can be preserved.

The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha dealt with the advertising of compulsory acquisitions, which is what the Bill deals with. For a number of years local authorities have felt obliged to advertise such things in more than one newspaper, but present advertising costs are very heavy. Anyone who has engaged in political campaigns has some idea of it and will realise the burden that local authorities have to bear in advertising every proposal to acquire land compulsorily. I should say that it would be sufficient to advertise in one newspaper, although the Bill does not take away from the council the right to advertise in more newspapers than one if it wants to. The council's original proposal to advertise only in the "Government Gazette" its intention to compulsorily acquire land would not have been in keeping with the requirements of the community generally, particularly those interested in the acquisition of the property, such as ratepayers and property-owners.

As advertisements in connection with the sale of land are not dealt with in the Bill, I do not intend to deal with them. However, over the years I have noticed local authorities advertising quite substantial schedules of property for sale by auction. If any hon. member has a knowledge of any irregularities in that direction, that would justify an examination of the law and an amendment to it by way of a subsequent Bill.

As hon. members generally have more or less signified their approval of the Bill, I have nothing further to add.

Motion (Mr. Walsh) agreed to.

#### COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Clark, Fitzroy, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 to 6, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7—Amendment of s. 7; Taking of land by notice of resumption—

**Mr. MORRIS** (Mt. Coot-tha) (11.55 a.m.): I desire to move an amendment, and I am prompted to do it by the remark of the

Treasurer that if I had any suggestion of any irregularity in relation to the sale of land that would be some justification for an examination of the matter. For that reason I move the following amendment:—

“On page 3, line 48, after the word ‘newspaper,’ insert the following words—

‘The said section seven is further amended by inserting after the word ‘Council’ where it secondly occurs in such section the words ‘or that land having been resumed under the provisions of this Act is no longer required by the Council;’”

The section would then read as follows:—

“The council shall from time to time, by notice of resumption published in the ‘Gazette’ and at least one newspaper circulating in the city, declare that land required for the purposes of this Act has been taken by the council or that land having been resumed under the provisions of this Act is no longer required by the council; and a list of the several parcels of the land taken shall be contained in or annexed to the notice of resumption.”

We agree that it is desirable and, in fact, necessary, that if land is to be resumed the fact must be advertised, and the purpose of my amendment is to see that land that is to be sold by the council must also be advertised. I feel that my amendment is very much in line with the invitation by the Treasurer who said that if I had any suggestion of any irregularities in relation to the sale of the land, that would be justification for an examination of the matter. Let me proceed to give what I believe to be evidence—well—of maladministration in relation to the sale of land. I use that phrase because it is the only way in which I can express myself in relation to the matter.

**Mr. WALSH:** I rise to a point of order. I do not want to limit discussion of the principles contained in the Bill but I should like to know whether the hon. member is in order in discussing something that is not contained in the Bill.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The amendment is outside of the order of leave and I have no alternative but to rule it out of order.

**Mr. MORRIS:** It is with the greatest regret that I now move that your ruling be disagreed with.

**The CHAIRMAN:** If the hon. member does not give me his motion in writing I shall have to decline to accept it.

**Mr. MORRIS:** I am in the middle of writing it now. I had no idea that I should be called upon to move a disagreement with your ruling, Mr. Clark, and having done so, I am now writing out my motion as fast as any normal man can write.

**Mr. MORRIS:** I claim the right to discuss the resolution.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! This being a day allotted for Supply I shall now leave the Chair and make my report.

**Mr. MORRIS:** May I ask a question? Shall I be permitted on the next occasion to discuss this matter?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Yes.

*At 12 noon, in accordance with Standing Order 307, the House went into Committee of Supply.*

#### SUPPLY.

#### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH ALLOTTED DAYS.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Clark, Fitzroy, in the chair.)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1953-1954.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION.

**Hon. W. POWER** (Baroona—Attorney-General) (12.1 p.m.): I move—

“That £43,944 be granted for ‘Electoral Registration.’”

The amount required is £58,701 less than last year’s expenditure, the additional requirements for salaries being £227 whilst for contingencies the amount provided is £58,928 less than in the last financial year.

The decrease in contingencies is brought about by the fact that provision is not required for a general election, which cost £56,557 in the financial year 1952-1953.

It is very difficult to move a motion with the amount of noise that is going on.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I ask hon. members to pay more attention. There is too much noise in the Chamber.

**Mr. POWER:** This is one of the most important Votes that come within the Estimates of this department. The Principal Electoral Officer is a person holding a very high and important office and he carries very heavy responsibilities. He is virtually the officer responsible for the control of the elections, in which he is assisted by the Under Secretary. As I pointed out earlier, he is one of our very hard workers. While paying a compliment to the work of Mr. Herlihy I should like to say a few words also about Mr. Ron Matthews, who plays a very important part in helping Mr. Herlihy in the conduct of elections. Mr. Matthews is an outstanding officer who is always prepared to give of his best on behalf of the department. I prophesy that later on he will reach a very high position in the Public Service of this State. He has on more than one occasion been appointed to positions that he has lost as the result of appeals. He is hard-working and enthusiastic in carrying out his duties. He has a very pleasant nature. I had occasion to call him back when he was on holidays when the elections were on and he came back with a smile and no complaint. We would do with a few more like Mr. Byrne, Mr. Herlihy, and Mr. Matthews, who carry out very arduous work. There are other people as well who carry very heavy responsibilities. We have 75 electorates. Digressing

for a moment I point out that 50 of them were held by the Labour Party; the figure is now 48 but according to my official reports we shall be back to 49 after Saturday next.

**Mr. Aikens:** Another puppet.

**Mr. POWER:** That may be the hon. member's opinion. The Standing Orders preclude me from expressing my opinion of what the hon. member is. Hon. members opposite will understand what is in my mind but I leave the matter of dealing with the hon. member for Mundingburra to the hon. member for Cairns, who can keep him well under control.

There are over 1,500 polling places and the work of sending out ballot papers and all the forms necessary for the proper conduct of a general election is a very heavy responsibility and entails much hard work and organisation. There is a returning officer for each of the 75 electorates. It was very pleasing to me as Minister in charge of the Department of Justice in my first year of office as the Minister in charge of the conduct of elections to have had no complaints from hon. members opposite or from any candidates, successful or defeated. This shows there must have been general satisfaction among all parties with the way in which the election was conducted. That is a tribute to the work of the 75 returning officers throughout the State. For appointment as returning officers we prefer to have men in the Government services holding responsible positions. Of course, we are not always able to get that type of officer and in electorates where this is not possible we endeavour always to get those who we think are the most competent men. These gentlemen must have first-hand knowledge of the working of the Elections Act. They select the officers to help them on the day of the election and perhaps some little time before and after that day. It is not always easy to get the men required, particularly in country areas in outback places and on stations.

We have endeavoured to meet the wishes of hon. members of both sides of the Committee for the establishment of additional polling booths and I am sure I shall have the unanimous support of all hon. members when I say it is our duty to provide facilities for voting and have them as accessible as possible to electors who under the Elections Act are required to vote. If a request comes from either side of the House for the establishment of a polling booth the Department of Justice usually accedes to that request and on the boundaries of electorates joint polling booths have often been set up. That is very important. The hon. member for Southport raised such a matter with me some time ago and we were able to have his request acceded to.

At times, and sometimes in the busy period, people visit a polling booth and ask for a ballot paper to vote for another electorate. This lodging of an absentee vote takes up a good deal of time and entails a good

deal of work. However, a direction has been given and carried out that no person must be refused the right to vote at any polling booth, whether his name is or is not on the roll. If such a person makes a declaration that his or her name is on the roll or has been wrongly removed he is entitled to get a ballot paper to vote for the electorate. Such ballot papers are enclosed in envelopes taken to the Electoral Office and there checked. I must say that of the great number of votes cast in this way very few are allowed.

**Mr. Sparkes:** It is just a mistake on the part of some people; it is not that they have done something wrong.

**Mr. POWER:** I mentioned an instance formerly in this Chamber: I read the report of the investigation. I used my discretion. Thank goodness, it was not in my own electorate, but in the electorate of a member of the Opposition. I will not disclose the name. I was satisfied, on the explanation given to the police, whom we asked to investigate the matter, that a mistake had been made.

Then it is suggested that there are more names on the roll than there should be. We have been able to explode that canard without difficulty. Let me point out, without being in any way derogatory of the men who held this office before me, that on the last occasion we had two canvasses, one before the end of the year and one shortly afterwards. That brought the roll to a state of near-perfection. We had a police canvass in the metropolitan and country areas but hon. members who represent country electorates will appreciate that it would be physically impossible for a police constable to visit all the areas coming under his jurisdiction. However, in our efforts to improve the position and ensure that every person who was entitled to vote was enrolled, we arrange that our clerks of petty sessions enrol persons who are entitled and wish to be enrolled, and we arranged recently with the Department of Public Instruction for school teachers, especially those in the remote areas, to make a check in order to ensure that all people in the district were enrolled. In this way we are bringing the rolls as near to perfection as possible.

Sometimes complaints are made when names are removed from the roll in error. It is well known that many people, seasonal workers in particular, who have a permanent place of residence at a hotel or boarding house in a town, and who leave that place of residence in following their employment, sometimes have their names removed from the roll. The law provides that a person is entitled to be enrolled in the electorate in which he has his permanent place of residence, and these places would be the permanent places of residence of such men.

Everyone will agree that it is not in my nature to raise controversial matters, but in stating a case it is good sometimes to make comparisons. We are desirous of seeing that everybody's name is on the roll, but I find that between the years 1929 and 1932 the

names of a large number of people were removed from the roll, and I shall explain the reason for that. People who are associated with the Labour Party, both inside and outside this Parliament, will recollect that in those days a single man had to travel 25 miles before he could obtain rations. When they were away a month the names of such men were struck off the roll. If my memory serves me correctly, I think at that time about 80,000 names—it might have been more, but I give those who I am criticising the benefit of being easy on them—were removed from the roll. Those people were disfranchised. They were unable to vote.

**A Government Member:** Were they all single men?

**Mr. POWER:** The great majority of them. They were seeking work to provide for themselves and their families and large numbers of them were removed from the rolls and as a result were unable to record a vote. In addition many names were left off the rolls as a result of the redistribution of the electorates. Despite that disfranchisement of some 80,000 electors, all of them of the working-class I should say, the people of Queensland, gave Labour an excellent victory in 1932 and they have enabled us to go on to bigger and better wins since. In the last one it was very pleasing to me to know that, under the leadership of Mr. Gair the first time as Premier, we were returned with a splendid majority and that because of the sound policy he enunciated and the good sense of the electors a large number of the members of the Opposition were deprived of something they held very dear and trotted out each time election matters were being discussed, that is, that we were a minority Government. That cannot be said about us today.

**Mr. Sparkes:** You are only trying to stonewall.

**Mr. POWER:** No, I am not, as a matter of fact. Do you think I am stonewalling?

**Mr. Sparkes:** Too right!

**Mr. POWER:** I shall be hitting out very heavily in a minute and the hon. member will know that I am not stonewalling then. When he catches me out or offside, that will be the day! I know all the rules of this game.

Coming back to the matter I was discussing when I was subjected to interruption by a certain member of the Opposition—and again in my charity I shall not name the gentleman who was responsible for it—I say that we have been able to deprive the Opposition of any basis for their allegation that we were a minority Government. When analysed that is very interesting because the figures show—and I do not think there is any need for me to produce them—that neither of the Opposition parties, which accused us of being a minority Government, could have formed a Government after the last election if all their candidates had been elected. What an unholy mess there would have been if we had had a composite Government here! Look at what happened in

the southern States and at the coming bi-election. Quite a decent amount of discussion and—

**Mr. Sparkes:** Quite a decent brawl at Maryborough, too.

**Mr. POWER:** There was no brawl at Maryborough. As a matter of fact, the Opposition, both Liberal and Country Party, knew that their chances of success were nil and did not even nominate a candidate so that they at least must be satisfied with the work that the Labour Party is doing. If I were in the Opposition I should remain very silent about that. However, as a result of proper administration we have been able to remain a Government for 30 years and be returned on the last occasion with seven new seats.

Now let us look at what happened some years ago about elections in this State. I will remember that the Government of the day, of the same political colour as the hon. gentleman opposite, contended that they believed in democracy. Hon. members opposite profess to believe in the principle of one man, one vote, but what did they do in regard to municipal elections? They amended the electoral laws to provide for a property franchise, with the result that thousands of people were disfranchised. In addition, people living in other parts of the world were entitled to a vote and it was possible for one man to have a vote in each of 20 different electorates. That is the sort of election in which the Opposition believe.

Let us examine also the redistribution that took place between 1929 and 1932. No doubt somebody will say that I am now raising something that is contentious but, as I said before, I am not likely to do that. On the occasion of that distribution of the ten seats that were eliminated eight were held by Labour. One of the eliminated Opposition seats was held by a man who had previously belonged to this party but, to use a word that we frequently hear, he ratted on the party. He was fondled and nurtured by the Opposition for a little while but when the redistribution took place they said, "Off with his head", and out he went. As I say, eight Labour seats were eliminated on that occasion, and that is how I came to be a member of this Parliament. The old Paddington seat was eliminated and the Baroona electorate came into being. I hold the distinction of being the first member for that electorate, having been elected in 1935. I extend my thanks to the Opposition for finding for me a seat in Parliament.

**Mr. Kerr:** From some of the remarks you make, you are very ungrateful.

**Mr. POWER:** I am not ungrateful. As a matter of fact, I am one of the most grateful members of this Assembly. If the hon. member who has just interjected will read "Hansard", he will find that he has frequently commended me for my generous treatment of the Opposition.

I will return to the way in which the returning officers in various parts of the

State conduct our elections, and I thank them for the excellent job of work they have done. I was very happy with the way in which this year's election was conducted, and I received not one word of complaint from anybody who was engaged in it. We had the usual bellyache from "The Courier-Mail" that there were too many names on the roll and a suggestion that we should use the Commonwealth roll. However, that is all past history.

**Mr. MUNRO** (Toowong) (12.23 p.m.): I propose to take up only a few minutes of the time of the Committee on this Vote. My remarks will be directed in the main towards endeavouring to help the Committee in viewing it in its proper perspective.

As members of the Committee know, sixteen days are allotted to the consideration of these Estimates, which involve the consideration of a total expenditure of £67,482,587. That expenditure is spread over 15 main sections, each of which is divided into various sub-sections. We are now considering one of twelve sub-sections of what I regard as a most important section, that is, the Department of Justice. You, Mr. Clark, very wisely in the early stages of this debate pointed out that you proposed to follow the practice of allowing full discussion on the Chief Office Vote of each department so far as Consolidated Revenue is concerned, and then to confine the discussion to each particular Vote. I think every thinking member of the Committee will agree with me when I say that we waste a colossal amount of time in unnecessary talk with the ostensible purpose of considering the Estimates. I am acutely conscious of the fact that this Committee has the responsibility of considering these estimates amounting to £67,000,000.

**Mr. Power:** Do you suggest that we should confine our remarks to the Vote for the Chief Office?

**Mr. MUNRO:** No. I am pointing out the waste of time that takes place. I am pointing out in particular how time is taken up in tremendously long discussions on one or two departments. Because we have a limited time available to discuss the whole of the Estimates the inescapable result is that a great number of departments involving an expenditure of many millions of pounds go through in the last day or two without adequate discussion. I feel that that weakness in our procedure must receive consideration and I would make my personal appeal to hon. members on both sides of the Chamber to see that each section or sub-section is treated in its proper perspective. I am not suggesting that there should be any limitation of time on any particular section but I think we should endeavour to allow at least some time for the discussion of the Estimates of every department. On electoral registration every hon. member could speak for 25 minutes without difficulty; any one of us could indulge in personal reminiscences in regard to our own experiences. I would point out, however, that the subject of electoral registration has already been

discussed to a reasonable extent under the heading of Chief Office. Therefore I think that we should endeavour to limit our speeches to a reasonably short compass not only on this particular section but on the remaining subsections of the Department of Justice so that other Ministers will have an opportunity of bringing forward the Estimates for their departments, thus giving hon. members on this side of the Chamber at least some opportunity to discuss the affairs of other departments.

**Mr. AIKENS** (Mundingburra) (12.27 p.m.): The hon. member for Toowong has taken four years to find out what an hon. member of average intelligence finds out in the first session he is in Parliament. There are 15 departments in the Estimates but the Government determine that only three or four will be debated. Every year we have a repetition of that practice. We saw it the other day and we shall see it again today. When the Estimates for a sub-department of this department was under discussion the other day we saw members of the Labour Party, either ordered or incited to stand up in this Chamber and speak, who read, actually read, for 25 minutes from reports that had been supplied to every other hon. member of the Chamber. We saw also hon. members of the Labour Party standing up one after the other, each giving his impressions of his visit to Boggo Road gaoi—the one dealing with the laundry, the other with bread, the other with the saddlery section, and so it goes on.

I would say to the hon. member for Toowong that if he can end this deliberate stonewalling on the part of the Government and so allow a more detailed discussion of the Estimates he will earn the praise and commendation of every free-thinking person in this Chamber. Hon. members opposite are not guiltless in this regard, nor are they guiltless in regard to some legislation that is brought forward. If you will allow me to digress for a moment, in today's paper it was stated that we shall have a Bill dealing with the fixing up of the Peak Downs scheme.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. AIKENS:** If that Bill does come before the House every member of the Country Party and every member of the Liberal Party will take his full time and repeat what he has said here on five different occasions in regard to Peak Downs.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I ask the hon. member to get back to the Estimates we are discussing.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I will do that; you are not a bad fellow; I respect your ruling. I think I have said enough to convince the hon. member, who took four years to wake up to something that I woke up to in my first session in this Parliament.

I will be as brief as I think the occasion demands. First of all, it would be churlish of me if I omitted to pay a tribute to the

Mundingburra returning officer. Since I was elected in 1944 there have been three returning officers, Mr. Payne, Mr. Pampa and the present returning officer, Mr. Latchford, all of whom have been courteous, efficient, and very fair. No greater compliment can be paid by me to any man.

I will now deal with what I believe to be the greatest political racket ever pulled in any State in the Commonwealth, that is, the remarkable coyness of the Premier before every election in regard to announcing the election date. I see no reason in a true democracy why the election date for the succeeding election should not be announced immediately after the preceding election. I see no reason why the date of the next election in 1956 should not be announced now. There is nothing to stop it from being announced. But the Government in an aura of secrecy hold the date of the election even from some members of the Cabinet—they do not even know.

**Mr. Power:** That is not true.

**Mr. AIKENS:** The Premier acts like a very little boy holding a lolly from his playmates; and when the Press approached him about the probable date of the election he acted like a coy and virtuous mid-Victorian maiden when questioned about her virginity. As a matter of fact, I think he said to the Press reporters prior to the last election that it was not the business of the people to know when an election was being held until it suited his convenience to announce the date.

Let us be honest and frank. If the hon. member for Toowong wants frankness, he will get it from me as he always does. The fixing of the election date in Queensland—and I take it the same circumstances obtain in other States—is a matter of pure and simple political expediency. On this occasion the Government knew early in the year that the Liberal-Country Party in the whole of the Commonwealth was losing favour because of the actions of the Federal Liberal Country Party at Canberra, consequently it was their desire to rush to the people as quickly as possible before the waning favour of the Liberal-Country Party was arrested. In New South Wales, the Labour Party, which for many years held its election on the same day as the Queensland Labour Party, rushed to the people early in February, before the Liberal-Country Party could regain some of its lost favour. The Premier of Queensland would have rushed an election early in February too but for one thing—but for the fact that the Government Printer could not have the rolls and the necessary documents ready in time. What a shocking state of affairs has arisen in this country when an election date is fixed, not to suit the interests or the convenience of the people, not in accordance with our broad conception of democracy, but entirely on the capacity of the Government Printer to get the rolls and other documents ready! Had the Government Printer been able to get the rolls and documents ready in time our last election would have been on 22 or 29 February, but because the Government Printer—despite the fact they were working overtime with extra staff—could not

have the rolls ready for an early rush election, the Premier reluctantly decided to hold the election on 7 March. While the Premier was bickering with the Government Printer he was acting, as I said before, like a coy mid-Victorian virgin with her suitor.

Now let me refer to what I might term, if you will permit me, Mr. Clark, the slobbering hypocrisy of the Premier and members of the Government Party with regard to fixing the date at 7 March. Everyone who lives in North Queensland and has knowledge of the conditions there knows that the wet season is contained in the three months January, February and March. Invariably March is our heaviest wet and cyclonic month, but completely disregarding the conditions in North Queensland and contemptuous of the comfort and convenience of the people of North Queensland and purely and simply to work a political stunt over his political opponents the Premier of Queensland fixed the election date for this year as 7 March—right in the middle of our wettest and greatest cyclonic month. Whoever was in control of the weather—whether it was Jupiter Pluvius, the Deity, or Inigo Jones, does not matter—evidently worked hand in glove with the Government on that occasion, because instead of March being our wettest month this year January happened to be.

**A Government Member interjected.**

**Mr. AIKENS:** The hon. member might have prior information. The Labour Party claimed to have influence with everyone in the community and I have no doubt would have influence with the Deity but luckily for the people of North Queensland and the Government this year January was the wettest month of the three wet months and so the Government were saved the sorry spectacle of seeing polling booths flooded out on 7 March, as everyone expected they would be. The comfort and convenience of the people of North Queensland was the last thing that entered into the mind of the Premier in fixing the election date.

I will not labour my next point but as the result of the fixation of the election date as 7 March several members of this Parliament were robbed of money due to them under the Parliamentary superannuation scheme. I will be perfectly clear on this matter. I understand that the Ministers are very sympathetic with those members who were robbed because of the unduly early election date and I hope they will do something to remedy the grievous injustice that was perpetrated on these men. That is a small thing, but nevertheless significant, that occurred as a result of the Government's precipitate rushing to the polls on 7 March. In effect we were told by the Government that they did not care too hoots in hell about the northern wet or cyclonic season or the discomfort and inconvenience they caused, not only to the candidates but to the people who were required to cast their votes. The 12 or 14 election meetings I addressed during the last election campaign—and March is usually our wettest month—were interrupted by rain on 10 occasions.

Had it been a typically average northern March the whole campaign would have been washed out. Every Northern Queensland member knows that. I repeat that the Government did not care two hoots in hell about the comfort or convenience of the North Queensland electors, but when the Federal Government fixed the tour of Her Majesty the Queen to North Queensland in March next year the same Labour Government raised an anguished howl of protest against sending Her Majesty to North Queensland in the middle of the wet season and in the hot and humid conditions that prevail there at that time. There is an example of the slobbering hypocrisy of this Government. March is quite good enough, when it suits the political expediency and political stunting of the Government to hold an election but the moment Mr. Menzies decides to send the Queen to North Queensland in March, not only did the Premier but many other members of the Labour Party rush to the Press and protest vigorously and vehemently against sending the Queen to North Queensland in the middle of the rainy season.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! There is nothing about the Queen's visit in the Estimates.

**Mr. AIKENS:** You surprise me, Mr. Clark. Nevertheless, I accept your assurance that there is nothing about the Queen's visit in the Estimates. I have no reason to disbelieve what you say. In view of that fact and as I want to keep, if possible, five minutes in this debate to reply to a typical reply that I know the Attorney-General is going to make in which he will first call me a liar, then foully abuse me and finally scatter round the point as much as he possibly can, I now resume my seat.

**Hon. W. POWER** (Baroona—Attorney-General) (12.42 p.m.): The hon. member for Toowong complained that too much time was being spent in repetition when discussing the Estimates for this department and that he would not have time to discuss the activities of other departments. I remind him that whatever takes place here is done under the Standing Orders. If the hon. member wants an alteration in procedure, he can suggest an alteration to the Standing Orders.

Then we had the ramblings of the hon. member for Mundingburra. First he complimented the returning officer for Mundingburra and his staff. I thank him for that. Then he mentioned political rackets alleged to have been engaged in by the Premier. I assure the Committee that the Premier has never been engaged in political rackets. The hon. member for Mundingburra knows all about political rackets. He has been associated with them all his life. Instead of accusing the Premier of engaging in political rackets, I suggest that the hon. member examine his own conscience.

**Mr. Aikens:** I still have a few lessons to learn from you.

**Mr. POWER:** The hon. member has a few lessons to learn from me about many things.

Then the hon. member referred to the announcement of the date of the election. Let me remind him that the decision as to when the elections shall be held is a matter entirely for the Government. We did not hear any criticism of the dates fixed by Governments prior to 1915 and between 1929 and 1932. There was no criticism because we realised that this was purely a matter for decision by the Government. In his desire to belittle the Premier of this State—no doubt he is annoyed because the Premier was returned with such a sweeping majority, which meant depriving the Opposition of their parrot cry of "Minority Government"—it is apparent that the hon. member is associated with the Opposition—

**Mr. Aikens:** Make up your mind. The other day you said I was associated with the Communists.

**Mr. POWER:** And the hon. member is. He is associated with everybody. There is no need for me to assure my colleagues or the public of Queensland that the Premier of this State withholds nothing from his Cabinet. He has done a remarkably good job. He did a remarkably good job as Acting Premier while the late Mr. Hanlon was overseas. His work during that period proved to the people of Queensland the capability, honesty and sincerity of purpose of Vince Gair, the Premier of this State. That is why he obtained such a record majority at the last election. He withholds nothing from the members of his Cabinet.

Then the hon. member talked about slobbering hypocrisy. If anyone should know anything about that he should, because he has indulged in it all his life. Then he said that the election was held deliberately during the wet season in March for the purpose of preventing the people from giving a true expression of their wishes. That was a bit of wishful thinking on the part of the hon. member. There was no wet weather. As a matter of fact, to show what a good judge the Premier was, it was ideal weather in Northern Queensland for the holding of those last elections.

**Mr. Aikens:** I suppose he arranged that beforehand.

**Mr. POWER:** As a matter of fact he did not, but the intelligence of the Premier enabled him to judge that that would be the most suitable time to hold it both from the political point of view and from the point of view of the weather. It is no good the hon. member's trying to pull my leg about this.

I want to correct a statement the hon. member made, although I know it is outside the debate. He said that certain people were robbed as a result of the Government's action in holding that election earlier. Nobody was robbed but if anybody had been he could have had resort to the processes of law, as they have been enacted in the past by this Parliament. If certain people have not

been paid moneys as a result of not serving the full time in accordance with the law, they are being paid in accordance with the law and the hon. member is not fair in making such a statement. The only party that was washed out during the elections in North Queensland on the last occasion was the Aikens Party. It was well washed out.

**Mr. Aikens:** That is different to the Labour Party; it is washed up.

**Mr. POWER:** The Labour Party is far from being washed up. Let us analyse another of the hon. member's stupid statements. How ridiculous they are! He said that the Premier would have had an earlier election except that he could not get the rolls printed.

**Mr. Aikens:** That is true.

**Mr. POWER:** It is not true because I am the Minister in charge of the department that is responsible for the control of the elections.

**Mr. Aikens:** You tried to hold the election on 22 February.

**Mr. POWER:** We never did. That is plainly absurd. The annual rolls were printed at 31 December, 1952. The police could have made a canvass during December, 1952, and the election could have been held on 2 January, 1953. So again the hon. member in his ramblings and rantings just shows how he suffers from hallucinations. I do not propose to waste any more time on him. At the same time I want to make it clear that I am prepared to defend the Premier, as leader of the State, in this Chamber or out of this Chamber when anybody attacks him. The statements of the hon. member, like the great majority of his statements, are totally untrue, absurd, and ridiculous. The hon. member goes to his electorate, gathers a lot of his fans round him, and says, "I said so-and-so and nobody is prepared to challenge me and take action against me because of what I said. I quote from 'Hansard' about so-and-so. Why does not he take legal action against me if it is not true?" The hon. member knows very well that quoting from "Hansard" protects him. That is why he makes the speeches in this Chamber that he would not have, to use an Australian term, the guts to make outside of the Chamber.

**Mr. KEYATTA (Townsville) (12.49 p.m.):** In reply to the hon. member for Toowong, I would say that I remember that years ago the Estimates were considered on a fixed basis of days, and discussion of them was limited. That drew violent protestations from the Opposition so in the discretion of those concerned the procedure was altered and now an Estimate comes up for discussion in rotation over the three-year period of the Parliament and the debate continues until every member entitled to speak or desirous of speaking has done so. That procedure has been allowed to continue at the will of this Parliament. It is not a matter for Cabinet or for the Minister concerned, but for Parliament as a whole. As long as any

member desires to discuss the Estimates relating to a particular department, the debate continues. If the suggestion of the hon. member for Toowong was adopted and so many days were allotted to the Estimates for each department, there would be loud protestations from various members at being deprived of their right to speak. I think the present practice is the correct one. because it allows all members the right to discuss in detail every activity of the department that is being considered.

**Mr. Munro:** What about the Estimates of those departments that do not come forward for consideration?

**Mr. KEYATTA:** They may not come forward this session, but they will at some subsequent session. During the last session we dealt with the Estimates for different departments from those that are being discussed this session.

How does the hon. member suggest that we could limit the debate on a particular department? The only way to do it would be to limit the number of speakers, and then other hon. members would protest against being deprived of their right to speak. Can the hon. member find a workable alternative? His suggestion is a reversion to the previous practice, and if it was adopted there would be loud protestations about gagging and about refusing individual members the right to speak. As I say, the present practice has been followed for years and this is the first occasion on which any objection to it has been raised. I cannot find any fault with the present arrangement. Other departments will come up for discussion during subsequent sessions.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I ask the hon. member for Townsville to get back to the discussion on this Vote.

**Mr. KEYATTA:** I compliment the Minister on his administration of this section of his department. The work that is being carried on in it is a credit both to him and to his administrative officers. The Department of Justice deals with many contentious and difficult matters. Frequently we have to go to that department on personal matters affecting our constituents. In my own case, I first of all send my notes on the matter to the department, and subsequently I have a personal interview with either the Minister or one of his officers. I have always found that if an anomaly exists it has been corrected, or alternatively a letter has been sent to me setting out the full facts of the case.

**Mr. DEWAR (Chermside) (12.54 p.m.):** On this occasion the Attorney-General, in the same way as other Government spokesmen have done over the years, has spoken of the necessity for having a separate State roll, and has endeavoured to convince the people of this State that the Queensland system of enrolling constituents is the most perfect. I am not entering into an argument on that matter, except to say that it has always amazed me that such a vast number of people do not cast votes in our elections, and also that there is very little evidence that many

of them are brought before the court and fined for failing to vote. We know that some people get sick and at the last moment are unable to go to the polling booth to vote. Others again are out of the State on polling day. That was the case in the last 12 months particularly, when many people went overseas to the Coronation. Those circumstances would account for the absence of a fairly substantial number from the polling booths. Generally speaking, it is recognised that if you get a 95 per cent. vote you get a good average.

**Mr. Aikens:** I should say that would be abnormal.

**Mr. DEWAR:** I do not see why we should expect that there would only be a 95 per cent. ballot if the rolls were clean, as some people would put it. I see no reason why the people who do not vote should amount to 5 per cent. of the number enrolled. I have had a look at some of the figures in this connection, with this result—

| Electorate.     | Enrolled. | Voted. | Did not Vote. |
|-----------------|-----------|--------|---------------|
| Bulimba .. ..   | 13,161    | 12,595 | 566           |
| Buranda .. ..   | 10,341    | 9,750  | 591           |
| Chermside .. .. | 15,020    | 14,260 | 754           |
| Kedron .. ..    | 16,492    | 15,790 | 702           |
| Sandgate .. ..  | 15,522    | 14,594 | 928           |
| Sherwood .. ..  | 14,529    | 13,692 | 837           |

The Sandgate figures were amazing.

You can understand that there would be spasmodic movement of people in areas where there was temporary accommodation. That is understandable in the Sherwood electorate, to some extent in Kedron and to a lesser extent in Chermside. Up to about Christmas last there were one or two temporary buildings in the Chermside Housing Area but they would all have been removed by March and the population of the electorate thereby stabilised. Taking those three electorates, the figures show that 5 per cent. of the people enrolled did not vote.

I decided to go further so as to have a proper comparison with people living in the more settled areas, which it happens are seats held by members of the Government party. I was not concerned about that. I was simply looking for a comparison with the more settled areas. I find that in Windsor 10,734 people were enrolled, 10,099 voted and 635 did not vote or 6 per cent. of the number enrolled. Windsor is an electorate about 1 square mile in extent and I should say that not a single block of land has been available for building purposes in that electorate for the last 10 years. The area is fully developed and it offers no opportunity for any increase in the population there. Substantially the same people live there today as lived there in pre-war years, yet 635 people in the electorate did not vote.

Again, in Fortitude Valley, there were 10,463 people enrolled, 9,603 voted and 860 did not vote. That too is a very settled area. There would not be a single block of land available for a new home in the electorate. The only movement in population would be

brought about by the demolition of condemned houses to make way for factory sites, thereby causing the occupants of the houses to move into outer districts. That does not take place every day either yet in this electorate 860 people did not vote.

In Merthyr there were 10,340 on the roll, 9,709 voted and 631 did not vote. It is hard to realise why in a settled area like Merthyr 631 people did not vote. In the Brisbane electorate we have the acme of perfection in this regard. There were 9,717 enrolled, 8,701 voted and 1,016 did not vote, or 10.5 per cent. of those enrolled. That seems an unusually high percentage. In Fortitude Valley 8 per cent. of those enrolled did not vote.

These are settled areas and there does not appear to be any evidence that the rolls are as clean as the Attorney-General says they are. I shall be interested to hear his explanation. When such a large percentage of people do not exercise their right to vote, how is it that we see little evidence that people are fined for not voting? I should be interested to hear figures showing the number of people who have had fines imposed on them because they failed to give a satisfactory explanation as to why they did not vote. I should also be interested to know the number of "Please explain" letters sent out to these people who did not vote were returned "Unknown."

The Minister has always vigorously contended that the Queensland rolls are more thorough and purer than the Federal rolls, because the checking is done by members of the Police Department. In my opinion that is one of the reasons why the rolls are not as pure as members on this side, at any rate, would like to see them. I believe it is an imposition to expect the local police to trudge round doing this additional work at election time. It is rarely they have much time to do it. While no complaint has been made to me on any official basis by any policeman, I have made it a practice wherever I have been to ask the police what their attitude was towards this further imposition, this additional burden that has been placed upon them; and I have found that generally speaking the police admit it is an imposition. They have to attend to their normal duties and then they are asked to attend to the cleaning up of the rolls.

At the last election, on 7 March, if I remember rightly, the police started on the roll work about Christmas time. It is impossible to expect the police to make a thorough examination of the various areas, particularly rapidly growing areas such as Kedron, Sherwood, Chermside, Mt. Gravatt, and Sandgate, where there has been a great influx of people. It is impossible to expect the local policeman to cover the whole area. Generally speaking, if a police officer goes into a street and finds that numbers of the residents were out, his time is so short that it is impossible for him to make a second trip to the same street; therefore I do not believe that the check on the rolls is as thorough as it should be. Again this is no fault of the men doing the job. Because of the tasks put on their shoulders by the

terrific amount of normal police work, it is utterly impossible for them to give time and attention to this job.

In conclusion, I express my appreciation of the work of the men concerned with the smooth running of the election in the electorate I represent. I have had little to do with the State Electoral Office but on the only occasion when it has been necessary since I became a member of Parliament to interview the officers on a small matter I received the courtesy and attention that I expected.

To the returning officer for Chermside, Mr. Waller, I express my gratification for the thoroughness with which he has done his work and take this opportunity of placing on record that Mr. Waller is a man of very high calibre. At all times when he gives a ruling he is quite definite. Of course, he has not always given rulings that were correct from my point of view, but on those occasions when he has given a ruling, once he has done so nothing would make him alter his decision, and he applied his ruling fairly to all. I place on record my sincere appreciation of the fair and unbiased fashion in which he conducted the election in the Chermside electorate.

**Mr. BAXTER** (Norman) (2.22 p.m.): One cannot be too high in one's praise of the staff of the Electoral Office. Despite the many disparaging remarks made in this Chamber at times, theirs is a job that they do painstakingly and hon. members can rest assured that at all times they do a very good job. One cannot speak too highly in praise of the Principal Electoral Officer, Mr. Herlihy. He has carried out exceptionally good work, which has been proved by the recent State elections. It is no mean job to ensure that people are correctly enrolled. Approximately six avenues have to be explored by the officers. A person wishing to be enrolled must complete an enrolment card. The information on that card must be checked and rechecked thoroughly by the officers. An elector changing his address fills in a card and the particulars stated thereon must be checked and rechecked. After this checking the name is placed in its proper alphabetical order on the roll for the appropriate electorate. A change of address of an elector requires the Electoral Office to notify the electoral district from which the elector came that the name must be expunged from the roll of that electorate. In my opinion the best system of keeping electoral rolls up to date is the Queensland system, in which the police check the rolls. Special squads of policemen are allocated to this work and they do an exceptionally good job. The figures will give the Committee an indication of the stupendous job the police are doing in this respect. During the year, new registrations in Norman alone numbered 2,342. Erasures totalled 2,047 and there were 330 changes of address. So that in one electorate alone 4,721 individual transactions were necessary. In view of those figures, the total for the State must have been enormous. Can anyone say, after hearing these facts, that the police are not doing their job?

I know of a case that is a typical example of the thoroughness of the work done by electoral officers. Two persons with similar surnames were born in the same street of the same town. They had also the same christian names, they were unrelated. They were girls. They married two brothers and so eventually became sisters-in-law. After marrying the brothers, they lived in the same street of another town. One of them died. So thorough was the checking and investigating work of the Electoral Office that when the rolls were printed it was found that the correct person was shown as being entitled to vote.

Another cause of difficulty is the giving of incorrect information. This requires searching investigation. Sometimes the taking of affidavits is necessary. Every possible avenue is explored in order to ensure that every person entitled to exercise his franchise is enrolled.

I point out also that there are 170 electoral offices throughout the State. They are not confined to the large centres of population. They may be found in such small centres as Bedourie, Coen, Burketown and so on. The officers in these places are making thorough checks continually and they have been successful in keeping the rolls straight, as is evidenced when we compare the cleanliness of our rolls with the discrepancies to be found in the Federal rolls.

But everyone must admit that even with the most thorough possible search and investigation there are still some instances in which persons' names do not appear on the rolls. That this must occur is quite natural because of the quick changes they made from one town to another in connection with their work. I am referring particularly to seasonal workers without home ties, most of them single men moving round the country. It is quite possible that in spite of the good job done by the electoral officers a few will fail to be enrolled; but with a house-to-house police canvass in the principal cities you cannot possibly fail to have a roll that is definitely up to date.

I mentioned the number of transactions, 4,721, that were necessary during the year in Norman. Another electorate that struck me in that respect was Toowong, another metropolitan electorate, where the figures are enlightening. They jumped well ahead of Norman.

**Mr. Brown:** A lot of deadbeats live in Toowong.

**Mr. BAXTER:** The people I am speaking about are entitled to a franchise. In Toowong the registrations were 2,602, the erasures 1,942, and the changes of address 504, giving the total of transactions in the electorate of 5,048. So in Norman and Toowong alone that electoral office covered almost 10,000 individual transactions that had to be investigated in six respects before the persons concerned could be given the right to exercise the franchise at the poll.

I do not think that the Electoral Office receive due credit for the work passing

through its hands during an election year in particular, or during any other year for that matter. When you think of the enormous size of Queensland, the enormous size of the electorates, and the work entailed in placing on the roll all the inhabitants of Queensland who are entitled to vote, bearing in mind the figures for the two metropolitan electorates I have mentioned, you cannot fail to realise the magnitude of the job that is being done by Mr. Herlihy, the Principal Electoral Officer of Queensland, and the officers of the department that he controls.

**Mr. WOOD** (North Toowoomba) (2.34 p.m.): The hon. member for Chermiside referred at length to the state of the rolls in various electorates, particularly metropolitan electorates, and he has been answered very effectively by the hon. member for Norman. He quoted figures showing that in the 1953 elections in some metropolitan areas there were 500 or 600, and I think he said in the case of Sandgate up to 700, fewer voters than there were electors enrolled. It would be a much more serious state of affairs if the number who voted were 500, 600, or 700, fewer than those who were entitled to vote. Of all the electoral systems in Australia Queensland's is outstanding in providing the opportunity to the maximum number who are eligible to vote to record their votes. I think the member for Chermiside would be on much safer ground if he concerned himself with seeing that every elector entitled to a vote has that opportunity.

Members of the Opposition seem to have the idea that the name of an elector can be erased from the roll easily. Let us look at the way in which an elector's name can be taken from the roll. Firstly, in the event of a death, the local electoral officer, or the returning officer, cannot erase an elector's name from the roll until he receives from the Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages Form Z showing that that elector has died. Then again, we have the case of an elector whose name is erased from the roll on his being confined in a mental hospital, or sentenced to a period of imprisonment for 12 months or more. Thirdly, an elector's name is erased from the roll when he applies to be transferred to another electoral district.

The only other way in which an elector's name can be taken from the roll is if an objection is lodged against its retention on the roll. Such an objection is not upheld merely on hearsay. Anyone who objects to any person's name being on a particular roll must make his objection in the prescribed form. That is very different from what happens in the case of the Commonwealth rolls where, as has occurred in the Darling Downs electorate, a party organiser has gone to the officials and said, "So-and-so is not now living there," and without any check his name has been taken off the roll. In the case of the State roll, however, when an objection is received to anyone's name being on the roll, the person whose name is objected to is notified of the objection and is given a certain time within which to state his case.

Those are the only ways in which a voter's name can be taken off the roll in the State of Queensland. I have seen the police at their work of checking the rolls, and it is all rot to say that they do it in addition to their usual day's work. When the rolls are being checked, a number of policemen in each police district are assigned to the job and they do it to the exclusion of all other work. And I have seen how effectively they do it. It is not a case of merely going to one house in the street and asking there who lives next door. I know that the police in my area have gone into every house in each street on their own initiative. If they find the people in one house are out they return, and if necessary they return more than once.

Irrespective of how efficiently the electoral officers do their work and how promptly they attend to the filing of the returns and the compilation of the information from applicants for registration, and irrespective of how efficiently the police do their job of checking, at no particular time would it be possible anywhere to have a perfectly accurate roll. Naturally the aim of the Government is to have the roll as near to perfect as possible. A check is made, the information is collated, and it is all sent to the Government Printing Office. The rolls are then printed and subsequently returned, but in the intervening period many people have died, have left the area, or have transferred to other electorates or other States. Between the compilation of the information and the time when the roll is printed and returned, obviously there must be some material changes, and no system in the world could overcome that difficulty.

The hon. member for Chermiside referred to the Brisbane electorate as a settled one and said that between 500 and 600 people in the Brisbane electorate failed to vote at the last elections. Let me tell the hon. member for Chermiside that the total enrolment for the Brisbane electorate in 1952 was 9,824. During that year 3,295 electors made new registrations and there were 3,473 erasures from the roll through death or departures from the district and other causes. A total of 526 electors changed their addresses. As I said, there were 9,824 people enrolled and there were 7,294 transactions in respect of that roll, which shows, firstly, that no electorate can ever be regarded as a settled or static one and the number of transactions stand as a mark of outstanding efficiency of the electoral officers and the police who make the check. We on this side of the Chamber would not mind if hon. members opposite complained that people were not given the right to enrol or the right to vote, which is a hard-won privilege, nor would we complain if they said that people were being deprived of their rights in this respect or that people were voting who had not the right to vote. No such accusations have been made by them and no fair-minded hon. member opposite could say such a thing in respect of the Queensland rolls. We are proud of our electoral officers, we are proud of our

electoral system. The Government would be the first to take notice if any such serious statements were made. There is no use in simply saying that only 95 per cent. of the number enrolled recorded their votes, in order to leave the impression that there was something wrong with the electoral system. The aim of the Government is to see that no man who is entitled to vote is deprived of that right. A system that provides for an excess of enrolments over votes is infinitely preferable to a system that results in the number enrolled to vote being fewer than those entitled to be enrolled. In all cases where an examination is made it will be found that, having regard to the normal changes in the electorates through deaths and transfers, the Queensland electoral system is as efficient as any other in the world.

**Hon. W. POWER** (Baroona—Attorney-General) (2.44 p.m.): I listened to the speech by the hon. member for Cherm-side and I compared it with the speeches made by the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Keyatta, the hon. member for Norman, Mr. Baxter, and the hon. member for North Toowoomba, Mr. Wood. After doing so I can say that it is no wonder hon. members opposite remain in opposition for all time. What does a comparison of the speeches reveal? In the first place the hon. member for Cherm-side simply spoke at random, recklessly, and without any knowledge of the Elections Act. He mentioned the number of people who failed to vote. He said that they amounted to quite a number. That is quite correct. He then said that he noticed that not too many people came before the court for failing to vote. That too is correct. The hon. member evidently has not taken the time to study the Act. Under Section 63 the Principal Electoral Officer is empowered to send a notice to those people asking them to show cause why they should not be dealt with. After receiving the explanation, if he is not satisfied he can fine them or take action in the court. One fellow who was asked for an explanation sent along £2. (Laughter). On analysis I find that 35,000 notices were sent out to various people who did not record their votes. The great majority of them—the bulk of them—have satisfactory explanations. It is true that there are some hundreds who do not reply at all. You get that type, and their names are immediately struck off the roll.

**Mr. Dewar:** What percentage?

**Mr. POWER:** Quite a number were struck off the roll. It is certain that next election some of them will come along and demand a vote. That has taken place on more than one occasion. The reason why these cases have not appeared before the court is the nature of the explanations given. Some replies were offensive and fines were imposed by the electoral officer. In the great majority of cases warnings were issued. That is the reason why the names were not published in court.

**Mr. Kerr:** You fine very few at all.

**Mr. POWER:** Very few at all.

The hon. member made this most remarkable statement—that the police had complained to him that they were unable to properly check the rolls and did not want to have to do the work.

**Mr. Dewar:** That is not the way I said it.

**Mr. POWER:** That is what the hon. member meant. What did he say?

**Mr. Dewar:** I said that I had made it a practice of asking the police in all parts of the State how effectively they found they could check the rolls and the reply was that they found it most difficult because their normal duties did not give them the time to do it.

**Mr. POWER:** The hon. member said—and I took it down—that the police complained about having to perform this extra work. It is not much good running round the serum. I took it down and it was taken down by my officer who is taking down statements so that I can reply to them. Let me explain the position. When a canvas must take place special police are allotted to that work. The police are sent out from headquarters. In the case of Roma Street and Petrie Terrace extra men are sent out to the various parts of Brisbane. The same occurs at South Brisbane. There is always a number of men on reserve duty at those stations and they are sent out to do that work.

**Mr. Kerr:** Local police also do it.

**Mr. POWER:** Quite right—local police also do it. The police like doing it.

**Mr. Kerr:** Oh no.

**Mr. Walsh:** It helps them in their general work.

**Mr. POWER:** I will tell you why they like it. As the Treasurer interjected, it helps them in their work; it gives them an opportunity of knowing where various people live and who they are, and it gives them an opportunity to meet them. It gives them an opportunity of discussing with Mr. Jones next door who lives down the road and what he does and what would be a good time to see him. In addition to that, the police officer is paid 2d. for every notation that an elector has left the district and for every enrolment he makes.

**Mr. Kerr:** That is on top of his wages?

**Mr. POWER:** Yes, he gets that, and it is paid by the Electoral Office through the Police Department, and rightly so. I do not think there is anything wrong with that.

The hon. member for Cherm-side made the suggestion that the police do not like doing this work and have told him so, but I am not prepared to swallow that. Frequently in this Chamber I have had to defend members of the Police Force. In fact, it might be said that I am always defending them from innuendoes of members of the Opposition. I cannot understand why Mr. Talty, the secretary of the Police Union, gave a brief to the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha when Labour members have had to defend them from attacks made by the Opposition. I wonder what

Mr. Talty's executive would think if they listened in and heard the attacks made on the Police Force by hon. members opposite. The police raised no objections whatever to doing this job and they do it very efficiently. My district is served by the Kelvin Grove, Torwood, Rosalie, Red Hill, Fortitude Valley and Roma Street police districts—that is because of the boundaries of my electorate—and I have found that a very efficient police canvass for electoral rolls has been made. In temporary housing centres, when making interviews, the police have found householders out, have left cards with nextdoor neighbours, and returned at night time to collect the cards. This would apply to every centre and the result is a perfect roll. I have never heard a complaint from the Police Force about the work they do. I know they are quite happy to do it.

The same hon. member complained also about the state of the rolls, but I would point out that 93.94 per cent. of electors enrolled actually voted in 1953. That is a very high percentage. I should have liked to make a comparison of the percentage in 1932 and I am sorry I did not ask my officers to get me this information but as this debate will continue for some time I suggest that they might do this and thus enable me to make comparisons.

**Mr. Walsh:** Then they disfranchised thousands of workers.

**Mr. POWER:** Yes, they disfranchised thousands of workers. They made it obligatory for men to walk 25 miles to the police station to get 6s. worth of rations, and if they were away from their addresses for a month they were struck off the roll. Returned soldiers who had fought for their country at Gallipoli in the first world war were disfranchised. The Treasurer reminds me that these people who now say they are so methodical and conversant with the electoral laws of the State a man wanted to nominate as candidate for South Brisbane who was not on the electoral roll and consequently not legally entitled to stand. A similar thing occurred at a municipal election. They brought a prospective candidate from the South and nominated him but found that as he had not lived here for the necessary length of time his name could not be placed on the roll. These are the people who talk about clean rolls and complain about the electoral rolls of Queensland.

The hon. member for Chermiside stated that there were spasmodic movements of electors in his electorate during 1952. The true position is that new enrolments were 3,634; erasures 817; changes of address within the electorate, 676; and the total transaction in the electorate, 6,127. I listened very carefully to the hon. member and he made the most remarkable statement that so many people did not vote in Sherwood because of temporary accommodation there and that people move about quite a lot. What would that have to do with temporary accommodation out there? What was he trying to make out? Again he displays lack of knowledge of the matter he wanted to discuss. Again he shows a desire to gain political kudos at the expense of this Government.

Then the hon. member referred to uniform rolls. First let me point out that although there are 18 Commonwealth electoral registrars, no serious attempt is made to see that people are enrolled. For instance, the Police Force is not used to check the Commonwealth roll. At one time there was in operation a system under which the postman was paid  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. for every name struck off the roll. The result of this was that thousands of names were removed from time to time. That procedure has since been abolished but there is still no periodical intensive Commonwealth canvass.

**Mr. Walsh:** In any case, when their own party was in office it rejected the Commonwealth roll.

**Mr. POWER:** I am coming to that. In order to show their inconsistency, I go back to the year 1908.

**Mr. Kerr:** That is 50 years ago.

**Mr. POWER:** It is 45 years ago, and if that is a sample of the hon. member's ability at subtraction I suggest that he go back to school because it is obvious that his education in arithmetic has been badly neglected.

In 1908, the Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn, Home Secretary in an anti-Labour Government, had this to say—

“The obstacles at present seem insurmountable. In any case, I think it would be inadvisable for the Federal Government to have control of the State rolls.”

Hawthorne was an anti-Labour Minister of an anti-Labour Government. They may have changed the name of the party, but they are still the same old Tory crowd. Irrespective of name, they are still anti-Labour.

**Mr. Gair:** They are still an anti-workers' party.

**Mr. POWER:** That is so. If I remember rightly, there was a Liberal Government in power in 1908.

Let us come now to 1911, to the words of the Hon. A. H. Barlow, Minister Without Portfolio. He was another anti-Labour Minister of the same political colour as those sitting opposite me now. He said—

“There is little good for us in these proposals to amalgamate State and Commonwealth rolls under Commonwealth administration, and possibly great harm. It would be better for us to go ‘on our own’ even if it costs a little more.”

Even as far back as 1908 and 1911, there was grave dissatisfaction with the state of the Commonwealth roll.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** There is no dissatisfaction today.

**Mr. POWER:** All I can say is that the hon. member is easily pleased. I have quoted statements by two Ministers of anti-Labour Governments.

Then, we all remember the Government we had between 1929 and 1932. You will remember a gentleman by the name of Mr. Macgroarty, who was the Attorney-General for this State. I think everybody remembers him for the

words he used—"If the Arbitration Court does not function to the satisfaction of the Government we will ringbark the Arbitration Court." He is noted for that statement. I might say that my colleague and friend, the Premier of Queensland, did a great service to the State of Queensland when he defeated that gentleman before he got the opportunity of ringbarking the Arbitration Court.

**Mr. Muller:** Who ringbarked the potato industry, anyway?

**Mr. POWER:** By the look of your head somebody ringbarked you.

To continue with Mr. Macgroarty—the Hon. N. F. Macgroarty, Attorney-General in the famous Moore Government who took a shilling a week off the State kiddies, taxed the washerwomen, took the pants off the railway men, outlawed the Crown employees from the Industrial Court and finished up sacking me from my position—let us see what he had to say—

"We have a splendid system in operation in Queensland, which he (Mr. Macgroarty) ventured to say, was unequalled in any part of Australia. If a State election were held tomorrow, they would be ready with rolls complete up to the moment. In most of the other States, elaborate preparations would be necessary over a period of two or three months."

**Mr. Munro:** How long ago was this?

**Mr. POWER:** This was in 1931. It was the last time that we had an anti-Labour Government in power in this State. I might add that that statement of Mr. Macgroarty's was a little exaggerated because some thousands of electors in Queensland were not on the rolls because of the policy of that Government, who made the single workers of this State travel from town to town to get 6s. worth of rations. As soon as they were away for a month off went their names from the roll.

Let us have a look at what another Government had to say, a Federal Government, as reported in "The Sydney Morning Herald" of 8 February, 1923—

"The pact entered into between Mr. S. M. Bruce (now Lord Bruce) and Dr. Earle Page (now Sir Earle Page) for the formation of a composite ministry in 1923, contained the following Clause:—"

Listen to this, you people who are condemning this State electoral system! This is what Stanley Melbourne Bruce and Sir Earle Page had to say about the system operating in Queensland. It contained the following clause:—

"4. The abolition of the present Federal Electoral Department and the work to be handed over to the States."

Even Stanley Melbourne Bruce and Sir Earle Page, and members of the Commonwealth Liberal party—the same political party, I remind hon. members, as graces the Opposition benches today—realised the importance of the machinery and the capable way in which the electoral system in this State was

operated. They were quite happy to discard their own system and hand over the Federal system to the State of Queensland.

Let us look at what was said by Mr. Gall, who was then Chief Clerk in the Home Department, now the Department of Health and Home Affairs, and who later became Under Secretary. In a report dated 27 July, 1911, he recommended that the basis upon which the State should enter into impending negotiations with the Commonwealth, should be: "State registrars to be appointed Commonwealth registrars." Nobody will accuse the late W. J. Gall of ever being sympathetic with the Labour Party. It is a well-known fact that he was on the redistribution committee that abolished ten seats, eight of which were held by Labour.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor** interjected.

**Mr. POWER:** I am not casting any reflections on him. I cannot help it if the hon. member places his own construction on these things. In a free and democratic country I do not want to restrict the hon. member's right to place his own construction on these things, but at least I am entitled to state the true position.

This is what Mr. Gall suggested—

"1. State registrars to be appointed Commonwealth registrars.

"2. That claims be on a double sheet, one page for purposes of Commonwealth enrolment and the other for purposes of State enrolment.

"3. That each registrar be supplied with two copies of the joint roll, one interleaved and entered up so as to provide for the requirements of the Commonwealth Act, the other to be dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the State Act.

"4. That the police make a canvass every second year."

How long is it since there has been a canvass of the Commonwealth rolls in this State? Hon. members opposite should know that.

Mr. Gall suggested also—

"5. That the compilation and printing of such joint roll be undertaken by the State Electoral Office, and that the Commonwealth pay their proper share of the cost thereof."

He goes on to say—

"I make suggestions 1 and 5 because in my opinion the preparation of rolls is one of the most important duties of the Clerk of Petty Sessions; that he is under strict supervision, and can readily obtain the assistance of the police for the purpose of verifying qualifications of electors. The Commonwealth registrars are, I understand, mostly postmasters who, according to Press reports, have frequently endeavoured to be relieved of their duties under the Commonwealth Elections Acts. The police, who are State servants, make any canvass that is necessary and the rolls are printed by the State office."

Mr. Gall was an officer of long and extensive experience and he was firmly of the opinion that the best method of getting a single roll

for State and Federal purposes was for the Commonwealth to use the State rolls, because the facilities for canvassing, compiling and printing rolls could be handled best by State instrumentalities.

That is the opinion of a man who was not even a Parliamentarian. His view was that the best method of having a joint roll would be for the State to maintain it.

I have had considerable experience of Commonwealth rolls, and I do not make these statements lightly. For a number of years I was campaign director for Mr. Lawson who, on 19 December 1931, won the Brisbane seat back for Labour from Colonel Cameron. The rolls on that occasion were in a deplorable state, and they are still in a deplorable state, despite anything that might be said by any Commonwealth officer. I am not blaming that Commonwealth officer for the position that exists. I say the machinery is not there. That is the trouble. If the machinery was there, these things could be cleaned up. Why have a duplication when we have in this State the most effective system in Australia of compiling rolls?

I know that some hon. members will rise in their places and say that names have been wrongfully removed from the roll. The hon. member for North Toowoomba has pointed out that in this State an elector's name cannot be erased from the roll without an objection. After the objection is made a letter is forwarded to the person concerned, and it is only after his failure to reply that his name is removed from the roll. My own name was removed from the Federal roll on one occasion, although I had never left my address. That was some years ago. Can anyone assert that that is an effective system? Although I had lived in the same place for many years my name was removed from the roll. I got my vote—

**Mr. Sparkes:** Only one vote?

**Mr. POWER:** As a matter of fact I had two votes, one for the House of Representatives and another for the Senate.

Can anyone say that the Commonwealth electoral system is a perfect one? It lacks the necessary organisation. What do the Commonwealth Government do in the matter of checking the rolls in the outback parts of the State? Nothing at all. They did not even print a new roll for one referendum. They operated on the old roll and printed only a supplementary roll. No-one, not even "Granny Courier," can prove that the State rolls in Queensland are not clean or that there is anything wrong with them. All my investigations disclose that the rolls in this State are virtually 99 per cent. perfect and with rolls you cannot get nearer to perfection than that.

**Mr. Kerr:** You did a pretty good job at the last elections.

**Mr. POWER:** The rolls were in such a perfect state that there was not a single complaint from any candidate, whether he was a successful one or a defeated one. That is a tribute indeed to the splendid work of

the Police Department, to the school teachers who helped them, to the clerks of petty sessions, to the members of the Federal service who helped, and to the Electoral Office.

The hon. member for Chermshire said also that the police complained about having to do the work in addition to their ordinary police duties. The police had help in the compilation of the rolls from members of the force who were sent out from head centres for the purpose. Their work is a credit to them and all who were associated with it.

**Mr. JESSON (Hinchinbrook) (3.13 p.m.):** I desire to congratulate the Principal Electoral Officer and his staff, including those in the outback parts of the State for the efficient way in which they do their work. This is an important job because it is the very foundation on which democracy rests. It has to do with a right and a privilege that was won for us by the old pioneers.

I have been pretty fortunate in my electorate in returning officers, in that I have had only three in eighteen years. I started with Mr. Chandler, who was the returning officer before I became a member of Parliament. Of course, he is not the Sir John Chandler but a man twice as good as he, a hard-working man, a man who trained thousands and thousands of children in Townsville. Indeed, many leading citizens in the State owe their success to his tuition. He was followed by Mr. Cocking, who is continuing the good work and doing the job as it should be done.

I was rather alarmed and amused at the remarks of the hon. member for Chermshire, Mr. Dewar, who flung himself into a fury about the police. He became so indignant that I am inclined to think that Harry Borrodale will be disgusted with him. The hon. member for Chermshire said that the police did not do their job or that they did not want to do it. I asked him a question by way of interjection but the hon. member is getting a bit cunning of late and he did not reply. I asked him who would take the place of the police in making the canvass of the electorates if the police did not do it? He was silent. I do not know whom you could use in the place of the police. The police are the people who do the job and they have done it for many years to the great satisfaction of the Government and the people generally.

The remark that the police do not go back into a street because somebody was out when they called is no evidence that a check was not carried out. There are other ways of making a check. There are neighbours who can be questioned and various inquiries can be made to check whether a person lives in a certain house. It is harder to get off the rolls in Queensland than it is to get on. We believe that everybody is entitled to a vote and we see that he can get it. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind—and I think this applies to members opposite, too—that the Commonwealth rolls are in a deplorable state. The blame does not lie on the shoulders of the Commonwealth electoral officers; that condition is due to the lack of

machinery to carry out a canvass. About every 10 years when a census is being taken they make an attempt to check up the rolls.

**Mr. Aikens:** You can very easily get wiped off the Federal roll.

**Mr. JESSON:** Yes. I got wiped off on two occasions, and members of my family have been wiped off, although they lived all their lives in the Ingham district. When names are wiped off the roll without proper investigation it leads to much confusion on election day. While it is very easy to have your name removed from the Commonwealth roll, every investigation is made in this State before a name is removed from the State roll.

The hon. member for Chermiside and another hon. member opposite quoted figures about the number of electors at Coorparoo and Mt. Gravatt as being about 17,000 for each electorate, while some electorates in the western areas had only 4,000 electors on the roll. I think it was the hon. member for Chermiside and the hon. member for Aubigny who said that because there were only 4,000 or 5,000 electors in a western area and 10,000 to 17,000 in electorates in the metropolitan area, it was not possible to have equity. They argued that it was wrong that a much smaller number of people should have the same representation as the big crowd in the city. The Minister mentioned that neither the Country Party nor the Liberal Party saw fit to contest the election in those western electorates; so why are they squealing now? If there was another redistribution that resulted in 10, 15 or 20 more electorates in the West or the North I should not mind, because it would give the people in that area a bigger say in the running of the country than they have now. As a matter of fact, in the United States of America members of Congress represent millions of electors and not thousands and in parts of the United States there are not more than 2,000 or 3,000 on the roll for the various States. The United States electoral system is very good and I should like to see it brought about in Australia: abolish the Federal Parliament and bring in the system in America, where the basis is not population but area. I guarantee that I receive 100 times the letters received by the hon. member for Clayfield.

**Mr. Aikens:** He does not get any.

**Mr. JESSON:** I know the hon. member does not. I have only 8,000 enrolments in my electorate, whereas the hon. member for Clayfield has 10,000 or 12,000. If any reform is needed in Australian politics I suggest the abolition of the Commonwealth Parliament and the establishment of a system similar to the American system; I am not in favour of the system I read of in Neville Shute's book "In the Wet". It is a book forecasting the happenings of 50 years hence when the present Queen will live in Australia. It is a coincidence that Her Majesty is now on a visit to the Commonwealth of Nations and that this book tells of a visit here in 1974. She is to reside three months in Australia and three months in Canada and the book mentioned an electoral system similar to the system that existed many years

ago, in the time of the Tories. It relates a chat between two pilots, the first the pilot of an aeroplane presented to Her Majesty by the Australian Government and the second the pilot of a plane presented by the Canadian Government. The Australian pilot is asked how multiple voting works here. As you know, Mr. Clark, that is quite an issue in England. The system of voting described in the book is a system of seven votes for the elector. The first is a basic vote. That is the ordinary vote, as we know it. A second vote is given for higher education, that is, if the holder is a graduate from a University. Then there is a third vote for foreign travel—the person who is able to travel in foreign lands gets an extra vote. Of course, only the idle rich would get that vote; it is for living outside of Australia for two years. That is a bit of a racket, that one. A Tory Government would exclude men and women on war service outside Australia. An extra vote is given to the person who raises two children to the age of 14 years without getting a divorce. That is termed the family vote. The fifth vote is for extra achievement. That is the incentive vote, the vote to encourage people to sweat a little harder for the bosses. The sixth vote is given to church officials, such as wardens, vicars, and so on. The seventh vote is given under Royal Charter from the Queen. Only about 10 of those are awarded each year.

The book then goes on to deal with politicians and the following extract is interesting. The Queen intended to visit Sir Robert Menzies—they had knighted him by this time—and she said—

"He's such an old man. I don't know how many years he was Prime Minister before he retired. He was Prime Minister when I came to the throne, and before that. I always try to see him when I am in Australia. But he's eighty-eight this year. He keeps remarkably well, but it's really not fair to ask him to travel at his age. So I'm having lunch at his house in Toorak with him tomorrow, and Mr. Calwell is lunching with us there as well. He lives in Melbourne, too."

The pilot said—

"I didn't know Calwell was still alive."

The Queen replied—

"Oh dear, yes. He's only eighty-six. So funny! In the House those two were political enemies all their lives. Now they can't fight each other in the House any longer, so they meet and have a game of chess each week, and quarrel over that."

The book depicts what might come to pass, and hon. members opposite are working along those lines now. They are doing their utmost to break down the structure of democracy. The hon. member for Chermiside and others are only too ready to tell us how to pull down or erect structures like the Story Bridge, yet they could not build a fowl-house in their own backyard. All this talk about impure State rolls is just so much

sabotage intended to ruin democracy with a view to allowing Fascists and Communists to obtain power.

**Mr. Hiley:** But you will save us.

**Mr. JESSON:** I'll say we will. The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha and the hon. member for Chermiside put a nail in the coffin of democracy every time they speak and the hon. member for Coorparoo is fast getting like them. They think it is fun to destroy the democratic system but they never offer anything to take its place. All this smear campaign against the police and electoral officers in which they have engaged during the past two weeks seeks to destroy democracy. They build up charges on lies, false evidence, and so on. They appeal and ask for recounts during election time without any foundation for doing so. I can remember that five or six years ago, when Bruce Pie was leader of the Queensland People's Party, I had a lead of 252 votes in the election for the Kennedy electorate and they asked for a recount. They flew a chap from Rockhampton, a man who was a rogue and a thief, a man who had been in gaol, and allowed him to sit at the table when the votes were being counted so that he could interfere with some votes. Their purpose was to have the Elections Judge say that some of the votes appeared to have been altered or interfered with and that as he was unable to say how many of these votes there were it would be necessary to have another election, as they did at Bulimba. I have advocated before and I still believe that if we amend the Elections Act we should include a provision requiring persons who ask for a recount to deposit a bond. These recounts cost the State a lot of money, yet anybody can go along to them, even any dishonest person, because there are no scrutineers and if the candidate himself is not awake to what is going on and does not watch his own interests, if the electoral officer is crooked—there are very few crooked ones; I have not known of any yet, but you never can tell, one may turn up—the recount can cost the State thousands of pounds and the conduct of a new election campaign because some thief or liar has done the wrong thing and interfered with an election callously and deliberately. I think that when that happens, if there is a difference of 100 votes between the two candidates, or 200—I am not particular about it; in my case there were 252—the one who demands a recount should deposit £250 and if the objection cannot be sustained the money should go into Consolidated Revenue.

**Mr. Aikens:** At the present time they can get a recount only if the returning officer agrees to it.

**Mr. JESSON:** They can go to the Elections Tribunal. However, I am not going into the details of it; they can be worked out by the expert—by the Principal Electoral Officer or others. I am talking only on principles. Strange to say, to show how accurate the returning officer and his staff were, in my case the difference was 252 and after the recount the result given was 252.

I think that speaks highly of the efficiency of the staff and of the returning officer, who did the recount. In view of all the talk from the Opposition I should like to test them on this point. I should like to move a motion first to see whether they would support that penalty. They are very silent about that. I think it is only right, when people come along and malign a person's character and cause him the anxiety of another election hanging over him, that they should be required to put a bond in if their allegations are not substantiated by evidence.

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR** (Clayfield) (3.33 p.m.): I had no intention of coming into this discussion until I heard the hon. member for Toowoomba speaking about the democratic right of a person to be on the roll. With that I heartily agree and it is because I want to quote an instance of the inability of an elector to enjoy that democratic right to vote that I rise from my seat. In my electorate the only person who was disappointed with the last election was a gentleman who, although he does not live in the electorate, was like the returning officer for the honourable the Minister, who because there was no contest merely received the minimum allowance whereas had there been a contest he would have earned much more money.

**Mr. Aikens:** How many did you win by at the last elections?

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR:** 10,700 on the evidence of the hon. member for Buranda.

However, I am rather concerned about this right of a person to record his vote and, as the hon. member for Rockhampton and you, Mr. Clark, and other members of the Rockhampton district know, in the last Federal election I went to Rockhampton as campaign director for the Senate campaign in the Capricornia electorate and we followed out there, as is done everywhere else, the practice of getting postal votes or trying to get them.

**Mr. Power:** Did you have any luck?

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR:** When I read these letters I have here the Attorney-General will see whether I had any luck.

We followed the usual practice of getting our canvasser to call on infirm people to see whether they wished to record a vote, but we found that people in the Rockhampton Hospital who wished to record a vote were not able to do so. I have here a couple of letters to prove that statement. The first one is from a patient in the Rockhampton Hospital. It is dated 10 May and reads—

“This is to certify that I was unable to get a postal vote at the hospital for the election on 9 May although I made every effort to do so.”

Another letter, from a gentleman who lives in Port Curtis Road, reads—

“I was admitted to this hospital on 5 May. I was operated on on 6 May. I

made every effort to procure a postal vote at this hospital for the election on 9 May but was unable to do so.”

**Mr. Brosnan:** Was that a Senate election?

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR:** Yes, but these people are electors of Queensland and are just as entitled to vote in a Senate election as they are in a State election. I was informed that in that hospital was a welfare officer and it was accepted as his responsibility to seek from patients in the hospital information about whether they desired to have a postal vote.

**Mr. Power:** Where did you get the idea that there was a welfare officer there?

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR:** I was told.

**Mr. Power:** Who told you that?

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR:** I was told by the people in Rockhampton. It may not be right; I am merely repeating what I was told. I am also producing evidence that two people in the Rockhampton hospital who sought to get postal votes were unable to do so.

**Mr. Brosnan:** Were they on the Federal roll?

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR:** Of course they were. I emphasise the right of an individual to get a vote when he is on the roll and is entitled to a vote.

Neither the Attorney-General nor the numerous Government members who have spoken seem to know that postmen have nothing at all to do with getting names on or off the Federal roll.

**Mr. Power** interjected.

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR:** The Attorney-General's offsidars have been saying it repeatedly. Just now I heard an hon. member say that if a letter is returned unclaimed the person to whom it is addressed is struck off the roll.

**Mr. Aikens:** At one time postmen used to get 2d. for every name struck off the Federal roll. I do not know whether that is so now.

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR:** It is not so now, and I want the Attorney-General to know it.

**Mr. Power:** I know it. There is no need for you to tell me that.

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR:** The Commonwealth method is to employ what are known as review officers. They are mostly retired police officers or retired public servants. They go round various district with a bunch of cards, one for each person in the district on the roll. They report whether the person whose card they have is still in the district and, just as in the case of the State rolls, the registrar sends out a letter giving the person concerned 20 days in which to reply. It is not till after the expiration of that period of 20 days that any action is taken.

**Mr. Walsh:** I remember getting a notice calling upon me to show cause why I

had not voted when I had actually voted. I wonder whether that happens in the State sphere too?

**Mr. Power:** No.

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR:** The hon. gentleman is above reproach.

I require some information on another point, and there is no suggestion or innuendo behind my question. Prior to every election police officers make a check of the rolls to ascertain whether any electors have left the district. The Minister told us that they get 2d. for the notation of the name of each person who has left the district.

**Mr. Power:** And each new enrolment.

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR:** The name of every person who has left the electorate is recorded before the election takes place. The Principal Electoral Registrar does not strike these names off the respective rolls immediately. They stay on the rolls throughout the elections and notices are sent to the people concerned calling on them to reply within three months to say whether they have left the district or not.

**Mr. Power:** That is so.

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR:** It has been noted by more people than one that as every police officer working through every electorate collects the name of everyone who has left the district and for that purpose has been rewarded by the payment of 2d. for each name noted, he must hand in these names somewhere. He hands them either to the Principal Electoral Registrar, the Justice Department, or the Police Department—I am not in the position to say which. He hands in a complete list of the names of all the people who have left the electorate prior to an election. My question is: who holds that list of names?

**Mr. Power:** The Electoral Registrar.

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR:** The significant point is that before every election the Electoral Registrar has a complete list of all the people the police have noted as having left the district or left the particular electorate prior to the election.

**Mr. Aikens:** If the police make a mistake in that connection the elector can claim a vote on the ground that his name has been improperly removed from the roll.

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR:** Yes, I was very anxious to make that point. I was wondering whether the police had the information or whether it was the Justice Department or the Electoral Registrar. Presumably it remains with the Electoral Registrar.

Looking at it from an economic point of view, it is rather unnecessary expenditure to have in this State both Federal and State electoral officers. At the present time both the State and the Federal Government must have separate sets of electoral officers for the maintenance of the separate rolls. I am not going to question the efficiency of either the Commonwealth roll or the State roll, but it is quite within the bounds of possibility that a basis could be found on which Commonwealth and State rolls could be made the

same. That is a suggestion that we should make to our friends in the Federal sphere. We should suggest that they come into conference with the State Government on the matter of having a unified roll and if it is only a matter of making a suggestion I shall only be too happy to make those representations and I am sure that my party will be only too happy to make them too. To me it seems to be a waste of money to have two sets of officers paid by two different Governments to do precisely the same work, when it could be done by only one group of officers. It is quite within the capacity of the Commonwealth and State Governments to have a joint roll.

Before the next State election there will be a reallocation of boundaries. We realise that this system of quotas that the Queensland Labour Party introduced and that the Queensland Parliament passed—I do not want anybody to think the Queensland Labour Party passed the legislation; the Queensland Parliament passed it after it was discussed by the Queensland Labour Party—provides that there should be in this State four zones with four different quotas. It is a great pity that the Labour Party cannot agree on this point. Queensland says that a vote in the western districts is worth two and a half to three times a vote in the city, yet on 3 December last the leader of the Federal Labour Party said that the Federal system, of one vote one value, was absolutely essential to democracy and should apply to State elections, and you could not have democracy if the system of elections was undemocratic on basic principles. Who is right? The Leader of the Federal Party who believes in one vote one value or the leaders of the Queensland Government who believe that a vote in the western areas is worth two and a-half or three times as much as a vote in the city?

**Mr. Walsh:** There is only one vote one value in this State.

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR:** I should like to refer hon. members to the remarks of the late Mr. Hanlon when the matter of increasing the number of electorates was under discussion. The Treasurer was not in the House at that time. The late E. M. Hanlon made it very clear that no longer did the Queensland Labour Party believe in the principle of one vote one value. (Government interruption.) If hon. members will look up "Hansard" they can read it. (Government interruption.) The leader of the Federal Labour Party believes that it is essential in State electorates to have one vote one value.

I never heard a word from the Labour Party complaining of the distribution made by the Chifley Government in 1949 when they increased the number of seats to 120 and the number of Queensland seats from 10 to 18. The number of seats was increased because the population had increased. If it was satisfactory to the Labour Party in 1949 that the seats should be so distributed that one Federal electorate embraced four State electorates, it is quite feasible and practicable

that there should be a unification of the Queensland and Federal rolls so that this State, when it does determine to readjust the boundaries, can make them coincide with the Federal boundaries. In most Federal electorates there are approximately four State electorates; but in some the boundaries do not completely coincide. It is practicable to bring the boundaries of the State electorates within one Federal electorate. That would reduce the number from 75 to 72 seats, but it would only bring it back to the number of seats there were in this Parliament from 1888, when the population was 387,463. Today the population is over 1,000,000 and we have increased the number to 75 seats. I have no great quarrel with that, but I have a quarrel with unequal representation of the people. Members in Parliament do not represent acres of land. If it was measured by square miles or acres of land there would be infinitely more representatives from far distant parts than from the cities. In the city, I think my friend the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha represents 88 sq. miles and I represent 2 square miles. It is unreasonable to talk about members in this Parliament representing areas. They represent people and all people in a democracy should have an equal voice—not a group. In a group, the representative of a certain place has only an equal voice with the representative of a group four or five times as great.

**Mr. Wood:** Do you agree with the South Australian system?

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR:** I am now interested in the Queensland system. It is possible, with this electoral administration, to have a conference between the States and the Federal Governments with a view to having one roll. When the State ultimately does decide on a redistribution of electorates, as it probably will be obliged to under the quota system, it should then consider bringing the quotas into line with the Federal boundaries, to embrace four electorates. Then there could be the one roll for both Federal and State and thus the necessity would be obviated that exists now of having two sets of officers of the two Governments to do exactly the same work.

**Hon. W. POWER** (Baroona—Attorney-General) (3.53 p.m.): The hon. member for Clayfield made a complaint about the inability of two persons in the Rockhampton Hospital to obtain a vote at the elections held on 9 May last year. There must be no misunderstanding in the minds of the public of Queensland as to there being neglect on the part of any State electoral officers because two people were refused a vote. These people were refused a vote not for the State elections but for the Federal Senate elections. The State electoral registrars from the State Electoral Office cannot be blamed because these two people were deprived of a vote in the recent Senate elections. The hon. member stated he was the campaign director on that occasion and two patients in the hospital—

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** The canvassers were not allowed to go after the vote.

**Mr. POWER:** The hon. member did not say that before. He is now looking for an excuse. I am replying to what the hon. member said. The hon. member was campaign director in the last Senate elections on behalf of his party and he would have this Committee believe from his statements that these men, who would have had knowledge of postal votes for many years, were told that there were welfare officers at the hospital to do that job.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** The canvasser was told that. He went to get votes.

**Mr. POWER:** I have some knowledge of the hon. member's canvassers. I was in the Mater Misericordiae Hospital at the time the Senate election was being held. I was on the veranda outside my room when a lady came along and said, "Would you like a postal vote?" Being courteous, I said, "Yes. By the way, what party are you representing?" She said, "No party. I am not representing any party." It was the old gag that was being put over. I said, "Lady, if you are not representing any party, I will get somebody who represents the party to which I belong to fix up my postal vote." It was the old story over again.

I have been canvassing for postal votes for Federal candidates for many years. On one occasion we were sitting behind somebody when postal votes were being counted. We found that a number of alterations had been made. I heard one person say to the other, "We have been doing this for years." That was the system. They would go round, get the postal vote and make the alterations. They had a very good system. Labour's organisation today is nearer perfect than theirs because we learnt much from what those people did in the early days. At that time we were getting very few postal votes and we certainly did not interfere with them. Under the present system, the Labour candidate polled a record number of postal votes in the Baroona district. I think during the last election the Labour candidate for the Kurilpa electorate received a record number of postal votes. We certainly learnt a good deal from the tricks that were attempted by our opponents in the early days.

The hon. member for Clayfield should not get up here and attempt to lead us to believe that he is a very innocent fellow who does not know how to go about getting a postal vote. Is he suggesting that the Country or Liberal Party would select as campaign director a person who did not know how to get postal votes? Why, the hon. member is smiling! Whose leg does he think he is pulling? He is certainly not pulling mine. I repeat that those people were not deprived of a postal vote by any action taken by the State Government or any State official. Actually I do not know what the Labour campaign director or Labour candidate was doing to miss a couple of votes up there. Believe me, they do not miss any in the district where I live.

Then the hon. member said that I had something to do with Commonwealth votes.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** You said that.

**Mr. POWER:** I did not say that. The hon. member does not understand what I am trying to tell him. How hon. members opposite come to be elected to represent the people when they have not the ability to absorb common sense is beyond my understanding. I said there was a period in this State when the postman was paid a certain amount for putting names on the roll and for taking them off. I said also that the system does not operate today. They now have 18 permanent officers, one for each electorate but no thorough detailed canvass is made immediately prior to the election, and that is the real crux of the question. Some time ago, I received a complaint that a man was going round asking people who lived in the house. He would merely call at the house and ask, "Is so-and-so here?" He did not even identify himself or announce that he was a Commonwealth officer. Upon receiving the complaint, I issued a warning through the Press that I should ask the police to take action against anybody who was attempting to interfere with our electoral system. The Commonwealth electoral registrar then stated in the Press that at the time there were 18 Commonwealth officers out making investigations. It was one of these men who called at the house, but he was secretive about it. He did not go along and ask, "Who lives here? Are all the people enrolled?" If he was told that Mrs. Jones had left he did not ask whether Mrs. Smith had come to live there, with the result, I repeat, that I have never seen a roll in such a mess as the Commonwealth rolls are in.

Let us look a little further into what the hon. member had to say about the names on the roll. He said that prior to the elections the police check the rolls. That is quite true, and they take a note of those who have left the district before the election. He wanted to know what happened to those lists. Those lists are submitted to the Principal Electoral Officer and the names of those people who it is claimed have left the district are not immediately eliminated from the roll, for this reason—and it is a very good reason—that the policy of this Government is to see that nobody is disfranchised. It is better to have a dozen names too many on the roll than to eliminate one name that should remain on the roll. The Principal Electoral Registrar makes a note of those and after the election he sends out a notice of objection to their names being on the roll and they have a certain period in which to reply. I took the trouble of obtaining the names of all those people who it was claimed had left my district and after making a check of the names submitted by the Police Department I found that somewhere about 35 people whose names were on that list had not left the district. Some of them had gone away for holidays; some had gone away to work in country areas. However, their places of residence remained unchanged and they were entitled to have their names retained as electors on the roll. An elector can be on only one roll. I am not blaming the police. The people are not there when they make their canvass but when the inquiries are being made as to the

persons who are challenged as being not entitled to be on the roll it is found that many of them are entitled to be on the roll for the area which the police say they have left.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** Would that privilege be available to any other member?

**Mr. POWER:** I assure the hon. member that all co-operation is possible from the Principal Electoral Officer. In addition, I made a careful check of my electorate because I did not want to have anybody saying that there were ghosts on the Baroona roll. I should say that it is the most perfect roll that we have in Queensland.

**Mr. Kerr:** Is yours more perfect than the rest?

**Mr. POWER:** I say that my roll is the most perfect roll in Queensland because not only do I satisfy myself as a result of police canvass but also I put men on to go from door to door to check every one of them. I know the number of houses in my electorate.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** I have 3,900.

**Mr. POWER:** I know the number of adults in my electorate and when the war was on and the young men were away defending their country, when checks were made and we had the proxy system available, I had over 100 proxies from people to vote on their behalf, so that on that occasion, instead of having only one vote, as a result of those proxies, believe me, I had a lot.

**Mr. Dewar:** For whom did you vote?

**Mr. POWER:** That goes to show you how intelligent the hon. member is. He would not even have enough sense to vote for himself and he asks me that.

**A Government Member:** He will be a gonner next time.

**Mr. POWER:** Gone a million. I should like to be the campaign director in his electorate.

**Mr. Dewar:** I will give you 10,000.

**Mr. POWER:** The hon. member will be finished. Without boasting, I say I have never conducted a campaign that has not been successful. The hon. member might think there is always a first time but on the figures at the last election, believe me, he will be easy.

**Mr. Dewar** interjected.

**Mr. POWER:** Keep quiet, little boy.

The hon. member for Clayfield referred to joint rolls. I read to him statements that were made by two anti-Labour Ministers.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** That was 20 years ago.

**Mr. POWER:** The position now is even worse. Those anti-Labour Ministers were in favour of joint rolls controlled by the State, as also were a prominent public servant, Lord Bruce, and Sir Earle Page. If hon. members opposite will recommend that machinery for a joint roll be placed in the hands of the State Electoral Office, I will suggest to

Cabinet that consideration be given to the proposal. The hon. member said there should be no difficulty about it, but I assure him there would be a lot of difficulty. Hon. members opposite say these things without analysing all the facts. Let us take, for instance, the Federal divisions of Brisbane and Ryan. Part of the State electorate of Baroona is in the Federal division of Ryan, and part of it is in the Federal division of Brisbane. In addition, the various sub-divisions are not named in the same way in the Federal rolls as they are in the State rolls. Let us come back to the place that I know so well.

**Mr. Dewar:** Paddington.

**Mr. POWER:** Paddington and Baroona, where I received my education, in the State school at Petrie Terrace, and where I drove trams and punched tickets for a long time—I am not ashamed of that—and where I worked in a foundry and got some experience of hard work, and where I sewed bales of wool in a wool store.

We find that the name "Paddington" has been eliminated from the State rolls but remains in the Federal rolls. In addition, part of Baroona is known as the sub-division of Brisbane within the Federal Brisbane division. We have asked both Labour and anti-Labour Federal Governments more than once to try to give the people a better opportunity of knowing the rolls on which their names appear. People come to the polling booth in Caxton Street, Petrie Terrace, and say they are on the roll for the Paddington sub-division. Sometimes they are on the Ithaca roll, sometimes on the Toowong roll, and sometimes on the Brisbane roll. In order to do away with that confusion and to give the people an opportunity of knowing what sub-division they are in, I think the Commonwealth Government should bring their sub-divisions into line with, and give them the same names as the State subdivisions.

**Mr. Munro:** Could you not alter the State boundaries to bring them into conformity with Commonwealth boundaries?

**Mr. POWER:** Why should we alter the State boundaries? I am not asking the Commonwealth to alter their boundaries. Does the hon. member think that we are silly enough to alter our boundaries just to suit the Commonwealth Government. I am suggesting that the Commonwealth should name their electoral subdivisions just as we name our electoral divisions.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** Do you mind if we make representations to the Commonwealth Government on those lines?

**Mr. POWER:** Not at all. Indeed, if the hon. member will come to my office I will write the letter for him.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** And I will sign it.

**Mr. POWER:** It may be one way of cleaning up the anomalies that exist on the Federal rolls. Representations along these lines have been made by all parties in the Federal Parliament but so far nothing has

been done. When the hon. member for Clayfield is writing his letter might I suggest that he ask the Commonwealth Government that they close their polling booths at 6 o'clock?

Hon. members opposite have raised the question of increased representation for western areas. Other hon. members have spoken of the so-called neglect of the North, the West, and country areas generally. The hon. member for Mundingburra is continually complaining about the neglect of the North. We gave them greater representation in Parliament. It was said that Brisbane had all the representation. What did the recent Redistribution Commission do? Brisbane has 25 seats.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** Twenty-four.

**Mr. POWER:** Yes, 24. Let me tell hon. members opposite that our policy is sound and it is sound too in connection with my suggestion that the Federal Government should name their electoral subdivisions.

Let me come back to this clamour that there is always abundant city representation and nothing for the country. The last Redistribution Commission gave the country much better representation than it ever had before. There is something in the suggestion by the hon. member for Hinchinbrook that representation should be made on an area basis but I go further and point to the last Redistribution Commission, presided over by a judge of the Supreme Court, that gave consideration to the principle of representation on an area-plus-population basis. I think that was a pretty good thing for country areas because it has given them much greater representation in this Chamber than they ever had before.

**Mr. Kerr:** Do you not think that that tends to defeat the cardinal principle of democracy?

**Mr. POWER:** I do not think it defeats anything. We had no defeats in the West. Indeed, we had many successes. The hon. member for Condamine is a case in point. Instead of defeats we had victories. Let us go further. In the northern areas we had no defeats—the Opposition did—but we had victories. Today we have seven more members than we had on the last occasion. No sound argument has been advanced that would justify any variation of the system. (Opposition interjections.) We have been winning since 1929.

Let us come to the question of democratic representation that we hear so much about from members of the Opposition. For a long period in this State there were two houses, a Legislative Council and a Legislative Assembly. Were the members of the Legislative Council elected by popular vote of the people? They were not. Members of the Opposition complained because we eliminated the Upper House. Those people who talked of democracy and representation by the people were very annoyed because we

abolished the Upper House. An examination of the record of the members of the Upper House showed that the great majority of them had previously sought election for the Legislative Assembly and had been rejected by the people. When the Labour Party took office the members of the Upper House who had not been elected by the people strangled the legislation that was passed in this Parliament by the elected representatives of the people.

**Mr. Kerr:** What do they do in New South Wales?

**Mr. POWER:** They elect them in New South Wales by popular ballot. What do they do in some of the anti-Labour States? They restrict the franchise in those States for the Upper House. What did the anti-Labour Government do in 1931? Prior to that date there was a popular franchise of one man, one vote for the Brisbane City Council and the Government of the day amended the legislation that restricted votes to property-owners and taxpayers. Our opponents endeavoured to lead the people to believe that that is true democracy. Under our democratic system we go to the people with a policy. It has been suggested that the electorates have been rigged to suit Labour.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** Who said that?

**Mr. POWER:** It has been said here half-a-dozen times. When the Bill setting up the Redistribution Commission was before the House a suggestion was made that a member of the Supreme Court should be made a member of the tribunal and we appointed one. (Opposition interjections.) There is nothing wrong with the zones.

Let us have a look at the position prior to 1932. In their desire to retain control of the Government of this State the Moore Government remained in office after their defeat till the three-year period was up. They did not resign straight away; they carried on to the three-year period as they were legally entitled to do; but no other Government have ever done that; all others resigned as early as possible after defeat. Because of that some of their Ministers were in Cabinet for the full three years and consequently today they hold gold passes over the railways in Australia. In their desire to retain control of the Government of this State they eliminated ten seats and the most remarkable coincidence is that eight of those seats were Labour. I am not suggesting that they rigged the boundaries. I should not be so uncharitable as to do that.

**Mr. Kerr:** They did it on the advice of an independent authority.

**Mr. POWER:** I would not suggest that they did not. Far be it from me to do that, but I know what I think and I will not speak aloud.

The Opposition have not put forward any criticism or established any case that I and other hon. members on this side have not been able to refute. I rose again to clear up one or two matters raised by the hon. member for Clayfield.

**Mr. ROBINSON** (Sandgate) (4.21 p.m.): At the outset I would say with all due deference to the opinions of the hon. members for Toowong and Mundingburra as to stonewalling that I have every right, as the member for Sandgate, to stand and speak on the floor of this Chamber. Now that the hon. member for Mundingburra has returned to the Chamber I wish to tell him, through the Chairman, that ego is not so important to me as it appears to be to him.

I do not intend to generalise in regard to the difference between the State and Federal roll. The State electoral rolls are in a better state than the Federal electoral rolls. I will give the names and addresses of people who have been struck off the roll so that these can be checked but before doing so I take the opportunity of congratulating the Minister and the officers of the electoral office on their selection of returning officers. Mr. Swenke, returning officer for the Sandgate electorate is very efficient, as was Mr. E. G. Wilson, the returning officer before him, who retired on account of age. He was very helpful and was of the proper class of man to hold such an important position. Mr. Swenke has been helpful to those of a certain religious faith who on account of their beliefs do not vote on Saturday between the hours of sunrise and sunset. He did everything possible to enable them to cast their votes. He also helped in every possible way those electors who would be outside the State on polling day.

There is a difference of opinion as to the cause of the better voting in State elections than in Federal elections, and I give the Committee a few reasons for the better vote in the State. I have instances of names that were struck off the Federal rolls by Federal officers. Some of these people have not left the same residence for over 20 years. I and my wife were struck off the Federal roll, as were Mr. and Mrs. Cavanagh. Others struck off the Federal roll were Mr. and Mrs. Siddens of Scott Street, Mr. and Mrs. Patterson, corner of Bevington Street and Palm Avenue. It is significant to note that every one of these people was a member of the A.L.P.

Mrs. Johnston who lived in Wharf Street, Sandgate, made application for a postal vote. I know because I witnessed her signature. The postal vote had not turned up within the period of ten days. She sent a person round to tell me so. A second application was made. Again I witnessed her signature, but no ballot paper was sent to her. She then received a memo asking why she had not voted and to show cause why she should not be fined for not voting. I got in touch with the returning officer immediately. It was Mr. Smith of Sandgate Road, Albion. I explained the facts to him and there was no prosecution.

Those are definite instances in which names that were on the roll were taken off despite the fact that the electors had not moved from their original addresses. Hon. members opposite must agree that the police officer, who has a knowledge of local affairs and who knows where people live, is in a

better position to make a check of the rolls than is the Federal officer who comes to the electorate for the first time.

**Mr. Aikens:** The State police go from door to door.

**Mr. ROBINSON:** That is so. The Federal people, on the other hand, go to one householder and say, "Who lives next door?" and, "Who lives farther up the road?" That is one reason why the State rolls contain more names than the Federal roll.

Then I have the case of Mrs. Ruby E. Sheppard. She came to me with a card that acknowledged that she had notified the electoral office of a change of address from Friday Street to Fourth Avenue, Sandgate, and that her name had been placed on the roll under the new address. She also received a card asking her to explain why she should not be fined for not being enrolled. Upon seeing these cards, I communicated with the electoral officer, and this correspondence followed—

"Mrs. R. E. Sheppard,

"21, Fourth Avenue,

"Sandgate.

"Dear Mrs. Sheppard,

"With reference to the form you received from the Federal Electoral Office consenting to your being dealt with by that Department for failing to comply with Section 42 (2) of the Commonwealth Electoral Act, I have been in touch with the Divisional Returning Officer and you will hear no more about the matter.

"I have returned the form to him at Albion."

I wrote to the returning officer in the following terms—

"The Divisional Returning Officer,

"Electoral Division of Lilley,

"330 Sandgate Road,

"Albion.

"Dear Sir,

"With reference to our telephone conversation re Ruby E. Sheppard of 21, Fourth Avenue, Sandgate, I return the form as requested by you."

Three weeks after that, Mrs. Sheppard received a card asking her why she was not on the roll. All these are examples of gross inefficiency, something that never takes place in the State Electoral Office. Hon. members opposite say that the Federal rolls are more up-to-date than the State roll but I am prepared to wager anything they like that such cases as those I have mentioned would not be experienced in connection with the State roll.

I have no desire to be accused of stonewalling by the hon. member for Toowong or the hon. member for Mundingburra. I merely rose to state my case. I have done that, and in conclusion I venture the opinion that the State Electoral Office is 100 per cent. more efficient than the Federal office.

**Mr. TURNER** (Kelvin Grove) (4.30 p.m.): Strangely enough, I have had five returning officers. In each election I have had a different one and I can say that every one

of those men has been an excellent returning officer, very capable and very efficient. On one occasion particularly, when a lot of my votes were discovered in my opponent's box, the returning officer did an excellent job.

**Mr. Aikens:** That would have been the fault of the presiding officer.

**Mr. TURNER:** No. A scrutineer put it over the presiding officer, who was quite an innocent person. When the recount was ordered I saw how thoroughly qualified my returning officer was. Every time he was in doubt he referred to the Principal Electoral Registrar and at all times he received a very effective answer.

During the counting of the votes in the election I referred to, the postal votes were being counted and to make doubly sure of their votes some of the people had marked the papers "Turner, Labour." I was not at the count but my campaign director was there and my opponent was there and the latter contended that those votes were not allowable because they had something other than a candidate's name on them. My returning officer read the Act very thoroughly and he agreed with him. That meant that eleven of my votes were not counted.

**Mr. Aikens:** But the section of the Act says that it is sufficient if the intention of the vote is clear, and it could not have been clearer than that.

**Mr. TURNER:** That is so. When he counted my opponent's votes, 15 were marked with his name and "Q.P.P." He thought then that he had made a mistake and he said to the returning officer, "I am afraid I acted too hastily, Mr. Returning Officer, in objecting to those votes of Mr. Turner's." He said, "Why are you doing that—because you happen to have four more than he has?" The reply was "Oh, not exactly." The returning officer said, "I have given my decision and my decision was in your favour and I do not change my decision every five minutes to suit you." Those votes were counted and they were wrapped up and sealed and initialled by the returning officer, my campaign director, and my opponent. When it came to the recount he wanted those to be recounted and the returning officer took no notice. I came into the room and I said, "Did you initial the seal on that paper?" He said, "Yes." I said to my campaign director, "Did you?" He said, "Yes." I said, "The only person who can open that bundle of ballot papers is a tribunal," with which he did not agree.

**Mr. Aikens:** I bet the tribunal judge would have allowed them.

**Mr. TURNER:** He certainly would have. During that day we had found fifty in one box with a number of others—ones, twos, and threes—of my votes counted for my opponent; but, taking it all around, I have never had any reason to complain about the work of my returning officer or any of the presiding officers; they have all been very courteous and efficient—with the exception of the occasion that I mentioned in this

Chamber when the matter was debated when one of them in one of the biggest booths, had neglected to stick the corner of the ballot paper down—had folded it over but had not damped it sufficiently—and I lost a lot of votes because the corner had lifted up. Nobody—not the returning officer, the presiding officer, nor anybody else—had any chance of seeing the numbers on those ballot papers but they were not allowed because the corner was not thoroughly sealed down. With that exception I can speak most highly of everybody from the returning officer to the Principal Electoral Officer, whether it was Mr. Herlihy or Mr. McGuire, or Mr. Thomas, who also is a very efficient officer in the department. They are always very courteous to me and anyone whom I have sent to them for their help or advice.

Much has been said, particularly by the hon. member for Chermside, in condemnation of our State rolls compared with the Federal rolls, which shows you that these people just make these statements for the purposes of political propaganda. They do not care whose character they besmirch in their efforts to make political capital. I think it is cowardly for anyone to come into this Chamber and endeavour to besmirch the characters of the officers of our department, who have no opportunity of replying to any charges that might be made against them. Hon. members opposite say that the Federal rolls are cleaner and better than our State rolls, but the figures in a book I have here prove conclusively that they are much worse, particularly from the point of view of the number of people who are on the roll but who do not vote.

I will take first of all two Federal seats, one of which can be said to be pro-Labour and the other pro-Tory. I take the Brisbane seat first. In the Federal electorate of Brisbane there were 1,540 people on the roll who did not vote in the last election, whereas in the State election there were only 1,016. That means that there were 524 more on the Federal roll who did not vote than on the State roll.

Then we come to the Darling Downs and we get these figures:—

| Polling Place.    | Enrolled. | Voted. | Did not Vote. |
|-------------------|-----------|--------|---------------|
| Clifton .. ..     | 1,009     | 831    | 178           |
| Crow's Nest .. .. | 1,771     | 1,544  | 227           |
| East Toowoomba .. | 11,669    | 9,596  | 2,023         |
| Greenmount .. ..  | 1,528     | 1,158  | 370           |
| Helidon .. ..     | 1,425     | 1,098  | 327           |
| Toowoomba .. ..   | 12,683    | 10,490 | 2,193         |

Of the total Federal enrolment for Queensland of 672,049, 639,333 voted at the last election and 32,716 did not vote. When considering those figures we must remember also the number of people whose names have been wrongly erased from the rolls. I should say that between 5,000 and 10,000 people in Queensland were unable to cast a vote because their names had been wrongly erased from the roll. That is conclusive evidence that the Federal rolls are not as clean as some hon. members opposite would have us

believe. At the last State election I did not receive one complaint in my area about inability to get a vote. In Federal elections, however, people come up to me and say, "I have lived in the same place for many years but my name is not on the roll." I always take those people into the presiding officer. I know that they have lived in the same place for many years, and later on a decision is made as to whether the vote shall be allowed. People who say that we should have the Federal roll only do not know what they are talking about. Their statements are conclusive proof that they have had no experience in examining Federal and State rolls to see which is the better. However, I am sure that from the figures I have quoted the majority of people will come to the conclusion that the Federal rolls are not clean. Thousands of people who should be on the roll are not on it. How they are taken off the rolls we do not know. All sorts of theories have been advanced but none of us can say with any sureness how it is done. Anyone who says that it is done by this one or that one is only hazarding a guess and it is unfair to make such a statement because it may tend to besmirch the character of a person who is not guilty of such things. Therefore I suggest to hon. members that before they speak they examine their case properly and be more careful with the truth. We in Parliament are the mouthpiece of the people and we must not make misstatements or mislead the people. We take an oath to speak the truth and we should speak as near to the truth as we possibly can.

**Mr. Aikens:** Are you talking about me now?

**Mr. TURNER:** If the cap fits, the hon. member can wear it but I am speaking of no-one in particular. It has frequently happened during the 14 years I have been in Parliament that an hon. member will make a statement that is afterwards refuted but the author of it does not care if someone's character has been destroyed in the process so long as he can get an extra vote for the Liberal Party or Country Party. It is our duty to enlighten the people and we can only enlighten them in Parliament by speaking the truth.

**Dr. DITTMER (Mt. Gravatt) (4.42 p.m.):** Out of deference to the hon. member for Toowong who is so decent politically and is a man of such exemplary character that I do not propose to speak at any length in reply to his observations today. He spoke of the time that he alleged was wasted in the consideration of the Estimates. He pointed out that at the end of the session the remainder of the Estimates were rushed through. We have frequently heard that story in relation to the consideration of the Estimates and in the course of the next week or so the local papers will tell us that a few thousand pounds were discussed in the course of a number of days and that £60,000,000 were rushed through in a matter of hours. That story has been told over the years and no Parliament in a democracy has ever been able to solve the difficulty. In reply to the hon. member's interjection, if

the hon. member for Mundingburra can put forward a solution then let us have it. He should not suggest that Parliament should sit longer, because on many occasions he is absent.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Mt. Gravatt said that on many occasions I was absent. I am absent on some occasions but not as often as the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt. I ask him to accept my assurance on that.

**Dr. DITTMER:** I will not always accept the hon. member's assurance but on this occasion I willingly do so.

The hon. member for Mundingburra said also that the present Premier, when discussing the elections, was alleged to have said that the interest of the people was not important. I do not want the hon. member for Mundingburra to rise to a point of order so I tell him I am not accusing him of lying but I tell him that he was certainly misinformed and that the statement amounted to deliberate misrepresentation. No-one would suggest that the Premier would make such a statement, that the interest of the people was not important. There is no-one in this Chamber who has a greater sense of his responsibility to the public than the Premier hon. member on both sides of the House recognise that in this Parliament or any other Parliament has there been a man possessed of a greater sense of responsibility than the present Premier and so I challenge the hon. member for Mundingburra and his informant on the matter and stoutly contradict them both.

**Mr. Aikens:** Then read the press report.

**Dr. DITTMER:** We have been associated with the Premier long enough to know that he does not even entertain such a thought.

In relation to his statement about determining the date of the next election soon after an election takes place, that is almost impracticable; the hon. member knows it.

I do not propose to rehash old election stories as has been the subject matter of this debate or tell of the nefarious practices of Tory Governments in the past, when there were few voters and when they came to count the votes they amounted to hundreds. I do not propose to tell the story of the member who was a brewery representative on the Darling Downs who took liquor round seeking to corrupt the consciences of the voters and pollute the fountain of electoral justice. Those are incidents that happened in the political history of Queensland.

**Mr. Sparkes:** In what electorate did that occur?

**Dr. DITTMER:** Drayton.

**Mr. Sparkes:** I never heard of it.

**Dr. DITTMER:** The hon. member is older than I am and even if he is not old enough to know that he could have been aware of it if he read the political history of Queensland.

There are some suggestions that I offer for the serious consideration of the Minister to facilitate making available a vote to each person entitled to it by statute. The purpose of democracy is to make available to each adult who is entitled to a vote the opportunity to cast one, irrespective of position or learning, in the simplest possible fashion. For that reason even intention is recognised, as the hon. member for Mundingburra pointed out.

**Mr. Aikens:** A vote should be allowed if the intention of the voter is clear.

**Dr. DITTMER:** That is stated in the Act.

Confusion often arises in relation to postal votes and a number are disallowed because of an irregularity that I believe is not particularly important. Certain categories of persons are classified as being qualified to witness votes, and one of them is any voter in the electorate for which the absentee vote is cast. I believe that as long as a person whose name is on the roll, or an adult who gives his address witnesses a vote, that vote should be allowed. Much confusion has arisen in the past and many postal votes have been disallowed, for the reason that the elector and the witness were not cognisant of the requirements of the law in relation to witnesses.

I commend that suggestion to the Attorney-General, who has so often shown capacity for constructive consideration.

Elections are becoming so complex and their ramifications so widespread—we now have 75 returning officers—that I believe there should be appointed in addition a chief returning officer to co-ordinate the activities of returning officers and relieve the Under Secretary and the Principal Returning Officer of some of the detailed work. I think that would facilitate elections, improve efficiency, and ease the mechanism of the electoral law.

I wish to pay personal tribute—and it has been paid by the people of Queensland at the last general election—to the efficient way in which the elections have been conducted. I do not know how any member of the Opposition dares to speak of irregularities in the elections when the Government party have been elected by popular vote with a majority unprecedented and unparalleled in the political history of Queensland. The people have paid their tribute to the Attorney-General for his efficient and honest administration of the electoral machinery of this State, assisted by all his officers, including the Under Secretary for the Department of Justice and the Principal Electoral Officer. No-one can quarrel with the conduct of the last State election and to those persons responsible Queensland owes a debt of gratitude.

**Mr. DONALD (Bremer) (4.51 p.m.):** I had no intention of entering this debate but the remarks of the hon. member for Clayfield brought me to my feet and this gives me the opportunity of paying tribute to the returning officer of the Bremer electorate. He has been returning officer of that electorate since I have been in

Parliament. There is no more painstaking returning officer than Mr. C. Innes, and I take this opportunity of expressing my personal appreciation for the very careful and efficient way in which he has carried out elections in the Bremer electorate and the other electorates where he has discharged the duties of returning officer.

The hon. member for Clayfield had something to say about minority Governments and said that Labour was a minority Government and that we no longer believed in the slogan of one man, one vote, or one vote, one value. That comes very strangely from a man who belongs to the Liberal Party, which over the years has fought for and still stands for the principle of a property franchise. Let us for a moment pause to see other places in which we find minority Governments, and I quote from Whittaker's Almanack for the Coronation year, 1953. It might surprise the hon. member for Clayfield to know that the Churchill Government in the British House of Commons is a minority Government. The British Labour Party, led by Mr. Attlee, at the last election in Britain polled 11,985,733 votes, but the Conservative Party, of which Sir Winston Churchill is the leader, and which is the Government in Great Britain, could only obtain a mandate from 8,693,858 electors of Britain. Approximately 3,000,000 fewer electors in the British Isles gave Sir Winston Churchill a mandate to carry on than gave their votes to Mr. Attlee, the former Prime Minister. That proves conclusively that the people of Britain, even though they preferred a Labour Administration, have a Conservative Administration under Sir Winston Churchill in power. Irrespective of his political opinions, no-one would suggest that Sir Winston cannot govern.

Much was made by the hon. member for Clayfield of the alleged unfairness of the recent distribution of electorates in the State of Queensland. He made repeated references to it. He told the Committee that we represented people and not areas. He told the Committee also the area of his electorate, 2 sq. miles, if I remember correctly. Does the hon. member say that he is asked to perform nearly the same amount of duties as hon. members for far northern and western electorates with areas up to 98,000 square miles? He made the statement that the late E. M. Hanlon said that no longer was one vote, one value Labour's policy. That is the statement that forced me to my feet. The late Premier said nothing of the kind. What he did say was that the State was divided into four zones so as to prevent in the future the people of metropolitan Brisbane from having sufficient numbers of representatives in this Chamber to sway the Government irrespective of what political power they swore allegiance to. The reason why the decision was made was that the interests of the people in these four zones should have equal representation in this Parliament and community of interests should be represented here. The Labour Party still retains the policy of one man, one vote, and one vote, one value.

We have in the metropolitan area 24 members, in the south-eastern area 28, in the northern area 13, and in the western zone 10. The divisions in those zones have so many votes. The people go to the poll and return their members. If we were to have what the hon. member for Clayfield advocated, we should have more members in this Parliament representing truly metropolitan seats and interests than the rest of the State put together. Perhaps that is what he wants, but I am sure it is not what the Country Party members want, because although they sit in Opposition with the Liberal Party their interests are not identical.

After the very decisive action of the electors at the last general election in Queensland, I am surprised that any fault should be found with the verdict of the people of this State, and I propose to repeat what I had to say in August, 1950, when speaking on the Address in Reply and replying to the allegations by hon. members opposite that the Labour Party at that time were a minority Government. On that occasion I said—

“A correct analysis of the voting recorded at the last State general election in Queensland was given to this Chamber by the hon. member for North Toowoomba on the Appropriation Bill. It was as follows—

|                     | Per cent. |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Labour Party .. ..  | 46.8      |
| Country Party .. .. | 29.9      |
| Liberal Party .. .. | 19.9      |

“A little over 3 per cent. of the votes were obtained by other candidates. Those figures proved the undoubted popularity of the Labour Party and the overwhelming support it received from the electors of Queensland at the last State election.

“One angle of the election figures that I should like to submit to hon. members is a table showing the aggregate vote obtained by the successful candidates for their respective parties. This also shows the fallacy of the Opposition's argument and proves the right of the Labour Party to remain the Government of Queensland. The Labour Party, with 42 members sitting on this side of the House, gained 193,566 votes; the Country Party, with 19 members, gained 86,066 votes; the Liberal Party, with 10 members, gained 66,785 votes; the two joint Liberal-Country Party members polled 10,332 votes, and the two independents, 7,303 votes. So we see that even after allowing liberally for the three Country Party members who were returned unopposed, the Labour Party has a very handsome majority and cannot be a minority government. It must be a majority government.

“Before leaving this question, let us examine the position that prevails in the other States of the Commonwealth, particularly those States where the Labour Party has not been in office for any length of time during the last decade or more. In South Australia, previous to the last election, the position was so bad that the

‘Adelaide News,’ an anti-Labour paper, had this comment to make on the need for reform—

‘The Government have an obvious duty to review the present system of electorates in order to give a better balanced representation between city and country in Parliament.

‘Under the existing system, with 39 single electorates, a minority of people appointed a majority to the Assembly.

‘Sixty per cent. of the electors live in what is classed as the metropolitan area. They are represented by only 13 members.

‘The forty per cent. of electors living elsewhere are represented by 26 members.’

“It is not a coincidence that the 13 members elected by 60 per cent. of the people in South Australia were Labour men whereas almost all of the 26 should be non-Labour representatives elected by 40 per cent. of the people.”

Yet we have the hon. member for Clayfield coming into this Chamber talking about democracy and the unequal distribution we have in Queensland, and at the same time condoning the position in South Australia, where 40 per cent. of the people elected the Liberal Party to govern. Despite the fact that the Labour members in the South Australian Parliament represent 60 per cent. of the electors, we have the position that the Liberal Party representatives, elected by 40 per cent. of the people, are the Government, and the hon. member for Clayfield supports this undemocratic and unfair system and we have complaints from members of the Opposition about what is being done in Queensland. What has been done in Queensland has been done purposely and consciously to prevent a situation such as that and to enable the people to express themselves at the ballot boxes in a democratic way and not in a way that gives power to a minority group. At the last elections in South Australia, the Labour Party, with 105,000 votes, could obtain representation in the House of Representatives by only 12 members, whereas the anti-Labour Party, which gained 97,000 votes, could get representation in the House by 23 members. The anti-Labour Party in South Australia, with 8,000 fewer votes than the Labour Party, had almost double the number of Labour Party representatives in the House. That is what the hon. member for Clayfield wants to happen here, but as long as the Labour Party is in office it will see that justice prevails and that the people are governed by the party they wish to govern them.

If Opposition members think that I have quoted that case because it is an isolated one and because it is proved to the hilt, I want to remind them that I went on to say:

“I shall content myself by quoting from a speech delivered by Mr. Hollway, the recently deposed Premier of Victoria and still leader of a party somewhat similar in composition to the party occupying the Opposition benches here. In

submitting a no-confidence motion against the new Country Party Government in Victoria, he gave the following as the reasons why that Government did not possess the confidence of the House—

'1. The Government of the State by a party comprising only 13 members out of a total of 65 members of this House and who received only 10.6 per cent. of the total votes cast at the recent election provides an extreme and unprecedented illustration of minority rule.'''

That takes some beating. I do not think that the hon. member for Clayfield or any of his party could evolve such a scheme as would enable them to rule on the Treasury bench of the State of Queensland with only 13 members of a total of 65 and with only 10.6 per cent. of the total votes cast.

''2. Such rule is not in accordance with the wishes of electors as a whole because at the elections the Premier announced that under no circumstances would the Country Party countenance the policy of any party whose objective was the socialisation of industry, production, distribution, and exchange, and the Leader of the Labour Party said that his party would not govern with the support of any other party and would not support any other party in office.

'3. Such rule is not in accordance with the wishes of electors as a whole, and should not be imposed until the electors have been afforded an opportunity of expressing their will thereon.'

''At the last Victorian general elections the Labour Party polled over 100,000 votes in excess of the joint aggregates of the Victorian anti-Labour candidates and yet the Labour Party sits in Opposition in Victoria. It will be seen that the worst examples of minority government in Australia are to be found in those States where anti-Labour parties are in control of the Treasury benches and in each case they swear allegiance to the same principles as the political parties that form the Opposition in Queensland. If these people are sincere in their criticism they should direct it towards their friends who have enjoyed the fruits of minority government for years, and apologise for the time they have wasted or go and hang their heads in shame for the rest of their political lives.''

I cannot find any better language, even over the years since then, to reply to the hon. members for Clayfield's speech delivered in this Chamber this afternoon. What he has advocated here this afternoon is that each Federal electorate should be split up into so many State electorates and that should be the system on which we elect our members of Parliament.

Because of pressure by the Labour Party in Victoria, the Government of the day were forced to bring into operation a system that gave the people of that State an opportunity

to elect a Government in a democratic way. As the result, the Labour Party were elected to the Treasury bench in that State. However, in Victoria, and in other States, although Labour might capture the majority of the seats in the Legislative Assembly, in many cases it cannot govern because of the restricted franchise by which members of the Legislative Council are elected. Those States have not yet followed the wise course taken by the Government of Queensland in 1922, when it decided to abolish the Upper House and thereby save considerable time and expense. That example has been followed by a non-Labour Party in our sister Dominion of New Zealand. The abolition of the Upper House in Queensland has meant that when a party goes on the hustings during an election campaign and puts its programme before the people, it has no excuse for not carrying it out if it is elected to office. That is why an anti-Labour Government have not been able to remain in power in this State. Unlike the Labour Party, anti-Labour parties do not redeem their promises to the electors. It is a tribute to the Labour Party that we have been the Government for so long, which is due to the fact that we are responsible only to the people of Queensland and not to members of an Upper House, who are elected on a restricted franchise. We are unable to go before the people and say, ''We could not carry out our promises because a hostile Upper House prevented us from doing so.''

Year after year, session after session, and Parliament after Parliament the Labour Party does what it has promised the people it would do. Because we have done that, because our legislation has been to the advantage of the people generally, and because of our wise administration, we have won the confidence of the people to such an extent that at the last general election the Opposition parties could not nominate enough candidates to fulfil the obligation of representing enough electorates to form a Government. Their financial supporters became so tired of backing them that they thought it was unwise to spend further money in trying to defeat the Labour Party in Queensland. That was confirmed by statements by prominent members of the Liberal Party at their convention.

As long as we retain our courage, as long as we keep to our policy, and as long as we adhere to the platform of the Labour Party, we shall remain the Government of this State, because by fulfilling our promises we retain the confidence of the electors of Queensland.

**Mr. AIKENS** (Mundingburra) (5.9 p.m.): While the hon. member for Bremer was speaking he struck a chord in my memory. I will tell the Committee about what was probably the most astonishing admission that has ever been made publicly by a Liberal Party candidate. The hon. member for Bremer said that the Liberal Party and the Country Party could not get sufficient candidates at the last State election to form a Government. I know that at times I am accused of extravagance in speech, and at times distortion, but the people whom

I represent know that those charges are not true. Anyone who cares to dispute what I am about to say can go into the Parliamentary Library and read a letter that was written by the so-called Liberal candidate for the Townsville electorate at the last election.

A man named A. D. Hooper ran as a Liberal Party candidate against the hon. member for Townsville. Not only did he run as a Liberal Party candidate but he also advertised himself as a Liberal Party candidate. As a matter of fact, an advertisement appeared in "The Townsville Daily Bulletin" with his photograph and the caption, "Vote Liberal for a new State for the North. The Liberal Party will never let you down. Put your trust in the Liberal Party." He stressed the need for a Liberal Party man for Townsville but he was defeated.

**Mr. Kerr:** There was nothing wrong in that.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I propose to show what was wrong with it.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** What has that got to do with the elections?

**Mr. AIKENS:** Surely I can deal with happenings at the last State elections? If I cannot I have no knowledge of the ambit of the Standing Orders.

Recently I had occasion to engage in a Press controversy with Mr. A. D. Hooper on the matter of the New State Movement and finally when I got him into such a mental state that it was necessary for him to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, he wrote a letter to "The Townsville Daily Bulletin" signed A. D. Hooper, in which he indicated that for years he had been a member of the Country Party and that prior to the last elections the leader of the Liberal Party in Queensland, Mr. Hiley, had come to Townsville and asked him to run as a Liberal Party candidate for the Townsville electorate. He said he had agreed to do so because Mr. Hiley had promised to have written into the Liberal Party platform the plank of new States to be set up in terms of their Federal constitution. So this man had always been a member of the Country Party but he had been inveigled or enticed by Mr. Hiley to not only run as a Liberal Party candidate but to parade himself as a Liberal Party candidate on the platform with Mr. Hiley and other prominent Liberal Party speakers who had gone to Townsville to help him in the campaign. He was advertised in big block letters as the Liberal Party candidate for Townsville. That shows the destitution of the Liberal Party at the last election in the matter of getting candidates in the various electorates. Here was a Country Party member who posed as a Liberal Party candidate on a promise that he must have known was impossible of fulfilment but was made to induce him to stand in the Liberal Party interests. The creation of new States has never been a plank in the Liberal Party platform and I believe it never will.

**Mr. Dewar:** That is in the policy.

**Mr. AIKENS:** The hon. member is the only person who knows all about it. The acting temporary Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party in the Chamber at the present time, the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha, cannot dispute the truth of what I have just said.

**Mr. Morris:** I am disputing it.

**Mr. AIKENS:** But this man A. D. Hooper was a lifelong member of the Country Party and he stood as the Liberal Party candidate for Townsville at the last State elections on the strength of a promise made to him by the Leader of the Liberal Party in Queensland, Mr. Hiley, who made the promise in order to secure his candidature.

**Mr. Morris:** I say that is a lie.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Just for the sake of having the records in order I ask that the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha be called upon to withdraw that remark.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I ask the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha to withdraw that remark.

**Mr. Morris:** Yes, I am sorry. I do withdraw it and substitute the phrase, "shocking untruth."

**Mr. AIKENS:** As a matter of fact, I do not care whether he says it is a lie or not, but I believe in keeping within the Standing Orders. I am now going to invite every hon. member to go into the Parliamentary Library and read the letter that was written and signed by A. D. Hooper and published in "The Townsville Daily Bulletin."

**Mr. Morris** interjected.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Say it again right out so that I can hear you. I just missed it.

**Mr. Morris:** I think you heard it.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I missed it, otherwise I would repeat it. I think you said, "He is as silly as you are."

**Mr. Morris:** I did not say that.

**Mr. AIKENS:** What an admission from the hon. member—that this man who carried the Liberal Party banner at the last election was as silly as I am! That makes it worse. The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha in effect said that the Liberal Party candidate was a drongo. He put his foot in it there.

I wish to deal with a matter that is very vital to the elections. The argument has been put forward from time to time by members of the Country-Liberal Party that the first-past-the-post system that applies in Queensland is an unfair method of electing a candidate. They suggest that we adopt what is known as the preferential system. It is true that up to about 1941 or so a voluntary preferential system obtained here in Queensland; that means you had the option of voting for No. 1, your choice, and then if you wished you could vote for No. 2 and 3, if there were three candidates, or go on to 4, 5, and 6 if there happened to be that

number. They will tell you that the preferential system is a fair system. It is the greatest fraud ever put over the people of any civilised community. It is the greatest fraud and the greatest catch ever put over any civilised community to suggest the preferential system is fair. Let me give some figures.

**Mr. Power:** You are on my side.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Then it is about time that I went home and took stock of myself, because I find I have been agreeing with the Attorney-General too frequently in the last two or three days. It is about time I went back to my beloved North and got a spiritual and political cleansing. (Laughter.)

The figures I shall quote are in round numbers, so that those who possess limited intelligence on the Opposition benches will be able to understand them. Suppose that there were three candidates, A, B, and C, and that A polls 2,500, B 2,000 and C 1,550 votes. Under the preferential system only those who voted for C get a second choice; those who voted for A and B are limited to their first choice. Those who voted for C get a second pick. That is what it amounts to. How can anyone justify 4,500 voters getting only one pick and 1,550 getting two picks? How can anyone justify that in a democracy? If C's second preferences on the No. 1 vote are added to B's first preferences the figures will finish up B 3,550, A 2,500. So under the present racketeering rort B will win the election.

**Mr. Power:** The whole thing is N.B.G.

**Mr. AIKENS:** That is so: That is really Petrie Terrace language, which we both understand. If we are going to count No. 2, in all fairness and in accordance with our conception of justice let us count No. 2 votes of A and B as well as the No. 2 votes of C. We shall find if we do that C will win with 6,050 votes, over B's 3,550 and A's 2,500. Yet members like the hon. member for Toowong and the other disciples of the Country-Liberal Party tell us that the first-past-the-post method is unfair and unjust and urge that the preferential rort should be substituted.

**Mr. RASEY (Windsor) (5.20 p.m.):** This Committee is discussing a very important Vote of the Department of Justice, but it is also a very important vote in its relation to democracy because in a democracy it is very important that not only the officers in the Electoral Office, but also the men employed as returning and presiding officers on polling day, should be men who know the electoral laws and are able to interpret them fearlessly and honestly. Much has been said today in commendation of Mr. Herlihy, the Principal Electoral Officer, and I add my quota of congratulations to Mr. Herlihy and his officers on the efficient way in which the last election was conducted and the very satisfactory nature of the electoral rolls. Today much has been made of comparisons between the Federal and State electoral rolls,

but from my experience in the Labour Movement in the past 25 years and in helping on polling days and in canvassing I have gained considerable knowledge of both sets of rolls, and that experience tells me that on polling day on a Federal election there are streams of people coming out of polling booths complaining that although they are on the State electoral roll their names do not appear on the Federal electoral roll and they have been refused a vote. My advice is to look up the State rolls. From my experience at Federal elections I always make sure that I have a State electoral roll handy on Federal election days, so that steps can be taken immediately, when a person complains that he or she has been refused a vote because the name is not on the Commonwealth roll, to turn to the State roll. It is found that the man who states that he has lived for a considerable number of years at the one address is on the State but not on the Federal roll. That proves the statements of so many of my colleagues that in a democracy it is a matter of giving a vote to people entitled to vote, if we are to get a clear expression of the opinion of the people.

As I said at the beginning of this speech, it is not only important to have men of integrity in the Electoral Office, it is also important that men of integrity and ability should act as returning officers. My observation is that the majority of these returning officers are men from the Public Service who have attained a reasonable standard of seniority, school-teachers and officers from the C.P.S. offices and others. These men do a great job for the money they get. For a month before and after the election they work long hours. On their judgment presiding officers are selected. A great responsibility rests on the returning officers.

In the Windsor electorate, which I have the honour to represent in this Parliament, Mr. Alf Kay, the returning officer, is a man of long experience in the Department of Public Instruction. Mr. Kay gives no favour to any candidate and I am certain that if all returning officers were as just and firm as Mr. Kay there would be no complaints as to the conduct of elections. I know that Mr. Kay, and many other returning officers, as well, not only select presiding officers but help them on election day. Some few nights before polling day they call their presiding officers and poll clerks together and make sure they are well informed as to their duties so that they will be able to discharge them fairly and justly on polling day. That is very important, because it will be found that many of the complaints made after an election are made because of the element of human error. For example, in a great number of instances when I have been acting as a scrutineer at an election I have found that the returning officer was able to point out that men of the same name, probably father and son, have voted at different polling booths and the human element creeping in, the mistake was made of marking off the wrong name on the roll. But that does not condemn the presiding officer. In the rush that

occurs at polling booths, some of which are not very well lighted, it is quite possible for the presiding officer to make the mistake of marking the wrong name as that of the elector who voted. When we realise that these officers are on the job sometimes only once in every three years we appreciate that in order to give a definite ruling on the spot in connection with the Electoral Act these men need a retentive brain, and I have always found the presiding officers to be very fair. I have been a scrutineer on several occasions. During the by-election for Kurilpa at which Mr. Moores was elected, I was scrutineer at the Treasury Building booth. I noticed that some Liberal Party representatives were endeavouring to intimidate the electors. I called the attention of the presiding officer to it, and he took immediate action. Mr. Charles Porter, who is not now connected officially with the Liberal Party, came out but when I explained the position to him I must say to his credit that he agreed that what these men were doing was wrong.

**Mr. Sparkes:** Would you advocate no canvassing on election day?

**Mr. RASEY:** I do not think so. I think people look for it to a certain extent. I do not think we should ban canvassing on election day.

Some hon. members opposite have alleged that the distribution of electorates in Queensland is unfair. I think it is very fair. If we adopted the suggestion made by some hon. members opposite and introduced a system in which all electorates had an equal number of electors, the position would be intolerable. For instance, if it was decided that 7,000 would be the number of electors to each electorate, we should find that western electorates would be so large that it would be impossible for their representative to do his duties properly. The elected representative of any electorate does not merely come to this Chamber to speak on behalf of his people. He has a duty to keep in touch with them, to ascertain their requirements and to know all about his area. It would be impossible to do that with the large western areas that would be necessary under the system suggested by the Opposition.

South Australia has been mentioned. In that State they have an anti-Labour government, and there has been no redistribution there for many years.

**Mr. Sparkes:** Where is that?

**Mr. RASEY:** South Australia. Hon. members opposite do not like our mentioning South Australia. They refer to that State only when we are dealing with industries and Government expenditure. It suits them then because there the population is very small and the State itself merely pocket-handkerchief size compared with Queensland, where we have a long coastline and vast inland area. It suits them to quote South Australia then,

but they object when we mention that State in connection with the distribution of electorates. But I propose quoting something, despite their objection. In 1948—this is something recent, not something back in 1406—Geoffrey Sawyer made this interesting statement—

It states here:

“In South Australia, State Lower House electorates are defined by the Constitution Act, but the practical effect is the same as in New South Wales, Victoria, and Western Australia—metropolitan electorates have many more voters than country ones. The differences in this State are very great, since the boundaries were drawn many years ago and have not been adjusted to population changes. In 1943, the smallest country electorates had under 5,000 voters, the largest Adelaide ones over 19,000. More than 240,000 metropolitan electors were represented by 13 members, or about 18,000 voters per member; about 155,000 other electors were represented by 26 members, or about 6,000 voters per member.”

**Mr. Pizzey:** You were just justifying that.

**Mr. RASEY:** It is a practice that has been aggravated by the rapid growth of the city. Of course hon. members opposite here are growling about the distribution of electorates in Queensland. I am showing that Queensland is on a much better basis than South Australia and I will show how exaggerated the distribution in South Australia is compared with ours. The Labour Government here have through the years been truly representative of all sections of the community. We have represented the country—for the farmer and everybody—and even in the distribution of electorates we have tried to give true representation to those people. That is why it is on a quota basis—and it is not on a quota basis in South Australia. It is all right for hon. members opposite when it is in South Australia. They have been quoting it against us here in Queensland and I am saying this about their champion State. It has been said that in the past the farmers and the country townspeople have been ruled and outvoted by the masses of the cities. Because of the overall policy of successive Labour Governments we in Queensland are not afraid to give the country people their just dues. We do not try to have the masses of the city rule and outvote the country people. That is why in 1950 the redistribution was made on such a just and equitable basis.

I have quoted the opinion of an authority on this subject and I just want to show hon. members the difference between South Australia and Queensland. In Queensland under the Act, quotas go very little over 10,000 for the Brisbane and the provincial cities and down to about 4,000 in the country areas. On the other hand I want to quote from the South Australian Proceedings of Parliament and Papers of South Australia in

1950—that is not in Julius Caesar's time—to show the numbers on the rolls of some of the South Australian electorates:—

| District            | No. of electors on roll<br>(round figures). |
|---------------------|---|
| Adelaide .. ..      | 15,000                                      |
| Burnside .. ..      | 19,000                                      |
| Eyre .. ..          | 5,000                                       |
| Frome .. ..         | 3,000                                       |
| Glenelg .. ..       | 24,000                                      |
| Goodwood .. ..      | 22,000                                      |
| Light .. ..         | 5,000                                       |
| Hindmarsh .. ..     | 23,000                                      |
| Mitcham .. ..       | 19,000                                      |
| Newcastle .. ..     | 4,000                                       |
| Port Adelaide .. .. | 25,000                                      |
| Prospect .. ..      | 21,000                                      |
| Ridley .. ..        | 5,000                                       |
| Rocky River .. ..   | 4,000                                       |
| Stanley .. ..       | 5,000                                       |
| Young .. ..         | 4,000                                       |
| Wallaroo .. ..      | 5,000                                       |
| Torrens .. ..       | 20,000                                      |

Those electorates are chosen at random from the 39 electorates in South Australia. I have given a reasonable balance of large areas and small areas, not in actual area but in numbers on the roll. In the electoral district of Port Adelaide, Mr. J. E. Stephens, who is a friend of mine, received 20,091 and his opponent received only 2,185. In the electorate of Hindmarsh, another friend of mine, Mr. Hutchens, was unopposed. If he had been opposed he, like Ernie Stephens, would have had a majority of about 22,000. In South Australia they do not have different quotas for metropolitan seats, for provincial towns, and for the outback areas. Adjoining an electorate like Port Adelaide or Hindmarsh, in the metropolitan area, with 23,000 or 25,000 on the roll, where the Labour majority is so large, they have three or four small electorates with only about 3,000, 4,000 or 5,000 people on the roll. On the outskirts of areas where the Labour vote is solid they have three small electorates represented by Liberals. As I say, the Labour man next door to them has a majority of nearly 20,000. And hon. members opposite talk about gerrymandering! That is gerrymandering at its very worst. I think I have established my point in that regard.

I want to say something now about the representation of electorates. It is very important that we should have different quotas for the metropolitan area, for provincial towns, and for outback areas, because if he is to give intelligent representation a member should know his people, know the productivity of his area, and know his industries and their requirements. That brings to my mind something that appeared in this morning's paper, in which it was said that in the last financial year £100,000 had been spent in Bundaberg by the Government compared with only about £45,000 in Maryborough. I am not sure whether those figures are correct. They were put forward by an Independent candidate and it is quite possible that they might not be. We know how careless and

extravagant Independent candidates usually are in their advocacy. We know how scurrilous they are as a rule in their propaganda. We know, too, that the electorate of Bundaberg was neglected for six years and that lag had to be made up. It is quite possible that if more money was spent in Bundaberg last year, it was because it has had good representation during the last three years and a lot of leeway had to be made up because of previous poor representation by an Independent candidate. On the other hand, Maryborough was represented for many years by a very good man in the person of the late David Farrell. He always gave good service to his people, with the result that there was no leeway to be made up in his electorate as there was in Bundaberg.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I ask the hon. member to get back to the Estimates.

**Mr. RASEY:** I am speaking about electorates. I thought that matter would come under this Vote.

**Mr. Sparkes** interjected.

**Mr. RASEY:** I am pointing out that as a rule Independent members have no sense of responsibility. They have no party to which they are responsible. Our electoral law sets out that a candidate must disclose the party to which he belongs, and that is a very good system. It gives stability to government under our democratic system to have candidates set out the name of the political party to which they swear allegiance. It is much better to have candidates belonging to recognised parties than have Independent candidates. It is much better from an electoral point of view.

I congratulate the Minister on his efficient handling of the department. He is endeavouring to administer the department and the electoral laws in particular impartially.

The Labour Government have always taken care to see that the returning officers appointed by them were men above reproach, men with a record for honesty and efficiency, men whose integrity could not be sullied. That policy has contributed to our success in the administration of the electoral laws. We are proud of what we have achieved. Most of the returning officers and the presiding officers are members of the Public Service and they have done a great job, sometimes under difficult circumstances. From year to year we hear hon. members opposite abusing people who have been associated with the elections and they should remember that when they make accusations against such people they are in effect reflecting on the character and integrity of the returning officers, the presiding officers, and others connected with the elections.

**Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny) (5.42 p.m.):** It is very refreshing to hear the hon. member for Windsor frankly say that an electorate represented by a member of the Labour Party got better treatment than an electorate represented by any other member.

**Mr. RASEY:** I rise to a point of order.

**Mr. SPARKES:** You cannot take it.

**Mr. RASEY:** I said no such thing. I did not say that favoured treatment was given to an electorate represented by a member of the Labour Party. I ask the hon. member to accept my denial.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I ask the hon. member for Aubigny to accept the denial of the hon. member for Windsor.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I will accept it because he would deny anything. He would say one thing one minute and deny it the next. I do not belong to that class. He went on to say that he had read in this morning's paper that £45,000 had been spent in the Maryborough electorate as against £100,000 in the Bundaberg electorate. He quickly added that he did not know whether it was true or not and he seemed to be a bit doubtful, because the statement had come from the Independent candidate. However, he went on to say that if that was so it was because Bundaberg was better represented. Will the hon. member concede that he said that?

**Mr. Rasey:** I did not say that.

**Mr. SPARKES:** One of the members of the Government party is so disgusted with the hon. member for Windsor that he has left the Chamber. He tried to tell the hon. member for Windsor that he had said it. I do not blame the hon. member. He went on to say that as an Independent he had no responsibility at all. Can anyone say that the hon. member for Burdekin has no responsibility in this Parliament? Have not the people the right to say who their representative shall be? They preferred the hon. member for Burdekin to the person who stood as the Labour candidate. He has as much responsibility and as much right as anybody else in this Parliament.

**Mr. Rasey:** You are trying to twist what I said.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I am saying what the hon. member said. I have the right to say it, and the hon. member for Burdekin has the right to say what he thinks in this Chamber. I feel sure that the Premier would take a poor view of the hon. member's statement—that because they were represented by an Independent the people of Bundaberg would suffer. We talk about democracy. What an insult to democracy and what an insult to the hon. member's own party! I should hate to think that the party on this side of the Committee would descend to such a degrading state. The people have the right to elect anyone they wish.

**Mr. Rasey:** I am entitled to make any observations on it.

**Mr. SPARKES:** The hon. member apparently got heated and let that slip out. The hon. member for Bulimba tried to put him right; he could see he was getting out of bounds. (Government interjections.) I am not entering into the Maryborough by-election. Whoever the people elect will have the responsibility of representing Maryborough in this Parliament. The people of Mundingburra

sent the hon. member for Mundingburra here, and you cannot deny him his rights, whether you agree with him or not; and the same applies to the hon. member for Burdekin.

**Mr. Power:** You said that the hon. member for Mundingburra had no responsibility.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I have often disagreed with him but I do not contend that he has not the right of any other member in this Assembly. It should not be, as the hon. member implied, that they would not get any attention in that electorate.

**Mr. Power:** I did not say that.

**Mr. SPARKES:** We have had that put over in every electorate. That is the stock-in-trade of the Labour Party. The hon. member let the cat out of the bag.

**Mr. Wood:** You said exactly the same thing.

**Mr. SPARKES:** The hon. member did it in North Toowoomba. I never said it at all. I challenge the hon. member or any other member to get up and prove it. A man has a perfect right, once he is elected by the people to represent the people, irrespective of whether he belongs to the Labour, Liberal or Country Party. We had here Mr. Paterson, a Communist, who had as much right to be here as anybody else, because the people sent him here. That being so, he was entitled to the same treatment from this Government as anybody else.

**A Government Member:** Nobody suggested otherwise.

**Mr. SPARKES:** The hon. member for Windsor told us they would not get that treatment, and the hon. member does not like being reminded of it.

**Mr. Rasey:** I like the truth.

**Mr. SPARKES:** The hon. member spoke for 25 minutes and he does not want to give me five minutes. Every time there is an election that is part of the stock-in-trade of Labour—"If you do not change your representative you will not get anything done." Let me give credit to the hon. member for Condamine; he did not use that slogan. He used other means.

**Mr. Diplock:** They were all fair.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I am not suggesting for a moment that they would not be fair but the gentleman the hon. member defeated has never made a statement either publicly or otherwise that they were not. As far as I am concerned, that is a matter between the hon. member and him. Every election the candidate for the Labour Party has said that and if the Attorney-General would like me to do it I can show it to him in black and white. I think it was in a newspaper called "The Gayndah Advertiser" in which it was said that the man I defeated said that the people of the Dalby electorate could thank themselves and that they would get nothing done now they had a man who was not a representative of Labour. The man's name was—

**Mr. Power:** Baker.

**Mr. SPARKES:** Yes, that was his name. He stood against me for the Aubigny electorate and he stood for the Maranoa electorate in the Federal elections.

**Mr. Hilton:** He is not a member of this Parliament.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I though the hon. gentleman would have shown more sense. I can understand the hon. member for Windsor but I thought the Minister would have a little too much guava. I gave the Minister a little too much credit evidently. This man was the endorsed Labour candidate but he was not elected to this Parliament.

**A Government Member:** That was a mistake the people made.

**Mr. SPARKES:** That may be so, nevertheless I defeated that man.

**Mr. Power:** Your majority is getting smaller.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I will invite the hon. member to stand for Aubigny. I will resign my seat tomorrow if the hon. gentleman will contest Aubigny.

**Mr. Power:** I will do that if you will come to Baroona. I will not leave my little wooden hut for you.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I know the hon. gentleman would not leave his little wooden hut because he would never get back to this big hut if he came and contested the Aubigny seat.

A number of hon. members on the Government benches were very disappointed when the hon. member for Windsor was letting the cat out of the bag. When he began there were many smiles on the faces of some of the older members of the Government but as he went on they walked out of the Chamber.

**Mr. Rasey:** I walked out only because you got onto your feet.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I have to stand and speak because of the untruth the hon. member put in my mouth. The hon. member has already had one opportunity to speak but if the Government wish they can give him the second opportunity. He has had ample opportunity to prove what I am saying is wrong.

**Mr. Power:** "Hansard" can be looked at in the morning.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I brought the paper and showed it to the late Mr. Forgan Smith, who was then Premier. He used a word I cannot repeat in this House but it commences with B and then, "What rot." I said to him, "There you are." He said, "You can contradict it publicly and I will take the first opportunity to do so." That shows what the endorsed Labour candidate put over. Baker was the endorsed Labour candidate for Dalby and that was the stuff he used. I do not know about city electorates but I can safely say that members for country electorates put it over every time. And that reminds me of a rather amusing

incident. When I stood for Aubigny I was told, "You will never get a bridge over the Oakey Creek until you get a Labour man." I will give the Committee the name of the Labour man.

**Mr. Power:** I opened that bridge, but you were too mean to put my name on it.

**Mr. SPARKES:** Later the bridge was built and the Minister opened it.

All his goes to show how strong they are in their desire to hit at the gentleman who is contesting the Maryborough seat. I had a so-called Independent standing against me at the last election. They had tried ever since 1932 to defeat me with an endorsed candidate, but without success, and last time they hit upon the happy idea of running a farmer as an Independent and asking Labour supporters to vote for him. When speaking in Dalby, the Deputy Premier asked the electors to support the Independent man.

**Mr. Power:** Rubbish!

**Mr. SPARKES:** It is not rubbish. Would the hon. gentleman like to have a little wager with me?

**Mr. Power:** You must not bet.

**Mr. SPARKES:** Not when it is my way. It would be all right if it was the hon. gentleman's way. The Deputy Premier did ask the Labour supporters to vote for the Independent man who was opposing me. If that Independent had been elected it would have been an expression of the will of the people of Aubigny, and those people would have been entitled to receive the same treatment from the Government as anybody else. After listening to the hon. member for Windsor, it would seem to me that the most satisfactory method would be to take a vote of the whole of the people of Queensland. He quoted certain electorates in South Australia, but he mentioned only those that suited his case, and I do not blame him for that. He said that there were 23,000 people in one, that one man had a majority of 20,000 and alongside him was a man who had a majority of only 2,000. If we accept his reasoning, the Senate voting would be the correct system to use. If we took the Queensland voting at the last Senate election we should find that Labour was defeated.

**Mr. Larcombe:** Forget about Queensland.

**Mr. SPARKES:** The hon. member for Rockhampton is a very wily old bird and he wants to forget about Queensland.

I was speaking of the preference given to electorates represented by the Government and the view that the late Premier of Queensland, Mr. Forgan Smith, took of it. I suppose most members of high position take the same view. Nevertheless it is a stock in trade in country electorates—"You cannot expect to get this done," or, "You cannot expect to get that done"—and the hon. member for Windsor today gave us a very interesting sidelight on the practice.

**Mr. Turner:** That is the construction you are putting on it.

**Mr. SPARKES:** If I heard him correctly, he said that he read in the paper this morning that so much—it does not matter what the figure is; it is the principle that matters; but let us say £45,000 for the sake of argument—was spent in Maryborough whilst in the same period £100,000, or whatever it was, was spent in Bundaberg, and he said that he did not know whether that was correct but that if it was Bundaberg appeared to be better represented than Maryborough.

**Mr. Rasey:** No. I said that Bundaberg had been better represented over the last three years than it had been over the previous six years and there was a lag to take up.

**Mr. SPARKES:** You see, we have a difference of view. The hon. member for Kelvin Grove nodded his head when I asked whether that was correct but the hon. member for Windsor differs. However, let us take it that that shows that if Bundaberg had to have that money spent on it, whatever the hon. member did say, it had not been well represented.

**Mr. Rasey:** Not necessarily. I said that Bundaberg had a big lag to make up over the last three years because it had been badly represented previously.

**Mr. SPARKES:** Why had it that big lag? What does the hon. member mean by that? I know that the hon. member for Kelvin Grove is sincere but I ask the hon. member why.

**Mr. Burrows:** Because it had been neglected in the past.

**Mr. Rasey:** I did not say that.

**Mr. SPARKES:** Who did say it and who did not say what? You see, we have the hon. member for Port Curtis admitting it and the hon. member for Windsor saying that he did not say that; he was not having any of it.

**Mr. Burrows:** I definitely contend that Bundaberg has been neglected in the past, through bad representation.

**Mr. SPARKES:** There is no doubt about what the hon. member for Port Curtis said but the hon. member for Windsor denies that he said it. The only reason we can get is that Bundaberg suffered because it did not have a Labour representative.

**Mr. Rasey:** No. The Chairman stopped me from proceeding with it. I could not explain properly what I wanted to say on it.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I am afraid I shall have to give it away, so many different inferences have been drawn, but the fact remains that if Bundaberg was entitled to that amount of money it should have got it no matter who represented it. If the Government of this State thought that that money should have been spent in Bundaberg, they should have spent it.

**Mr. Gair:** Not necessarily.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I say yes.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I ask the hon. member to get back to the Vote that is under discussion.

**Mr. SPARKES:** The hon. member for Windsor said that Bundaberg had had better representation than Maryborough.

**Mr. Rasey:** I did not say that at all.

**Mr. SPARKES:** It is one continual "I did not say this" and "I did not say that." Apparently Bundaberg must have been in need of having that money spent, otherwise it would not have been spent. Hon. members opposite cannot tell me that the money would be spent if it was not necessary to spend it.

**Mr. Rasey:** The Attorney-General will tell you shortly what I said.

**Mr. SPARKES:** The hon. member has had the Attorney-General defending him all along. He has the Attorney-General and his Government in such a hole that they do not know where they are.

**Mr. Rasey:** Rubbish! A dense person like you—

**Mr. SPARKES:** Abuse is no argument. Irrespective of what we might think of an Independent, once he comes into this Parliament his electorate is entitled to the same treatment from the Government of the day as it would be if it was represented by a Government member. I do not care whether it was the electorate that was previously represented by Mr. Paterson, who openly admitted that he was a Com.; it should receive the same treatment as any other electorate.

**Mr. Turner** interjected.

**Mr. SPARKES:** If it is a matter of schools, roads, and those things, the local authority usually asks the member to make representations for work to be done, and in fairness to the public servants concerned, they treat all the applications on their merits. It does not matter a great deal how much a member talks about things. If a road is really required in an electorate it should be built.

**Mr. Hilton:** Have you ever introduced a deputation to a Minister?

**Mr. SPARKES:** Too right I have! It is my job to take people along to the Minister concerned. If the member for Burdekin introduced a deputation to a Minister, should he not receive the same treatment as I would?

**Mr. Power:** He would.

**Mr. SPARKES:** That is the whole argument.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I ask the hon. member to deal with the Estimates.

**Mr. SPARKES:** We are dealing with the Elections Act.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The matter that the hon. member is dealing with has nothing to do with the Estimates.

**Mr. SPARKES:** These matters have been brought up and I am forced to reply to them. However, if what I am saying is hurting hon. members on the other side of the Committee I do not desire to proceed with it any further.

**Hon. W. POWER** (Baroona—Attorney-General) (7.24 p.m.): The speech of the hon. member for Aubigny compels me to rise, because it was made purely for the purpose of getting in some political propaganda to help the Independent candidate in the Maryborough by-election. Despite the fact that he was told by the Chairman that he must accept the denial of the hon. member for Windsor, the hon. member for Aubigny in his usual cunning way tried to get round the Chairman's ruling. By deliberate misrepresentation he implied that the hon. member for Windsor had said that Independents had no responsibility. He did not say that at all. He rose to a point of order and he assured the Chamber that he did not say that, and the hon. member for Aubigny was directed by the Chairman to accept the denial of the hon. member for Windsor. Again the hon. member for Aubigny is attempting to get round the scrum in his usual cunning way and adopting the big blustering attitude that does not always come off. I took down what the hon. member for Windsor said, just as I have taken down the words of other hon. members so as to be in a position to reply to them. What the hon. member for Windsor said was, "The Independent had no responsibility to any party." Those were his words and the hon. member for Aubigny knows that but he is trying to say by implication if not in so many words that an electorate represented by an Independent or a non-Labour man would get nothing from a Labour Government. The hon. member for Windsor made reference to the expenditure of public money and pointed out that over a number of years, when Bundaberg was represented by an Independent, it had been neglected because no representations had been made to the Government about the things that were necessary to Bundaberg. The hon. member for Aubigny cannot get round the scrum in these things. Let me show you what the hon. member for Aubigny had to say on one occasion. Let me show you how hypocritical he can be.

**Mr. Sparkes:** Read it all. Do not forget the part in which I mentioned the Labour Party.

**Mr. POWER:** I quote from "The Toowoomba Chronicle" of Saturday, 28 February, 1953. The hon. member poses as the champion of Independent candidates.

**Mr. Sparkes:** No.

**Mr. POWER:** Now he denies what he himself has said. He even referred to the work that was done in this Chamber by the Communist member of Parliament and pointed out the value that he was to his electorate. He referred to the hon. member for Burdekin, Mr. Coburn, and mentioned the value that he was to his electorate. He speaks about the value of Independent members, but let me tell you what he had to

say when he was opposed by an Independent candidate at the last election. This is the report from "The Toowoomba Chronicle"—

"On election day you will have to choose between myself as the endorsed Country Party candidate, and an Independent candidate concerning whom no-one knows with which political party he would vote if he became their member.

"As an old and experienced member of Parliament," he said, "I have seen Independent members come and go, and always they have been a voice in the wilderness, a sheep without a fold."

Now listen to this—

"They have no standing with any political party, and can play no part in organised bringing down of any legislation or of organised attempt to amend any legislation introduced by any party. They are neither flesh, fish, fowl, nor good red-herring . . ."

**Mr. Gair:** Who said that?

**Mr. POWER:** The hon. member for Aubigny. Having been opposed by an Independent candidate and having to the best of his ability criticised and described him as being neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring, he goes on to support his case here by endeavouring to attach something to the hon. member for Windsor in the hope that what the hon. member says may have some beneficial effect on the Independent candidate in the Maryborough by-election.

The report in "The Toowoomba Chronicle" continues—

" . . . and have been described by Mr. Walsh, the Labour Treasurer in the last Queensland Parliament, as 'People who have no standing in Parliament, and no matter what they call themselves, they are merely opportunists.'"

**Mr. Sparkes:** That is what Walsh said.

**Mr. POWER:** The hon. member used it as an argument to back up his case. The hon. member is twisting and turning and squirming now. I tried to keep this debate above politics. (Opposition laughter.) I have endeavoured as Attorney-General to administer justice. There seems to be some humour about it. Would anybody suggest that I have not kept this debate free from politics?

**Mr. Sparkes:** Tell the story.

**Mr. POWER:** I am stating the facts. The hon. member tried for political purposes to bolster up the Independents so that the Maryborough papers will publish the matter in the hope that it may influence the voting there. The hon. member for Windsor is a man who studies his subject and who does not make violent extravagant statements. If the hon. member for Aubigny has not the intelligence to interpret correctly the speech of the hon. member for Windsor, that is not the responsibility of this party. I am not going to allow the hon. member to get away with his championing of the cause of Independents, in view of what he had to say about Independents some time ago. The hon.

member was defeated by an Independent at the council election. It is no use the hon. member's trying to pull the wool over the eyes of the people. I have stated the true position. The hon. member should realise that it is no use trying to mislead the people.

The hon. member implied that the hon. member for Windsor had said that any electorate that did not support the Labour Party would not receive any consideration. The hon. member knows that is not true. The hon. member also pointed out what a former Premier, who has since passed away, Mr. Forgan Smith, had to say—that the policy of the Government would be to see that each electorate and every person had a fair deal.

The hon. member for Sandgate brought forward interesting information in regard to the way names were being taken off the roll. He made certain statements and he brought forward documentary evidence. He referred to Mr. Swenke, an officer of the department under the control of the hon. member for Carnarvon, and his work in regard to the opportunities he was providing for all sections of the community to cast a vote. There are some enclosed religious orders, and some time ago the Government gave those people the right, by amending the Act, to cast a vote if a certificate was signed by a minister in charge of the parish saying that they were an enclosed order, and after they made a declaration. There is also another section—and a very decent section of the community—who do not vote on Saturday, and the Government have made provision for those people to vote before Saturday. Mr. Swenke desired to see that the rights of all sections of the people were preserved and special provision was made for them.

**Mr. Nicholson:** The Commonwealth Government do not deny them that right either, you know.

**Mr. POWER:** The Commonwealth do deny them that right. They deny a certain section the right. I know of an enclosed religious order who do not get a vote at all under the Commonwealth legislation. At the last Commonwealth election I visited this religious order to make provision for their voting for the Senate. There was no provision in the Commonwealth law for these people to vote. In regard to another religious section of the community who do not cast a vote on Saturday I would not be prepared to say whether or not they are able to cast a vote under the Commonwealth law.

**Mr. Nicholson:** They are able to do so.

**Mr. POWER:** I am prepared to accept the statement of the hon. member but I do know that there are religious orders for which no provision to vote is made under the Commonwealth system because the members belonging to one enclosed religious order do not leave their place of residence and no provision has been made for them.

**Mr. Nicholson:** I think the Commonwealth would make provision for them if it was known to them.

**Mr. POWER:** The Commonwealth would be just as au fait with the position as the Principal Electoral Officer. This shows how efficient the State system is compared with the Federal system. On the admission of the hon. member, if the Commonwealth does not know of these things, at least if application had been made to our Principal Electoral Officer the Commonwealth would have been informed.

The hon. member for Mt. Gravatt made certain suggestions as to the witnessing of postal votes and made eulogistic references to the Premier when replying to the allegations made by the hon. member for Mundingburra about the attitude of the Premier when setting the date for the State elections. The hon. member for Mundingburra had said the Premier was not concerned for the interests of the people. Those who are not politically biased will endorse the remarks of the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt that the Premier is very concerned about the wants and requirements of the people of Queensland. He has been a very good advocate on their behalf. At the Premiers' Conferences he has endeavoured to convince the Commonwealth Government of the importance of Queensland and the necessity that help should be given to it. The hon. member for Mundingburra merely made another of his irresponsible statements.

The hon. member for Mt. Gravatt made a suggestion that had some merit and will be looked into and considered when further amendments of the Elections Act are under way. Certain restrictions apply to the witnessing of signatures on postal votes and the hon. member suggested that the signatures of applicants could be witnessed by any elector on the Queensland roll, irrespective of electorate. That will be looked into by the department when further amendment of the Electoral Act is considered necessary. The same hon. member suggested that there might be a system of co-ordinating returning officers to help the Principal Electoral Officer in his work. Mr. Herlihy, the Principal Electoral Officer, is assisted by Mr. Byrne and also Mr. R. Matthews, who gives much help in the matter raised by the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt. That suggestion, too, can be kept in mind. I am always pleased to hear constructive suggestions for the improvement of legislation for the benefit of the State and I can assure the hon. member that the matters raised by him will not be dismissed lightly. They will have the full consideration of the officers of the department.

Then we heard much about minority Governments. The hon. member for Bremer quoted some illuminating figures. Over the years, hon. members opposite have been suggesting that we were the minority Government, despite the fact that our election figures were considerably higher than theirs and despite the fact that neither the Liberal nor the Country Party could officially form a Government. I remind them that over the years there has been a Government of their political colour elected on a minority vote in Western Australia and that the Winston Churchill Government of England are a

minority Government but they conveniently overlook these things because it serves their purpose to do so.

The hon. member for Windsor referred to the work of Mr. Kay, a returning officer in his electorate. Mr. Kay, like other returning officers, was specially selected for his work and it is gratifying to know that there have been no complaints.

During the debate, the hon. member for Chermside had something to say about the rolls and the number of people who voted. I have had figures taken out for the period since 1932. At the 1932 elections, 92.86 per cent. of the people recorded a vote and a Labour Government were elected. In 1935 the percentage who voted was 92.71, and again a Labour Government were elected. In 1938 the percentage was 92.51, but in 1941, during the war period, it dropped to 90.29. That was because many of our men were overseas fighting to defend the country. In 1944 the war was still in progress and the percentage who voted dropped to 87.55. In other years they were—

|      |    |    |                 |
|------|----|----|-----------------|
| 1947 | .. | .. | 90.75 per cent. |
| 1950 | .. | .. | 92.51 per cent. |
| 1953 | .. | .. | 93.80 per cent. |

In other words, in 1953 we had the highest percentage of voters since 1932. Because we had our present leader, who had served a probationary period as Acting Premier leading a fine team of candidates, that record number of voters gave us an overwhelming majority over the Opposition. That trend will continue, because we have a sound policy and our members are doing excellent work. The people have only to compare the speeches made by hon. members opposite with those delivered by hon. members on the Government side to become convinced that the wise thing to do is to continue returning this Government with that overwhelming majority. They have only to look at the speech of the hon. member for Chermside yesterday. He made a number of stupid and ridiculous statements. He made incorrect statements and he made a fool of himself by saying that we controlled the price of the commodity when that was not the fact. The people have only to compare other speeches made by hon. members opposite who do not seem to take the trouble to read the reports of our departments. Although some of them do go to the trouble of preparing notes they are unable to make the speech because they do not understand the notes that have been prepared. On the other hand, we have the speeches of hon. members on this side of the Chamber. Members here take their reports, read them, and compile their speeches. They have statistics to support many of the statements they make. The great majority of the members of this party give full-time attention to their work. I have had some experience in the municipal arena, experience as a private member of Parliament, and experience as a Minister of the Crown, and I say that no person in this State can give full and proper representation, and do his duty to the people he represents, on a part-time basis. I was a private

member for 12 years attending here daily and meeting people not only from my own electorate but also from electorates represented by members of the Opposition who were not here. Their constituents were brought in to see me on more than one occasion. It is physically impossible to do the work of a member of Parliament effectively if you are not prepared to give your full time to it. Since I have been appointed to the Ministry I have had to go to my office at 8 o'clock in the morning, and I am not the only Minister who has had to do that. Many other Ministers have to do the same, and they can be seen working in their offices at night and those of them who live at Parliament House can be seen with their bags on their tables studying the problems of their departments. That is why the departments are so successful; the ministerial heads have a thorough knowledge of what is taking place and what is required. The Premier may ring up from time to time and ask questions and the Ministers must be on the ball all the time. I say that the success of this party has been the result of its not being subject to any pressure tactics or pressure politics from anybody at all. We have resisted in no uncertain way every attempt at pressure politics. It has been applied on more occasions than one and has been resisted by the Government. Our members give good time and attention to their duties. That is why we have been successful, in addition to our policy and the able leadership of the Premier, supported by the other members of the party. Therefore I say that the criticism and the allegations directed from time to time against the Labour Party are totally unwarranted. It is regrettable that at the present time when elections are looming that smear campaigns are being waged against the Labour Party. Smear campaigns are being waged in New South Wales. Why all these complaints because legislation has been introduced to compel people who make certain statements to furnish information? Even the Federal Parliament became perturbed because the Labour Government said, "Our police have gone such and such a distance. We cannot get further information. Certain people have made allegations. Now we are going to put them right on the spot and give them the opportunity of standing up to their responsibilities."

**Mr. Jesson:** Take the Casket Commission.

**Mr. POWER:** The hon. member points out to me the allegations about the Casket. Consider the amount of money that has been expended from time to time on Royal Commissions as the result of smears and allegations against the Labour Party without any justification. As I said quite recently when the hon. member for Kedron complained about the tactics engaged in at the last election—the slurs and whisperings that were going on—those people who are prepared to engage in such tactics are generally dealt with by the electors in the way they should be.

I rose on this occasion just to make sure that the hon. member for Aubigny did not get away with the insidious propaganda and the misleading statements he was making in this Chamber about the member for Windsor. It is deplorable that some people should attempt to twist these matters just to suit themselves.

**Mr. PIZZEY** (Isis) (7.50 p.m.): I rise to support the hon. member for Aubigny.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! There has been far too much talk about Independent and other members of Parliament. I do not think such matters are relevant in a discussion on this Vote, and I appeal to all hon. members to refrain from mentioning Independent or any other members of Parliament and what they are doing.

**Mr. PIZZEY:** I have not said anything about Independent members of Parliament.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I am appealing to hon. members to deal only with the Estimates before the Committee.

**Mr. PIZZEY:** I repeat that I rise to support the hon. member for Aubigny in his criticism of some of the remarks that were made by the hon. member for Windsor. I refer particularly to his reference to the fact that country electorates have better representation than metropolitan electorates because they contain only 4,000 or 5,000 electors, whereas metropolitan electorates have from 15,000 to 20,000 electors. The hon. member for Windsor implied that we were opposed to giving country people better representation than people in the metropolitan area, because we objected to allowing certain parts of the State to have such a small representation while other parts, and particularly some rural areas, had such a large representation. If the hon. member for Windsor will use his influence with the Government to have all the rural electorates cut up into electorates containing 4,000 or 5,000 people, I think he will have the whole-hearted support of this side of the Chamber. It is a strange fact that wherever the Country Party holds a rural electorate, that electorate has maintained a quota of 11,000 or 12,000.

**A Government Member:** What about rural electorates represented by the Labour Party?

**Mr. PIZZEY:** The only two really rural electorates that I know of are Port Curtis and Condamine.

**Mr. Hilton:** What about Carnarvon?

**Mr. PIZZEY:** That is a western electorate.

The argument of the hon. member for Windsor was that it takes a long time to travel round the sparsely populated areas, but the facts are that every member who represents a western electorate lives in Brisbane. Of course, I do not blame them for that because possibly they can represent their electorates better by living here than in their own electorates. But that does not alter the fact

that in the majority of cases those members visit their electorates only a few times a year for two or three weeks at a time. In the closer settled rural electorates such as Port Curtis, Condamine and Carnarvon, there is far more work to be done by a private member in looking after the needs of his constituents than there is in the large western electorates. If it was decided to re-arrange the electoral boundaries so that every rural electorate consisted of about 4,000 or 5,000 electors, I am sure we should have an entirely different Parliament.

I am surely permitted, Mr. Clark, to defend a fellow party-man who was condemned by the Minister, who read from a newspaper statements that were made about an Independent. I will touch on the matter briefly to defend my friend. The hon. member for Aubigny dealt with the power of an Independent to introduce legislation. He said nothing against the power of an Independent member to represent his electorate.

**Mr. Power interjected.**

**Mr. PIZZEY:** Surely the Attorney-General will not condemn school teachers on the very eve of a by-election in which a school teacher is the Labour candidate? Surely he will not speak disparagingly of them on such an occasion as this? The hon. member for Aubigny merely referred to the power of the Independent to initiate legislation and he has a perfect right to stand up here and say that Independents have every right to demand justice for their electorate. I should have liked to deal with the remarks of the hon. member for Windsor but in deference to your ruling, Mr. Clark, I shall have to leave that matter as it is.

Let us have a look at the various electorates, not the number of them but their boundaries. I do not know the exact boundaries of the electorates of Toowoomba and Warwick or electorates in the North and I suppose there are many hon. members who do not know the exact boundaries of the electorates in the Maryborough and Bundaberg districts. I propose to put the position clearly and simply and to ask them whether they think that the boundaries of the electorates have been properly defined. I suppose the most important factor to be taken into account in determining the boundaries is community of interest. A Redistribution Commission should try to keep people with the same community of interest together. It must have regard to geographical factors and to population.

Let us consider the five electorates of Maryborough, Bundaberg, Nash, Isis and Port Curtis. Consider first of all the town of Maryborough. I suppose that about 70 per cent. of the city of Maryborough is in the Maryborough electorate and then we have a great long tongue about 2 miles wide running along each side of the railway line with no people living there extending out many miles to the Burrum coalfield. There is this great arm that extends right out to take in the Labour votes at Howard and Torbanlea. People who live a few hundred yards north

of Maryborough are not in the Maryborough electorate at all. They are in the Nash electorate. I refer to the people at Newtown and at Island Plantation. Then Granville, which is north of Maryborough, is in an electorate that is south of Maryborough.

**Mr. GAIR:** I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Isis in order in complaining about the boundaries of the electorates? They do not come under the Justice Department nor are they under the jurisdiction of the Electoral Office.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The hon. member will not be in order in discussing the boundaries of electorates in these Estimates.

**Mr. PIZZEY:** I know that the boundaries are determined always by a Redistribution Commission.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That matter does not come under the Estimates and it cannot be discussed. The subject of redistribution of boundaries is one that requires legislation and matters requiring legislation cannot be discussed on revenue Estimates. The hon. member is out of order in discussing the boundaries of the electorates. I ask him to keep to the Estimates.

**Mr. PIZZEY:** I am not asking that new legislation should be introduced. I am simply giving the facts in respect of certain electorates today. Surely to goodness each electoral officer is responsible for certain areas—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! Earlier in the debate I pointed out that I had allowed a wide discussion on the Vote for the Chief Office and that it was my intention to confine subsequent debates to the subject matter under discussion. I have distinctly pointed out that matters requiring legislation cannot be discussed on the Estimates. I have endeavoured to keep hon. members in order but they will persist in referring to extraneous matters. The hon. member will not be in order in discussing the boundaries of electorates on these Estimates.

**Mr. PIZZEY:** Mr. Clark, all I was talking about was the duty of returning officers; and when you talk about their duties you have cognisance of the boundaries. A returning officer has certain names on the roll and there are certain people to go in certain areas. The returning officer for Nash, when putting on names or erasing them, has to make sure that they do not live just across the river on the showground side because if they do they are not in the electoral district of Nash, but are in Marodian. I am talking about the economies of the department whereby the returning officer in Gympie is responsible for enrolling people living in Newtown and Granville. The Maryborough people are in an electorate half-a-mile away. The returning officer at Bundaberg is responsible for certain boundaries but the people of North Bundaberg cannot be enrolled there because they belong to another place 50, 60 or 70 miles away, at Gladstone. It must be extremely difficult for these to

know in which electorate people live. (Government interjections.) After all, the people of Howard would expect to be in the Isis electorate but this arm shoots right into it. When the new electoral boundaries first came out people were enrolled on the wrong roll, and they did not know it. I do not think the electoral officer knew where the boundaries were. That position has been rectified by the returning officer since the election. Although people were enrolled on certain rolls, because of the difficulties in outlining the boundaries some were on the wrong rolls. I am sure that no reasonable person would suggest for a moment that the people living at Newtown should have to enrol with the returning officer at Gympie.

**Mr. Power:** They do not enrol with the returning officer at all.

**Mr. PIZZEY:** They will be enrolled eventually.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I will ask the hon. member to resume his seat if he does not confine his remarks to the vote under consideration. The returning officer is not concerned with boundaries but with elections and voting.

**Mr. PIZZEY:** I should like your ruling on just what I can speak on on this Vote.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The administration of the electoral laws of the State; the Estimate under consideration is "Electoral Registration."

**Mr. PIZZEY:** I will talk about the administration of the electoral laws. I wish to point out that a surprising number of postal votes are always issued by the Maryborough electoral officer. I do not know why that is. There do not seem to be any more pensioners or aged people or invalids in that town, in proportion to the number of people enrolled, than in any other town, but certainly a surprisingly large number of postal votes are registered there. They represent a big percentage compared with the ordinary votes.

**Mr. Power:** What are you inferring?

**Mr. PIZZEY:** Whatever inference the hon. gentleman likes to draw; I am stating the facts as I see them. If the hon. gentleman looks at the figures he will see the difference. I should like the Minister to make a statement on that point. I should like an assurance. I should like him to give an explanation why it is necessary for so many people there to have postal votes.

I know that in my own electorate there do not seem to be many at all and looking round other electorates there does not seem to be the urgent need for people to vote by post.

Most can manage to get along somehow to the polling booths on election day and exercise their right.

Mr. Clark, you have tremendously restricted the scope of my speech. There were many other matters I had wished to speak on and I felt I would have the same privilege as the Minister and the hon. member for Windsor in discussing these matters. When

statements made by members of the Government are allowed to go unchallenged by you, Mr. Clark, surely members of this side can refute them? Surely we can discuss them?

**Mr. Jesson:** That is a reflection on the Chair.

**Mr. PIZZEY:** I am not saying it as a reflection on the Chair. Perhaps the scope of the debate could be restricted if there was tedious repetition but I was not repeating something already said. I was introducing an entirely new angle.

I suppose we are at liberty to speak about the last election. On the first day or so after the election my opponent came out and said that his sole reason for opposing the Country Party candidate was that he felt they would get a better deal if the electorate was represented by a Labour man. The Minister was too cunning to let that get into print—that if they did not elect a Labour man they would not get anything done.

**Mr. Power:** Because it would not be true.

**Mr. PIZZEY:** But the Minister let his candidate say it. Ministers were on the same platform many a time and he knows very well that Labour's candidate has made these statements on the platform that unless it was a Labour man they would not get anything. Surely if an electorate requires necessary work in the way of schools, hospitals, roads, &c., each should be treated on its merits and not done because the electorate is represented by a member of the Country Party or a member of the Labour Party. The hon. member for Windsor said that Bundaberg had been neglected by an Independent. No doubt the hon. member was referring to the late Frank Barnes. An Independent member could neglect it by not attending to the personal needs of his electors, replying to letters received from them or making representations on their behalf but if major works are needed in an electorate surely the permanent public servants would see that these things were needed? That is their job. If schools are needed, surely they are not built on the application of the Treasurer, the Attorney-General or an Independent member? If they are necessary the Department of Public Instruction makes representations to the Department of Public Works and that department decides on the merits of the case, priority of the work, and all other matters. I have not heard the Treasurer say that. He is too wise to go to Bundaberg and say "You got nothing when Frank Barnes was here but I will get you everything because I am a Labour man." He lets his offsider say that and then expects to get away with it. Democracy is fast slipping when such things can happen. I hope not only the Attorney-General but the Premier and the Treasurer will stand and give a stout denial to the statement by some offsider or backbencher, "unless you put a Labour man in, you will not get anything done in the electorate."

**Mr. BROSNAN** (Fortitude Valley) (8.10 p.m.): The hon. member for Isis has attempted to cast a slur on the Electoral

Office and its administration but if there is one bulwark of democracy that remains with us it is the electoral office. None can deny that Mr. Herlihy, the Principal Electoral Officer, and the officers under his control, are doing an excellent job. I do not believe that we should be continually subjected to these general statements filled with inference, innuendo and veiled allegations, statements with no vestige of substance or a scintilla of evidence, statements such as that made by the hon. member for Isis about the extremely unusual number of postal votes in the Maryborough electorate.

**Mr. PizzeY:** Do you deny that?

**Mr. BROSNAN:** I am not going to deny or affirm anything, because I do not have to do so. The records of the Electoral Office are printed and open to the inspection of any person who wants to peruse them. If the hon. member for Isis thinks there are too many postal votes in Maryborough he should remember that in order to obtain a postal vote a person is required to make a declaration. At law the person making the declaration is responsible for its truth. If the veracity of the person or the truth of the statement can be challenged, let the hon. member for Isis bring forward his facts. Do not let him just stand up here and say that there are too many postal votes in Maryborough. Let him come forward and say, "I have proof that postal votes applied for and granted should not have been granted." Let him not besmirch and besmear the names of the officers of this department who administer this Act, and who do their best for the people enrolled in the various electorates, in this case for the people of the Maryborough electorate in particular. Do not let us have statements banded about regardless of substance or truth.

The hon. member went on to protest about the boundaries and you rightly ruled him out of order, Mr. Clark. In an endeavour to make his point, he started to suggest that people did not know where they were to be enrolled. The people do know what electorate they have to be enrolled for. They are helped in that by the police, by the officers of this department and the roll that is printed each year. They have also the help that is forthcoming from that loyal band of workers who go to make up the party to which I belong. They give their time voluntarily to helping their fellowmen, and who can deny that the voluntary labour of the man who goes out because he wants to help his fellowman is better than that of the person who goes out for £2 a day? That is what the Opposition parties pay when they are in funds.

The hon. member went on to protest that the hon. member for Windsor had made certain statements, despite the fact that the hon. member for Windsor had denied making them. You had ruled, Mr. Clark, that the hon. member for Aubigny must accept that denial, but the hon. member for Isis insisted that the hon. member for Windsor said things he did not say. The hon. member then went on to say that the

permanent heads of departments could tell the Ministers this and that, that school committees could tell what was needed at the various schools. Hon. members opposite would like permanent heads of departments, school committees and everybody else round the place to raise these matters for them, for then all they would need to do would be to take their places as members of Parliament and have nothing to prevent their attending to the running of the various businesses in which they are interested.

It is different with hon. members on this side. The electors within our electorates, irrespective of political colour, have only to approach their member and they get attention. Never in our long history has anyone been able to point the finger of discrimination at us. However, it is true that some electorates are neglected and not properly represented and it will be true in the future too. It is certainly not true with regard to the Valley.

**Mr. Gair:** None are properly represented by members of the Opposition because they are only part-time members.

**Mr. BROSAN:** That is true. They all have other occupations or their own businesses or they are connected with some companies.

**Mr. Nicholson:** At least they do their business out in the open.

**Mr. BROSAN:** I challenge the hon. member and any other member opposite to bring up evidence of anything shady on the part of any member on this side of the Chamber. Never mind about veiled accusations. If the hon. member has the intestinal fortitude and the knowledge, put it on the table. The Labour Party has never been afraid to stand up to its responsibilities. Do not hide behind the privilege of Parliament. Get up on the stump and say what you have to say. I am prepared to put my skeleton in the cupboard, if there is one, alongside the hon. member's. At least there will be fat on my bones. Never mind about these accusations. Come out and say what you have got to say if you can back it up. If you cannot back it up, then shut up. That is all you have to do.

**Mr. Gair:** You were born in Australia and you are still here.

**Mr. BROSAN:** I was born in Australia and I am still here and despite "The Courier-Mail's" accusations this morning I shall still be here if they send me back to Maryborough tomorrow. I am an Irish Australian. That bit of Irish will not hurt you; it will do you good. The £45,000 spent in Maryborough was thrown up today and the £186,000 in Bundaberg but nobody goes on to talk about the £2,000,000 that has been spent in Maryborough since 1936 at Walkers.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. BROSAN:** I accept your ruling, Mr. Clark. I will not transgress. I was merely mentioning that an additional amount of money was spent.

**Mr. Pizzey** interjected.

**Mr. BROSAN:** I thought after the mess the hon. member for Isis made last year about the Maryborough Hospital he would be very happy with the quarter of a million that was spent on the out-patients' department, but no. As they say, Pizzey is on the job again, but he is not doing much good, as usual. Next time the majority in Maryborough will be between 2,000 and 3,000.

**Mr. Sparkes:** Would you like to take a bet on it?

**Mr. BROSAN:** I will. I will see the hon. member afterwards and I will have the money even if I have to sell one of his heifers. He spoke of the Independents and again I am not going to transgress. Far be it for me to have a word to say about this champion of those people who he himself admits are useless, neither fish, nor flesh, nor good red herring. Far be it from me to say that it was rumoured strongly that he is going to Maryborough tonight to back up the Independent candidate. Nevertheless the rumour is very strong. He did say that the shire councils did a terrific amount of work and did most of the representations to the Minister about their various districts.

**Mr. Sparkes:** You are off the beam a bit.

**Mr. BROSAN:** I am not off the beam because I heard him say it. He did say it and then when he realised that he was defeated as the chairman of the shire—and I was wondering, and I have no doubt other members are wondering whether that defeat was not due to his maladministration of the Wambo Shire—

**Mr. Sparkes:** Possibly so.

**Mr. BROSAN:** It is a good man who can admit defeat. The chairman of the Wambo shire, Mr. Bassingthwaite, must have had something extra special when he was put in there or perhaps the people of the Wambo shire felt they were not having their case presented properly and they said, "Very well, in accordance with the democracy that is ours, the franchise that is ours, and in accordance with the very much safeguarded interests that are ours because of the close preserve of this Elections Act, which gives a man a vote, not take it from him, we will exercise the franchise as we think best." They did, and in came Mr. Bassingthwaite. It was not like the franchise on 9 May last, in respect of which the hon. member for Clayfield stood up and read four letters—

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** I did not.

**Mr. BROSAN:** How many did the hon. member read?

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** I read two.

**Mr. BROSAN:** I am sorry. Although I do not drink, I must have been hearing double. I stand corrected. The hon. member read two letters. The date of one was 6 May and the date of the other was 7 May. He read those two letters and cried because those men were not able to get a vote on 9 May.

Then somebody said, "But that was a Federal election." The hon. member suddenly realised that he had corroborated what we have been saying for years, that is, that the State rolls are up to date but the Federal rolls are not. You can get a vote on our rolls, but not on the Federal rolls. As long as we have the administration we have in the hands of such capable officers, and as long as that administration is controlled by my friend and colleague, the Attorney-General, the people of Queensland have nothing to fear. I feel sure that they will continue to accept the justice that is being meted out to them, justice that is in conformity with the highest accepted standards that have been handed down over the years.

**Hon. E. J. WALSH** (Bundaberg—Treasurer) (8.22 p.m.): I should not have taken any part in this debate but for a statement that was made by the hon. member for Isis, who has sought to take advantage of the discussion on this Vote to engage in a little propaganda on behalf of the Independent candidate for Maryborough. Because the hon. member for Isis represents an electorate that adjoins Maryborough, and because the Independent candidate for Maryborough is opposing a Labour candidate, I suggested to the hon. member for Isis that it would be rather embarrassing for him to determine which of the candidates he would support in the Maryborough campaign. Apparently he has indicated quite clearly tonight that he wants to support a statement that was made by the Independent candidate for Maryborough.

**Mr. Pizzey:** I did not make any mention of it. You were not in the Chamber when I spoke.

**Mr. WALSH:** I was outside the Chamber reading a report on a very important matter, which I handed over to the Premier, but if the hon. member for Isis says that he did not say anything—

**Mr. PIZZEY:** I rise to a point of order. I did not mention anything about the money that was spent in Maryborough or Bundaberg. I merely refuted a statement by the member for Windsor that Bundaberg had been neglected by an Independent member.

**Mr. WALSH:** If the member for Isis wants it that way, I will say he was refuting a statement by the member for Windsor that Bundaberg had suffered because it was represented by an Independent. I think it will be generally accepted that any electorate that is represented by either a member of the Opposition or an Independent is never properly represented.

**Mr. MULLER:** I rise to a point of order. I understood you to say early this evening, Mr. Clark, that you were not going to allow any further discussion of Independent candidates or members. You followed that up by denying the hon. member for Isis an opportunity to speak on those matters. I should now like to ask you whether you intend to allow the Treasurer to speak on matters that you prevented the hon. member for Isis from dealing with.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Hon. the Treasurer! I appeal to hon. members to confine their remarks to the Estimates. I have allowed a certain amount of latitude in debate but hon. members have tended to get out of order. I explained very early in the debates on the Estimates that I would allow a full discussion on the Chief Office Vote and I said that matters involving legislation could not be discussed on the Estimates. I now appeal to every hon. member, including the Treasurer, to keep within the Estimates.

**Mr. WALSH:** I assure you, Mr. Clark, that I am not going to transgress your ruling, I heard hon. members opposite refer to electorates represented by Independent members. I heard the hon. member for Windsor refer to the subject and I heard the hon. member for Isis in reply.

**Mr. Pizzey:** I was denied the right of reply.

**Mr. WALSH:** That statement is not correct because I heard the hon. member for Isis say that I would make the statement that certain people should not represent certain electorates. I do not want anybody to make statements for me; I am capable of making my own. The hon. member for Isis had no counter for the statement by the hon. member for Windsor, which can be justified. Let us consider the electorates throughout the State. The subject of boundaries of electorates come into the matter. They have been discussed extensively on this Vote.

**Mr. Sparkes:** Do they come under this Vote?

**Mr. WALSH:** I understand that the administration of the Electoral Office comes under this Vote. It is very obvious that I cannot criticise the electoral boundaries. If the compilation of rolls consequent upon the boundaries has resulted in the return of an Independent candidate, the electors eventually found that it was not a wise policy to return an Independent. I do not want to transgress your ruling, Mr. Clark, and I am not going to continue on those lines other than to say that the statement by the Independent candidate for Maryborough about the expenditure in the Maryborough and Bundaberg electorates is a deliberate and malicious falsehood. I have the figures here but I cannot use them because I should be transgressing your ruling, Mr. Clark, but the expenditure is £9,000 in favour of the Maryborough electorate for the 1952-1953 period. That gives the denial to the statement by the Independent candidate for Maryborough.

I heard hon. members opposite today discuss electorates, boundaries, and quotas. I heard the hon. member for Clayfield refer to quotas. If the hon. member for Clayfield was in order in discussing these things, I should be in order too. I was here during almost the whole of his speech and I interjected while he was speaking. I heard him make his statement. I ask hon. members to have a look at the position in Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia, where there are Country Party Governments.

In Western Australia, for instance, there are electorates with an enrolment of about 600 voters. If you look at the position in South Australia you will find that the industrial populations have no chance of returning representatives, as they have under the system laid down in this State. In this State there has been a generous redistribution of the boundaries and the electorates are designed to give the different interests throughout the State representation.

The Opposition, when in power, sought to deny the right of the Labour Party to continue in this Parliament and they proceeded to eliminate ten electorates, eight of which returned Labour candidates. You only have to look at the records to see that my statement is correct. I cannot give all the names but I know the Secretary for Labour and Industry was one member who lost his seat; he represented one of the far western areas. These are the people who say that they believe in representation for the rural areas or remote parts of the State. They talk about giving representation to the country people but what I have stated has been the experience when the Opposition were in power here and in the other three States that I have mentioned.

**Mr. Heading:** That does not work out very well as far as South Australia is concerned.

**Mr. WALSH:** No representative of a metropolitan area has ever got into the Cabinet over there, under the regime of the Playford Government.

**Mr. Heading:** You know the country electorates have a lesser number than the city electorates.

**Mr. WALSH:** I know that in South Australia you have electorates with enrolments of 6,000 and you have an electorate like Hindmarsh with 30,000-odd. You cannot quote a similar case in Queensland. The same thing applied in Victoria where over the years the Liberal Party and Country Party held out the Labour Party, and it was not till there was a brawl between the Country Party and the Liberal Party that the Labour Party was able to force them to redistribute the electorates on a proper basis. When that was done we know the result; Victoria returned a Labour Government. It was not a Victorian Labour Government who carried out the redistribution, but the Labour Party forced the Liberal Party into agreeing to a proper redistribution of those electorates.

Apparently the member for Isis is concerned in case I proceed to discuss the case of Independents. I have not the slightest doubt, even though he denied that he made any statement with the idea that it was going to help the propaganda for the Independent candidate, that behind the scenes he and other members of the Opposition are doing everything in their power to help in the return of the Independent candidate against the Labour Party candidate.

**Mr. Muller:** You ran one against me in Fassifern and backed him.

**Mr. WALSH:** Can you imagine the member for Fassifern—who opposed an increase in the price of butter for the dairymen—(Government laughter) can you imagine the hon. member for Fassifern having the hide to make that statement in this Chamber when it has been freely stated that he paid the deposit of the Independent candidate (Government laughter).

**Mr. Muller:** You backed him.

**Mr. WALSH:** It is all very well for the hon. member to try to get out of it like that.

**Mr. Muller:** You were not game to come in in your true colour.

**Mr. WALSH:** The hon. member got the Independent candidate to oppose him for the election because he was afraid there might have been a Labour candidate who would oppose him.

I think I have said sufficient to show that the Independent candidates have not by any means represented their electorates effectively in this State. If any evidence is required as to how the Bundaberg electorate was represented by an Independent candidate, the hon. member for Isis knows better than anybody in this Committee the difference there has been since the electors returned a Labour candidate. And it is just too bad for Maryborough if they return an Independent candidate on election day.

**Mr. BROWN (Buranda) (8.35 p.m.):** It has been very interesting to hear the discussion on this Vote and hon. members opposite have been very prominent in it. That is quite understandable but we have heard the hon. member for Toowong stating that time was being wasted. He said he would not be long and took five minutes to tell us we were wasting time on this Vote. Surely the Opposition are wise enough to realise that the election on 7 March last had some connection with this Vote and we should be safe in saying that the Opposition are still licking their wounds. That is the reason why they would not have Government members talk, but we on this side have the right to express our views to the people on the great confidence placed in the Labour Party on election day.

The Principal Electoral Officer, Mr. Herlihy, and his officers, from the highest to the lowest, always are willing to give anybody information required on electoral matters. I had many contacts with this office years before I became a member of Parliament and always found the officers were easy to approach. The system from the top to the bottom is such that we could scarcely expect anything but the best and I pay tribute to the staff. There is a particularly hard job. Some 3½ years ago, because of the redistribution of electoral boundaries, a colossal job was placed on these officers, but they worked it out very well.

This Vote recalls memories of many years ago. I remember first of all the time when members of the same party that hon. members opposite belong to opposed giving people

a vote at all. They would not give the working-class a vote. There was a time when a man boasted that he had a vote for every electorate in the State of Queensland. He has long since passed away. I think his name was G. T. Bell. He was an auctioneer and because he had a 16-perch allotment in some part of each electorate he had a vote for that electorate. Surely hon. members will remember the fight for one man, one vote and the agitation put forward by Labour in the latter part of the last century. As soon as we got that, we agitated for one adult, one vote. In 1905 the adult franchise became an established fact. Since that time, every man and woman has been entitled to vote at every election that has taken place. Thanks to the agitation by the Labour Movement this right of citizenship, the adult franchise, was granted to the people. I know that if the Opposition were the Government, as they were between 1929 and 1932, they would take that right from the people tomorrow.

As a matter of fact, the Moore-Barnes Government did that in connection with municipal elections between 1929 and 1932. Hon. members will remember what was called the householder's franchise introduced by that Government. Under that legislation there was only one vote to a household unless other people in the house owned property or paid rent. The people of Queensland have had that right restored by the Labour Government, who have never looked back since 1932. I repeat that the Government supported by hon. members opposite deprived the people of the right to vote at municipal elections, and they would do it again tomorrow if they had the opportunity.

In Queensland we have 75 electorates. This means that at an election 75 returning officers and thousands of presiding officers and other people are required. The Electoral Office does a wonderful job, and we all know that the Queensland Police do excellent work in checking the rolls before the election day. As a result of all this efficiency, we find that at the last State elections 93.8 per cent. of the people enrolled exercised their vote. That is the highest percentage of voters since 1932 and they returned a Labour Government by an overwhelming majority. In this result we have ample proof of the wisdom of Labour's policy.

Much has been said about the desirability of having the one roll for both State and Federal elections. If this could be worked—I think it can be—we should have it, but we cannot have it unless we use the State rolls. The State rolls are undoubtedly much cleaner than the Commonwealth roll, they are more up to date, and it would not be difficult to adjust them to suit Federal purposes. What is more, the State rolls are issued each year and for that reason must be right up to date.

I rose to speak because I realised that the Opposition wanted this Vote to go through because they want some other Vote to come on. I think this is the most important Vote that has ever been discussed in this Chamber and the fact that the Opposition members

are so silent about it makes it all the more imperative that every member of the Labour Party should speak on it. I support the motion.

**Mr. BURROWS** (Port Curtis) (8.46 p.m.): Every year since I have been a member of this Assembly the Opposition have taken the opportunity when this item in the Estimates has come forward to try to excuse their own ineffectiveness and inefficiency and have adopted the attitude of the bad sportsman who, if he cannot win or tie, resorts to wrangling. We hear all sorts of excuses put forward for the dismal failure hon. members opposite have made at the elections so monotonously since 1932 and prior to that, with the exception of the year 1929, right back to the year 1915. As the blackfellow says, one would have thought they would have fluked one in between, but they do not even seem capable of rising to that.

Hon. members opposite have tried to justify their defeat by a lot of nasty inferences and innuendoes but what has that availed them? Take for instance the last election. What a glorious defeat they suffered there! I can see the danger, if the Opposition are to consist only of men who are prepared to put just part of their time into their job as members of this Parliament, that there will be a further drift in the number of members sitting opposite, and that will be a very bad day for democracy. I think it is essential in any democratic system of government to have a strong and virile Opposition and I very much regret that we do not see that today. Nor have I seen it since I have been here, and I regret that the virility of the Opposition has further deteriorated over the past six and a-half years, since I have been a member of this Assembly.

I should say that the first essential of a successful Opposition is truthfulness.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the Vote under discussion.

**Mr. BURROWS:** As I said previously, members opposite are quite happy to cruise along, indolent, ineffective, and inactive. The hon. member for Isis, referring to the last elections, said that his opponent's first words were that the Isis electorate would be better represented by a Labour man. Then he went on to twist that into a suggestion that the man said, "You will get nothing unless you return a Labour representative."

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the Vote under discussion.

**Mr. BURROWS:** That shows how hon. members opposite will twist things and blame the electoral system, the electoral officer, and anything but their own indolence and their own ineffectiveness. I do not want to be nasty, but as I said previously the time will come when there will be only Government members in this Chamber. That will be a bad day for democracy.

**An Opposition Member interjected.**

**Mr. BURROWS:** On the progress we have made since I have been a member of this Assembly, it will take only another couple of elections and there will be nobody at all on the Opposition benches. We shall have to appoint members from this side of the Chamber to act as critics and thus create an Opposition of our own. That would be farcical, of course, and would be getting towards the dictatorial or Communist style of government. I appeal to hon. members opposite to devote more time to their jobs as members of Parliament.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I again ask the hon. member to keep to the Vote that is being discussed. There is nothing about members doing their jobs in this Vote.

**Mr. BURROWS:** During the last election campaign hon. members opposite did a lot of complaining. For instance, the hon. member for Coorparoo complained bitterly that the electoral officer in my electorate was allowing things to happen that should not happen. I admit that enthusiastic and over-zealous supporters of any candidate will at times go beyond the electoral law, but it is paltry, just because somebody steals a sign belonging to me and hangs it on a railway carriage, more as a joke than anything else, for the hon. member for Coorparoo to complain.

**Mr. Low:** That was done deliberately. They were on more than one engine.

**Mr. BURROWS:** The hon. member says it was done deliberately.

**Mr. Low:** Of course it was.

**Mr. BURROWS:** To the pure all things are pure. No doubt the hon. member can see badness and viciousness in the actions of everybody but himself.

**Mr. Low:** They were on several engines, and they were put on in Bundaberg, too.

**Mr. BURROWS:** On virtually every tree-guard from Bundaberg to Gin Gin Liberal and Country Party signs were pasted up.

**Mr. Pizzey:** Not in my electorate.

**Mr. BURROWS:** There were some in the Isis electorate—I saw them there—but I did not go squealing to “The Courier-Mail.”

There is an answer to it all, and a very effective answer, that is, to avoid that type of propaganda and get onto the job of looking after our electorates. We do not win an election during the three or four months prior to the election, but by looking after our jobs here. To hon. members opposite that might mean neglecting their private business, but that is how Labour has been so successful. I appeal to hon. members opposite to put more into their jobs as members of Parliament and a little bit less into their private businesses. If they attend to their work here they will be doing more than effectively representing their electorates, they will be doing something to preserve democracy.

Vote (Electoral Registration) agreed to.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 8.57 p.m.