

Queensland



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Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 1962

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. D. E. Nicholson, Murrumba) took the chair at 11 a.m.

QUESTIONS

CONSTRUCTION OF VIRGINIA OVERBRIDGE

Mr. DONALD (Ipswich East), for **Mr. MELLOY** (Nudgee), asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

“When is it anticipated that the Virginia overbridge will be completed and opened for traffic?”

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

“The Virginia overbridge, together with the necessary road approaches and twin bridges over Downfall Creek, are being carried out by the Brisbane City Council as constructing authority for a combined project with the Main Roads Department. The overbridge is being constructed by contract. The Honourable Member for Wavell raised this matter with me some

weeks ago and I informed him that, depending upon favourable conditions, it is anticipated the bridge will be completed and ready for traffic in May, 1963."

SCHOOL CHILDREN'S FARES ON GOLD COAST BUSES

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

"In view of the concern expressed by residents on the Gold Coast at the reported rise in fares for school children using local buses, will he keep this matter under surveillance with the view to alleviating the pressure on parents if this proposal to increase fares should become necessary?"

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY (Isis) replied—

"The Honourable Member can rest assured that my Department will continue to pay the full fares of all primary and secondary children travelling on authorised school transport services living more than three miles from the nearest school. There may have been cause for concern before this Government took office, when all secondary children in the Gold Coast area, including those living more than three miles from the Southport State High School were compelled to pay their own fares. However, for the last five years the Government has been paying the fares of those children outside the three mile radius. Children attending the non-State schools in that area are also eligible for similar concessions. This Government has never taken any action regarding the fares charged to children living within the three mile limit, who prefer to use public transport rather than walk or cycle to school. Inquiries made of the Transport Commission reveal that no application for increase of fares in the Gold Coast area has been made to the Commissioner of Transport and in view of the information provided at the time of the transfer of the licence there appears to be no justification for any increase in fares.

PARKING METER BREACHES, BRISBANE

Mr. DONALD (Ipswich East), for **Mr. LLOYD** (Kedron), asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

"(1) How many tickets for minor traffic breaches in relation to parking meters have been issued by police officers in Brisbane?"

"(2) How many police officers are presently engaged in policing these parking meters?"

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY (Isis) replied—

"(1) 163,149 parking meter tickets have been issued in the Brisbane City area from July 1, 1957, to October 31, 1962."

"(2) Twelve police officers are required to perform duties in relation to the policing of parking meters in Brisbane."

REPAINTING OF HOUSING COMMISSION HOUSES AT GROVELY

Mr. DONALD (Ipswich East), for **Mr. LLOYD** (Kedron), asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"As numerous complaints have been received by me from tenants of houses at the Grovely project in relation to repainting of State houses by contractors, a matter which has been referred to the Queensland Housing Commission and an unsatisfactory reply received, will he instruct Housing Commission inspectors to inspect all houses recently repainted and in course of being repainted?"

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth) replied—

"All the houses recently repainted and in the course of being repainted have been and are subject to very rigid and frequent inspections, two per day during currency of the work by foreman painters of the Commission, and by the officer-in-charge of painting. The paints used on each house are also subject to test by the Government Analyst to ensure that the high standards of the specifications are met. During 1962 at Grovely ninety-five houses have been repainted externally and those which are in the course of being repainted and for which contracts have been let total 145. All of the paintwork is of high quality. The complaints referred to by the Honourable Member may probably be in respect to alleged damage to gardens and plants by contract painters. On this matter he was advised by the Commission that (1) specifications for repainting work required contractors to avoid damage to lawns, plants and gardens and to carry out the work with the minimum of inconvenience and to protect occupants of the houses and their effects from loss or injury; (2) in some cases it was necessary to cut back or remove plants to enable the work to be carried out. With very few, if any, exceptions, tenants of houses at the Grovely project were aware beforehand that their houses were to be repainted and contractors arranged with them for use of electric power for sanding machines. Tenants have been given every opportunity to arrange and co-operate with painters for protection of their plants, gardens, lawns, &c."

CONSTRUCTION OF POWER STATION AT COLLINSVILLE

Dr. DELAMOTHE (Bowen) asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

"(1) Has his attention been drawn to a statement in 'The Bowen Independent' of November 16, 1962, by Mr. J. Gralton, an accredited representative of the A.L.P. in Bowen, that the proposal to build a 180 megawatt power station at Collinville had been an open secret for the past seven years?"

"(2) If so, (a) what investigations had been carried out and (b) what plans had been prepared prior to the advent of the Country Party-Liberal Government?"

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

"(1) I have seen the statement referred to by the Honourable Member."

"(2) (a) Detailed investigation of the Collinsville coalfield as a site for a large power station was first made in 1957 and 1958 in conjunction with other possible power developments in North Queensland. Based on these investigations the State Electricity Commission reported to the Government in July 1958, and approval was given by the present Government to the construction of the Barron River Hydro-Electric Extension Project which was more economic at that stage, and which is due for completion in 1963. The British consulting engineers, Messrs. Merz and McLellan, reported on certain aspects during 1960 and the Commission reviewed the whole matter of a Collinsville power station and alternative schemes prior to submitting its report and recommendations to the Government in October of this year as a result of which approval has now been given to the Collinsville power station. (b) No plans for construction of a power station on the Collinsville coalfield had been prepared prior to the advent of the present Government."

ROAD TRANSPORT OF FISH FROM TOWNSVILLE TO BRISBANE

Mr. COBURN (Burdekin), for **Mr. AIKENS** (Townsville South), asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"Is it a fact that a large consignment of fish was recently sent from the Townsville Fish Board to Brisbane by road transport and, if so, was the Railway Department given an opportunity to quote for or obtain this freight?"

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth) replied—

"I am having enquiries made in this matter and will advise the Honourable Member of the result of those enquiries."

EXTENSIONS TO TOWNSVILLE RAILWAY STATION

Mr. COBURN (Burdekin), for **Mr. AIKENS** (Townsville South), asked the Minister for Transport—

"(1) What are the details of the proposed alterations and additions to the Townsville railway station?"

"(2) Have any tenders been accepted for the work and, if so, for what amount and for what part of the job?"

"(3) When is it anticipated that the work will be completed?"

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer) replied—

"(1) Public tenders closing at 2 p.m. on December 10, 1962, have been invited for a new structure which will be an extension of the existing station building, four storeys high, and will comprise approximately 26,300 square feet of floor space. The building will be of steel frame construction, the walls brick with concrete floors and roof. The concrete floors will be overlaid with polished wood. The three upper floors will be fully air-conditioned and soundproof. On the ground floor will be a milk bar to replace the existing milk bar, plus conveniences which will replace existing facilities to be demolished in connection with the new construction. All floors will be served by an electric lift."

"(2) See answer to Question (1)."

"(3) The work is to be completed within 450 calendar days from the date of the signing of the contract."

PERSONNEL AT POLICE DEPOT GARAGE, PETRIE TERRACE

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

"(1) How many (a) policemen and cadets and (b) civilians are employed at the Police Depot garage, Petrie Terrace?"

"(2) What is the classification of each person employed there?"

"(3) What qualifications have those on motor repair work to do such work, i.e. trade apprenticeship qualifications?"

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZHEY (Isis) replied—

"(1) There are twenty-one policemen, six cadets and four civilian personnel employed at the Police Depot Garage."

"(2) Persons attached to the Police Depot Garage are employed under the following classifications:—Officer in Charge, 1; Motor Cycle Section, 7; Maintenance Section, 11; Clerical duties, including one purchasing officer, 9; Cleaners, 2; Greaser, 1."

"(3) There are eight employees at the Police Depot Garage with "A" Grade Motor Mechanics Certificates and two with "B" Grade Certificates."

WHARF SITE AT KARUMBA

Mr. GILMORE (Tablelands) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"As no wharf facilities exist at the Gulf of Carpentaria port of Karumba, will he investigate the position with a view to obtaining a suitable site and constructing a wharf sufficient for the needs of the area?"

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth) replied—

"It is the Department's opinion that the present need at Karumba is not of sufficient magnitude to warrant substantial wharf facilities. This position could

change, however, if there is substantial development in the prawn industry in that locality. In that case quite substantial improvements, including wharfage, could become essential. My Department recently convened a conference of representatives of the Commonwealth Department of Primary Industries, C.S.I.R.O., Fish Board and representatives of commercial fishery interests. The need for and means of implementing a full survey of Gulf waters was fully discussed and recommendations will be placed before both the Commonwealth and State Governments. The Honourable Member will appreciate, of course, that much of the water which will be investigated is under Commonwealth control. One matter which would require investigation in such a survey would be the shore facilities necessary to support any fishery opportunity which such a survey might disclose."

ERECTION OF HOUSING COMMISSION HOUSES AT MAREEBA

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"Owing to the rapid rise in population in the town of Mareeba and the present acute shortage of homes in the area, will he give consideration to the erection of the required number of homes by the Queensland Housing Commission to meet the present shortage?"

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth) replied—

"At October 31, 1962, the local Clerk of Petty Sessions was holding only ten applications carrying points priority for tenancy of rental houses—one at 100 points—family subject to a Notice to Quit; five at 60 points—families separated owing to lack of accommodation; and four at 40 points—families living in overcrowded conditions or sharing accommodation. At Mareeba the Commission has erected eighty-one houses (seventy-one home ownership and ten rental), four houses are under construction and contracts let for a further two. In addition tenders have been called for two houses and plans and specifications are being prepared for four houses for home ownership applicants, and any of thirty-one unused sites may be selected by prospective home owners. It is proposed to call tenders in April, 1963, for eight houses."

SHORTAGE OF LABOUR IN MAREEBA-DIMBULAH AREA

Mr. GILMORE (Tablelands), without notice, asked the Acting Minister for Labour and Industry—

"Is he aware of the very severe shortage of labour in the Mareeba-Dimbulah area, and the grave concern that this shortage is causing to tobacco farmers in the area? If so, will he take urgent steps, in conjunction

with the Commonwealth Employment Service, to provide labour to fill the vacancies?"

Hon. A. T. DEWAR (Wavell) replied—

"I am aware of, and very concerned at, the great difficulty being experienced in obtaining suitable labour to harvest this year's heavy tobacco crop, which will be worth up to £8,000,000 to the Mareeba-Dimbulah district.

"The latest information available to me is that there are vacancies for some 130 workers in the district, and that there is a likelihood of the present labour shortage becoming even worse.

"For several weeks the Commonwealth Employment Service has been making strenuous efforts to relieve what it regards as an 'acute' labour shortage. It has opened a special branch office in the district, and has, in fact, transported men to the fields from all areas of the State—Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville, Cairns, Ipswich.

"The opportunity to take this employment has been offered to every suitable applicant in Queensland who is registered as unemployed with the Commonwealth Employment Service and who is prepared to travel in order to find employment. The position is so acute that townspeople have been harvesting the tobacco at week-ends, and even the senior school children of the district have joined in this work.

"The harvesting is likely to continue till the end of January, and I appeal to any person seeking work to contact the Commonwealth Employment Service, from which full details can be obtained."

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1961-1962

Mr. SPEAKER read a message from the Deputy Governor transmitting the Supplementary Estimates for the year 1961-1962.

Estimates ordered to be printed, and referred to Committee of Supply.

VOTE ON ACCOUNT, 1963-1964

MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY GOVERNOR

Mr. SPEAKER read a message from the Deputy Governor recommending that the following provision be made on account of the services of the year ending 30 June, 1964:—

From the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland (exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account), the sum of twenty million pounds;

From the Trust and Special Funds, the sum of twenty million pounds;

From the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account, the sum of four million pounds.

Message referred to Committee of Supply.

ELECTIONS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair)

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong—Minister for Justice) (11.20 a.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Elections Acts, 1915 to 1959, in certain particulars.”

The purpose of this Bill is to give effect to one important principle. That principle is the introduction to Queensland of a system of preferential voting which will be as nearly as practicable on the same basis as the Commonwealth method of voting for election of members of the House of Representatives and which will conform generally with the electoral systems of the other Australian States.

I might mention that the matter of a change in our system of voting has been under consideration for several months past, during which time various voting methods have been considered.

As a result of this consideration, our conclusion, shortly stated, is that preferential voting is, on the whole, a fairer system of voting than the existing Queensland system of first past the post.

Mr. Hanlon: How many of your Caucus think that?

Mr. MUNRO: While that represents a general conclusion and consensus of opinion, it should also be recognised that there are some arguments both for and against this proposed change in the law.

Mr. Walsh: More against than for it.

Mr. MUNRO: That may be the opinion of the hon. member for Bundaberg, but he will have the opportunity of stating his views later.

Arguments that might be used in favour of the retention of our present Queensland system are that it is the simplest possible form of voting and that it enables the result of the election to be known as quickly as possible. On the other hand, arguments in favour of a change to a system of preferential voting include the following: first, it will bring our Queensland method of voting into broad conformity with the systems operating in all other Australian States and in the Commonwealth. Second, the wastage of votes given for defeated candidates will be eliminated and all formal votes ultimately will be allotted to a candidate and counted to such extent as may be necessary for the final determination of the election. In the net result a candidate in any election will

not be elected unless, after inclusion of all preferences allotted, he receives an absolute majority of the formal votes cast in that election.

The most important result, therefore, is that the new system will do away with the position under our present law in terms of which a candidate may be elected to the Parliament notwithstanding that he received only a minority of the votes and that a majority of the electors might have preferred to have elected some other candidate.

Summing up these arguments, the conclusion is arrived at that the introduction of preferential voting will not only give us substantial uniformity in voting systems throughout Australia, but will also give us the benefit of the fairest practicable system of voting for candidates elected by single-member constituencies.

In passing, it may be mentioned that the results of an election by a system of preferential voting will generally be very similar to what would have been the result if there had been successive elections by exhaustive ballot.

As hon. members will be aware, the exhaustive-ballot system is quite often used where there is a small number of voters, and in such cases the exhaustive ballot is quite practicable and gives a completely fair and accurate result.

On the other hand, the exhaustive-ballot system would not be a practicable method of voting for election of members of Parliament where the number of voters is very large as compared with the small number who are concerned in, for example, an exhaustive-ballot for office-bearers of a particular organisation.

Having arrived at the conclusion that a system of preferential voting is desirable, it next became necessary to consider the relative merits of a system of compulsory preferential voting as in operation in Commonwealth elections for the House of Representatives and the system of optional preferential voting which had been in operation in Queensland for a long period prior to 1942.

On examination it is found that there is very little to choose between these two systems of preferential voting, but of the two the compulsory system appears to be the better for two reasons. The first reason is that it gives us substantial uniformity with the laws of the Commonwealth and of the other Australian States. The second is that the result gives a slightly more accurate reflection of the wishes of the electors seeing that, in the final result, all formal votes are counted and the successful candidate, therefore, must obtain a majority of all the formal votes counted in the election.

Whilst, as I have indicated, the basic purpose of this Bill is to give effect to only one important principle, that is, the introduction of a system of preferential voting,

the introduction of that principle does necessitate quite a number of incidental amendments in the Act. Many of these incidental amendments are merely of a drafting nature, but there are others which are of some practical interest and I will, therefore, outline briefly the nature of the incidental amendments, which may be of interest to hon. members.

Speaking generally, it may be said that these incidental amendments arise mainly from the fact that under a system of preferential voting it is necessary that the names of all the candidates appear on the ballot paper, whereas with the first-past-the-post system it was practicable in certain circumstances to admit as a formal vote a ballot paper which had on it the name of only one candidate.

The main result of this is that it now becomes necessary to discontinue our former Queensland practice of permitting votes to be cast in some limited classes of cases prior to the date for the closing of nominations.

It will be readily understood that, if voting prior to the closing date for nominations were permitted in a system of preferential voting, many of those votes could be rendered informal by the nomination of a candidate whose name did not appear on the ballot papers used prior to the closing of nominations.

Mr. Walsh: So you are going to disfranchise many voters.

Mr. MUNRO: No, we will not disfranchise any voters.

Mr. Mann: You are going to make it harder.

Mr. MUNRO: No, we will not make it harder. On the contrary, if the hon. member will be patient, he will find when I conclude my explanation that in some cases we will be further serving the convenience of electors.

Mr. Newton: In some cases only. What about the people who leave the State at a date earlier than the elections?

Mr. MUNRO: We have given consideration to the problem raised by people who may leave the State at an early date prior to the conclusion of nominations. Accordingly, our new law in relation to those types of votes which may be cast before election day will not permit any such votes to be cast prior to the time for closing of nominations.

In relation to the interjections that have been made, surely hon. members will understand that under the system of preferential voting it is simply not practicable to have all the votes cast before the concluding date for nominations and before the electors know who are the candidates for whom they are entitled to vote.

Mr. Walsh: That is not a legitimate excuse for disfranchising electors.

Mr. MUNRO: We do not disfranchise them. I have already explained that, while it is necessary to modify our present law, we have considered the problems that arise, and we propose to make further arrangements that will quite make up any deficiency that could have arisen from the original modification.

In the case of pre-election absent voters, there will be machinery for such votes to be cast after a period of 72 hours next succeeding the hour of noon on nomination day.

It may perhaps be of interest if I further explain these types of vote. If we take the case of a person who wishes to vote as an absent voter prior to election day, it will be necessary for him to await the expiration of 72 hours after the closing of nominations so as to allow a reasonable time for ballot papers to be made available in the hands of returning officers and electoral registrars. However, if such a voter is not able to vote as an absent voter, he will still be free to avail himself of the alternative facilities for postal voting. Having in view this necessary reduction in the available time during which pre-election absent votes may be cast, the convenience of electors will be met by an extension of the facilities for postal voting. These extended facilities will be on the same basis as the arrangements for postal voting in Commonwealth elections and, as a result, persons who are out of Queensland and who are otherwise eligible to use a postal vote will be able to do so on very much the same basis as a postal voter who is within the State. Consequential on this there will be an extension of the provision for authorised witnesses to conform with the corresponding provision in the existing Commonwealth law.

In connection with these consequential revisions, I may mention that the Act presently provides that any candidate may retire from his candidature not later than 72 hours after the close of nominations. There is no similar provision in the Commonwealth law. To facilitate the operation of preferential voting, it is desirable that ballot papers be printed and distributed as soon as possible after the close of nominations. In order to distribute, quickly, ballot papers with the candidates' names printed thereon, it is proposed to eliminate the three days' period allowed for withdrawal of candidates. The saving of three days at this time will be invaluable to returning officers and State electoral registrars, who will require to receive printed ballot papers for absent and postal voting as soon as possible after the close of nominations.

On the question of the time for counting of postal votes it is also proposed generally to follow the Commonwealth system, which recognises postal votes that comply with the established postal-voting requirements and that are received by the returning officer through the post within a period of seven days after the close of the poll. This limitation will allow reasonable flexibility for

meeting the requirements of voters who may be outside the State without unduly delaying the count.

It also becomes necessary to provide for what will no doubt be a very rare occurrence, namely, of there being two or more candidates with an equal number of primary votes and where it is required that one candidate be eliminated so that his preferences may be allotted. The Commonwealth procedure in this type of case is for the returning officer to have a discretionary power as to which of the candidates is to be eliminated. There is a different procedure in the State of New South Wales, in terms of which it is provided that, in this type of case, the candidate to be eliminated is to be decided by lot.

Mr. Houston: Will you explain to me the special power that the returning officer has?

Mr. MUNRO: This is merely dealing with the elimination of a candidate for the purpose of allocating the preference votes.

Mr. Houston: You have two with exactly the same number of votes.

Mr. MUNRO: Yes. Under the Commonwealth law the discretion as to which candidate is to be eliminated lies with the returning officer. Although not so expressed, it is substantially the same thing as giving the returning officer a casting vote for the purpose of deciding which candidate is to be eliminated. Under the New South Wales law, instead of casting that somewhat onerous responsibility on the returning officer, it is decided that the one to be eliminated will be determined by lot. If I may use a colloquial expression, the names will be put in a hat and one eliminated.

Mr. Houston: The returning officer could have two or three votes. You might have that doubling-up twice.

Mr. MUNRO: Certainly not in New South Wales, but, under the Commonwealth law, in an extremely rare case the returning officer could have something in the nature of a casting vote to determine which candidate retires from the count and later, if there again happened to be a tie in the final count, he would have a similar casting vote. Up to the present, I have merely given a brief indication of those two systems that we have considered. We propose in this matter to follow the New South Wales provision, which is quite fair to all candidates and does not cast an onerous responsibility on the returning officer.

Mr. Houston: That means if the lower candidates have an equal number of votes.

Mr. MUNRO: Yes. That merely applies in the somewhat remote contingency of its being clear that one of two candidates has to be eliminated. If they have an equal number of votes, it is a matter of deciding which one is to be eliminated. There is a refinement in relation to that, because provision is

made for something in the way of a count back. This applies in cases of absolute equality, when the fairest way to make a decision is by lot.

This particular matter is not to be confused with the provision that applies when, in the final count, two candidates have equal numbers of votes. That particular problem could arise even under our existing system of first-past-the-post voting. In this case we will retain our existing provision, which is similar to that of the Commonwealth in that in such a case the returning officer is required to exercise a casting vote. Hon. members will understand that whilst it is necessary to provide for such contingency, its use would be extremely rare. In that respect, we are merely retaining the existing provision. We have decided that it is not desirable to extend the power of the returning officer to cover broadly similar contingencies that could arise incidental to the counting of preferential votes.

Apart from the matters that may be regarded as consequential on the introduction of a system of preferential voting, there is also one small amendment purely of an administrative nature. This amendment will permit a returning officer, if he so desires, to lodge a candidate's deposit with the Department of Justice for safe custody. The reason for this is that some returning officers feel that it is not satisfactory for a candidate's deposit to be lodged in a private bank account, whilst on the other hand it is an undue responsibility for a returning officer to have to retain candidates' deposits in cash. There will be complementary provisions so that if a candidate's deposit is lodged with the Department of Justice the amount of the deposit will be available for return to the candidate at the appropriate time if he becomes qualified to receive it.

I feel that members generally will be quite happy to see the passing of this Bill, seeing that it does represent a forward step in our democratic approach to the problem of providing for our State the fairest practicable system of voting. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. Duggan: That is the silliest statement I have heard since I have been in this Parliament.

Mr. MUNRO: If the Leader of the Opposition is not happy with this measure, as I gather from his interjection, the natural conclusion is that he is not particularly anxious to provide for the State the fairest practicable system of voting. If he is able to give adequate reasons why this system of preferential voting is not desirable, he will have the opportunity to do so.

Mr. Duggan: I am so used to reflections being cast on me that I do not mind them, but I am rather surprised that you cast reflections on about 48 members of your own Caucus.

Mr. MUNRO: I am not sure whether the arithmetic of the Leader of the Opposition is correct. As far as I am concerned, I do not know what the figures were. This matter was considered and discussed very exhaustively at a well-attended meeting of Government party members. We discussed it, I think, for slightly more than three hours in a very fair debate, unlike, according to the little stories that one hears through the grapevine, some of the discussions that take place when hon. members opposite meet. There was nothing acrimonious at any stage of that three-hour debate. Very fair and objective consideration was given to the whole problem, and what I have indicated to hon. members is the result of that consideration, which represents the consensus of opinion of members of the Government parties.

Mr. Duggan: Does your store of stories include the one that many of your members were dissatisfied with being led by old and tired men?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope that is not a reflection on the Chair.

Mr. Duggan: You are not one of the leaders, Mr. Taylor, but in many respects I think you should be.

Mr. MUNRO: I do not think the interjection of the Leader of the Opposition is particularly relevant to the debate. The only conclusion I can draw from it is that, although he is not old, the Leader of the Opposition must be very tired this morning after the late sitting last night.

The real significance of preferential voting is that in 1963 the people of Queensland will be entitled to elect a truly representative Parliament on a fully democratic basis.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (11.47 a.m.): I think the first observation I should make is that the Government does not deserve any credit for introducing a Bill amending the Elections Act in the dying stages of the session.

Opposition Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. DUGGAN: I say that because on 19 November, 1942, which was four days earlier in the session than this, the present Premier, Mr. Nicklin, who was then Leader of the Opposition, criticised the amending Bill introduced by the then Attorney-General, Mr. Gledson. I do not think it inappropriate to refer to that.

Without wasting words, I think I should say right at the beginning of my speech that the Opposition is not prepared to accept this proposal as being an opportunity for examining freely, objectively, and impartially and determining on the merits the best means of providing an electoral system for the return of candidates to this Parliament, because we regard this as a sorry, sad, sordid sequel to political manoeuvrings that have gone on in the Government parties for a considerable period.

In refuting the statements made by the Minister for Justice, I wish to refer first to his statement that this matter has been under consideration for several months. That is a completely untrue statement, because it has been under consideration for several years.

Mr. MUNRO: I rise to a point of order. I had moved to rise to a point of order when the Leader of the Opposition said that it was completely untrue to say that this matter had been under consideration for several months, because that is in fact a completely true statement. However, on reflection, I feel that it was unnecessary for me to take a point of order because the Leader of the Opposition went on to say that it was untrue because it has been under consideration for several years. It may have been; it may have been under consideration for 20 years; but that does not detract from the fact that it has been under serious consideration for some time.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. DUGGAN: On a strict legal interpretation of the matter, I suppose the Minister for Justice may have a point, but obviously he wished to imply that the Government had recently become seized of the need to do something and has at last done something.

I have here a report that appeared in "The Courier-Mail" of 27 June 1959 to the effect that on the previous night, by 150 votes to 3, the Liberal Party State Convention urged the State Government to legislate for preferential voting as a matter of urgency.

Now, let us see whether there was at that convention this same objective, fair desire to approach the problem. Probably one of the most able men the Liberal Party has furnished to this Parliament over recent years was Mr. Peter Connolly. He spoke at this convention, this is what he said—

"It is cold comfort to believe in what's right and spend 20 to 30 years in Opposition because of it.

"I'd like the moralists to work out a way to give more value to the votes of our friends and less to those of our enemies."

Then there was the distinguished Q.C., Mr. Hart, the hon member for Mt. Gravatt, who said—

"Very often with preferential voting you get a person whom nobody wants. I'm quite certain the Country Party do not want it."

There you have two of the leading lights among legal men in the Liberal Party who have expressed themselves in that way. However, the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha, Mr. Morris, the former Liberal Party leader, said on many occasions that it was his personal desire to implement this measure as quickly as possible.

We all remember that when the Premier faced a television quiz session some time ago he was asked about the inconsistency of the Government parties in this matter because it was on the platform of both parties, the Country Party and the Liberal Party. He said that the reason for not doing anything in the matter was that he was instructed by the Bundaberg Convention not to introduce preferential voting. No-one can tell me that this matter has been actuated by a lofty ethical approach. It has been determined because of smart political manoeuvres by the Liberal Party, whose members at least have been consistent in their agitation and have used from the beginning the force of their vote in the Caucus to have this measure moved. The reason why that meeting gave them the green light was the disloyalty to the Country Party of some of its leading members, including the Premier and the Deputy Premier.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not think the hon. member is entitled to refer to the disloyalty of the Premier and the Deputy Premier. If the hon. member makes such a statement he must found it on fact.

Mr. DUGGAN: I referred only to disloyalty to their political party.

Mr. MUNRO: I rise to a point of order. I think that remark is quite uncalled for.

Mr. DUGGAN: I beg the hon. gent's pardon. I meant the Deputy Leader of the Country Party. I am sorry, I did not mean the Minister for Justice.

Mr. MUNRO: I understood the Leader of the Opposition to refer to the Premier.

Mr. Mann: But only as Leader of the Country Party.

Mr. MUNRO: If so, in the absence of the Premier from the State, I think it is quite unparliamentary and quite uncalled for to make such a totally unfounded statement.

Mr. DUGGAN: I hope I get some credit from this interruption by the hon. gentleman, because it was only at a quarter to 1 this morning that we were informed of the Government's intention to introduce this legislation.

Mr. Hanlon: It is because the Premier is absent that it has been brought down.

Mr. DUGGAN: Of course it is. They took this opportunity because they want to remove some embarrassment from the Premier by bringing it forward while he is in Perth. There is no reason why it should come forward today. It could have been introduced on Tuesday.

Mr. Munro interjected.

Mr. DUGGAN: The Minister has unlimited time to speak on the measure, but my time is limited. I say this is a significant Bill, and quite frankly, irrespective of the outcome of the 1963 elections, Country Party members will rue the day that they became parties to this arrangement. I could perhaps, if I had the time, produce unlimited evidence to show the relative decline in the Country Party organisation throughout Australia, so much so that in Canberra the other day its Federal leader was obliged to dissociate himself publicly from the policy of the Liberal Party because the Country Party will lose certain seats. That has been reflected throughout the Commonwealth and in many places it is becoming a moribund party. The more vigorous elements are in Queensland. Queensland has a more vigorous Country Party than any other State. The Country Party recently, I think, has attempted to enter the arena in Tasmania because of dissatisfaction with the Liberals in that State.

While I am talking about whether there is this great compatibility between the two parties, I point out that I do not like the Minister for Justice saying that he believes this proposal will give everybody an opportunity to vote in accordance with his conscience and to elect the candidate whom he likes best. Under the first-past-the-post system the people determined which party they considered should govern. If the Minister wants to discuss this matter on the highest possible ethical level, why does he not introduce the proportional-representation system? It is not that I support that system personally, but theoretically it does provide the best possible system to ascertain the wishes of everybody and ensures that the only people returned are those who represent the aggregate body of voters in the State, or the Commonwealth.

Mr. Munro: If you do not support it personally, why don't you support it personally?

Mr. DUGGAN: I could quote many authorities——

Mr. Munro: In other words, you know its deficiencies.

Mr. DUGGAN: Only because it is not deemed to be politically expedient. The reason I do not support it is because of situations such as there are in Tasmania where one or two Independents, with no sense of responsibility, can determine the conduct of a Government. If it were confined to two major parties I would agree that it would be the fairest system, but because in Tasmania the major parties have approximately the same numbers, the intrusion of an odd Independent means that the balance of power is held by an Independent with no particular responsibility to the Parliament.

Mr. Munro: Then you recognise its deficiencies?

Mr. DUGGAN: If the Minister said, "We recognise the deficiencies, but because of political expediency we are going to reintroduce the preferential system of voting in Queensland", at least I would give him credit for it. As Mr. Connolly said, "We want a system that will give more value to the votes of our friends and less to those of our enemies." I do not think the Minister is being at all honest in this matter.

Apart from the swing towards Labour which was evident in the Federal election and the Brisbane municipal election, on the present electorate feeling throughout the State the Country Party, even in its wildest possible imaginings can hope to obtain only two additional seats, namely, Cook and Aubigny. That is the only hope that party has of increasing its representation in this Parliament. With the Liberals there is a greater opportunity for winning or losing seats in a great number of constituencies. Consequently, if the Government were returned at the next election the present balance of power of 25 to 20 in favour of the Country Party could be greatly in excess of that proportion with the preponderance favouring the Liberal Party. It is because of that that the true Country Party people have voted against this measure.

If the Minister wants to provide the opportunity for hon. members to have a free choice in this matter so that they can exercise their preference to the fullest extent, why does he not let the Bill come forward as a non-party measure or have a secret vote on it? There are many hon. members on that side who do not agree with the proposal but, because of the obligations of party loyalties and discipline, they accept the decision. The Minister has said how happy they were, but I have been here for 27 years and never in that time have I known so many Country Party members to want to "shout" for Labour members in the billiard room after a Caucus meeting. They were so upset that they had been betrayed by their Leader on this matter.

Mr. Munro: They must have thought that you were extremely worried and wanted to make you a bit happier.

Mr. DUGGAN: They were worried about themselves. Some of the best men the Government has over there will not be here after the next election, irrespective of the composition of the Parliament. I think we can win, and we will win.

Australian Labour Party Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. DUGGAN: It is a pity that some of the best Country Party members will not be here after the next election. They have adopted a certain attitude because they feel very strongly on this subject. Throughout the piece, it was said that an early decision was expected because Country Party people and members of the Government wanted to know

just what the political climate was likely to be at or round about election time; what the economic climate was likely to be at or round about election time, and what the position of the Q.L.P. would be at or round about election time. Undoubtedly an arrangement has been entered into between senior officials of the coalition Government and the leader of the Q.L.P. outside on any consideration of electoral support being given when this measure was introduced, because the President of the Q.L.P., Mr. Gair, said quite openly, and without any blushing, that the only thing they had to sell was their preferences, and that unless the Government introduced a system of preferential voting the Q.L.P. would have to look very closely into whether or not it could continue to function.

The history of all these things tends to establish that at least the Government has gone behind the scenes. It appointed Mr. Gair to the position he now holds of secondary industry establishment and expansion officer, although the man who appointed him said publicly at the time of the 1957 split that Mr. Gair had done more to strangle secondary-industry development in this State than any other political leader. Although he said that at the time, he appointed Mr. Gair to that post at a salary of £2,500 a year, plus £250 entertainment allowance, plus expenses. Then he sent him south with a little tin pot trade display, and the former Premier was humiliated by having to tell holidaying people who were thinking of coming to this State all about motels and the state of the roads.

Let us see what Mr. Gair said, as reported in "The Courier-Mail" of 26 July, 1957. He said—

"The humbug and hypocrisy of that hopeless political combination, Messrs. Nicklin and Morris, daily becomes more transparent . . .

"The A.L.P. is now definitely under the control of Socialist extremists and Communists working hand in glove," hypocritically declares Mr. Nicklin a week before the election.

"The Labor Party as it has been known to Queenslanders for 25 years is dying," echoes Mr. Morris, the humbug from Mt. Coot-tha . . .

"Heaven help Queensland if this pair of inexperienced bunglers should somehow struggle on to the Treasury benches! . . .

"They have proved themselves weak, incompetent and clueless in Opposition, and hopeless on the hustings. Who could trust them as the Government? . . ."

Those were the claims that were made at that time. This Government appointed nine Q.L.P. members to jobs but it did not appoint one A.L.P. man. I will make no reference whatever to hon. members who were members of the Q.L.P. in this Chamber—they can defend themselves—who have dissociated themselves from that party. However, I feel I

can say that the hon. member for Bundaberg and the hon. member for Cook, in particular, regret as much as I do the fact that we have not an A.L.P. Government in this State, irrespective of what led up to the split. In public declarations both of them have said that their reason for not accepting direction from the Q.C.E. was their belief that the Government should not be directed by an outside body. I will not go into the merits or demerits of that matter, but they said that was the only issue at stake on that occasion. They said, too, that the other issue—the D.L.P.—had nothing to do with their decision in Queensland. When there was an attempt to infuse money and speakers into the Q.L.P. these gentlemen left the organisation. They said at the time that they had a specific objection to a specific issue and they would not be parties to some other organisation that was anti-Labour in nature. Consequently, we have seen a resurgence of the idea to introduce a preferential-voting system. The D.L.P., in association with the Q.L.P., has arranged for an assistant secretary to come from one of the southern States—not from Queensland—and there has been a promise of an infusion into Queensland of speakers from the southern State. I say that will be accomplished very largely with Liberal money and with Liberal assistance.

I am surprised at the Country Party. The Labour Party is prepared to fight for its own political programme.

Mr. Hart: That was just a wild guess.

Mr. DUGGAN: No, it is fairly definite. The hon. member for Mt. Gravatt cannot refute it.

Mr. Hart: You cannot prove it.

Mr. DUGGAN: I have a little support for my statement. The hon. member invites some sort of assessment of this feeling of camaraderie. I have here an article published in "The Bulletin" of 8 September last dealing with, among other things, an assessment of the various political parties and the distrust that occurs. It reads—

"There is little love lost between the Liberal and Country Parties . . . generally the Country Party likes to look on Liberals as weak-kneed wowsers, lawyers, accountants and back-stabbers who run for cover whenever the chips are down, while the Liberals like to see the Country Party as a corrupt Parliamentary club, a clique run by a handful of Legislative Councillors. (The Liberals want to reform the Legislative Council, the Country Party wants to leave it just as it is)."

That is New South Wales, of course, and it reflects the opinion of the dyed-in-the-wool Country Party member.

Mr. Campbell: Why don't you talk about Queensland?

Mr. DUGGAN: The same thing applies here.

Mr. Campbell: No fear.

Mr. DUGGAN: The fact that this proposal scraped through by 24 votes to 21 shows just how much division there is over there, whether the Caucus meeting is called a coalition meeting or not. The Premier even swears the scrutineers to secrecy and he does not announce the result of the ballot. If the Minister for Justice says he does not know, how do we know it was carried by the Government party? He had to take on trust the declaration of the Premier, who swears everybody to secrecy, including the scrutineers, about the result, and then says, "It was carried, boys." And, of course, the way the proxies were exercised brought about this result to the discomfiture of the Country Party members.

There is abundant evidence to show that this is not an occasion to examine objectively or impartially the merits of the best system of voting. If we want to talk about what is the best system, I suppose the preservation of freedom in the Western World today can be said to repose largely in the hands of Great Britain and the United States of America, and in both of those great nations the first-past-the-post system of voting prevails. It prevails in the great Commonwealth nation of Canada, and in our sister dominion of New Zealand. So it can be said that there is substantial backing of authority for the present system.

I want to know why it is that any group—I do not care which group it is or whether it is an independent—can have a second choice of determining the final decision. A lot of people vote for No. 1 and No. 2 who would like the opportunity of saying, "If I knew my candidate would not become No. 1, I would like to distribute my vote a little differently—if I knew that my candidate was not to be elected." If, as I say in this case you are going to carry into the field people who have no hope of being elected to power, I think it is not a democratic system at all. We had a case here, without mentioning particular names. I do not mind people who take issue on a political problem or a political principle, but Mr. Gair, former Leader of the Q.L.P., has indicated that he will enter the field only if preferential voting is introduced..

A former Minister, Mr. Power, said on 26th November, 1961—

"If Mr. Gair prefers Menzies to a Labour Government, he should seek endorsement as a Liberal candidate."

That is a man who was very close to him. As I say, if he wants to do these things, why not come out in the open? To be perfectly factual—and this is not a hate session as far as I am concerned—(Government laughter) I could not care less, because Mr. Gair will not be back here. All I want to do is point out to the Labour people outside, as they have accepted our

advice because whereas our vote has progressively increased, that of hon. members opposite has not—

Mr. Tooth: It would want to from 29 per cent.

Mr. DUGGAN: What are hon. members opposite talking about? They are a minority Government, yet they have the colossal impertinence to suggest that they have the support of the majority of voters. At the 1960 election the Labour Party gained 39.88 per cent. of all votes, the Country Party 19.49 per cent., the Liberal Party 24.03 per cent., and the Q.L.P. 12 per cent. The combined vote for non-Government candidates amounted to 419,598 compared with 323,432 for Government candidates, showing a Government deficit of 96,166.

Mr. Tooth: Which was the biggest group of the three?

Mr. DUGGAN: The A.L.P. It was by far the strongest party.

At the last Brisbane City Council election the Labour Party received over 50 per cent. of the total votes cast. The number of votes cast for Labour has increased considerably. From 23 per cent. in 1957 the Q.L.P. vote was reduced to 12 per cent. at the last State election, and to 6 per cent. in the Brisbane City Council election. In New South Wales, D.L.P. candidates received fewer votes than Communist candidates.

Anyone has the right to nominate but he should say whether he stands for Labour policy, for Country Party policy, or for Liberal Party policy. I object very much to people saying that they are standing for a Labour Party when in actual fact their votes are for sale to the Liberal Party. They endeavour to convey the impression that they have a Labour Party programme, but are actually agents of the Liberal Party. Let them be politically honest and say just what they do stand for.

Let me now quote from "The Age", a Melbourne newspaper. No-one can say that it is, or ever has been, a Labour paper, but it is a good one. It deals with the D.L.P., which virtually has control of the organisation in Queensland because for the first time since the split we have seen imported to this State a secretary from the South and promises made to send speakers here. "The Age" deals with the policy speech of Senator Coles at the last Federal election. Here it is pertinent to point out that he said that they would get larger representation in every State. They did not; on the contrary, they lost representation.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HANLON (Baroona) (12.13 p.m.): I rise to oppose absolutely the legislation introducing compulsory preferential voting and, for that matter, preferential voting of any sort. The Leader of the Opposition has lucidly pointed out that this legislation, with its sordid background, is an indication

of how desperate the Government has become as the election approaches and it realises the certainty of its defeat.

The Deputy Premier when introducing the measure, and later when the Leader of the Opposition was speaking, chided us for referring to the Premier in his absence at Perth whilst this legislation was being brought forward. As the Leader of the Opposition said, it is very significant that the Government has seen fit to introduce today, in the Premier's absence, such an important measure at short notice. We were not told of its introduction today till the House rose at 12.45 this morning. It is very significant that it is brought on in the Premier's absence, and I say that he is ashamed to be here because he has received so many complaints from his own Parliamentary members of the Country Party, and Country Party people outside Parliament, on the remarkable decision to introduce compulsory preferential voting.

I suggest that the Premier is too ashamed to be here today because this is a system of voting that the people of Queensland do not want. Despite attempts by the Deputy Premier and some sections of the Press to praise this system of voting as something that the ordinary voter in Queensland wants, I say that the overwhelming majority of Queensland voters are opposed to it. All who have spoken to voters coming from booths agree that the general opinion of people not committed to supporting any particular party is against preferential voting.

I say that the public have good reason for not wanting it. Firstly, they do not want it because it confuses many voters, even to the extent that they cast an informal vote or, as the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt told the Liberal Party Convention, vote for someone that they do not want to see elected, or perhaps for someone that they do not even realise they are helping to elect, because of the control of preferences by party organisations, particularly those of the smaller parties, who will have a decisive say when preferential voting is introduced. Secondly, the public do not want preferential voting because, far from being a fair method, or the fairest method, as the Minister for Justice would have us believe, it is actually a most unfair method in that one section of voters has the privilege of having two votes, as the Leader of the Opposition said, as against one vote cast by voters in general or in particular electorates.

The Minister for Justice talks about fairness, but the section of voters that is, by preferential voting, given a chance of a second vote—after all, that is all it is—comprises those who have voted for the candidates who have received the least support in a poll in a particular district. This does not always apply, but in 99 per cent. of electorates in the coming election, as has been foreshadowed by Federal, State, or municipal elections in recent years, the people who will have the privilege of casting

a second vote are those who vote for the candidates who have the least support in the poll—usually either a Communist candidate or a Q.L.P. candidate, or some other miscellaneous independent candidate.

To illustrate my point, let us suppose that there are four candidates in a particular electorate—A.L.P., Liberal, Q.L.P., and Communist. Under the first-past-the-post system, the candidate who receives the highest number of votes is elected. That is quite obvious. But under a system of preferential voting, the candidate receiving most votes is elected only if he has an absolute majority. If he has no absolute majority, the preferences are counted, and, as I pointed out earlier, they are the preferences of the candidates who have received the least support within the electorate. People are often confused by having to mark the ballot paper in a series of numbers and usually the significant preferences are decided by how the Q.L.P. and Communist Party "How to Vote" cards recommend that preferences should be allotted. In most instances the preferences of candidates who ran last and second-last would be allotted, and I should say that in most electorates they would be those of the Communist candidate and the Q.L.P. candidate. In effect, as I said, those voters are given two votes. Firstly, they have a vote to decide which candidate they want out of four, and secondly, they are given a chance to decide which candidate they want out of two.

Mr. Sullivan: To whom would you say Communists would give their votes?

Mr. HANLON: I am coming to that. In many instances Communist "How to Vote" cards would show a preference for the Australian Labour Party; but in the result, as we saw in Moreton, the actual preference votes of a Communist candidate are sometimes sufficient to ensure the election of a Liberal Party candidate.

The effect of this so-called fair system of voting is that the ultimate decision as to whether the A.L.P. candidate, the Liberal Party candidate, or the Country Party candidate, is elected in a particular seat, and consequently, in a close election, as to which party shall form a government, might be placed, under a system of preferential voting, in the hands of groups such as the Q.L.P. and the Communist Party, who have little support from the overall electorate. In reply to the hon. member for Condamine, I point out that this was very well illustrated in the last Federal election in the Queensland electorate of Moreton. It will be recalled that the Liberal Party member for Moreton was returned for that electorate on a decisive combination of Q.L.P. and Communist preferences, which also gave the Menzies Government a bare majority to carry on as the Government of this country.

Mr. Herbert: Communist preferences went to the A.L.P. to the extent of 70 per cent.

Mr. HANLON: The hon. member for Sherwood is sensitive on this subject, but he cannot deny the fact that the Communist candidate directed 93 of his first preferences direct to the Liberal candidate and 193 Communist voters directed theirs directly to Hagen, the Q.L.P. candidate, in preference to the A.L.P. That is also of more than passing interest. After those 193 went back up the paper to vote first preference to the Q.L.P., most then went to the Liberals to make sure they avoided the A.L.P. The 93 Communist preferences that went to the Liberals and the 193 that went to the Q.L.P., or a net total of 286 Communist preferences, were far more than sufficient to decide the issue in favour of the coalition. Had they gone to the A.L.P. candidate, of course—

Mr. Herbert: Give the figures of the Communist preferences that went to the A.L.P.

Mr. HANLON: It does not matter a "hoot" how many preferences the A.L.P. candidate got; he did not get 286, 93 of which went direct from Julius, the Communist candidate, to the Liberal Party and 193 direct from Julius, the Communist candidate, to the Q.L.P. It is not possible from the electoral return to trace what happened to those 193 that went to Hagen, the Q.L.P. candidate, but undoubtedly a substantial number of them went to the coalition candidate from the Communist Party through the Q.L.P., together with the large percentage of direct Q.L.P. preference votes that went to the Liberal Party candidate, to ensure that the Menzies coalition Government carried on in Australia.

So let us not have any more interruption from the hon. member for Sherwood. I can quite understand that he does not like being reminded of the fact that his colleagues in the Federal sphere owe their being in Government to the preferences they got from the Communist Party and the Q.L.P.

That, then is the background of the Nicklin-Munro Government's decision to introduce preferential voting for State elections. Realising that they cannot possibly win on their merits because of their failure as a Government in so many directions, they hope to confuse electors by introducing this system of preferential voting. Everybody in Queensland was saying the Government could not possibly win, so well they might know it. Anybody in the street could tell them they could not possibly win on their merits by first-past-the-post voting. So, as I say, they decided to introduce preferential voting in the hope that they might have a rough chance of confusing sufficient electors so that, with the same support as they got at the Federal election from the Q.L.P. and the Communist Party, they might carry on as a Government. No doubt they are basing their calculations on the voting in Moreton and are looking forward confidently to the same support from Q.L.P. and Communist voters, whose preferences decided that seat in favour of the

Federal Liberal candidate and the Federal Liberal Government. They are hoping to achieve the same result in the State election.

Some little time ago the final joint Government Caucus meeting on preferential voting was held and, from what we are told, decided, by 24 votes to 21, for preference.

Mr. Hooper: How do you know the voting figures?

Mr. HANLON: Hon. members opposite can tell us what the figures are, and if the figures I have given are wrong I will be only too happy to correct them, but, if it was 45 to nil, let them tell us. They won't tell us, because, as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, the leaders of their Caucus, the Premier and the Deputy Leader of the Country Party, had not let them know. However, from what we are told they did not even know it was carried until they heard the result.

I remind hon. members that on the evening on which that Caucus was held the meeting ended at about 20 to 7. The 7 o'clock news on the A.B.C. gave a substantive and official statement from the Premier that a decision to introduce preferential voting had been made by the joint Caucus. The A.B.C. does not engage in speculative political comment. I am not now criticising the daily Press, but because of its more or less semi-official nature, the practice of the A.B.C. with news is, generally speaking, to quote only substantive statements. As I say, the A.B.C. announced that the Premier had said that a decision had been reached in favour of compulsory preferential voting. The A.B.C. news stressed—and it was repeated in "The Courier-Mail" the following morning—that Government members had been asked to vote according to their conscience.

Mr. Hooper: What is wrong with that?

Mr. HANLON: Nothing, but if there was nothing wrong with it then what is wrong with those 21 who voted against it according to their conscience having the courage to vote here against the Bill according to their conscience? That was the question of which I gave notice to the Premier on 6 November, but Mr. Speaker ruled that in his opinion it did not come within the scope of the Standing Orders. However, I propose to read the question that I endeavoured to ask on that occasion because it is still one I should like answered. This is the question—

"With reference to his announcement on Wednesday last that the State Country-Liberal Parties had decided at their joint Caucus to bring forward legislation to change the present first-past-the-post system to a system of compulsory preferential voting, can the Premier inform the House . . ."

or in his absence now the Acting Premier—

"(1) Is it a fact as reported that members of Caucus were asked to, and did, vote on the matter according to their own consciences, and, if not, why not?"

"(2) If so, as this is obviously regarded as a matter of conscience, does the Premier intend that those members who in conscience voted against any change from first-past-the-post system of voting should, to ensure the passage of the legislation for the Government, vote against their conscience by supporting the legislation when it comes before the House, or will he publicly state that he will allow and indeed request those members to vote according to their conscience in this House on the matter as they reportedly did in Caucus?"

That question has not been answered. I remind the Committee that it was not the Australian Labour Party who said this was not just a political matter; it was the Premier who said that this was not a political matter but a matter of conscience. He stressed that in the joint Country Party-Liberal Caucus meeting. Out of their own mouths they condemn themselves. If the Premier is to insist that those 21 members who, on his own say-so, voted against any change from the first-past-the-post system according to their conscience should now vote according to party discipline for the introduction of preferential voting, we will have a remarkable situation which I think the people of this State should be aware of. If there were only 24 of the joint Caucus who supported the measure, there are only 24 who can conscientiously support it here. From the remarks of the hon. member for Bundaberg I do not think he is going to support it, but that will be indicated in due course. Even if those 24 members of the joint Caucus have the support of the seven hon. members who are not committed either to the Government or to the Australian Labour Party—five Independents and two members of the Q.L.P.—the vote in favour of the Bill would be only 31 out of 78.

Hon. members opposite talk about democracy and how people should not be directed as to what they shall do. If it is against the conscience of those 21 hon. members opposite it does not matter whether the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Country Party Executive, or anybody else tells them that they have to vote for the legislation, it must still be against their conscience. It does not matter whether they are directed from inside the Chamber or outside the Chamber. Are those 21 hon. members who voted against the measure in Caucus, having been told by the Premier that it was a matter of conscience and not a party matter, now going to vote according to party lines?

The Leader of the Opposition has asked the Deputy Premier why he does not declare it a non-party matter now in the Chamber, as the Premier apparently did in Caucus, and as he told the A.B.C. he did. Why doesn't the Deputy Premier do so? Obviously because he realises that if he declared it a non-party matter, or held a secret ballot on the issue, it would be decidedly defeated. I hope that, in the interests of the people

of Queensland, it will be decisively defeated in this Chamber. If it is not, I think the people of Queensland will indicate their resentment by putting the Government out of office at the election in 1963. No-one likes being taken for a fool, and it is quite obvious that the Government thinks the people of Queensland are fools. Firstly, the Government will rely on the people who vote informally, through confusion, and, secondly, it will rely on the people who get so mixed up that they will vote for candidates whom they do not want. The Government is to be no more admired for its approach to this question—and to the next election and the benefits flowing from it to individual members, or to the Government if it is successful—than any of the share sharks and the other disreputable people who have been fleecing Queenslanders in one way or another. The same principle is motivating the Government. It is determined to win at any cost. The members of the Government believe that they can confuse Queenslanders into being foolish enough to fall for their line of approach. I sincerely hope that the people of Queensland will not be confused and that they will ensure the return of a Labour Government at the election in 1963.

Mr. HERBERT (Sherwood) (12.32 p.m.): I will speak for a few minutes to show how fallacious is the argument of the previous speaker. I will refer to the Statistical Returns for the last Federal election in Moreton, and I hope that the hon. member will not try to contradict the figures.

The Communist, Julius, polled a total of 676 first preferences. When the preferences were distributed the Liberal member, Mr. Killen, got 93 of the 676. The Q.L.P. candidate, Hagen, got 193, and the A.L.P. candidate, O'Donnell, got 390. Hon. members will notice that the previous speaker did not mention the votes received by the A.L.P. candidate when the Communist preferences were distributed. For emphasis, I should like to repeat those figures. The A.L.P. got 390, and the Liberal got 93. There is no way of recording how the 193 preferences from Julius to Hagen went when they were distributed, but our scrutineers followed it very closely and they reported that almost 100 per cent. of the 193 preferences went to the A.L.P. We have frequently heard the A.L.P.'s claim, but the figures I have quoted prove it to be wrong. It may be said that Killen got virtually no Communist votes, and such a claim could be sustained. I have given these figures merely as an example of the fallacious reasoning of hon. members on the other side of the Chamber. It is very badly based, and the claim is unfounded.

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon) (12.34 p.m.): This is a very important principle in our democratic system of electing Governments in this State, and I think it should be approached objectively. I propose to do that.

I appreciate that there is a wide divergence of opinion in all political parties on preferential voting. If we discuss the matter from a party point of view we find that Labour Governments in the other States, and in the Commonwealth sphere, wholly endorse the system of preferential voting. This subject cannot be argued from the point of view of political expedience in one particular State or in the Commonwealth. It has exercised the minds of all democrats who desire to see introduced the purest system of democratic voting. Perhaps if we take a look at the Mother of Parliaments on this issue, as we have done on so many other aspects of our Parliamentary Government, we can say at once that the consensus of opinion in Great Britain all along the line has favoured the system of first past the post and, furthermore, there is no system of compulsory voting there. In respect of that last-mentioned aspect, I think it is only right and proper that there should not be a system of compulsory voting because, if a person has not a clear conception of what is involved in voting, and if he does not want to exercise his right to vote, I do not think he is capable of registering an intelligent vote.

However, these matters are decided by weight of numbers in a democratic way in all political parties that grace the scene of our system of government right throughout Australia. I do not accept the proposition put forward by the Leader of the Opposition today that the system of preferential voting stems only from the Country Party-Liberal Government in this State. It has been endorsed by Australian Labour Party Governments time and time again in various States and throughout the Commonwealth. Being a democrat, no matter what my personal views on such a matter are—and I always express them fearlessly—I accept the majority decision of members of the party when they express their views on a matter, just as I accepted the majority decision of the Australian Parliamentary Labour Party in 1957 when important fundamental parliamentary principles were at stake.

Seeing that my name has been "mentioned in dispatches" by the Leader of the Opposition and seeing that the party I represent has been trenchantly criticised by him in many aspects, I want again to make the point that, when the question of direction of a Government from an outside body was involved and when the whole of the then Australian Parliamentary Labour Party had to make a decision on it, the majority at the time stood four-square against the undemocratic principle of people not elected to govern the State dictating to a Government, under the threat of expulsion from the party, when and where certain legislation should be introduced. I still unreservedly hold the view and take the stand that I did in those days. Nobody can gainsay the fact that sinister influences at least

played a very big part in leading up to the decision that issued a direction—and it was a most undemocratic direction—to the then Australian Parliamentary Labour Party in 1957, and that destroyed that great party.

As the question of Q.L.P. preferences has been brought into the debate by the Leader of the Opposition, may I make this observation—and it applies particularly to the last Federal election, because the question of preferences cast at that election has been referred to in a particular manner: I preface my remarks on this point by saying that I came into public life as a man imbued with the ideals of the Labour Party in its original and true concept. If and when I go out, either by the effluxion of time or for any other reason, I shall still maintain that throughout my political career I was imbued with ideals that have meant much for the people of Australia through the years.

If preferential voting at the last Federal election is to be discussed, I remind the Leader of the Opposition, and all other members of the A.L.P. in this Chamber, that if the proposals for bridging the unfortunate rift that occurred in the A.L.P. in 1957 put forward by me were considered reasonably and accepted, there would have been no question of Q.L.P. preferences being allotted to any other party at that election, and I venture to say that the question would not have arisen at the next State election.

What was the result of the sincere and genuine overtures made to heal the rift in the Labour Party and put it again on a sound and firm keel? So bitter was the hostility of the dominating clique at the Trades Hall on this question of unity that even before the letter reached the executive body of the A.L.P. a meeting was held at which this proposal was damned. It was said that there could be no unity, even though we accepted first and foremost as a basis for discussion the preamble contained in the Federal Constitution of the Australian Labour Party which, to my mind, expresses very clearly and honestly genuine Labour philosophy.

Mr. Duggan: Will you permit me to say that at the last Federal election the Q.L.P. candidate for Capricornia, Mr. Gardner, appealed to us for our preferences, and we agreed officially to give them to him?

Mr. HILTON: I know nothing of that, but I make the point that definite appeals were made not only in Queensland but also by the D.L.P. in the South for unity on a fair and reasonable basis, even to getting round the table and talking things over. In my concept of democratic government I appreciate that there are in the main two major parties, and nobody can gainsay the fact that for good and progressive government the Labour Party, whether in government or in Opposition, must be a united

party and must pursue a sound, steady course—the course that led it to its previous lustre and strength.

When we accepted that expression of Labour philosophy and made overtures for unity, what earthly reason was there for those controlling the Labour Party to reject them? When genuine Labour people hear this talk of preferences and the Q.L.P. being an auxiliary of some other party, let them consider that overtures were made to heal the unfortunate breach and to ensure that Labour ideals would be implemented both in the Commonwealth and the State spheres.

Unfortunately that insidious influence still dominates and controls the Labour Party, and I venture to say that the Leader of the Opposition cannot deny that prominent men in this own party have expressed great concern and regret at the situation. From what we have read of the position of the A.L.P. in Victoria, and from statements made by prominent men in the A.L.P. in Brisbane, nobody can say with any truth or sincerity that the Australian Labour Party in this State or elsewhere is a united, cohesive, and progressive party. Of course, it might be “progressive”, using that term as certain conspirators use it at present.

A Government Member: The way the Communists use it.

Mr. HILTON: They use it as a mark of commendation for those apt to follow their policy and assist in their conspiracy. Labour men who do that are “progressive”. They regard other genuine Labour men with contempt and use the word “reformists” to describe them.

I say again, as I have said many times before, that the Queensland Labour Party wants to see a united Labour Party. However because of the history of the split in the Labour movement over the years, we cannot accept that the A.L.P. is not controlled and strongly influenced by those people who would sell out Australia. As I have said on television, on public platforms, and elsewhere, I will accept the lesser of the two evils. Although I am violently opposed to many of the political principles of hon. members on the Government benches, I accept them as the lesser of two evils. If preference votes have been allocated by members of my party to the Liberal Party and the Country Party, it is because we think that is safer, from the point of view of the destiny of Australia, than placing the Government under the control of people who would sell out the country tomorrow, as many of them have proved by their actions.

Mr. Duggan: The deal has been made, therefore.

Mr. HILTON: No deal has been made. I indicated clearly that we wanted to make a deal to ensure a united Labour Party and a continuing fight against Communism at all levels.

Mr. Mann: You want us to accept the National Civic Council's policy?

Mr. HILTON: Not at all, and I should like to say of the Australian Democratic Labour Party—and utterances in the Federal House and elsewhere will prove that what I say is true—that many prominent members of the Australian Labour Party in the Federal sphere were very keen to bring about unity. Three of the leading members of the party, including the Deputy Leader, went to Melbourne prepared to take certain action, but they could not get the backing of the Leader of the Federal A.L.P. and other men to put moves in train to bring about unity and fight Communism. They were unsuccessful because they were up against the same influences as we were up against when we tried to achieve unity a few years ago. So let us not indulge in any hypocrisy on the question of preferential voting.

The Leader of the Opposition also said that in the calculated opinion of himself and the A.L.P. the only seats that the Country Party could hope to gain in the next election were Cook and Carnarvon.

Mr. Duggan: You can add Aubigny to those.

Mr. HILTON: The hon. member now adds Aubigny. I should like to make this comment on his assessment of the position: that in normal circumstances the only way in which the Country Party could win those seats would be by the Australian Labour Party's having determined already to give its preferences to the Country Party rather than to members of the Queensland Labour Party.

Mr. DUGGAN: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Carnarvon has said that the A.L.P. has already indicated that it intends to give its preferences to the Country Party. I want to give a categorical denial to that statement. The question has not been discussed either officially or unofficially.

Mr. HILTON: I accept the statement of the Leader of the Opposition at this stage, but I might tell him that the Australian Labour Party organisation in the Carnarvon electorate is already trying to back the Country Party candidate against me because it has said, "We have got Hilton stitched this time with our preferences." That is a fact. If the Leader of the Opposition contends that no decision has been made at the top level, it certainly has been made at a local level.

There are other factors so far as I am concerned and, of course, they will be resolved one way or the other in due course. But I point out that on the occasions of my last two campaigns I won very handsomely indeed against the most effective campaigns that the A.L.P. and the Country Party could wage against me. I have been proud to stand by my political principles all along

the line. I have been proud to fight a decent campaign, and the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues were not sufficiently strong to displace me.

However, I do not want to digress from the business before the Committee. I repeat that preferential voting is not a system that is advocated by any particular party; it has been approved and endorsed by the Australian Labour Party, the Country Party, and the Liberal Party in all States and in the Commonwealth. I accept a majority decision of my party and, of course, I accept a majority decision of the vote in this Chamber. If we are to adhere to our democratic systems we must do that irrespective of our own personal views.

As I will not be here after lunch—I have to return to Stanthorpe to attend a function—I did not want to remain silent and not express my views on this matter. I also wanted to make some comments on the views expressed by the Leader of the Opposition this morning.

Mr. MANN (Brisbane) (12.52 p.m.): I listened very intently to the Minister for Justice when he was introducing this measure, and one would gather from his remarks that it was quite a simple Bill that would make voting much easier for the public. His further statement was that it was much fairer than the present system and would give a fairer deal to all concerned.

I can draw my own conclusions on why this amendment of the Elections Act is introduced, and I believe that a majority of the people of Queensland will draw their own conclusions after this sitting of Parliament when they get the opportunity next year.

The Minister for Justice said that this matter was decided by a small majority in the Caucus, and that they were very affable and friendly and amiable and that it was decided in a very friendly manner.

Mr. Duggan interjected.

Mr. MANN: I was going to say that. According to the grapevine there was more chicanery and double-dealing in this affair than there has ever been in any party in Parliament.

Mr. Munro: I am afraid you are mixing up your parties.

Mr. MANN: I am not mixing up my parties. I have listened very attentively to the grapevine and the stories told of the recriminations within the Country Party and the Liberal Party. I make no bones about saying that there was more chicanery and double-dealing on the introduction of this proposal in the Country Party-Liberal Caucus than has ever been known.

Mr. Sullivan: There would have been a bit at the Q.C.E. this morning.

Mr. MANN: There was no Q.C.E. meeting this morning. We did not have an opportunity to discuss this matter. It was thrown into our laps at a quarter to 1 this morning, and I agree wholeheartedly with my Leader that it was done solely because the Premier is absent from the State. He will be back next week and hon. members opposite wanted to get it over and done with because they were ashamed to make the Premier bring something forward that he knows in his heart Country Party members do not desire.

I am sorry the hon. member for Carnarvon is not in the Chamber because I have something to say to him on his remarks. I have formed the opinion over the last few weeks that a deal has been entered into between the Q.L.P. and the Liberal Party. This is the culmination of it.

Government Members interjected.

Mr. MANN: They say, "Give us some idea of it." I draw their attention to an article in "The Courier-Mail" of 27 August attributed to Mr. Gair.

Government Members interjected.

Mr. MANN: It is in black and white. They cannot deny it.

Mr. Richter interjected.

Mr. MANN: I am pleased that the Minister for Public Works and Local Government is here. He will not deny that he went out to stop the Country Party from collaborating with Mr. Gair. He cannot deny that.

This newspaper article says—

"The Government parties were giving precedence to personal interest over principle in their approach to preferential voting, the Q.L.P. President (Mr. Gair) said yesterday.

"Mr. Gair's political future is involved in the decision. He is expected to lead a strong Q.L.P. team at the State election next year if preferential voting is introduced."

There is the crux of the whole thing. The Q.L.P. is defunct; it is finished unless it is sponsored by the Liberals and fostered by preferential voting.

Mr. Herbert: Aren't you going to give Dan Casey your preferences?

Mr. MANN: That is too silly for words. Dan Casey will not be running against me, because he got such a drubbing last time.

Mr. Sullivan: Will you give your preferences to the Q.L.P., or the Liberals?

Mr. MANN: My preferences will go to whom my party decides they will be given.

Mr. Herbert: What does your conscience, apart from your party, tell you?

Mr. MANN: I tell all those people who talk about conscience that I am a member of a strong party and my party comes first with me at all times.

Mr. Dewar: Right or wrong, wise or unwise.

Mr. MANN: My party is not wrong; it is always right. Whatever the majority decides and lays down as policy, I pursue to the letter. I make no apology for that. The hon. member for Carnarvon and other members of the Q.L.P. say that they object to instructions from an outside body. The outside body was the parliamentary body of the Australian Labour Party. Do not let the Liberal Party or Country Party say that they have not got a controlling body. Of course they have. I have never heard such hypocrisy and nonsense as the assertion that they have no controlling body. Of course they have a policy-governing body that ensures that the policy is carried out. I have no objection to that. There are the Country Party, the Liberal Party, and the Australian Labour Party. The policies of all those parties are laid down at conventions. I would not think a snap of the finger of a man who would not carry out the policy of his party. I make no apology for that. It ill behoves the hon. member for Carnarvon to say that they got out on a principle. They got out because they tied themselves up with an organisation that did not support our policy, and an organisation we would not support. He talks about Dr. Evatt going to Victoria to stop an appeal for unity. The hon. members for Carnarvon and Bundaberg made an appeal for unity. I say that there is no place within our party for them. I am a good enough bushman to know that if you have a horse that bolts once, he bolts again. I have said that I believe it was an arrangement between the Liberal Party and the Q.L.P. that forced the Government to bring down this legislation. I doubt the statement of the Minister for Justice when he says that it was brought down for the good of the people. It was introduced for the good of the Government.

I now wish to refer to a statement by Mr. Gair during a television interview. He said that if he had his choice he would sooner have Mr. Menzies as Prime Minister of Australia than Mr. Calwell. The Minister cannot deny that.

Mr. Tooth: He explained his reason for saying that.

Mr. MANN: Of course he would explain it, and I could explain the reasons to the hon. member.

Mr. Gair then said—and I quote, because I do not wish to say anything that is untrue—"Preference voting gives us something to sell." That is the gravamen of my complaint about this amendment. It will give the Q.L.P. something to sell. I do not wish to

take up too much time talking about Mr. Gair but he has some influence over the Government on preferential voting. It is a significant fact that a Liberal Minister of the Government employed him in his department, yet he had no more love for Mr. Gair than I have. I asked the Premier a question about it in the House and he said that Mr. Gair had been given a job at £2,500 a year, and that as he was excluded from the provisions of the Public Service Act there was no appeal against his appointment.

Mr. Knox: Would you have given him a job?

Mr. MANN: No, I would not have given him a job.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr. MANN: I am speaking for myself, not for the Labour Party.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hooper): Order! The hon. member must relate his argument to the Bill.

Mr. MANN: I am relating it to the Bill. I point out that it is because of Mr. Gair's attitude and his co-operation and association with the Liberal Party that this Bill is introduced today. It is no good flogging dead horses. If preferential voting had not been introduced he would have been politically dead. There is no doubt about that. Of course, the fate that overtook him was thoroughly deserved. He scabbed on the A.L.P. and he scabbed on the Q.L.P.

Mr. Ewan: No.

Mr. MANN: It is useless for the hon. member to say "No", because the political facts prove it. His party is now being devoured by the D.L.P. Through you, Mr. Hooper, I say to hon. members that Mr. Gair's latest venture in scabbing has disgusted some of his most ardent supporters who sit on the Opposition cross-benches, men who supported him up to the hilt and who are perhaps the men who advised him in his political career when he was leader of the A.L.P. They were his right-hand men. I sound a warning to the Minister for Justice, who sits on the Government benches so complacently with a smug smile on his face. He believes that by introducing this measure he will get the support of Mr. Gair and the Q.L.P. people in this State. I warn the Minister that Mr. Gair's treachery to the A.L.P., and to his colleagues in the Q.L.P., will, if he gets the opportunity, manifest itself with the Liberal Party at a future date. That is all I want to say on that point.

Despite the pious attitude and the platitudes of the Minister for Justice, I know that you, Mr. Hooper, in strict accord with parliamentary procedure, will not allow me to talk about the redistribution of electorates and the gerrymandering that took place. I know I cannot speak about that because you will not permit it. It is ironical that the Premier, who is the leader of the strongest party politically in the House at the moment,

has succumbed to the dictates and the pressure put upon him by the members of the Liberal Party, and the Minister for Justice, who is leading the debate on the Bill.

I believe the people of Queensland will realise that the real reason for the introduction of preferential voting into Queensland is to enable the Q.L.P. to come to the Government's aid and save it from political extinction. So it is not in the interests of the people, as the Minister for Justice said, but in the interests of the members of the Government themselves to save their political hides at the next election. I should have liked to say something about the gerrymandering of electorates, but I know that it does not come under the Bill and that you would not allow me to discuss it. That is one of the things the Government did to keep themselves in office. Now they are shivering in their shoes and, among other things, amending the Elections Act to introduce preferential voting into Queensland. In my opinion it is wrong and it will create confusion at the polls. At Federal elections, particularly for the Senate, many informal votes are cast that should not be informal. With the first-past-the-post principle the voter goes to the poll and marks the ballot paper with a cross or with a figure 1 in the square, and his intention is clear. The candidate securing the highest number of votes in the electorate wins the seat.

I agree with the hon. member for Baroona, who said that preferential voting gives the man who votes for the weakest candidate in the field an opportunity to have two bites at the cherry, or, in effect, two votes. Hon. members opposite cannot deny it.

I will not enter into the argument on Mr. Killen and all those votes, but preferential voting does give to those who vote for a minority candidate an opportunity not extended to those who vote for the candidate who tops the poll. We had that spectacle in Griffith. Liberal hon. members know what happened there with Kehoe and Chresby. I will not go into that at this stage. But I believe there has been a conspiracy between this Government and the Q.L.P. on this matter. It is quite evident that the members of the Government are not concerned about the welfare of the people but rather about retaining office by the use of any means available.

Mr. Knox: Do you think we will be successful by doing that?

Mr. MANN: No, I do not. The Government has killed half a dozen good Country Party men and three or four Liberals. I could name them. The hon. member for Albert, Mr. Carey, is one for sure who cannot be elected. There will be a number of other casualties on the Government side.

Mr. Tooth: Do you reckon there will be any over on your side?

Mr. MANN: Not among the 25 of us. There will be two Q.L.P. members.

Mr. Tooth: Don't point to the hon. member for South Brisbane. You will put a mock on him.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hooper): Order!

Mr. MANN: I believe the hon. member will survive.

Mr. Tooth interjected.

Mr. MANN: The hon. member for Ashgrove wants to be funny about it, but this is a serious matter. (Government laughter.) The Government know that it is a serious matter. They are afraid to go to the poll. They have gone to the poll before and won, but they are frightened to go again on the same conditions so they have come to an arrangement with Gair and the D.L.P. It is not the Q.L.P. any longer; it is the D.L.P.

Mr. Knox: You said it would not save us.

Mr. MANN: I do not think it will. Hon. members opposite think that this is their salvation. The hon. member for Nundah, like all his colleagues, believes that this system of voting will save him from the wrath of the people. I do not believe that it will.

A Government Member: You are not serious about that?

Mr. MANN: The hon. member who interjects asks if I am serious. I have with me details of the voting at the last general election, and I advise him to examine the figures carefully. All A.L.P. members will be here, but I suggest that hon. members opposite look at these figures and then see if they believe they are safe.

I believe that every man and woman has the right to a vote, but only one vote and not two. This system of voting will confuse a lot of people who are used to going to the polls and putting "1" or "X" in the squares opposite the names of the candidates they choose.

Mr. Munro: Don't those people vote at Federal elections?

Mr. MANN: Of course they do, and doesn't the Minister know the number of informal votes cast there?

Mr. Munro: How many?

Mr. MANN: There again is the typical attitude of the Minister for Justice. He has a cold, calculating, and don't-care attitude. He sits there with a smug smile on his face, knowing that he cannot be defeated in Toowong.

Mr. Munro: I am very worried!

Mr. MANN: The Minister should be worried about his party, and you, Mr. Taylor, won't be here to help him.

There will be many more candidates nominating than those belonging to the Liberal and Country parties, the A.L.P., and the Q.L.P. The more candidates there are, the greater will be the confusion of the people in casting their votes, as, with preferential voting, each candidate has to be voted for.

Mr. Tooth interjected.

Mr. MANN: The hon. member for Ashgrove was one of the Liberal Party's architects in the framing of this measure, but he should not be too sure of himself as an examination of these figures will make him realise that his stay in Parliament might not be as long as he thinks. The purpose of this Bill is to enable the Government to retain power against the express will of the people.

Mr. Knox: You said we would lose a lot of seats.

Mr. MANN: My opinion is that the Government is bringing in this legislation against the express will of the people in the hope that it will be retained in office. It is an old saying that one can fool some of the people all of the time and all of the people some of the time, but not all of the people all of the time.

Mr. Sullivan: That happened with the A.L.P.

Mr. MANN: It pleases hon. members opposite to criticise, but the A.L.P. in this State has nothing to be ashamed of.

Mr. Tooth: Why are they arguing the toss among themselves so much?

Mr. MANN: We are not, but hon. members opposite cannot say the same about themselves. I have been here for 26 years and have heard many recriminations, but never in all that time have I heard such back-biting as followed the recent Caucus meeting of the combined Liberal and Country parties. As a matter of fact, if I told the story in this Chamber I think the Press would headline the gerrymandering and shenanigan and double-crossing that went on before this motion was carried, and then by a majority of only three. These people have come into the Chamber and foisted their proposal on the Government, and hon. members opposite have been pulled into line. I believe that the Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party has a great influence on the young men in his party, and the old Country Party members fear him because they realise that he dominates his party, has a cold, calculating attitude towards things, and is not easily upset. I believe that the Liberal Party plans that, if possible, he will take over from the Premier after the next election and become the Leader of the Government, and that is why they are bringing in the Bill.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (2.31 p.m.): On many occasions the Minister for Justice has had the task of introducing unpopular legislation into this Chamber, but this is perhaps the most unpopular Bill he has ever introduced, even including the legislation dealing with rents and prices. If the Minister had been in touch with the ordinary people in the community, he would know that what he is doing is very unpopular with them.

Mr. Tooth: Why does every State in the Commonwealth that has a Labour Government have this system? They have it in New South Wales.

Mr. LLOYD: Is that the standard we should accept here? At one stage we had an Upper House in Queensland. However, an Australian Labour Party Government, one of the most progressive in the Commonwealth, decided that the Upper House was a waste of public money and was a negation of real and true democracy and abolished it. That was a long time ago. We also had preferential voting in Queensland at one time, and we decided that it was undemocratic.

Mr. Tooth: You decided that it was dangerous.

Mr. LLOYD: It was optional preferential voting, and the people could not be disfranchised as they will be disfranchised under this Bill. They were not disfranchised merely because they voted first-past-the-post and did not exercise their preference.

Mr. Ewan interjected.

Mr. LLOYD: I am looking at the hon. member for Albert and thinking how much more he would prefer a first-past-the-post vote or optional preferences. He has been sacrificed, as have the hon. member for Bowen and the hon. member for Tablelands, who, unfortunately for himself, is unable to see his fate before him. As the hon. member for Albert, the hon. member for Bowen, and the hon. member for Tablelands know,—

Mr. Bromley: And the hon. member for Whitsunday.

Mr. LLOYD: Yes, and the hon. member for Whitsunday—they will be defeated by this legislation. However, we are not concerned with the defeat of members on the Government benches; we are concerned only with having a true democratic vote of everyone in Queensland under a system that entitles each person to cast his vote and have it registered.

In my opinion, this Bill is one of the worst that has ever seen the light of day in this Assembly. Many people will be disfranchised by it, and it is the most undemocratic legislation that has ever been introduced. In his introductory speech, the Minister praised the system of exhaustive ballot. He said that it was the only really democratic method of voting. He did not say that in

so many words, but he indicated that that was his belief. I think I am correct in saying that.

Mr. Munro: No. I did not use the word "only". I mentioned it as a very fair system under certain circumstances.

Mr. LLOYD: I might agree with the Minister in regard to exhaustive ballots of a certain type. First of all, in an exhaustive ballot each man has only one vote. If the man with the lowest number of votes is eliminated, then you have another choice on the basis of first past the post. In other words, you are casting a vote for the person you favour out of a number of candidates. Is that not first-past-the-post voting? The truly democratic form is to vote by saying, "This is the man I want to represent me."

The Minister did not say the system of exhaustive balloting was the only type of democratic voting, but he did praise it. I should like to know whether, in the joint meeting of the Liberal and Country Parties, the vote that was taken in favour of preferential voting was by exhaustive ballot or first-past-the-post. I believe the result was 24 to 21.

Mr. Munro: Would you like the answer? An exhaustive ballot has no application at all when you are making a simple vote between two alternatives, A and B.

Mr. LLOYD: I am referring to the type of preferential voting that we have in Australia. The Minister has said that he is introducing into Queensland voting in conformity with that in other States and in the Commonwealth. Let me point out to him that in the real Western democracies of the world today voting is by the first-past-the-post method. Voting in the United Kingdom and in the United States of America is by first past the post, and, I believe, also in New Zealand. Yet we in this Parliament, in our wisdom or lack of wisdom, as the case may be—I think it is lack of wisdom—are departing from that very democratic principle of allowing people to registered one vote for one person.

Under the exhaustive ballot system you go right through all the candidates until one is eliminated, when those who voted for that candidate are given a second choice and so it goes on. That is the type of voting the Minister has praised. As I say, you go through the candidates until one is eliminated and then you have a choice of two or three more. But you always have to choose the best candidate you have left and you still vote for him on the first-past-the-post system. The Minister stated the exhaustive ballot was too long and costly a process, and he thinks that preferential voting is the only alternative.

By the exhaustive-ballot method candidates are eliminated until you finally find the candidate you think is the best man, but preferential voting does not do that. In preferential voting people will vote for the

man they want and many electors will be casting informal votes at the next State election.

We must also remember what the Minister said about absentee and postal voting. Absentee and postal votes are not available until 72 hours after the close of nominations. In other words, three days after the close of nominations will be the first opportunity anybody in this State has to cast a vote.

Mr. Munro: By a particular method of voting.

Mr. LLOYD: Then why hide it? Why doesn't the Minister say "absentee and postal voting"? What about people who are leaving the State? Nominations could close three weeks before election day and people who leave the State within a period of 72 hours after their closure will not be given a vote. They will be disfranchised by the Minister and his Government because they cannot cast a vote if they are in another State.

Mr. Munro: Complete nonsense! I explained it.

Mr. LLOYD: The Minister made a horrible mess of it, and he will continue to make a horrible mess by the introduction of this Bill.

A Government Member: You weren't here.

Mr. LLOYD: I know everything that was said. I was out in the lobby and I heard everything the Minister said and, until 72 hours after the close of nominations no absentee or postal vote can be cast. The first opportunity to cast a vote will be three days after the close of nominations, and if an elector is going overseas or interstate he will have no opportunity to vote.

Mr. Knox: You did not listen to what the Minister said.

Mr. LLOYD: I listened to it, all right. Such an elector cannot vote in this State. He must have his ballot paper, and it will not be available until 72 hours after nominations close. I can see no real reason why any person should not vote only for the candidate he favours. Had the Minister taken an interest in the matter he would have known that the great majority of people want only one vote. They are not concerned about having a preferential vote, in which the order on the ballot paper may be an important factor. They are not concerned about putting "2", "3" and "4" on the ballot paper, but only with electing one person to represent them.

Mr. Armstrong: They do it in the Federal elections.

Mr. LLOYD: I do not think the Government should be very happy about the result of preferential voting in Queensland for the Federal elections.

Mr. Armstrong: What are you whingeing about?

Mr. LLOYD: I am not whingeing. I am not at all concerned with what the Government does. It can have preferential voting. It will not affect us, but it will affect many hon. members on the Government benches. What I am concerned with is the principle of true democracy. One of the planks of the platform of the Liberal Party in its 1957 policy speech was "One vote, one value." To carry that principle into effect, one vote with one value would mean one vote for the person you want to represent you. I am sure that all the preferential-voting legislation in the world will not save the hon. member for Nundah from Frank Roberts, but I feel sorry for some hon. members opposite. I see that the hon. member for Albert is back in the Chamber. Possibly the hon. member for South Coast will not be affected by preferential voting, but he is one who is solidly in support of the Country Party principle.

In considering the spirit behind the legislation we can accept the statement made two days ago by that rebellious character, the ex-member of the Country Party, Charlie Russell, when he said that the Country Party in Australia had sacrificed principle for power. How right he was. When I look round here I see Country Party members who have sacrificed principle. They have sacrificed everything they had. They have made the primary producers the sacrificial goat on the altar of the unholy alliance with the Liberal Party. But those people are the ones who are the most unhappy about preferential voting. They know that the Australian Labour Party will not be affected by it, but the representatives of the primary producers—the members of the Country Party—will be. The Liberal Party can nominate candidates against them and defeat them in certain areas so that the stage is reached when the Liberal Party gains supremacy in Parliament, that is, if it ever occupies the Government benches. In that event it would be a Liberal Party Government—no longer a Country Party-Liberal Government but a Liberal-Country Party Government. Some of the Country Party members have not realised that, but most of them have.

I think I can make a prediction. There will be a new political party within this State in two years. The hon. member for Fassifern may be the leader of it. I think he will be the leader of the Queensland Country Party within two years—a "Country Party" which at least will look after the interests of the primary producers and not be controlled by the Young Liberals that have come in to try to take over the Government.

We are not concerned about the legislation but with the principle of democracy, which has been postulated by the Minister. The U.S.A. and the United Kingdom have first-past-the-post voting, which is the only true democratic principle. The only alternative

is exhaustive balloting, and I agree with the Minister on that. Preferential voting can mean the disfranchising of many people who cannot understand it. Hon. members have only to go through the voting at Federal elections, particularly the Senate votings, to see how many informal votes are cast. If the informal votes were counted they could give a total equal to making "Informal" a senator. That could happen in Queensland under preferential voting, and it has happened in the Senate.

With first-past-the-post voting we have to consider only one question: whether we have the most truly democratic form of voting. I believe that we have it in Queensland. We certainly have an example of minority control in Parliament from time to time. It may be said that we are not catering for minorities in the community, but I think that could be denied because at present we have the hon. members for Bundaberg, Carnarvon, Cook, and Aubigny in Parliament on a minority vote. They represent minorities in the community. By the first-past-the-post voting system we have minority representation and, in a true democracy, I believe there should be such representation in any Parliament. There cannot be true democracy without it. The Minister said that preferential voting will give it, but that is not so. Many people do not consider the order of preference of candidates when voting. The result of the last Federal election proved that the order on the ballot paper was very important when it came to a distribution of preferences. I do not think that is truly democratic.

Mr. Walsh: You realise that in 1957 you had less than 43 per cent. of the votes.

Mr. LLOYD: That would be right, but at least the Government did not have 50 per cent.

Mr. Walsh: I meant in your electorate—in Kedron.

Mr. LLOYD: In 1960 I had 62 per cent.

Mr. Walsh: In 1957 you had 42.62 per cent.

Mr. LLOYD: And in 1960 I had 62.62. I should say that, on a distribution of preferences in 1957, I would still have won my seat.

Mr. Walsh: I got 53.83 per cent. in 1957.

Mr. LLOYD: The hon. member is still representing a minority.

Mr. Walsh: Not in 1957.

Mr. LLOYD: The hon. member represents a minority of the people in his electorate. He is here only because he represents the minority, and I think it is truly democratic that he can be here representing a minority. That could happen only under the first-past-the-post method. No member could be in Parliament representing a minority under the

preferential-voting system. There will be only a two-party Government, minorities will not be here.

Members of the Country Party must remember that the same situation will arise in any electorate close to the coast, where there is a reasonably strong Liberal Party faction and a not-so-strong Country Party faction. I believe that there may be candidates representing a minority of the people of Queensland—and I think the Country Party do—who are members of a pressure political party for good. But the Liberal Party can take over in these areas that have provided the Country Party in Queensland with a majority. If Country Party members are content to see their masters in big business in the city take over the Government of Queensland and destroy everything the Labour Party has built up over the years, then they can go ahead. It is not vital to us whether there is preferential voting or first-past-the-post voting. We will still win seats; we will retain the members we now have on this side and we will still be the Government. But I am concerned with whether the system of voting to be introduced is the essence of democracy, or whether it will provide only two parties in this Chamber.

Will we have the minorities in the community represented? I do not think that in the future we can hope to see any of the minorities that have been represented in political thought represented in this Parliament unless the sleeping members in the Country Party at last wake up and realise what they have done. When they do, I am certain my forecast will come true; there will be a new political party in this State, the Queensland Country Party, just as in Victoria there is the Victorian Country Party. When one considers where the members of the Country Party in Queensland come from, one can readily understand why they have been so weak in this matter.

I have spoken of disfranchising voters. That is rather important. The Minister said in his introduction that there is no alternative to this system, but people who leave the State or the country for a month or two are just as much entitled to a vote as are those who remain here over election-time. There is no comparison between the Commonwealth type of voting and the voting within a State. I do not care what happens in New South Wales or in any other State. We are concerned about matters that affect us in Queensland. There are no facilities available in any other State or overseas for anyone leaving the State to cast a vote.

The Minister is reducing the period for absentee and postal voting from before the closing date to a time three days after the closing of nominations. That can only mean disfranchising more voters. We have already had amendments to the Act making it almost impossible for people who work more or

less continually as seasonal workers to cast a vote in any electorate by requiring them to remain three months in the one electorate before becoming eligible. By a recent amendment to the Act, seasonal workers can be summarily disfranchised. This is just another means of disfranchising voters because those who leave the city or the country will be unable to vote.

Moreover, voters will be disfranchised through their inability to understand preferential voting or to assess the qualities of every man for whom they are asked to vote and indicate their order of preference. One correspondent of "The Courier-Mail" wrote the other day, "All I am concerned about is voting for the man I know, the man I think can do the best job in representing my electorate. I am not concerned with a man I do not know. I am not concerned with a man I know nothing about." He said he would cast his vote informally. He was concerned in a democratic country with casting one vote. If the Government had introduced an optional system of preferential voting, we should have said that at least it was somewhat democratic because it would have given such a person an opportunity to cast his vote for the one candidate he favoured. Then, if he knew the next man on the ballot paper, he could cast a preferential vote. That would give him a choice of systems.

I remember that in my electorate one man voted for Ned Kelly. A number of people vote like that. Many people in the community do not believe in voting; but many sincere people want to vote and will cast their vote for one person only. They believe the person for whom they vote is the man they want. To them, voting for the other names on the ballot paper is only an obligation to make the vote formal. They know nothing about the other candidates, but they have to cast preferential votes for them. It has been found that the preferences do not mean very much, and do not indicate the feelings of the people casting them. The only truly democratic method of voting is the one that has been followed over a number of years. If that is to be changed, let there be optional preferential voting and, if a truly democratic method is wanted, let it be by exhaustive ballot, which of course is a costly method.

I think that this legislation is something that the Minister himself has sponsored and he is now in the unhappy position of having to find arguments to support it. One of his contentions is that it is the only alternative to exhaustive balloting. I do not believe that. It is the least democratic form of balloting. We believe that the system that we now have has been proved in other nations of the free world, and is the type of voting that should continue.

Mr. DONALD (Ipswich East) (2.56 p.m.): I listened attentively to the Minister when he was introducing this measure in the hope

of hearing some justification for it. Unfortunately, no reason at all was advanced why there should be a change in the method of electing members to this Parliament. The Minister said that there was a principle involved, that it was a fairer and simpler system, that the results would be known earlier, and that it was in use in all other Australian States.

Let us examine those points. When he mentioned a principle, I was hoping that he was going to expound a moral principle, something on which we could all probably agree, but it was only a principle in the Bill, that being to save the Government from annihilation.

He said that it was a fair system. It is anything but that, because it prevents electors from electing the candidates of their choice. It is a measure that makes it compulsory to vote for as many candidates as offer themselves. It is in no way a fair method. It is also far from being the simplest method of choosing a member of Parliament, or anyone else. What simpler method could there be than merely voting for the man of one's choice, the one that one knows and trusts, and who has distinguished himself and met with one's approval? Quite apart from political leanings, electors want to choose candidates in whom they have implicit confidence and can look up to.

What does this system mean? It makes compulsory voting for a number of candidates, some of whom might not meet with the approval of the electors, and many of whom are not known by them. It is said that results will be known earlier than at present. How on earth the Minister can justify that statement is beyond my comprehension. First-past-the-post voting is the easiest and fairest method, and results under it are known far sooner than they are under any other method.

I am surprised that the Minister for Justice claimed that the proposed method was adopted in all other States of the Commonwealth. That is not so. It may be adopted in the mainland States with the exception of Queensland, but that is certainly not the position in the island State of Tasmania, in which there is a different system altogether.

The Minister claims that he is an advocate of, and believer in, exhaustive ballots. This method is far from being exhaustive. It does not resemble such a method, under which one can at least vote for all the candidates of one's choice and then retire if one wishes. What this system does not reflect is the opinion of the electors. In any election, whether it is for the House of Assembly in Queensland or for any other organisation, the people vote to elect representatives. This Bill does not assist in achieving that end, and preferential voting is far from being uniform throughout Australia.

When introducing the Bill, the Minister for Justice tried to tell us that it was uniform and that Queensland was the only State out

of step. We have been out of step many, many times; but by being out of step we have been one step ahead of the other States of the Commonwealth. Since the change of Government, we have been marking time so consistently that the other States have not only caught up with us but in many instances have passed us. It is a retrograde step for us to throw away something that has given the voters of Queensland an opportunity to express themselves intelligently and enable the State to progress.

I think it is a great pity that the Government has put political expediency before principle. There can be no doubt that this is a very carefully prepared plan to enable the Liberal Party not only to remain in Government but also to be the dominant party in Government. When that day comes, it will be a sorry day for the Country Party and for Queensland as a whole. I say that advisedly, because Country Party members in this Chamber have a far better idea of the needs of the community than do members of the Liberal Party. We all know that the Liberal Party is controlled by outside interests, if any party is. We have heard a number of allegations from members of the Government about the control exercised over the Australian Labour Party. It is controlled in a very democratic way, a way that is not excelled by the control of any other party. On the other hand, the Liberal Party is controlled in such a way that the people of Queensland do not have a say in it. Those who have a say are the wealthy industrialists, and the Liberal Party manages the State in their interests. They are the people who are anxious that the Liberal Party should become the dominant party in the coalition, no matter what happens to their Country Party allies.

Although I am strongly in favour of the first-past-the-post system of voting, I hope that the people of Queensland will use their preference votes intelligently. What is the history of preference voting in Australia? There has been a good deal of talk in the debate about the preferences of the Communist Party, the Q.L.P., and the D.L.P. History shows again and again that those parties have consistently voted to hold out the Australian Labour Party. For example, their support was given to Mr. Killen in Moreton, despite what may be said to the contrary, and this was admitted by the hon. member for Sherwood in his attempt to prove that it was not. The D.L.P. has consistently given its preferences against the Australian Labour Party to any other party, no matter what it was, and the Q.L.P. has taken similar action. For a long time it refused to be associated with the D.L.P. or to affiliate with the D.L.P. Before the split, the A.L.P. in Queensland was known as the Queensland Labour Party, and it had a wonderful record and reputation in government. So good was our record, so excellent was our achievement that the Queensland Labour Party, the people who left the Australian Labour Party, said, "We will stick to that

name." And, what did they do in the 1957 election, and since? Didn't they use our traditional colours? Didn't they say, "Vote for the Queensland Labour Party?" What are they doing now? They are not game to affiliate 100 per cent. with the D.L.P. They say, "When we go to a Federal election we will be known as the 'Democratic Labour Party'. When we go to a State election we will be known as the 'Queensland Labour Party'." Why do they make a distinction? We fight every political election, whether it be municipal, State, or Federal, as the Queensland branch of the Australian Labour Party. We do not change our name as our political opponents do. Unfortunately, the Queensland Labour Party in certain circumstances draw on the good name of the Australian Labour Party because they fear annihilation if they do not. They know they will get some voters to help them by confusing them with the name "Labour Party".

The Minister went on to say that it is not practicable in certain circumstances for the preferential system to be used. If I heard him correctly, those circumstances were in the recording of absentee votes. I will have something to say about that later on. Then he said something about returning officers depositing candidates' deposits in their own banking account, or about preparations being made so that they could bank candidates' deposits with some Government organisation or department. I do not think we can quarrel with that. However, I point out that when a candidate has his deposit returned it is in the form of a cheque whereas he must lodge his deposit in cash.

I suggest that the Minister, rather humorously—because he was blushing when he said it—said that this decision was made at a joint party meeting that was conducted in a very happy mood. Everyone was happy—tremendously happy.

An Opposition Member: Everyone was drunk.

Mr. DONALD: Drunk with power, which they are going to lose in the very near future. That is the position. If they voted, as the Premier said, according to their consciences in coming to a decision, will the Deputy Premier say to the members of the respective parties, "You are free to speak and vote on this Bill in the Parliament as your consciences dictate? Let us have a decision reached in this Chamber where everyone will exercise his democratic right, fearlessly, and without prejudice. You may speak and express your views freely. Let us have an open vote on it and let this Parliament demonstrate what democracy means, with each man not only expressing his opinions but also voting for or against it, openly and without fear"? Will they do that? We have an example of what will be done. This debate has been the only business before the Committee today;

it is now almost 10 minutes past 3 and, except for the three-minute or four-minute speech of the hon. member for Sherwood, who got up to justify the Government's action, not one member from the Government side has spoken.

Mr. Munro: All you are doing is stonewalling.

Mr. DONALD: If I am stonewalling, the Minister introducing this legislation has not even put on his cricket flannels.

If members of the Government and their supporters prate about democracy and claim they are the only democratic party, let us have a display of democracy in this Chamber. As I say, let hon. members vote as they want to vote, and vote openly; let them not treat the matter like a division and follow party instruction. Let us vote quite openly. We on this side of the Chamber are going to do it and they, too, should do it.

The Minister repeatedly said, "Let us have uniformity throughout Australia. Let us all vote the same way." Is he ignorant of how people vote in Tasmania? They do not vote this way, they vote in another way. Is theirs a sensible way? If any hon. member thinks so, let me recall to his memory the fact that a man who once lost his deposit at a general election in Tasmania subsequently, in the same Parliament, held the balance of power in that State. Could anything be more ridiculous? Yet hon. members prattle about democracy. Is there a fairer method of giving a choice to the voter than by enabling him to say, "I want John Brown and no-one else. I don't want to vote for three or four other candidates."

Mr. Windsor interjected.

Mr. DONALD: The hon. member interjects that we are a minority party. He should not need reminding that almost without exception hon. members opposite are on that side of the Chamber because of a political accident. But for the unfortunate split in the Labour Party, they would not have been able to get in here on a minority vote. But they were afraid to go to the electors on the boundaries on which they won in 1957. They had to rob country areas of a representative and gave metropolitan voters four additional representatives, and so carved up electorates to save their political hide. Yet they talk about democracy and giving electors a choice of their candidates! That is not democracy, and they know it. The fear that impelled them to change the boundaries is the very fear that has conceived and made possible the birth of this legislation.

The hon. member for Sherwood rose in complete indignation and tried to refute the claims of previous speakers on this side that the present Commonwealth Government owes its position to the preference votes of the Communist voters. There is nothing that he or anyone else can say to prove

that Jim Killen does not hold his seat because of Communist preferences cast in the Moreton electorate. No-one can deny the fact that Mr. Menzies is Prime Minister of Australia because of the preference votes that his party received from the Communist Party.

We are alleged to be supported by the Communist Party. I am not going to elaborate on that point—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I trust that the hon. member will not repeat statements already made.

Mr. DONALD: I am only replying to criticism from the Government side. I will content myself with making the true statement that the Communist Party invariably gives its preference to anti-A.L.P. candidates.

In an impassioned speech the hon. member for Carnarvon tried to convince the Committee, and the public, that a peace offer was made through the Democratic Labour Party to the A.L.P. in order to bring about complete unity so that the people of Australia could again have good, sane government. The appeal was made, but on what basis? It was on the basis submitted by the Democratic Labour Party. It was not democratic, nor was it a Labour party. The offer was rejected by the A.L.P. It was rejected because the appeal was not sincere. It was not one that would heal the breach; rather was it one which, if agreed to, would have destroyed all that the A.L.P. stands for.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I trust that the hon. member in future will stop speaking when I call "Order!". I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. DONALD: I thought I ought to be given an opportunity to reply to attacks on the A.L.P. by the hon. member for Carnarvon. That is all I am doing. I do not want to ignore your authority, Mr. Taylor, or to be discourteous to you.

The constitution of the A.L.P., Queensland Branch, and the policy and platform of the A.L.P. in Queensland and in all other States is exactly the same—not a word is different—as it was when the members of the Q.L.P., inside and outside Parliament, were members of it—and some of them were very prominent members.

There was a suggestion by interjection that the Labour Party was a party of the "left". In reply, the Liberal Party is a "left" party—left far, far, far, behind!

Other hon. members have said—and it is true—that Mr. Gair, the Leader of the Q.L.P., said outside this chamber, and inside it, that the Q.L.P. had something to sell. The only method by which he could dispose of that commodity—if we can call it a commodity—was by the institution of a preferential system of voting. Can we blame hon. members of this Chamber, or intelligent people outside, who say that the Government has acceded to the request of the

Q.L.P. to, "Give us something to sell." The something to sell, as was explained by the Minister, was the preferential vote.

We have been told that the system of preferential voting was approved of by the Government parties. The hon. member for Greenslopes asked how we know how many voted for it and against it. He said, "I do not know, and I was at the meeting."

Mr. Hooper: That is right.

Mr. DONALD: If that is the way the Government parties work, and if that is what they call democracy, it is no wonder they are so much out of touch with the people. Is it any wonder that they do not understand democracy or that they do not have any feeling for the people? They are prepared to humbly accept the decision of their returning officers; the scrutineers were sworn to secrecy. The Australian Labour Party will never sink to that level. Members of the A.L.P. demand to know what their officers and leaders are doing, and what the men in positions of trust are doing, and they have control over them at all times. It is the rank and file of the Labour Party which is supreme.

Let us examine the preferential-voting system. It can set up power only for the minority in the State. The minority in each electorate is being pandered to and is being given the right and power to select who will represent them in Parliament and who will be the Government. It is so much hooley to suggest that that is democracy at work. That gives power to the minority. The people of Queensland should be safeguarded against it. We strongly object to it.

Let us suppose that there are three candidates for election—A, B, and C—and you know them all. You know A to be a man whom you can trust, who would bring credit to his electorate and to the State, and add lustre to the Chamber, and you know B and C are people who you would not speak to, recognise, or be seen with. This Bill provides that you have to vote for them all. It means that you must cast a vote for a person whom you know is not a good man to represent you anywhere; he may not even be a good citizen. Your second vote is as good to him as your first vote, but you are compelled to vote for him, and perhaps make him the representative for the electorate. That system is just so much hooley. It is not fair. It is very undemocratic. Indeed, it is the very antithesis of democracy. Democracy has a responsibility to make it easy for every elector to exercise his vote and to make it easy for him to vote for the man he prefers. A system of compulsory second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth voting is not democratic, and it does not make it easy for people to record a vote. It can result only in a record number of informal votes being cast. I need not remind the Minister or other hon. members of that. We have seen it happen,

Where are the most informal votes cast? Under the preferential system! With the first-past-the-post system the number of informal votes is infinitesimal. Many of the informal voters are intelligent people who do not like any of the candidates. They will vote informally even if they have only one candidate to vote for. How much more chance is there of having informal votes if they are asked to vote for three or four or five candidates?

I have said that it is under the preferential system that most informal votes are cast. One has only to note what happens with the voting for the Senate, where the number of informal votes sometimes exceeds the number of votes cast for three or four of the candidates.

(Time expired.)

Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (3.21 p.m.): It is a pity, on an important measure like this, that there is not more concentration by hon. members on the vital principles contained in the Bill.

When I look back on some of the history of the struggle for the right to vote, agitated as it was by hard-working people who had to win the right by making very many protests, I say it is a pity that A.L.P. members should take upon themselves the right to continue the petty views that exist within the political structure, rather than concentrate on this vital principle. I do not intend to be attracted into a discussion of that nature except to make the remark again, in reply to the Leader of the Opposition, that he seems to think that, because he is a member of a party machine, he is more responsible in this House as a member of Parliament than any other person who may not be affiliated with a political machine. I have emphasised before in the Chamber that I regard my responsibilities to the Parliament as being just as important as those of the hon. member for Toowoomba West.

Mr. Hanlon: You will admit that you did make some rather salient remarks about the former Independent member for Bundaberg some years ago?

Mr. WALSH: If the hon. member for Baroona wants to encourage me to enter into a discussion on that matter, I can assure him I will go along the track all right; but it is only fair for me, knowing political techniques, that I do not propose to sit here and take slurs from the Leader of the Opposition or anybody else. As far as my position as an Independent is concerned, the previous hon. member for Bundaberg had as much right as an Independent member of this Assembly to object to any statements I made about him as an Independent as I have to make here today about other people.

I think it will be agreed that the principle involved here is an important one. At the first election in Queensland, I think in 1860, there was what was known as a manhood franchise and it was on a very restricted

basis; so much so that, if hon. members would only take the time to study all the data available to them, they would learn the interesting position that obtained at that time. Of the 4,700 electors enrolled, slightly over 48 per cent. voted. Contrast that with the 1960 election, when 831,000 voters were on the roll and 92.54 per cent. voted.

I commend a study of the figures from the manhood franchise in 1860—the quinquennial elections at that time—down to the triennial elections in 1893, still under a manhood franchise. Remember that the adult franchise first applied in 1907. Probably it is only a little over 50 years since the women of this State were given the right to vote. To go into the politics of it, it was not a Labour Government but the agitation of Labour people that helped to bring that about. It is interesting again to note that it was not a Labour Government that introduced compulsory voting, but an anti-Labour Government. It is also interesting for the Minister to note that it was immediately following the introduction of compulsory voting by the Denham Government that that Government was defeated and Labour came to power. As the Minister is responsible for such a radical departure from the established method of voting in this State, he and his Government might find themselves out on their heads after the next election as a result of the application of this new principle.

A Government Member: It might not save you in Bundaberg.

Mr. WALSH: I am not concerned at all about whether it will save me. One of the great worries in this place seems to be who can save whose hide. If we are to approach democracy on that basis and argue from the point of view of how we will be affected, either individually or as a party, it is not a good thing. The old stalwarts of the Labour movement in the past did not look at it in that way. They were prepared to enrol all people in the community and give them the opportunity to select the candidates they wanted.

There is one interesting aspect of this matter to which I should particularly like to draw the Minister's attention. I know that many people have views on the donkey-voters and the confusion that is said to exist in the minds of electors at election time. I have not yet found anyone able to produce to me conclusive evidence that many electors are confused at either Commonwealth or State elections. Those who vote informally have their reasons for doing so. At the first Senate election in Australia in New South Wales there were 50 names on the ballot paper. Two names beginning with "A" were at the top of the paper. One of those candidates received a little over 7,000 votes and the other 2,000, but the man at the bottom of the paper topped the poll with 79,000 votes. Among the other

candidates listed alphabetically, some received more votes than those polled by the two candidates at the top.

I should like to draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that at the last election his electorate had the highest percentage of informal votes in the State.

Mr. Munro: There was a good reason for it.

Mr. WALSH: I should very much like to hear the reason from the Minister.

Mr. Munro: They were not accidental or due to lack of education.

Mr. WALSH: Only three electorates in the State showed a proportion of informal votes of more than 2 per cent. The Minister's electorate had more than 5 per cent., Warrego had 2.98 per cent., and Logan a little more than 2 per cent. There was a fair distribution between Liberal, Country Party, and A.L.P. candidates. The Minister may be able to give a reason for the high figure in his electorate, but that 6 per cent. or thereabouts could be a very dangerous figure under preferential voting. If those people saw fit to make their votes informal because they did not like the Minister's candidature, that 6 per cent. under preferential voting could make things particularly awkward for him.

Mr. Munro: Your example is not a good one, because it did not matter very much; 79 per cent. voted for me.

Mr. WALSH: It does not matter that the Minister received 79 per cent. of the votes. When the preferences are distributed he will get a minority of them. Consequently, he can expect more candidates in the field, and an examination of any one of the electoral returns will show that where there are more than three candidates—four and five particularly—the candidate who wins does so on a very low percentage.

I have only a limited time in which to discuss this important principle. I have 25 minutes at this stage, 40 minutes on the second reading, and 25 minutes on the particular clause. But there are many other important principles in the Bill, and I cannot devote all my time to discussing this principle. I think it would be unreasonable for me to follow the line adopted by members of the A.L.P. and speak only about the Q.L.P., the Liberal Party, the Country Party, or whatever party might be involved. My job is to show how ineffective this measure will be in providing a democratic approach. To satisfy his own point of view, the Minister may argue that this is the fairest method. I suggest that it is a very unfair method. On 19 November, 1942, when the

Elections Act was being amended, the Premier, who was then Leader of the Opposition, as reported on page 1223 of Volume 179 of "Hansard", said—

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

As I interpret it, what the Premier, who was then Leader of the Opposition, was saying amounts to this: that of the 1,000 primary votes cast, 516 electors are allowed one vote and 484 are given two votes. The effect is that a minority of the voters decides which candidate shall be elected. The Minister cannot get away from that, no matter how he argues.

I will take another example that was given by the intellectual gentleman who writes under the nom-de-plume of P.E.N. for the "Telegraph" when some months ago he sought to bulldoze the Government into accepting this particular principle. He took the case where 12,000 votes had been cast in a ballot and split them up in this way: 4,001 to A, 4,000 to B, and 3,999 to C. He pointed out that it was not A, the candidate with 4,001 votes, who was elected, but B, who received the majority of the preferences of C. It needed, as the Minister knows, no more than 2,001 of the 3,999 votes to elect the second candidate on the ballot paper, or approximately one-sixth of the total votes cast. Now, if the Minister can argue that one back, I will be interested to hear him. If he could bring down a formula that would allow of every preference vote being counted, I should be happy to support it. In this instance here, and particularly in the one that was submitted by the P.E.N. gentleman, there are, in fact, 8,000 second preferences out of 12,000 that have not been counted at all. So how can these people argue that preferential voting is so fair when a person who might even lose his deposit in accordance with the electoral law in this State could determine the election. He might only have 25 votes and 13 votes of that 25 could determine who the member is to be. If the Minister can justify that on a democratic basis, I should like him to get his mathematicians to work and see how he can wriggle out of it.

Mr. Houston: I'll bet he does not reply to you.

Mr. WALSH: He knows that is a bit too watertight. I can see him smiling to himself so smugly. He realises the truth of my statements. After all, this is a measure that is consistent with the Government's minority outlook.

Irrespective of what formula the Government or the Minister may present here to provide for an alteration in the method of voting, in the final analysis it is the gerrymandering of boundaries that determines whether or not the Government is elected on a majority vote of the people of the State as a whole.

Dr. Delamothe: Would that apply to all Governments?

Mr. WALSH: It does not matter what Government it is. If the hon. member for Bowen wants to test these things out, I take his mind back to the 1950 redistribution. If he analyses the figures for that election he will see that the redistribution was so near accurate on that occasion— (Government laughter).

Mr. WALSH: I will not make a statement without giving hon. members some food for thought. If they take the whole of the electorates they will find—

Mr. Hodges: Including Nash?

Mr. WALSH: Yes, including Nash. If they take the whole of the electorates and examine them they will find there were eight electorates in the State in that election that had a majority of fewer than 1,000 votes among them. In other words, a change-over of a little more than 600 votes among the whole of the eight electorates could have defeated the Government. Yet they want to tell me that that was not a fair redistribution!

Mr. Herbert: We got 56 per cent. of the votes and 37 per cent. of the seats.

Mr. WALSH: They never got 56 per cent. of the votes in their lives.

Mr. Herbert: Yes, we did.

Mr. WALSH: The hon. member for Sherwood represented himself here before lunch as one who wanted to stick to the truth, and he reprimanded the hon. member for Baroona for quoting figures that were not strictly correct. He himself quoted from official documents to prove that the hon. member for Baroona was incorrect. I challenge him to produce any document to show that his party, or his Government, got 56 per cent. of the votes.

Mr. Herbert: 53 per cent.

Mr. WALSH: I do not know where the hon. member is going back to, but I can almost give him the figures for 1953 and 1956 from my mind.

Mr. Herbert: 1950, 53 per cent.

Mr. WALSH: Who would believe that? The hon. member knows that the Liberal Party never got anything like that at any stage. In any case, for the two elections in 1953 and 1956, based on the redistribution of 1950, the figures were a little over 52 per cent. in 1953 and a little over 51 per

cent. in 1956. Give me a little margin there. It could be 51.21 per cent. and 53-point-something. The fact remains that those are the percentages. If the hon. member wants to know how he fared in 1957 when the Labour movement was split asunder, the combined vote of the two Government parties was less than 45 per cent. Even with all the political turmoil at the time, they could not muster anything in excess of, say, 46 per cent. Likewise, in 1960 the Government came back with 1 per cent. less than in 1957. I think that is a pretty fair test for the State as a whole.

I have no doubt that this change will produce many interesting situations in various electorates. If the Minister thinks that it is the right course to adopt from the point of view of political expediency to save a number of Liberal seats in the metropolitan area, which is quite true—and it could have the effect of unseating a few A.L.P. members—it is politics. But it is not democracy.

As I have proved with my figures, the Minister has taken away the rights of 8,000 out of 12,000 in one case, to determine who their member should be, and in respect of that other case stated by the Premier in 1942 it will be found that the minority there also determines who shall be the member.

Mr. Herbert: Do you think that the New South Wales Government—

Mr. WALSH: I am not concerned about the New South Wales Government. The hon. member for Ipswich East said something about Tasmania, where they have a proportional preferential-voting system—what they call the Hare-Clark system, which has been operating under a Labour Government for years. As a matter of fact, I think it was brought in by a Labour Government. This proportional representation was brought into the Senate. Now they are finding difficulties in that respect. Nothing other than complete preference will satisfy me as being a genuine method of getting the total opinion of the electors who cast their votes. It could be that a candidate got 10 votes, and eight out of 10 or seven out of 10 could be the determining factor in the election of the member. If the Minister wants to dispute the analysis of my figures—after all, he is an accountant—I should like him to give his answer as simply as I have.

Mr. Munro: Come up to my office some time and I will explain it to you.

Mr. WALSH: If I went up there the Minister would not mesmerise or hypnotise me.

Mr. Munro: I could explain the figures for you.

Mr. WALSH: He could not explain them to me. A simple explanation is required of that 2,001. You can make it higher. You could make it 80 per cent. of the 3,000. You would still have a minority taking power into its hands to elect a candidate.

I hope that from now on, whatever debate takes place in the Chamber, we will not have regard to the political hide of any party, but will get down to the principles the Minister outlined for preferential voting. There are other things that can be mentioned that may be minor in some ways. People will be disfranchised. The Minister did not tell us anything about people travelling overseas, although he said a good deal about postal voting. One can imagine a person halfway to England or Hong Kong, or somewhere else on the other side of the world, writing back to Queensland to make application for a postal vote and the ballot paper being posted to him! Of course they will be disfranchised. The mere fact that the Commonwealth Government has accepted the proposed system does not mean that we should accept it.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (3.46 p.m.): I feel compelled to enter the debate. There are two main points: firstly, whether the Government is ironist in the reasons advanced by the Minister for the introduction of the Bill, and secondly, whether it is the best and most democratic method of electing representatives to Parliament.

I will deal with the first matter first because I think from the people's point of view it is the most important one to consider. I do not think the Minister is kidding anyone. This measure has been introduced for only one reason: to try to return the Country Party-Liberal Government to the Treasury benches after the next election.

The preferential-voting system has been part of the policy of anti-Labour parties for many years. Prior to 1942 the Country Party had preferential voting as part of its platform; the United Australia Party also had preferential voting as part of its platform. When this party became completely discredited in the eyes of the public it disbanded, and a new party, the Queensland People's Party, was formed. It also included the preferential-voting system in its platform. The change in name was an attempt to hoodwink the people into believing that it was a new party, with something different. This party included in its platform exactly the same principles as were included in the United Australia Party's platform. When it fell into disrepute with the public the Liberal Party was formed and again preferential voting was included in the platform.

The Minister said that the Government had been considering for a few months whether or not to bring in preferential voting. Politically, that is completely dishonest. In the light of his statement the people can look upon any measure brought down by this Government, and any submission by the Minister, as dishonest. Do not let us get any ideas that the measure was introduced for the good of the public. It was

introduced purely and simply to try to ensure the continued political life of the Government parties.

Let us consider whether the other statements by the Minister are true. He said that preferential voting was introduced by the Government because the majority of the people wanted it. But he did not quote any figures; he gave no examples, except that the other States believe in preferential voting. As other hon. members on this side of the Chamber have said, that is quite incorrect. Tasmania does not use the system. The only reason for preferential voting in the other States is that the Upper House is anti-Labour and has made sure that a change cannot be effected. I venture to say that when the Labour Party has a majority in both Houses in the other States a more democratic method of election will be introduced. We are concerned mainly with Queensland.

I have here the result of a Gallup poll published in "The Courier-Mail" of 16 March, 1962. I have heard hon. members opposite quote the findings of Gallup polls as accurate assessments of public opinion but we have heard nothing from the Minister or from the Government this time. In fact it seems that the Government parties have been completely muddled; they have refused to offer any support of the Minister in this debate. One question in this Gallup poll was, "Do you prefer to mark only the one name on the ballot paper?" Of those interviewed, 58 per cent. said they preferred first past the post. That is a high percentage in any public-opinion poll, particularly as only 14 per cent. preferred optional preference, only 22 per cent. preferred compulsory preference, and 6 per cent. were undecided. So in this poll only 22 per cent. of the people interviewed throughout Australia supported the preferential system of voting. How, then, can the Minister in all sincerity come into the Chamber and try to tell us it is the will of the public that the preferential system of voting be introduced?

Let us look at some of the possible reasons for the Government's decision to introduce it. Whether it was a genuine wish of the Government parties to introduce preferential voting we will never know, but it is true that when, while in Opposition, they thought they could say something against the Government in the hope of gaining public favour, they would say it. It is true that prominent members of the Cabinet believed that the majority of the electors were fools. "The Courier-Mail" of 10 May, 1961, had this to say—

"The Labour and Industry Minister, Mr. Morris, said yesterday he believed most Australians voted with little, if any thought for basic ideals, ultimate goals, or end results."

In other words, he considered that they were completely irresponsible when they went to the poll. Believing that, of course,

he thought, "That is the way they are going to vote. Let us bring in this preferential voting to create further confusion."

As was said earlier, we believe that if a system could be devised whereby the complete will of the people could be shown in the voting system, the Australian Labour Party would support its introduction. I suppose the nearest to it is the system that is used in Cabinet elections and in certain elections in smaller bodies. That is the exhaustive-ballot system of election. As we all know, it would be completely impossible to introduce that system into State, or Federal, or local-authority elections.

The Minister tried to make out that there was a very close comparison between the two systems. There again I believe he was completely wrong. In the exhaustive-ballot system, once a candidate is eliminated all the other candidates go back to the ballot, that is to say, all those who have already received the required number of votes to give more than half, when we are considering electing more than one person. In an election for only one person in which there are four candidates, when the last one drops out all go back to the ballot again. In other words, every ballot taken is a considered vote. Everyone taking part in the voting carefully considers his vote at every ballot.

Under the preferential system electors are forced to vote for not only those candidates whose qualifications and, perhaps, party affiliations commend them, but also for people whom they may not know and whom, in some cases, they might completely detest. Having to cast all votes at the one time is what makes preferential voting completely different from the exhaustive-ballot system. Under the latter system, if a voter is not sure of the qualities of a candidate, he knows, after the first vote is taken, the opinions of those who perhaps do know of them. Under the preferential system, all his votes are completely "blind" if he does not know any of the candidates particularly well. There is therefore a great difference between the preferential-voting and the exhaustive-ballot systems.

The Minister said that under preferential voting there is no wastage of votes. That is completely wrong. If reference is made to the results of Federal elections in which there is preferential voting, it is found that informal votes in areas of single State electorates or, in some cases, two or more, far exceed those in State elections. This is caused by two things. The first is that people get confused by a large number of candidates, and the second is that there are people who, because of political or other beliefs, refuse completely to vote for other candidates. I have seen ballot papers on which staunch Labour supporters have voted for Labour candidates but have absolutely refused to be associated in any way with Liberal candidates, for which of course I cannot blame them. It is, however, throwing

away good votes. It is completely undemocratic to ask anyone to vote for other than candidates of his choice, particularly if he has suffered at the hands of this Country Party-Liberal Government.

When a comparison is made between the number of informal votes cast under preferential voting and our present system, it is found that most informal votes are absentee and postal votes. Anyone who has had the job of going to hospitals and other institutions trying to help sick and aged people carry out their duty of voting will agree when I say that it is sufficiently difficult for these people to vote for even one candidate. Having to consider the merits of all candidates will put an additional strain on these people. If the Government persists in having a mobile booth going through the hospitals, as it has at the last two elections, I shudder to think what sort of vote we will get from the hospitals. The confusion was bad enough on those occasions; on this occasion the situation will get out of hand completely.

Mr. Mann: That is what the Minister wants.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is right. He knows that the more confusion he creates in the minds of the people, the more chance he has of succeeding. Let us look at some of the voting figures. The Minister said that where a dead heat occurred between the last two candidates, they would draw straws or draw the name out of a hat. Just fancy leaving the whole welfare of the country to lot! The Treasurer will probably go down in history as the person who has given the greatest encouragement to gambling in Queensland. The Minister for Justice has now gone further and said, "We will have a gamble to see which party will be in power." Let us consider an instance where there are 11,000 electors, of whom 5,000 vote for A, 3,000 for B, and 3,000 for C. The preferences of B and C are allocated quite differently. If C is eliminated, his preferences go to A; but if B is eliminated his preferences go to C. The result does not depend on the vote of the people, and I would much rather rely on the integrity and considered opinion of a returning officer, as we have in the past, when there is a tie between two candidates than on the luck of the draw.

I could give further examples to show how ridiculous this type of preferential voting can be and how the whim of one person can determine who shall be the elected representative of a particular area. A person who has been completely discredited by the majority of the electors might come to power only because of one vote that he happened to receive. I will take an example using four candidates, because future elections will not be confined to three candidates. I should say that in the majority of cases there will be four or more candidates, and it will not be merely a case of allotting the preferences

of the third candidate. If there are five candidates, not only the fifth candidate's first vote will be considered but also his second, third, and fourth votes. If time permitted, I could go further and show how people who voted for the minority candidate, whether he was a sensible man or someone who should never have been allowed to nominate, have the final say. Of course, it is a privilege of democracy to nominate and a privilege of democracy to vote for the person for whom one wishes to vote; but it is difficult to believe that the decision as to who shall govern the country can depend on the preferences of people who vote for an irresponsible person.

Let us take an instance where there are four candidates and A receives 4,000 votes, B 3,000 votes, C 2,001 votes, and D 2,000 votes. In other words, D received 1 vote less than C and was eliminated. If D's preferences all went to C, although C was the third candidate and attained that position by only one vote, he would then become the No. 1 candidate. He would have 4,001, A would have 4,000 and B 3,000. B is then eliminated, and his preferences could show then that C became the elected candidate. Yet in the first instance he was only one vote removed from being completely eliminated in the first ballot. In fact, if he had not got that vote and it had gone to D instead of C, C would have been eliminated and A or B would have been the elected representative. How foolish can it be when we consider that one vote—not for one of the major candidates but for a candidate who, in the minds of the majority of the voters, was unworthy of consideration and support—could have been the deciding factor in who was to be the representative of the electorate. In fact, it could determine the Government of the State.

What many people do not realise—I hear them talking about preferential voting—is that in the great majority of cases the candidates from the main political parties, who would be the Australian Labour Party, the Country Party, or the Liberal Party—depending, of course, on whether they decided to run against one another, which would alter the basis of the matter, but assuming there would be only one or the other against the Australian Labour Party—then the preferences of those two parties are not counted or considered. In other words, the whole legislation is not to give the great majority of people a choice in whom their representative should be because, so long as the A.L.P. or the Country Party or the Liberal Party is first or second in the ballot, their preferences are not considered. They are not required. The only ones whose preferences are required are the minority who have not seen fit to support either of the two main political parties.

This is the sort of thing that will encourage Independents. I have no quarrel with that because this is a democracy and if anyone considers he should go in, that is all right.

I should like the Minister to explain to us very carefully and very fully why the Government did not bring in preferential voting this time three years ago. As I said at the start of my remarks, it was part of their policy then; it had been spoken of for many years and there are repeated statements in "Hansard" by the Premier and others to the effect that they believed in preferential voting and would bring it in at the first opportunity. Yet they failed to do so three years ago. If they can convince me and the people of Queensland that they did not introduce it on that occasion for any reason other than politics, we will re-examine their submissions. But I believe the position was that, with the redistribution of boundaries, they did not know just how the two changes would affect them. They did not have any evidence to show that the political pendulum would swing one way or the other. I believe that they deliberately forgot their promise of preferential voting until they could see which way the boundaries would affect them. As we know, in many electorates that they thought were theirs, the people had the good sense to show that they preferred the Australian Labour Party. I shall wait until I read the Bill before I have any more to say.

Mr. BENNETT (South Brisbane) (4.9 p.m.): When I was first acquainted with the fact that new legislation would be introduced on preferential voting, I expected that I would make some submissions and give a learned discussion on the relative merits of preferential and first-past-the-post voting from the point of view of political science as it is lectured on at the university and at political science schools. But the attitude of the Minister has so nauseated me that I have determined to deal with his attitude and the attitude of the Government he represents because they have not introduced the legislation on any basis of political science whatever but purely for the purpose of base political expediency and because of their cowardly fear. I have watched the Minister during this session, particularly since his elevation to the Leadership of the Liberal Party. He has acted in a nervously-ashamed fashion. In the past he has claimed that he was motivated in his actions by sincere principles. In this particular instance I know that he has quoted figures in the Caucus—incidentally, fictitious figures—in his typical academic-accountant way in order to dazzle the Country Party coalition Caucus meeting with science. What he did was designed to save the cheap political hides of some of those who voted for him as Leader. That was the pay-off, of course. It was done in order to out-manoeuvre the Country Party in its supremacy in this Parliament. Those in the Country Party who are fair-minded and decent, and have remained loyal to the secrecy of their Caucus, have since not hesitated to say that the Deputy Premier out-manoeuvred their own Leader and that they

were not satisfied with the genuineness or bona fides of the statements that were alleged to have been made in the arguments he submitted to that Caucus. Therefore, bearing the background in mind it is idle and futile for me to deal with it on a political science basis, so I shall deal with it on the basis of cheap political expediency, as legislation introduced by a Government that is gasping for survival and is fearful of the future.

When it was confidently expected and forecast that the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt was going to fill the vacancy in the Supreme Court judiciary in recent months, the decision was changed because Government members said that they could not possibly face up to a by-election in Mt. Gravatt which would expose the weakness of their Government. The poor old hon. member for Mt. Gravatt was sacrificed on the political block of the coalition Government. He was the sacrificial goat.

I have been amused to listen to the Deputy Premier speaking about conscience, particularly the statements he has made since he has been Deputy Premier. As he does not appear to have acted according to a conscience we wonder if there is one residing in his body. It reminds me of an extract from Shakespeare's "Richard III" which deals with conscience. I think the Deputy Premier could well regard the following statement by Shakespeare on this matter because it is typical of his Government—

"I'll not meddle with it; it is a dangerous thing: it makes a man a coward: a man cannot steal, but it accuseth him; he cannot swear, but it checks him; he cannot lie with his neighbour's wife, but it detects him; 'tis a blushing shamefast spirit that mutinies in a man's bosom; it fills one full of obstacles: . . . it beggars any man that keeps it."

The coalition Government has been speaking of conscience. The little conscience that still rests in their political souls has told hon. members opposite that they must remain silent today and leave the nervous Deputy Premier to introduce the Bill on his own. So much so that most of them have been absent all day. Certainly every member of the Country Party and the Liberal Party has been ashamed and afraid to speak. They are not willing to speak because they know they have nothing sincere to say. If they spoke they could only admit that this legislation has been introduced at the whim of the Liberal Party leaders, who are trying to take control of the State.

It is unfortunate that the Country Party members did not examine closely the percentage of votes at the last State election. If they had examined it in detail they would have found—and it is a wonder the Minister did not refer to these figures when introducing the legislation—that the only decent party in Queensland, the party really representing all interests in the community—municipal, country, and provincial—was the

A.L.P., which gained the highest percentage of votes—39.88 per cent. of all votes cast in Queensland. Strictly speaking, according to the concepts of the theories of democratic Government, the A.L.P. sitting in Opposition should be guiding the destinies of the people from the Government benches.

It is rather amusing to see that the party with the next greatest numerical strength in the House is the Country Party, which obtained only 19.4 per cent. of the votes cast, but due to the gerrymandering of the electorates—so successfully carried out by the now present President of the Land Court—it was able to maintain supremacy in Parliament over its Liberal colleagues, who received 24.03 per cent. of the valid votes cast.

The position of the Q.L.P. is rather interesting. It is obvious that a pact has been made, as my Leader and other hon. members on this side have said. There is no doubt about it; it is absolutely and abundantly clear that the Liberal Party has made a pact with the Q.L.P. through the agency of the Leader of the Q.L.P., Vincent Gair. I am satisfied that he sits in on the determinations at the meetings of the leading executive members of the Liberal Party in this State. I am sure that he sits in, and that he dictates to them their future policy. The Q.L.P. has sacrificed its conscience for preferential voting. It received 12.2 per cent. of the votes cast at the last election, with a representation of four elected members of the Q.L.P. in Parliament. If the Country Party had been sufficiently awake to give consideration to the fact that half of that percentage has been dissected because of the departure of 50 per cent. of the Q.L.P. members in this House from the Q.L.P., they would have found that on the last election figures they could expect at the best, only 6 per cent. of the votes for the Q.L.P. Incidentally, the D.L.P., with which the Q.L.P. has recently affiliated, is also in the quick process of disintegration. I am satisfied that, by May of next year, the Country Party will be saddened to know that the pact made between the Liberal Party and the Q.L.P. will have no force or effect whatever, and that they have sacrificed their self-respect and their supremacy in the Chamber for a shadow. Without going into the minor percentages, it is obvious on the last figures that the proportion that could be polled by the Q.L.P. is 6 per cent.

Before setting aside these figures, it is rather interesting to note that many hon. members sitting on the Government benches must lose their seats under the preferential-voting system. Those who must lose their seats are the hon. member for Rockhampton South—he just cannot win—the hon. member for Toowoomba East, the hon. member for Aspley, and the hon. member for Ithaca. They cannot possibly win under the system of preferential voting. It is a shame for those unfortunate individuals who are unskilled in the ways of political figures and political science that they did not seek the

advice of some intelligent person who has studied political science and who understands figures rather than allow themselves to be hoodwinked by their Leader, who has the specific purpose of endeavouring to obtain the Premiership of the State as the Leader of the Liberal Party. In due course, when the time is ripe, he will—and I use the term advisedly—sabotage the Premier, Mr. Nicklin, for the office of Premier of Queensland. He hastened to introduce the Bill while the Premier is absent from the State attending the Commonwealth Games in Western Australia. The Deputy Premier knew that arrangements had been made many months ago for the Premier to be in attendance at the Games.

He claimed that the Bill was a matter of conscience. He knew the arguments that would be advanced from this side. He anticipated them because they are truthful and obvious arguments. He decided that, rather than have the Premier sit here in embarrassment and be convinced that he acted in an ignorant way by allowing himself to be persuaded by the Deputy Premier, he would introduce the Bill during his absence. And it was introduced with indecent haste, stealthily, and without any indication until 1 o'clock this morning, at a time when nobody had an opportunity to arrange for the material data to be prepared and arranged in order to enter upon the debate. Nobody on the Government benches can counter that argument.

By their conduct hon. members opposite have indicated that they have not an argument to support the weak submissions of the Deputy Premier. The decision to introduce the legislation was forced upon them in almost a political blackmailing fashion by none other than a public servant in the person of V. C. Gair. He told the members of this coalition Government that they would have to wake up to themselves and that he would not play ball with them any more; he would sell them down the drain if they did not give him something to sell, in other words, so that he could engage in some political bribery by saying to the Government, "Unless you do this for me personally"—and I say that quite advisedly—"unless you do such-and-such, unless you safeguard my interests, I won't sell you the votes that the Q.L.P. might get at the next election. I do not treat him as a fool by any means. He is a man who spent long years in political life.

Mr. Ramsden: He treated you as a fool, though.

Mr. BENNETT: That was the trouble. He treated me as a fool and that is where he got the boot. That is why he has to go cap in hand to certain Governments and sell his wares for the Liberal Party, using as his tools the poor unfortunate individuals who sincerely believe they are fighting for some principle. He is only using them in his own personal interests to safeguard his own selfish welfare.

Mr. Duggan: Anyone who takes the hon. member for Merthyr for a fool is no mug.

Mr. BENNETT: What my Leader says is perfectly true.

The man who has precipitated this decision, it has to be admitted, created a lot of confusion and chaos in his own party when he was a member of the Australian Labour Party and he has created a lot of chaos and confusion and intrigue in the ranks of the Liberal Party. If the Deputy Premier is not prepared to admit it he is either a fool himself or, alternatively he does not know what is going on. I do not move around the lobbies very much or spend much time in certain sections of this edifice. However, I move around sufficiently to hear what is going on, and large sections of both Liberal and Country Party members are saying that Vincent Gair is causing a great upheaval within their own ranks. I am saying this only to those genuine Country Party members. I share the opinion expressed by my Leader that there are quite a few decent and well-respected members of the Country Party representing genuine country interests. As I have said previously, I have always admired them and I still do. It pains me to see them being so misguided by some of the city slickers who, when it comes to political science, accountancy figures, and the professional approach, are dazzling them with science. It is a great pity that this is being done to those genuine men from rural areas who are here simply to advance the interest and welfare of the country people whom they represent.

This man to whom I have been referring said, "I make no apology for saying that I prefer a Tory Prime Minister to an A.L.P. Prime Minister." He also said that he told them that they had better smartly introduce preferential voting. This Government is being directed by a man in the Department of Labour and Industry in the Treasury Building. It is receiving direction from this public servant on many major issues. Industrialists, and other people interested in bringing industry to Queensland, cannot find him when they go to his office because he is too busy preparing political propaganda for Mr. Ken Morris, his erstwhile enemy, for the Liberal Party. He is too busy preparing electioneering propaganda and other forms of skulduggery for the Deputy Premier to pull over the eyes of the coalition parties when they meet in Caucus. History will prove that I am correct.

This same man who says that the only correct way to vote is by preferential voting is a rather interesting personality. As a matter of fact, he can be truthfully described as a real political chameleon. The Act that introduced first-past-the-post voting was brought in in October, 1942. Up till that time there had been contingent preferential voting, and the man who played a prominent part in the introduction of first-past-the-post voting was none other than Vincent Clair Gair. He was a member of the Cabinet

of the day, and he forced it through. Is he now being honest with the people of Queensland when he slimes over the Government and says that the only way to vote is by preferential voting? Get out the records and see in "Hansard" the part that he, as a Cabinet Minister, played in forcing through in 1942 first-past-the-post voting. By his utterances of the day and the divisions in which he participated, as recorded in "Hansard", it will be seen clearly that he supported first-past-the-post voting, and no doubt was one of the most ardent advocates of the amendment.

Mr. Duggan: He was Premier after that and could have done what he wanted to.

Mr. BENNETT: Yes, for approximately 5½ years. Never once did he advocate in this Chamber a change in the voting system. Never once did he do so at any of the Labor-in-Politics Conventions or A.L.P. meetings that he attended. As a matter of fact, when the system was attacked from time to time by his political opponents, he strongly defended it. He sneered and scoffed at anyone who advocated altering the system, and it is rather amazing that he should now be dominating the political thinking of the coalition Government. However, he is doing it not with bona-fide motives but simply because this craven, cowardly Government, which is shaking at the knees and gasping for survival, is prepared to clutch at any straw in order to safeguard its political hide.

Mr. Windsor: Your speech would not do justice to a nine-year-old kid.

Mr. BENNETT: If the hon. member's age was in keeping with the development of his brain, he would still be at kindergarten.

It must be conceded that I have never previously attacked Vincent Gair in this Chamber. Recently hon. members considered a Bill relating to architects. Vincent Gair is the architect of this particular amendment, so it is only right that in considering the amendment we should consider the brain that conceived it—the brain of Vincent Gair. When he was a member of Cabinet in 1942 and the then Opposition attacked the amendment that was brought down, he objected to a reference to someone as a czar. It was also pointed out by the Cabinet of which he was a member at the time that the first-past-the-post system was the system adopted by the House of Commons and in fact was the best system of voting that any democratic state could conceive. It has stood the test of time, and as far as I know it is still the system adopted by the House of Commons, and, incidentally, by the Conservative Party in Great Britain.

It is rather intriguing that in the dying hours of this session, when Parliament is almost ready to go into recess, the Government should introduce legislation and sneak it in quietly so that it cannot be considered adequately by the public over a period of

time. The Government has been in office for 5½ years and has done nothing till now to achieve any ambition to change the system of voting. As a matter of fact, they were directed not to do it by the Country Party conference. But Vincent Gair was more powerful and his influence was stronger than that of the Country Party conference. Because a public servant told the Government that he was going to dissociate himself from it, the Government decided, in its weakness, to throw in its lot with him. There is reason for alarm when a public servant can have more influence on the coalition Government than even the Country Party Executive has. The Premier, Mr. Nicklin, said that he would not introduce preferential voting because he had a direction from the Executive of the Country Party not to introduce it. Yet when one man, who poses as the leader of the Queensland Labour Party but who in fact is breaking his neck to get into the Liberal Party, tells the Government that he will sell it down the drain unless it introduces preferential voting, the Government bows to his dictates. It bows not to the dictates of the duly-constituted executive of a recognised political party, not to the dictates of the electors at an election, not to the dictates of any reputable organisation throughout Queensland, but to the dictates of one public servant.

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) (4.35 p.m.): I suppose in complete charity to the Minister who introduced the Bill members must feel a certain amount of compassion for him. He came into this Chamber this morning, as the hon. member for South Brisbane said, in a fearful and ashamed manner and presented this Bill to the Committee. I feel that on no earlier occasion have members of the Chamber—

A Government Member interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I heard the hon. member for Ashgrove say that he wants to go home. I can assure him that he will have plenty of time to spend at home after the next election.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to continue with his speech.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I was saying that I did not think that, at any previous time, members of the Chamber had seen the Minister more fearful or more ashamed, because he tried to sell this Bill to the Committee by saying it had been brought in in a state of complete camaraderie in the Government parties, and so on.

In the introductory remarks to my speech I feel I should draw attention to what was said by the Leader of the then Opposition

when there was an amendment of the Elections Act in 1942 to provide for the first-past-the-post system of voting. On that occasion the Premier, who was then Leader of the Opposition, had this to say—

“As to the question whether we should make any alteration to our Elections Act, I say very emphatically indeed this proposed amendment is a retrograde step and one the Government do not deserve any credit at all for introducing at any stage, particularly in the dying days of the Session.”

Yet we see them, because of political expediency, seeking to bring about this amendment, not in the dying days of a session but, indeed, in the dying days of the Government. If ever I saw a political candidate for the crematorium, this Government at present admirably fills the bill.

Then the Premier had this to say—

“I say very definitely that when the people of the State realise the implications behind this proposed alteration of the Elections Act it may take more than the straight-out voting for which the Bill provides to save the Government from defeat at these two coming by-elections. I say that such phrases as ‘rights of the people,’ ‘principles of democracy,’ ‘the will of the people,’ should henceforth be discarded for ever from Labour’s political catchcries.”

History will prove that the very words the Premier on that occasion used will be very applicable to what will happen to this Government because of the political trickery it is indulging in in forcing on the people of this State a preferential-voting system that nobody asked for, except those who are fearful of their own political chances in the forthcoming State election.

I repeat that history will prove that those words of the Premier’s will indeed be fulfilled because, when people realise the implications of preferential voting, when they realise that it has not been designed to bring about a democratic expression or to bring about complete freedom to elect the candidate most suitable to the most people, when they realise that this amendment is designed merely to save the hide of the Government, it will take more than preferential voting to save it from defeat.

The Minister said that preferential voting was fully and completely discussed at the Caucus meeting in an air of harmony and camaraderie. Let us examine the history of decisions made at various party conferences on preferential voting. This is reported in “The Courier-Mail” of 12 November, 1959—

“Country and Liberal Party members of State Parliament decided yesterday to fight next year’s election on first-past-the-post voting.”

It goes on to say—

“The ‘first-past-the-post’ vote decision is probably the most far-reaching made by the Country-Liberal Party Government in its first term.”

Later it states—

"The general attitude of many Government Party members was: 'What is best for the Government?' One member is reported to have said: 'It's taken us a long while to get here. Don't throw it away'."

In other words, the only thing that motivated the decision was whether the Government could retain the Treasury benches.

The article goes on to say—

"A strong argument was presented that preferential voting could bring the two Labor parties—A.L.P. and Q.L.P.—together."

There again we see the fear that unless they could ensure that preferential voting would make certain the return of the Government they were not prepared to accept it at any price. It is indeed interesting to read in this article—

"The future of the Queensland Labor Party figured largely in the discussion."

So we see that the welfare of this party which the Premier attacked on many occasions, including its Leader, in such a scathing way that in the 1957 election campaign he referred to him as being completely unworthy of holding the reins of Government, had to be considered when the Government made the decision whether preferential voting would produce the most democratic way of electing members of Parliament.

It is interesting to read further—

"The atmosphere in the lobbies during the meeting was reminiscent of some of the A.L.P. Caucus meetings in 1957 on the three weeks' annual leave issue."

In other words, because of the internecine wrangling in the party at that time there was that fear that if a wrong decision was made it could result in the defeat of the Government.

Then we come to some history which is a little more pertinent to the matter at the present time. Again this is a decision that allegedly has been based only on the democratic rights of the people. This Government does not care two hoots for the democratic rights of any person.

This appears in "The Courier-Mail" of 18 May, 1962—

"The Parliamentary Country Party used its numbers in the joint Country-Liberal Party room to defeat a move before the 1960 election for preferential voting. One fear was that it would result in a multiplicity of non-Labour candidates.

"But more Country Party Parliamentarians are ready to approve the new system if the Liberal Party gives assurances that it will not encourage independent Liberal candidates in coastal electorates."

That is the sort of camaraderie that the Minister has the audacity to try to tell members of the Opposition existed during the discussions on the Bill. The Minister has completely misled the Committee. It was indeed rather strange when the Bill was introduced this morning to hear the Minister say that an important principle was involved, namely, that it dealt with the important question of preferential voting. At the time that the Minister was whistling in the dark about this matter the Government benches were almost completely empty. That indicates the importance that is placed on this measure by some Government members. There is no doubt in my mind that the absence of several members from the Government benches this morning can be accounted for by the fact that the members whom the Country Party-Liberal Government is literally throwing to the wolves were away at the local wailing wall bemoaning the fate that will befall them because they have been sold down the drain by their mates in the Country-Liberal Caucus. As for the others who were missing, I have no doubt that, being fearful of their chances in their marginal electorates, they were away in some corner meditating on what scurrilous filth they could use against members of the Australian Labour Party at the election. That clearly indicates the importance certain members of the Government parties place on preferential voting.

The Minister claims that this is the fairest system of voting, the best practical method, and so on. History has shown that preferential voting caters for minority parties and allows them to dictate who shall hold the reins of Government. I do not think any further, or clearer, proof is needed than a reference to the results of the last Moreton Federal election. In that instance 25,123 primary votes were cast for the Labour Party and 22,528 for the Liberal Party. A total of 47,651 electors voted for either the Australian Labour Party or the Liberal Party, yet the member for that seat was elected on the preferential votes of the Q.L.P. and Communist candidates, whose combined total was only 4,554 primary votes. In other words, the people who determined the elected representative for the electorate of Moreton were the 4,554 voters who voted for those candidates. Because of the small number of votes they received, they were eliminated from the poll in the early part of the count. I will need more than the platitudes of the Minister to convince me that this is the most democratic and fair way of voting, when 47,651 electors cast votes for two candidates and the decision rests in the hands of 4,554 voters.

I do not wish to dwell at length on the result of the Moreton election, but I must say that this morning the hon. member for Sherwood tried to convey to the Committee that Killen received only 10 per cent. of all the second-preference votes from Julius.

That statement is absolutely incorrect and is misleading. I am basing my statement on personal experience because I was in charge of the A.L.P. team that was at the recount for that electorate. The figures I obtained from the returning officer show that the first preferences by Julius to Killen were 93 and the second preferences by Julius to Hagen to Killen were 139, giving in effect a total of 232 first or second preferences, Communist preferences.

Compare those with the preferences given to Mr. O'Donnell in the same way—Julius to O'Donnell 390 and Julius to Hagen to O'Donnell 54, a total of 444.

So Killen was elected on approximately 50 per cent. of the total first and second Communist preference votes cast. If we want any further proof that preferential voting does not give the elector the absolute right to select the candidate he desires, the result of the election in the Moreton electorate clearly demonstrates the power of minority groups to elect a representative.

It is interesting to note what the Premier had to say in his policy speech in 1957 about groups obtaining control of the Parliament. He said—

“Political institutions and the sovereignty of Parliament cannot be maintained if a group gains control of Parliament with the object of destroying democratic principles; and there are no constitutional safeguards here which would prevent any such group from being able to destroy Parliament as an effective instrument for the preservation of the rights of the people.”

Yet in this very legislation the Government is providing that a minority group, because of its exchange of support for this Government, can be put in a position to dictate what shall be done by this Parliament.

Mr. Chalk interjected.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I hear the Minister for Transport interjecting. He is typical of the hypocritical attitude of Government members who come into the Chamber and tell us what horrible people Communists are and who tell us of the subversive activities of the Communist Party, yet he will be the first to put out the grasping hand for Communist preferences if they will save his own political hide. I say the members of the Government have been stripped of their thin veneer of respectability. They have been shown by the Bill to be completely hypocritical in their attitude because they will accept every vote, whether it be from a Communist or from any other person, whom they are always attacking in the House as subversive. Like the hon. member for Moreton, they will be not unashamed to be elected on Communist preferences.

I might add that Mr. Killen, who was notable for his Red-baiting tactics, has been horribly silent, knowing that he has been elected through the assistance of the Communist Party.

The Bill will provide that the small vote of a minority party can place this Government in such a position that, if by some mischance it is able to retain occupancy of the Treasury benches, it will be dictated to by a small minority of outsiders. Hon. members opposite know full well that, if they do not obey the dictates and the wishes of that small minority, it will say to them, “We are giving our preferences elsewhere next time.” If any Government member can convince me that this will lead to efficiency in government, to use the vernacular I will “go he”.

Government Members: Go he, then.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I hear a lot of interjectors saying I am here, but at least I can say that, after the next election, preferential voting or not, I will still be here. That is something that many other members on the Government benches fail to realise because they were sold down the drain by their mates and, because of this gerrymandering that went on in Caucus, they will not be here after the next election. As one prominent member of the Government said to me, the Liberal Party has the Country Party just where it wants it now. In other words, through this political chicanery that has been going on in and out of Caucus meetings, the Liberal Party section of the Government has been able to gain complete control of Caucus and to dictate what shall be done. Indeed, it is significant that they are building up the Minister for Justice for the role of Leader of the Government if they are successful at the next election.

I want to say in conclusion that the Minister completely misled the Committee this morning when he said that a candidate will not be elected at any election unless, after inclusion of all the preferences, he receives an absolute majority. My only comment on that is that it is absolute rot. He knows, and we know, that the only preferences counted are those of the minority groups that are eliminated as a result of the primary vote. The Minister's trying to convince us and the people of Queensland that every preferential vote cast will be counted is absolute hokey, and I gave him credit for being too intelligent to try this pea-and-thimble trick on the electors of Queensland. He knows full well that the only preferential votes counted in an election under preferential voting are those of the minority parties that are eliminated. Faced with defeat, with the sands of time running out, the Government is endeavouring, by the use of the camouflage of preferential voting, to attract the rebel forces that have existed for a number of years in this State.

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong—Minister for Justice) (4.58 p.m.), in reply: In reply, I propose to divide my remarks into two parts. In the first place, I shall make very brief comments on the contributions of the hon. members or Carnarvon and Bundaberg. Although the hon. member for Bundaberg did, to a certain extent, get a li'de mixed in

his figures, I class those two contributions as being very thoughtful ones and of the type expected from very experienced former Ministers of the Crown. Having made those remarks, I am sorry that there will be insufficient time to expand them to any great extent.

I now propose to make a few observations on the tactics and performance of Her Majesty's Opposition in this Parliament as a whole. Apart from the two contributions that I have mentioned, and the four or five minutes taken up by the hon. member for Sherwood by way of explanation, this debate has proceeded since approximately 11.45 this morning and I should say that it is the most shocking exhibition by the Opposition that I have ever seen.

Let us analyse the tactics used by the Opposition. Obviously, the primary objective of hon. members opposite has been to absorb time. As I listened to their arguments, I did not hear one that I had not heard many times previously. Their next endeavour was to create strife. Here was a wonderful opportunity for intelligent members of the Opposition, without being limited to the principles of the Bill, to make some contribution to our thought on this matter.

Mr. Duggan: If this is such a simple Bill and can so easily be discussed by intelligent people, why did your own Caucus take over three hours to discuss it?

Mr. MUNRO: Because the principles were important. The discussion in the Government party meeting was an intelligent discussion. It did not consist of constant reiteration such as we have heard this afternoon.

I do not propose to refer to particular speakers. I think it will be much better if at this stage I based my reply on the trend of the debate as a whole. I have indicated already that it was quite apparent that one of the primary purposes of speaker after speaker was to create strife. The main theme of hon. members opposite has been an endeavour to create strife between the Country Party and Liberal Party sections of the Government. Apart from that, there have been quite unnecessary references to particular electorates in an endeavour to create ill-feeling between one member of this Parliament and another. The culmination was a quite unfounded and unwarranted attack on the Premier of Queensland, and I will return to that in a moment.

Hon. members opposite found that line of approach rather heavy going, and after some time the policy was changed to some extent. Instead of endeavouring to create strife either between senior Ministers of my party and others, or between the Country Party and the Liberal Party and particular members of those parties, they attempted to establish that, although there was this alleged ill-feeling between different sections of the Government, in effect the Government and the Q.L.P. were buddies and that the Bill

had been introduced as a result of some kind of nefarious arrangement between the Government and the Q.L.P. If I might deal compendiously with those various matters and save words, I would use very much the same words as I used in making a very important statement yesterday and say that if at this stage I base my reply on the many of the allegations that have been made throughout the debate are not only completely untrue, but obviously untrue. They are not even logical. I shall give only one or two examples because I do not want to waste time. First of all, this silly and futile endeavour to use the debate to create ill-feeling between the two sections of the Country Party-Liberal Government all comes from wishful thinking, and I assure front-bench members of the Opposition that they are wasting their time. We on this side of the Chamber have worked together in a spirit of friendly co-operation for more than ten years, and if hon. members opposite think that we are going to quarrel among ourselves or personal issues, then they are going to have to think again.

Mr. Duggan: That is what Ken Morris said before you kicked him out.

Mr. MUNRO: If I might address my remarks perhaps a little more directly to the Leader of the Opposition, I would say that if he expects the kind of occurrence to take place in this Government that took place in the Government of which he was a member, then he is mistaken because I would say we have a different type of man.

Mr. Duggan: What are you referring to in that?

Mr. MUNRO: I am referring to what happened in 1957. I do not usually make remarks of this kind, but I must say I am a little fed up with having to hear—

Mr. Duggan: Are you casting a reflection on the people who re-elected me after that?

Mr. MUNRO: No.

Mr. Duggan: What did your Premier say about Mr. Muller in covering up that one?

Mr. MUNRO: I do not want to cast any reflection on the hon. member personally, but I do say that I am keenly disappointed with the tenor of this debate.

Let us take the next thought. There were slurs and innuendoes and personal insinuations against the Premier of this State and against me personally. As far as I am concerned, I will say that I make no reply because I do not care; I do not think there is anything that any member from the Opposition side could say that would do me any serious harm. But I do take the strongest exception to any slur or attack on Frank Nicklin, the Premier of this State, because I will say that he is the best Premier this State has had over the past 25 years, and I will say that conservatively. If the Leader of the Opposition wishes to get

up, as he did yesterday, and say that is untrue because he is the best Premier of the State over the last 50 years, then I will accept that.

Mr. Duggan: All I am saying is that his own Country Party members said that he was not, and they said it to me.

Mr. MUNRO: I will give another example. I am only giving a few examples to illustrate the quite illogical nature of the remarks that have been made. The hon. member for Brisbane spoke, and he speaks very well; he is a powerful personality. His main theme was that we had not introduced this Bill because we thought it was a good system, but because of our selfish views to save our own skins. Having made that masterly statement, he then went on to give personal application of it to various members on this side of the Chamber. He said, "You are likely to lose your seat as a result of preferential voting," to several members on this side, thereby completely destroying any logic that there might have been in his remarks.

Again, it surprised me that one speaker after another stood up and just groped in the air for something to say. Let us take another point that was made very strongly. It was the objection that this Bill was introduced today. It was suggested that it was some nefarious plan to put it through during the absence of the Premier. Do Opposition members know, or do they not know, that all we are attempting to do today is get this Bill printed so that hon. members can read it, and that the Premier will be back here to take his place in the Chamber when it comes up for the second reading?

That brings me to the other surprising point that, apart from this overwhelming desire that we see developing at all times to waste time, if there is one thing that certain Opposition members in the Chamber seem to object to, it is the fact of a Bill being printed. May I suggest again, as I have on various other occasions: why do not hon. members opposite relax their relentless opposition for a little until they can read the Bill?

Mr. Houston: We don't like the idea at all.

Mr. MUNRO: No, they do not like getting to the stage of reading a Bill. If the introduction of the Bill had been deferred until next week, what would the Leader of the Opposition have said? He would have said that we should have introduced it this week so that hon. members would have had an opportunity to read it over the week-end.

Mr. Duggan: I simply quoted from "Hansard" what your own Premier said.

Mr. MUNRO: What I am saying is that the Leader of the Opposition and the front-bench members generally on that side are most inconsistent, because whatever the Government does they object to it. A succession of speakers referred to the Government party meeting. One speaker after

another has alleged that the voting on that occasion was 24 to 21. The hon. member for Mt. Gravatt was one of the scrutineers and the hon. member for Barambah was the other. They had intended to speak but because, with the exception of five minutes, hon. members opposite took up all the time, they very courteously decided not to speak.

Mr. DUGGAN: I rise to a point of order. I desire to know whether the Opposition prevented the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt or the hon. member for Barambah from speaking in this debate today.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Chair calls on hon. members as they rise.

Mr. MUNRO: There was no suggestion—

Honourable Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! This constant heckling is somewhat like a street-corner election meeting. The elections are six months off—I hope.

Mr. MUNRO: I want to proceed as quickly as I can. Let me make the position abundantly clear. There is not one member of the Opposition, nor is there one member on this side of the Chamber other than the two scrutineers, who knows what those voting figures were. The technique used of this 24-21 business is just the familiar repetition technique—as a matter of fact, it is used a little bit by the Communist Party.

Mr. Duggan: Again you are reflecting on your own members.

Mr. MUNRO: I am not making any reflection. The two scrutineers are men of honour and integrity.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MUNRO: There was no great interest in knowing what the figures were. The Premier and I made it clear that we did not wish to know because we wanted it to be completely free. All we asked the scrutineers to report to us was the result of the ballot. That is what they did. You either trust the scrutineers or you don't. I do not suggest hon. members opposite would ever have had any experience in this sort of thing, but if they had they would know that if you do not trust the scrutineers you do not overcome the problem by asking them for the figures. They could just as easily give you false figures as a false result.

I might give just one more example. The Leader of the Opposition commenced at one stage to give what I thought was a rather thoughtful and constructive contribution to the problem. He started to discuss another alternative, the proportional system of voting. Just as in all the other examples I have given, he started off to indicate that the proportional system of voting may have been a much better one than this, and that it may

have been a much better Bill if we had provided for proportional voting, but then he continued and said that personally he did not believe in it, and outlined some of its defects. Although he did not state them very fully, the disabilities of proportional voting are fairly well known. As it would not be in order for me to discuss them at the second-reading stage, let me tell hon. members briefly that, if proportional voting was there merely as a system to give the fairest possible representation of members in a Parliament, it would be the best system, and a better system than the preferential-voting system contained in the Bill. But surely hon. members are sufficiently well informed to know that there is a dual objective in all parliamentary elections. One objective is to provide a fair representation in Parliament, and the other is to provide a means of carrying on stable Government. As the Leader of the Opposition well knows, I am sure, the defect of proportional voting is firstly that there is such a fine result that you are constantly living on the edge of a volcano without knowing which party is to carry on the Government, and if you have a couple of Independents in the House, they, in effect, may become very close to being dictators.

If the time had not been so late I would have been very interested in discussing developments that could take place in the future under which we could have, perhaps, a combination of the best features of proportional representation, with a system of preferential voting. I do not claim that our proposed system is ideal.

Finally, apart from the invalid and illogical viewpoints I have mentioned, the substance of the theme of the Opposition was that the old first-past-the-post system is a better system than preferential voting. I do not often quote, but this is short and so very apt, and I ask hon. members to listen to it very carefully. It appears on page 366 of the "Australian Encyclopaedia" Volume 3, which is in the Parliamentary Library. It is a pity that some hon. members opposite did not read it before they entered this debate. It reads—

"First-past-the-post voting, still the rule in the United Kingdom and the United States of America, is the crudest system still in common use; the voter votes only for so many candidates as there are seats to be filled, and the candidate with the highest number of votes is elected. This system favours a two-party political organisation, grossly exaggerates the parliamentary strength of the majority party, penalises a divided Opposition, and often results in a strongly-organised party gaining power although a majority of electors, while differing in their positive choice, are against that party. In Australia, the system would favour the Labour Party, because as a rule that party presents a united front to an Opposition divided

between a Country Party and a Liberal Party; for this reason, the Queensland Labour Party when in power in 1942 re-introduced first-past-the-post."

The Labour Party introduced this system, which is authoritatively described as the crudest system still in common use.

I have only one final point, and I want to end on this note. After hearing this debate today I think we should ask ourselves this serious question: what would be the outlook in this State if we had to have a Government that carried on its policy on the basis of the principle, or perhaps the lack of principle, that has been evidenced by the speeches from Opposition members? I suggest that that is a question that should be very seriously considered.

As for the reasons in support of the Bill—I have already given them in my introductory speech and I will conclude by repeating that the Bill contains only one important principle; that is, that it introduces a system of preferential voting which is, on the whole, a fairer system of voting than the existing Queensland system of first past the post.

Question—That the motion (Mr. Munro) be agreed to—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 32

Mr. Armstrong	Mr. Hooper
" Bjelke-Petersen	" Houghton
" Camm	" Knox
" Campbell	" Low
" Carey	" Munro
" Chalk	" Pilbeam
Dr. Delamothe	" Pizzev
Mr. Dewar	" Ramsden
" Evans	" Richter
" Ewan	" Sullivan
" Fletcher	" Tooth
" Harrison	" Wharton
" Hart	" Windsor
" Herbert	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Hewitt	Mr. Smith
" Hiley	" Hughes
" Hodges	

NOES, 17

Mr. Baxter	Mr. Lloyd
" Bennett	" Mann
" Burrows	" Marsden
" Davies	" Newton
" Donald	" Sherrington
" Dufficy	" Walsh
" Duggan	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Hanlon	Mr. Thackeray
" Houston	" Bromley

PAIRS

Mr. Nicklin	Mr. Byrne
" Rae	" Wallace
" Lonergan	" Graham
" Gilmore	" Tucker
Dr. Noble	" Melloy
Mr. Beardmore	" Inch
" Madsen	" O'Donnell
" Row	" Gunn
" Gaven	" Dean

Resolved in the affirmative.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Munro, read a first time.

The House adjourned at 5.28 p.m.