

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 24 OCTOBER 1918

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 24 OCTOBER, 1918.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*), took the chair at 7 o'clock.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from His Excellency the Governor of messages assenting to the following Bills:—

- Land Acts Amendment Bill;
- Infant Life Protection Act Amendment Bill;
- Appropriation Bill, No. 3.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT ON CENTRAL SUGAR-MILLS.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received from the Auditor-General his report on the accounts of the central sugar-mills for the financial year 1917-18.

Ordered to be printed.

PAPER.

The following paper, laid on the table, was ordered to be printed:—

- Return of all schools in operation on 1st July, 1918, with the attendance of pupils, and with the status and emoluments of the teachers employed.

QUESTIONS.

CHARGES AGAINST MR. JOHN ROSE.

Mr. BUTLER (*Lockyer*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

- "1. Was Mr. John Rose, temporary dairy instructor, afforded an opportunity of replying to any charges made against him before he was discharged?
- "2. If not, will he grant to Mr. Rose an opportunity of doing so?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. Lennon, *Herbert*) replied—

"1. No, because the reasons why his appointment was not confirmed were—unsatisfactory performance of his duties, and absenting himself from the College without leave at times when he should have been present.

"2. Seeing that Mr. Rose is no longer employed at the College, and a successor has been appointed, Mr. Rose may, if he so desires, put his case before me in writing, and is, of course, free to see me personally on the matter."

LAND FOR SOLDIER SETTLEMENT IN BOWEN ELECTORATE.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

- "1. What area of land is open for soldier settlement in the Bowen electorate?
- "2. Where is such land situated?
- "3. Have any applications been received for settlement; if so, how many?"

[*Hon. W. McCormack.*

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrego*) replied—

"1. 17,236 acres in the parishes of Euri and Roundback, comprising forty-four portions, ranging from 40 to 1,280 acres in area. Situated on the Bowen-Townsville Railway adjacent to Wathana Station, and extending back therefrom for about 6 miles. Twenty-two acres in the parish of Pring, comprised in two portions of 11½ and 10½ acres. Situated on Queen's Beach, near Bowen. These areas were reserved for soldier settlement at the request of the Bowen War Council. It is the intention of the Government to reserve for soldier settlement suitable areas along the Merinda-Bowen Coalfields Railway.

"2. See answer to No. 1.

"3. Yes; two. One for 579 acres in the parish of Crystal Brook, near Proserpine, and one for 12 acres in the parish of Pring, near Bowen."

REPORT ON CENTRAL SUGAR-MILLS.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*), in the absence of Mr. Swayne, asked the Treasurer—

"If in connection with the statement on page 4 of the report of the general manager of central sugar-mills that Messrs. Petree and Oakes's report will shortly be available, is it possible to arrange to get this report printed and made available before Parliament rises?"

HON. W. N. GILLIES, on behalf of the Treasurer (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*), replied—

"1. It is not intended to make available the report of Messrs. Petree and Oakes."

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

STRIKE OF SANITARY EMPLOYEES AT TOWNSVILLE.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received from the hon. member for Dalby notice, in writing, that he intended to move the adjournment of the House to discuss a "definite matter of urgent public importance,"—namely, the strike of sanitary employees in Townsville.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): Mr. Speaker, I desire to move, as conveyed to you in that letter—

"That this House do now adjourn for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance—to wit, the sanitary strike at Townsville."

I do not think it is necessary for me to give reasons for applying for this privilege. I am glad to know that the very mention of this matter in itself is considered to be of sufficient public and urgent importance for me to take advantage of the Standing Orders. My reason for taking this step is that it appears to me that the Premier and the members of the Cabinet do not seem to be alive to the position that appears to exist there. For the last three weeks the whole of the city of Townsville has been disorganised as a result of a breach of the law. The history, as I gather it, is this— that certain employees were working for a contractor who had a contract with the municipality or town, as the case may be; but when that contract fell in, the aldermen decided to carry on the work themselves, and the first intention was that two men

who had been employed by the contractor were not to be engaged, because it was stated that they were not satisfactory employees. That seemed to be resented from the very beginning, and, notwithstanding the fact that the council subsequently stated they were prepared to continue to employ those men, a strike followed—a strike which is strictly within the meaning of the definition of “strike” in the Industrial Arbitration Act; one which is a breach of the law, because the provisions of that Act in respect to a strike were not carried out. They are still defying the law, and an award of the court is being openly and defiantly flouted, and the attitude of the men is being backed up by a labour organisation.

Mr. GLEDSON: How can that be, if they were never employed by the council?

Mr. VOWLES: They were employed by the council. They were taken into the employ of the council, and they have struck for higher wages than the award rates.

Mr. GLEDSON: They were never employed by the council.

Mr. VOWLES: They were, as I will point out, on the authority of the mayor of Townsville, and as is shown in the reports in “The Townsville Bulletin,” which I have here. The award is the result of an Act which was brought into being by this Government. Evidence was given as to the cost of living in various towns, and the price was fixed for this class of work at £4 5s. per week. To be on the liberal side, the contractor and the aldermen of the city of Townsville gave them 5s. a week more than award rates. They gave them at the rate of £4 10s. a week. That is one of the highest scales of wages given to that class of work anywhere in Queensland. Notwithstanding that they were getting that liberal allowance, they have now struck, and they demand that £6 a week shall be paid to them for the future as a minimum for this class of work; because through their representatives they say they will be satisfied with that amount for the time being—they may yet demand more. I say it is the duty of the Premier, it is the duty of the Home Secretary, to take action in this matter, and see that their laws are not violated; to see that the awards of the court are not flouted.

The PREMIER: I ask you to tell me where in the law has been violated.

Mr. VOWLES: Section 65 of the Industrial Arbitration Act has been violated. It says—

“No person shall take part in, or do or be concerned or instigate or aid in doing, any matter or thing in the nature of a strike or lockout unless or until a strike or lockout has been authorised by the industrial union or employers in the calling concerned.”

The PREMIER: Well, do you know whether that has been done or not?

Mr. VOWLES: I know it has not been done.

The PREMIER: Who is your authority for that?

Mr. VOWLES: My authority is a good authority, and the Premier should make inquiries to point out if what I am saying is wrong. This section goes on to say—

“A strike shall not be deemed to have been authorised until all the members

of the industrial union who are engaged in the calling and in the district affected have had an opportunity of participating in a ballot taken at a general meeting duly constituted in accordance with the rules of the union, and a majority have voted in favour of such strike.”

That has not been done. They are not striking for any principle that may be involved as between employer and employee. They are simply defying an award of the court, although they were offered a larger sum of money than was prescribed by that award. I notice that the Premier was interviewed in connection with this matter this morning, and it appears in this evening’s “Daily Standard.” This is what it says—

“Questioned about the sanitary strike at Townsville, the Premier stated this morning that, as far as the Government was concerned, the matter was in the hands of the Home Secretary.”

The Home Secretary is acting in a spineless way, and I will deal with him later on.

Mr. COLLINS: What is that word? Spineless?

Mr. VOWLES: Yes, spineless, jelly-fish. The Premier went on—

“He added, however, that the function of carrying on the sanitary service was primarily a matter for the local authority; indeed, it was one of the most ordinary functions of the local authority. For the Government to interfere in the present circumstances would indicate the complete failure of the local governing body to cope with the situation.”

That is the statement of the Premier when he knows that his own law, and also an award of the court, is being flouted. He said that it would show weakness on the part of the local authority if the Government interfered. Where does the strength of the Government come in when they allow that sort of thing to go on?

The PREMIER: What do you say the Government should do?

Mr. VOWLES: They should act as a governing body, and as these are law-breakers in Townsville, they should be prosecuted. Law and order should be established in Townsville. There are free labourers in Townsville who are prepared to do this work at the prescribed award rates; but they are not allowed to do the work. These men should not be intimidated. If the Government have got the Police Force at Townsville, they should do their duty.

The PREMIER: I have received no complaints that anyone has been interfered with.

Mr. VOWLES: I will quote you some remarks of your own friends in Townsville from the reports which appear in the Northern papers. They threaten to do all sorts of things to these men in order to gain their point. I would point out that the Townsville council, in a spirit of conciliation, offered to allow Mr. W. J. Riordan, who is a member of the Legislative Council and president of Australian Workers’ Union, together with Mr. McGee of the Industrial Court, to act as arbitrators, and decide the matter, and they are prepared to abide by the decision. When that offer was made to the men, what did they say? They said, “No, we will have our £6 a week. We will

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not submit this matter to arbitration or conciliation."

The PREMIER: That is another matter.

Mr. VOWLES: It is not another matter. It is a continuing matter. The Premier then continued in his interview in the "Standard"—

"It would amount to the mere unloading of the difficulty on to the shoulders of the State Government, although local authorities have been specially set up for dealing with matters of local concern. Of course, it was possible to conceive of a stage being reached when it would become necessary for the Government to intervene in the public interest, but such circumstances would be very extraordinary."

What about the Police Force in Townsville?

Mr. COLLINS: They went to Hughenden to put your friends in their proper place.

Mr. VOWLES: We know what happened at Hughenden, and while the police went away from Townsville to Hughenden the men there take advantage of their absence. What happened in Townsville while the police were away? We learn from the papers that the sanitary pans were taken out on a moonlight night and carted through the streets, while public buildings and various parts of the streets were befouled. Where were the police while this was going on? Are the police a party to it, and conniving at it? What is the meaning of it all? What about the public health? We know what it is like in a hot place like Townsville with the summer coming on, yet no sanitary work has been carried on there for the last three weeks, except some voluntary work done by the aldermen themselves. The whole place is being made filthy by the stuff lying about the streets, and the Health Department is refusing to intervene. The Home Secretary's Department is refusing to intervene at all. Have we got a Government, or are we under mob rule at the present time?

Mr. COLLINS: It was mob rule in Hughenden the other night.

Mr. VOWLES: We hear a lot about the firm, strong Government we have got. For goodness sake, let them display a little of their strength and let them cope with the situation, such as it is. There are many other phases of this question to which reference might be made. We are told that the Home Secretary will not interfere. In the course of an interview he said—

"I did everything I possibly could to get the local authority to agree to the terms."

Why should the local authority agree to the terms? Instead of the Home Secretary standing behind the local authority, he is only inducing the men to go on. Instead of assisting the local authority in every direction, the hon. gentleman says he induced the local authority to come to terms. The Home Secretary also said—

"They will not budge and the other people will not budge, so they must fight it out amongst themselves."

What is the Commissioner for Public Health doing? He has power under the Health Act to intervene in a matter like this. He has power to intervene and take the matter out of the hands of the local authorities. Under section 19 of the Health Act the Commissioner of Public Health has certain powers

vested in him, and he may do certain things. He may make regulations to prevent a nuisance, and so on. He has power to call on the local authority to do certain things, and if the local authority does not do it within the time specified he can do it at their expense. If it is an urgent matter of public importance the Commissioner for Public Health can come in under that section. He can do everything for the preservation of the public health and charge the cost to the ratepayers. What is he doing here? We find that the Home Secretary does not intend to take any action at all. The Home Secretary says that they can fight it out amongst themselves. What have they to fight out? It is law and justice on one side and attempted intimidation on the other.

Mr. COLLINS: Like Hughenden.

Mr. VOWLES: Here we have the Government standing behind the law-breakers again.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Are you going to move the adjournment of the House in connection with what took place at Hughenden?

Mr. VOWLES: I will let the hon. gentleman do that. The police were sent away from Townsville, and while they were away advantage was taken by these men on strike; and we know what has happened in Townsville during the last few days. Dealing with the reports which have appeared in the papers, I might quote from an article which appears in "The Townsville Bulletin."

Mr. COLLINS: A penny half-penny rag.

Mr. VOWLES: It does not matter what it is, the fact remains that it publishes reports of meetings which are uncontradicted, and I am going to read from those reports.

Mr. COLLINS: The "Bulletin" has no influence in the North at all.

Mr. VOWLES: It is not a question of what influence the paper has, but the reports of the meetings which took place there, and they are uncontradicted reports, so we must take them to be correct. We all know the state of affairs that must be existing in Townsville at the present time. Why should such a situation be allowed to continue? No action has been taken by the Government, and the people are left to fight it out in a primitive way amongst themselves. At any moment there may be a clash between the free labourers and the union labourers when the police come back. We know that that position may arise any day. We are told so by a gentleman with I.W.W. tendencies, who went so far as to say that sabotage would be introduced in other directions in order to bring about what they wanted. He distinctly says that.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Who said that?

Mr. VOWLES: I will give his name later on. In "The Townsville Bulletin" of the 9th instant, it speaks about a letter that came from the Australian Workers' Union office, which stated that the men were not prepared to start work until they were paid at the rate of £6 a week and all the previous hands employed by the Council. The letter also stated that if the settlement was delayed there might be further demands. That was the beginning of it. That shows the Australian Workers' Union are supporting these men. They are aiding an illegal act. There is no negotiation, but they just simply say

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that these men must get £6 a week, and if a settlement is delayed there will be further demands. Further on, it was pointed out in the "Bulletin" on the 9th that the position was critical. A number of men were prepared to take the positions of those who had gone on strike, but they were intercepted by pickets and were given to understand that they must not go to work.

Mr. COLLINS: Terrible!

Mr. VOWLES: It is terrible to think that free labourers are prepared to do the work under the award prescribed by the court, but they are not permitted to do it. Further on it says again—

"A serious feature of the position was that the men were flouting the Arbitration Court award. They seemed to be a law unto themselves, and it was pure I.W.W. doctrine, as direct action. He had heard that it was possible other demands might be made, and if the demands were not acceded to, the strike might be extended. This increased demand meant approximately an increase in cost of from £1,800 to £2,000 a year."

Then it goes on to say that the men insisted on being paid the rate they asked for. The next article appears in the "Bulletin" of the 12th instant. I will not quote the leading article, because hon. gentlemen will say that that is inspired, and is only the opinion of one man, but I will deal with the report in another part of the paper.

Mr. BERTRAM: How many men are affected?

Mr. VOWLES: I am bringing the matter before the House in the hope that I may induce the Premier and his Government to do something to relieve the situation. The "Bulletin" of the 12th contains the report of a public meeting. It is a meeting of alleged ratepayers and citizens. It is as follows:—

"PUBLIC MEETING.

"CONVENED BY INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL.

"An open-air meeting of citizens and ratepayers convened by the Townsville Industrial Council, in connection with the sanitary trouble, was held at the intersection of Flinders and Denham streets on Friday night. The chair was taken by Mr. Kelly, chairman of the Industrial Council, and there was a very large attendance.

"Mr. J. Dash, district secretary of the Australian Workers' Union, gave an outline of the beginning of the trouble, reading the notice served from the Town Hall on the two men, Hemenstey and Prolongeau, over the dismissal of whom the cry of victimisation was raised. He also read recommendations given by the ex-contractor (Mr. Armstrong), to these men, describing them as good and steady workers. Dealing with the financial side of the question, he pointed out there were about 5,000 services in Townsville now carried on at 7d. It would only need an extra rate of 1½d per service to raise £1,300, which would be more than enough to provide £6 per week for sixteen men.

"Mr. J. Cameron (Waterside Workers) opened by attacking the mayor. If the Industrial Council decided on stringent action, they would have the water-

side workers behind them. He moved the following motion:—"This meeting of citizens and ratepayers of Townsville request the city council to grant the demands of the sanitary carters, and avoid any epidemic that is likely to arise."

"Mr. P. Carney (Australian Meat Industry Employees' Union) seconded the motion, stating the city fathers were putting up a fight against the workers. There was one alleged Labour man who went to the meeting of the council with the object of moving a resolution that the sanitary workers' demands be granted, but when he heard Mr. Dash's letter, changed his mind. He hoped the trouble would not spread, but if it did, they would find the organisations behind these men, and, if there was an extension, they would give these city fathers the best fight they had ever experienced."

Mr. Cameron, a member of the waterside workers in Townsville, points out that there is likely to be an epidemic of typhoid unless something is done to settle the matter. I think it is criminal indeed on the part of the Health Department that they are not taking some action to deal with the matter. Mr. C. J. Ryan also spoke at that meeting, and said if there was an epidemic of fever, then the aldermen would be responsible. The report continues—

"Mr. Lewis (Australian Workers' Union) said the sanitary men were out, and there was no possible hope of them going back until the whole of their demands were conceded. He had no doubt that the city fathers had meant to put out the militant men in the sanitary service. He gave a warning to the city fathers and the other employers that if anything happened to union representatives, then God help them. He was told that the employers were going to knock off a few shillings from the carters for the stop-work meeting. If they did that it would cost them more than a few "bob." There were other methods than going off the job."

What is the suggestion there? Here is one of the friends of these men who is suggesting other methods to get at the employer then ceasing work. We have had samples of that in New South [7.30 p.m.] Wales, and we have a pretty good idea of what the suggestion is there. It is sabotage pure and simple, and the destruction of property. The report goes on—

"Mr. Kingston (Bakers' Union) contended that the demands of the sanitary men were only for what was necessary to enable a man to pay rent and keep his family in decency and comfort."

Mr. WHITFORD: It is true.

Mr. VOWLES: If it is true, what is wrong with your court?

Mr. WHITFORD: How much do you want for that class of work?

Mr. VOWLES: I leave that to the hon. member. The report concludes—

"Mr. Kelly (Industrial Council) said if they reversed the salaries for mayor and sanitary workers, and called for applications, there would be more

applications for the mayorship at £4 10s. per week than the sanitary job at £400 a year. The whole of the organised labour of Townsville was behind the sanitary men. Mr. Carney had said if they did fight, the employers would get the biggest fight of their lives. He would go further and say they would get the biggest licking.

"The resolution was put, and carried by a large vote, without dissension, and the meeting concluded."

Then a suggestion was made, I think at the instance of the Premier, that they should have a conference, and see if some conciliatory methods could not be adopted. The suggestion was made to them that Mr. Riordan and Mr. McGee should deal with their grievance, and the councillors decided to abide by the decision of those two gentlemen. If they had a just cause, surely they should have confidence in Mr. Riordan, the president of the Australian Workers Union. Surely they would know that he would give them what was reasonable under the circumstances; but they evidently knew that Mr. Riordan would have to follow out the award which had been granted on evidence and given by the Industrial Court, and further, they must have known that if Mr. Riordan were to act for them, he would say, "You will have to remain on this £4 10s. a week until such time as you present a new case before the court, and you get a legitimate award." What is the position to-day? This is going on indefinitely, as far as we can see. I understand an informal poll is being taken of the ratepayers to day in the nature of a secret ballot to see whether they are going to concede the men's wants, or whether they are not, but we have to look further than a few people in Townsville, who are forced into the position that for the sake of their families and for the sake of the residents of the district, they have to knuckle down to unjust demands. We have to consider that, as soon as those men in the district have their award rate increased to £6 a week, the same demand will be made by the men doing sanitary work throughout the whole of Queensland, until their pay is put up to the same rate.

The PREMIER: What do you suggest should be done?

Mr. VOWLES: When men are openly defying the law, and when other men are prepared to do the work, as we know they are, the Government should step in, and they should put the necessary power there to allow those men who are prepared to do the work to do it without molestation. If the Premier were a strong man, if he were not driven by the very class of men who are defying the public in Townsville, if the Trades Hall were not behind these men, and were not binding the Premier, then if he would carry out the functions of his office, if he were dealing out justice evenly to all sections of the community, then I say he would see that the necessary power was put in the hands of those authorities in Townsville so as to enable that work to be done, and further, to see that it is done. How on earth can the Government of Queensland carry on in a way such as this? How can they belittle themselves and call themselves a Government, while they are being governed? They are being dictated to, their own laws are being flouted, and they stand back, and we have this reply of the Minister in charge of that department, who should

look after, first of all—before any party consideration—the public health. What do we find now? In a spineless sort of way, he says—

Mr. COLLINS: That is a good word. It applies to the jelly-fish Opposition.

Mr. VOWLES: It is a good word. It is a very effective word. In a jelly-fish, miserable sort of way the hon. gentleman throws the onus on to someone else, and is glad to escape by the back door. And I regret to say that we find the Premier of Queensland, in an article where he is being interviewed on this subject by the recognised Labour paper of Queensland, the "Daily Standard," that he, too, is shelving the position. I defy the Premier or anybody else to say the law has not been broken. I defy the Premier to show that these men have carried out the provisions of the Industrial Arbitration Act, and he knows as well as I do that they are committing an illegal act, and the unions that are backing them are also committing an illegal act; that the individuals themselves are responsible and liable to the penal sections and fines, and the unions that are supporting them are liable to deregistration, and are liable to fines, and no action is being taken by any member of the Government. Instead of that, they are siding with the lawbreakers, because you can call them nothing else. What difference is it whether you break an Act of Parliament or whether you commit a certain offence, and you are liable to imprisonment or a fine? If you make a condition as far as the industrial workers are concerned, and they break that deliberately and openly defy the law, where is the difference? Are they not lawbreakers, and why should they not put up with the consequences? I venture to say that if the boot were on the other foot, if the employers or councillors were following the attitude adopted by the men, that they would have been prosecuted in five minutes. It is true that under the Industrial Arbitration Act that inspectors are appointed, and those inspectors have powers which they are not exercising. Those inspectors should turn round and prosecute these men. The Minister should make an object-lesson of them, but instead of that it is the same old story. The law, apparently, is only intended for one side. The employers would be prosecuted readily enough, but never on any occasion since this Government has been in power can they say that they have taken proceedings against any employee for a breach of their own Act. The Government should see that their laws, whatever they may be, are carried out. They should insist upon it, and if they do not do that I say that they are not fit to be a Government, because instead of governing they are being governed themselves. I have very great pleasure in moving the motion as stated by me.

The PREMIER (Hon. T. J. Ryan, *Barcoo*): It is with some degree of wonderment, in following the deputy leader of the Opposition, I learned what standard of intelligence he places upon the people of this State. He has taken advantage of an unfortunate position which exists at Townsville at the present moment to endeavour to place the blame for that situation upon the shoulders of the Government. I say his attitude is discreditable, not only to himself but also to hon. members who hold seats on the Opposition benches. I am surprised that

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their sense of their public duty has fallen so low that they should endeavour to place the responsibility of the present situation upon the shoulders of the Government. (Hear, hear). I defy any hon. member sitting opposite to give me any evidence of any breach of the law which should be prosecuted by the Government.

Mr. VOWLES: Section 65.

The PREMIER: The hon. member says that no poll was taken. I understand a poll was taken.

Mr. VOWLES: You understand.

The PREMIER: I understand a poll was taken. I understand that three weeks before the late sanitary contractor in Townsville finished his contract the men gave notice of their intention to demand £1 a day. That was known to the contractor, and it was also known to the council or to some section of the council. There has been no attempt made on the part of any aggrieved persons in Townsville to institute a prosecution, which would be their right if there was any breach of the law. There has been no complaint made to the Government with regard to any hold-up or interference with any men who propose to do the work that is now being left undone.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Have you had no communications at all?

The PREMIER: No complaints, I said. The first I heard was from the hon. member this afternoon, who complains of interference with free labourers whom he said were willing to do the work. If any aggrieved person in Townsville—the council themselves or others—thinks there is any breach of the law, they could have taken steps to have had the law vindicated. They have not done so.

Mr. VOWLES: I read it out of the reports.

The PREMIER: I only take notice of official communications that are made to the Government from Townsville.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Will you lay them on the table of the House?

The PREMIER: I am quite prepared to lay them on the table of the House. The most discreditable part of it to me is: that when a difficulty arose in Townsville between the local authority within whose area the matter lies and their own employees, and they are unable to settle it, then an attempt is made to hand over the difficulty to the Government so that the local authority, being unable to get the work done as they think fit, at less than £6 a week, will be able to turn round and say the Government have backed down. Is not that the situation?

Mr. VOWLES: No.

The PREMIER: I may tell you that a number of representatives of the industrialists in Townsville asked the Government to take over the matter some days ago. The Government did not yield to that request. It will be suggested by hon. members opposite that there was some motive in asking the Government to take it over, so that their demands would be acceded to. It will be suggested that the motive on the part of the council is that, as they cannot handle the situation themselves, then let the Government give way, and instead of the motion that we have had moved here to-night we

would have had another motion if we stepped in. We would have had another motion to adjourn the House to consider a matter of urgent public importance, because the Government was paying more for the cleaning up of the town than the Townsville Council was prepared to pay. It did not matter what the Government did, the Opposition would hold that they were wrong, and I am certain that the hon. member would have been more eloquent than he has been this evening if it had been that the Government had stepped in and, in order to get the town cleaned up properly, had yielded to the demands made by the men who are on strike.

Mr. VOWLES: The Government need not step in. The Commissioner has power.

The PREMIER: The Government has taken the course that they consider right.

Mr. VOWLES: The line of least resistance.

The PREMIER: Not the line of least resistance at all. The line of least resistance would have been to step in and yield to the demands of the men, and that is what the Government did not do, and I am quite certain that the whole of the people of Queensland will be able to say that we did not take the line of least resistance. What eloquence we would have had from the hon. member if the Government had yielded to the demands of the men, which were made by telegram to me to step in and take over the work in Townsville. He would have said: "Here is a Government which steps in, backs up the strikers, pays them what they demand, and cleanses the town at the expense of the council." That would have been the indictment then. What did the Government do? They were communicated with by telegram on the 16th of October by the town clerk of Townsville asking them to take the matter over. The communication was as follows:—

"At compulsory conference this morning before industrial magistrate union delegates absolutely refuse to permit matter in dispute to be arbitrated upon. They insist on union demands solely. Council has agreed to give men £5 per week until daylight service is installed. This they also refused to accept. Position most serious; suggest you instruct Commissioner of Public Health to take matter up until some arrangement is arrived at.

"Town Clerk."

That is the telegram that came along, and the Home Secretary and the Commissioner for Public Health took the matter into consideration. There was no objection to the Commissioner for Public Health stepping in and doing the work provided he could get it done. He must be able to get the men to do it, and you cannot compel men to work if they are not willing to work. That is a physical and legal impossibility. So a communication was sent them after the conference between the Home Secretary and the Commissioner as follows. It was a wire dated 16th October sent to the town clerk, Townsville, from the Commissioner. It read—

"Have wired Inspector Cato as follows:—'Town clerk Townsville has telegraphed asking that Commissioner for Public Health carry out sanitary service until some arrangement can be arrived between the council and the men. I

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authorise you to do this but first secure the consent of council to whatever expenses and amount of wages are necessary in order to get work done promptly."

He also telegraphed, on 16th October, to Inspector Cato, Health Officer, at Townsville, as follows:—

"Town clerk Townsville has telegraphed asking that Commissioner for Public Health carry out sanitary service until some arrangement can be arrived at between council and the men. I authorise you to do this but first secure the consent of council to whatever expenses and amount of wages are necessary in order to get work done promptly."

The Home Secretary wired to the mayor of Townsville on the same day as follows:—

"Re sanitary service Commissioner for Health has wired Inspector Cato in the matter who will interview the town clerk."

In that is an expression of willingness to do the work for which the council would be liable to recoup the Commissioner for Public Health; but, rather than step in and pay an amount that would not be first agreed to by the council, they were given the opportunity, before the work was undertaken, of saying whether or not they would authorise the payment of the amount that would be required to do the work. We were exceedingly fair to them, and doing what I think was the proper thing to do. There was a dispute existing between them and the men, and the Government did not desire to do anything that would prejudice either party in the dispute. The following is the reply from Inspector Cato, at Townsville, to the Commissioner for Public Health, Brisbane:—

"Your wire yesterday have interviewed union secretary Dash who states men will not work under six pounds per week. Mayor states that council is prepared to pay five pounds only and will not agree to any larger sum. Please instruct."

Instructions then went to Inspector Cato, Townsville, as follows:—

"Your wire yesterday matter must be left in hands of council. Please notify town clerk accordingly."

And then there is a further wire on 23rd from the town clerk, Townsville, again asking that the work be taken up, and a reply was sent on 24th as follows:—

"Your wire of yesterday work can only be taken over by Health Department on conditions mentioned Commissioner's telegram dated 16th instant. Will your council give guarantee therein mentioned?"

I think this will show that we have been perfectly fair as a Government. We have not attempted to prejudice the case of either side, and we endeavoured to accede to the request of the council upon the condition which I mentioned. Now, what is the situation, generally speaking, with regard to the matter? Here is a local authority charged with the work of cleaning the town; they have failed, apparently; and, if they have utterly failed and the extraordinary circum-

stance arises that the sanitary service of Townsville is not going to be carried out at all, then it becomes the duty of the Government to see that Townsville is cleaned up, whether it costs £6 a week or £10 a week. (Hear, hear!) That is what I conceive to be the duty of the Government, if the local authority utterly fails to be able to arrive at a solution of the situation. The hon. member for Dalby has referred to section 20 of the Health Act, which gives the Commissioner for Public Health the power to intervene under certain circumstances and to do the necessary work at the expense of the council. That usually arises when some epidemic breaks out, or when the council, or the local authority utterly fails, in defiance of the Health Office, to do what is demanded of them by that office. Then the Health Commissioner may step in in hostility to the local authority, do the work, and charge it to the local authority. But in this instance the local authority asked us to intervene. But they say, "Here is this difficulty, that we cannot adjust with these men who are in dispute with us. We hand it over to you to adjust." Why do they do that? Why do they attempt to place the responsibility upon our shoulders and shackle us at the same time?

Mr. MOORE: Because you won't afford them sufficient protection to employ the men who are willing to work.

The PREMIER: If that was their reason, why did they not say so? They have not said so. That is a reason manufactured in the fertile mind of the hon. gentleman.

Mr. MOORE: It is not.

The PREMIER: There is nothing in the official communication to show that there has been any interference with the men, and I can say here and now that the Government will see that law and order is maintained in Townsville—that people will be able to move about as they desire. (Hear, hear!) The Government have never failed to do that—

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Hughenden! Hughenden!

The PREMIER: And they will also do the same with regard to Hughenden. We shall see that the law is observed; at the same time we are not going to have the blame, or rather an attempt made to place the blame, upon the shoulders of the Government.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Rightly so, too, in any case.

The PREMIER: Of course, the hon. gentleman will say "rightly so." I wonder what he would have done. I ask the member for Dalby what does he suggest should be done.

Mr. VOWLES: Carry out the law.

The PREMIER: I again ask: where has the law been broken? The hon. gentleman does not condescend to get down to particulars. We all know the old Latin proverb, "In generalibus latet dolus." That is, the position with hon. gentlemen opposite. There is deceit and bluff when they say the law has been broken, but they will give us no illustration of it. The hon. member says, "prosecute the men." If the men are

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liable to prosecution, any aggrieved persons in Townsville can prosecute them. Why did they not prosecute them up there? They know all about it, and why did they not prosecute them, or submit the matter to arbitration?

I have no hesitation in saying that we stand for conciliation and arbitration. (Hear, hear!) That is the platform of our party. That is the policy upon which we have been returned here as a Government, and we stand for it all through. And I cannot understand why the situation could not be met by the intervention between these parties of the Arbitration Court, or the instrumentalities of that court. I think it is necessary, in the interests of the whole of the workers of Queensland, that they should realise the necessity of standing to arbitration. (Hear, hear!) I am not making now any reference to the particular circumstances of this case. I purposely avoid passing any opinion on the matter, for obvious reasons.

Mr. VOWLES interjected.

The PREMIER: I understand there was a ballot taken in the presence of the Registrar; I do not know whether the result is known. I understand that that is a second ballot, and I do not know yet what the result is. We may hear it within the very near future. But whatever the ballot may be, you cannot compel a man to work if he does not want to work. But I do say that if hon. gentlemen opposite are honest and sincere in their protestations about maintaining industrial peace, they will give credit to the Government for the position they are taking up, because there is nothing more detrimental to industrial peace in matters of this kind than for one side of the House—as has been done this evening—to get up and endeavour to place the blame on the other side, and say we are responsible.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Why don't you do your duty?

The PREMIER: Here we have another generality. The hon. gentleman talks of "duty," but he won't define what "duty" is. We, as a Government, are going to do our duty; and, if it becomes necessary I am quite certain the Commissioner for Health will step in and see that Townsville is cleaned up. (Hear, hear!) But we are not going to step in in such a way as to prejudice the case for either side; either to yield to the demands on the one hand or to take over the difficulty from the other party with a view of shifting the responsibility of yielding from that party.

Mr. VOWLES: What is the good of your Arbitration Court, if the awards are not followed.

The PREMIER: I understand that in this case the ordinary course was taken by the men with regard to giving three weeks' notice of their intention. I understand so, and I am advised so, and there has not been any attempt to institute a prosecution by any aggrieved parties. But if the Arbitration Act has not been observed, I think they ought to be prepared to submit to arbitration.

The HOME SECRETARY: But these are not council employees.

The PREMIER: If they are not, there can be no arbitration award, because there is no award binding them.

Mr. VOWLES: That point has been raised for the purpose of getting over the difficulty of section 65.

The PREMIER: No, that has not been raised for the purpose of getting them out of section 65, or for any other reason. But the whole argument has been raised by hon. gentlemen opposite in order to attempt to make political capital out of a situation for which the Government is not at all responsible. I say we stand for arbitration, and hon. gentlemen opposite will be well advised, when they find the Government doing the right thing, to see that they stand to them, instead of attempting to condemn and criticise them, because if hon. gentlemen opposite do not do the fair thing in that way, they will only get less support from the people of Queensland than they have now, and they will come back, when an opportunity occurs, in even more diminished numbers. (Hear, hear!) I do not think there is anything more I need add, except to refer to my statement to the Press this afternoon, and I am glad to have the opportunity of again endorsing what I there said, and I invite members of the Townsville City Council to read what I said there, and also the members of the Townsville Industrial Council, and I challenge them to be able to find fault with the principles which I have therein laid down. I will just refer to what I said—

"Questioned about the sanitary strike at Townsville, the Premier stated this morning that, as far as the Government was concerned, the matter was in the hands of the Home Secretary. He added, however, that the function of carrying on the sanitary service was primarily a matter for the local authority: indeed, it was one of the most ordinary functions of the local authority. For the Government to interfere in the present circumstances would indicate the complete failure of the local governing body to cope with the situation. It would amount to the mere unloading of the difficulty on to the shoulders of the State Government, although local authorities have been specially set up for dealing with matters of local concern."

[3 p.m.]

"Of course, it was possible to conceive of a stage being reached when it would become necessary for the Government to intervene, in the public interests—"

Mr. VOWLES: What did you mean by that?

The PREMIER:

"but such circumstances would be very extraordinary. Mr. Ryan said that he could not imagine that the local authority would admit its complete failure to cope with an ordinary matter entirely within its jurisdiction. For obvious reasons, the Premier added in conclusion, I refrain from expressing any view on the merits of the dispute. The Government have provided the machinery for conciliation and arbitration,

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for the prevention and settlement of disputes, and, personally, I would be inclined to think that the citizens of Townsville would be able adequately to cope with the situation."

Now, while I was reading, by interjection the hon. member for Dalby asked me what I meant by the sentence—

"Of course, it was possible to conceive of a stage being reached when it would become necessary for the Government to intervene, in the public interests, but such circumstances would be very extraordinary."

Well, it is very obvious what I meant by that. I meant that if the situation goes on developing, and it becomes quite plain that finality cannot be reached, but that the public health is going to be endangered, I say it becomes the duty of the Government to intervene, and to clean up Townsville, at whatever cost.

Mr. VOWLES: It is the Commissioner's duty, not the Government's.

The PREMIER: I mean the Commissioner. I referred to the Commissioner. The Commissioner is alive to his duty in that respect, and if that stage is reached—and it will be soon reached—he will take those steps that are necessary to clean up Townsville, I say at whatever cost, without interfering in any way with the merits of the dispute between the parties. I regret the hon. member, in the dying days of the session, took the opportunity of moving a motion which must expose to the public of Queensland, to those who really know the situation, that it has been actuated by motives—

Hon. W. H. BARNES: By honest motives.

The PREMIER: By an attempt to gain political capital; but, as a matter of fact, he will lose political prestige by his move.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I think the Chief Secretary rather overreached himself in his speech just now. He commenced by saying that he had no official knowledge of this strike.

The PREMIER: I did not say that at all.

Mr. SWAYNE: Something very much like it.

The PREMIER: Nothing like it.

Mr. SWAYNE: Before he finished he disclosed a wonderful fund of telegrams and communications of various kinds in regard to it. However, the point in my mind is the impossible position that exists in Queensland to-day; one which renders it difficult to carry on any industry. Any demand may be made, any attitude or force may be taken in carrying out these demands, and the employer is unprotected and powerless. The administration of this Government has directly brought about this position. I notice the hon. gentleman spoke about the law having been carried out. He denied that there had been any acquiescence on the part of his Administration to a breach of the law; yet we know that in the numberless strikes that have occurred during his

administration, in nearly every instance the law has been broken.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. SWAYNE: And there has been no prosecution.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! The hon. member will have to keep to the question before the House.

Mr. SWAYNE: Yes; and I am just showing—

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! The hon. gentleman is not going to be allowed to talk in generalities on industrial matters. The motion is in specific terms.

Mr. SWAYNE: Surely I may be allowed to reply to statements which have been made. The hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat denied that there had been any breach of the law. I say distinctly that there has been a breach of the law.

The HOME SECRETARY: In what way?

Mr. SWAYNE: I will tell you. You spoke about a ballot having been taken. A ballot may have been taken; but I feel perfectly safe in saying that section 65 of the Industrial Arbitration Act was not carried out, because it not only lays down that a ballot must be taken, but that the result of that ballot must be communicated to the Industrial Registrar. If the Speaker will allow me, I will refer to past actions in this House, showing that the result of that ballot has not been communicated to the Registrar. I know, by questions that I have asked, that the result of that ballot—

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! The hon. gentleman will have to keep to the question, or I shall have to ask him to resume his seat. I shall not allow him to wander all over the place on a specific motion of this kind.

Mr. SWAYNE: I am dealing with the position as it now exists in Townsville, and also with the actions of the Government that have led up to it. I think I can quite safely challenge the hon. gentleman to show where the result of any ballot has been communicated to the Industrial Registrar as is laid down by the Act.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would point out to the hon. gentleman that a motion of this kind is moved to call attention to a matter of urgent public importance. Surely the hon. gentleman knows that he is abusing the privilege to enter into a general discussion. The question is the ventilating of a specific matter—that is, the sanitary strike in Townsville. If the hon. gentleman cannot discuss that matter, I shall have to ask him to resume his seat.

Mr. SWAYNE: What I was doing was only replying to charges made from the other side. It was stated that we were endeavouring to make political capital out of this event.

The HOME SECRETARY: So you are.

Mr. SWAYNE: We are not. I am showing that if there is any fault it comes from that side of the House. It is through the lax administration of the law by the Government in the past that this exceedingly serious

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position in Townsville has been brought about. Further, by the Act we find that every one of those strikers is liable to a penalty of £10.

The PREMIER: For what?

Mr. SWAYNE: For participating in a strike. A ballot has not been taken on that strike; or, if a ballot has been taken, the result has not been communicated, as the Acts lays down, to the Industrial Registrar.

The HOME SECRETARY: As a matter of fact, they could not prosecute those men, because they were not industrial employees.

Mr. SWAYNE: Well, I am pointing out that this strike is distinctly illegal, and everyone participating in it has broken the law.

The PREMIER: You have been told that the Townsville City Council took legal advice, and they found there was no breach of the law. Can you get away from that? What is the use of your talking nonsense!

Mr. SWAYNE: The Act distinctly says that before a strike shall be legal a ballot shall be taken, and the result of that ballot shall be communicated to the Industrial Registrar; and in the event of that not being done, everyone who is a party to that strike is liable to a penalty of £10.

The HOME SECRETARY: But these men did not strike. They are not strikers. They were not employees of the council.

Mr. KIRWAN: They decided they would not go to work at those wages. They were never employed by the council.

Mr. SWAYNE: The quibbles that are raised on the other side are simply wonderful. We have here a body of men who are working under an award no matter who the employer is. The award provides that they shall have £4 5s. a week. The council has exceeded that award by 5s. a week, and is paying them £4 10 a week. They turn round and say, "If you will not give us £6 a week we will expose your city to all the dangers of an epidemic of sickness."

The HOME SECRETARY: The council have paid them no money at all. They were never employed by the council.

Mr. SWAYNE: That is simply side-stepping the question. We know that this service has just been taken over by the council. We know that these men were working under an award with contractors, and we know that the award rates with the contractors were £4 5s. a week.

Mr. D. RYAN: The contract expired.

Mr. SWAYNE: What has that to do with it? The award did not expire. The award stands. What I am pointing out is that those strikers are already being paid in excess of the award. They make a demand of some 50 per cent. in advance of that award, and they say to the council, "If you do not pay us 50 per cent. more than the court in its wisdom has awarded, we will subject your city to all the risks consequent on the suspension of the sanitary service." Mind you, the court goes very fully into all these claims. It takes due care that the employees are not harshly dealt with. It takes care that they should get a living wage, and if there is any doubt, it gives the benefit of any doubt to the employee. After going into the matter, the court decided that £4 5s. a week was a fair wage. I may say that it is a higher rate than is paid in Rockhampton or Brisbane or

Charters Towers. What has stopped them asking £12 a week. I suppose if they did, the Government would still stand aloof, and say, "You had better settle with them; you had better pay them."

The PREMIER: You are trying to force us into that position. When you cannot get an agreement, you put it on to us to do so.

Mr. SWAYNE: You yourself virtually said so just now.

The PREMIER: I did not say that.

Mr. SWAYNE: I take it no greater hint could be given to the men than the remarks of the hon. gentleman just now. He puts the words into their mouths, to make such demands as that. It has been pointed out on this side of the House that if you concede demands of that kind in this industry there is no knowing where you are going to stop.

The PREMIER: You are twisting.

Mr. SWAYNE: What we want is that the law shall be administered; that before these strikes take place, ballots shall be taken and the results of those ballots shall be communicated to the Industrial Registrar.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! If the hon. gentleman does not keep to the motion I shall ask him to resume his seat. He wants to enter into a general discussion on industrial matters. He practically wants to do that on every motion that comes before the House.

Mr. SWAYNE: With all due deference, it appears to me that the hon. gentleman opposite got over the ground pretty well. However, I will have to abide by your ruling.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is completely under a misapprehension of the use of this Standing Order. It is to call attention to a matter of urgent public importance, not to enter into a general debate on the merits and demerits of other questions.

Mr. SWAYNE: I was replying to what has been said by the Chief Secretary. There is one thing he did say, and he asked us for our remedy. Surely I may be allowed to point out some of the remedies that occur to my mind. For instance, we want an amendment of our legislation. We know that under the old Industrial Peace Act of the past Government this sort of thing could not happen.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. gentleman can deal with the matter as it is down here, I will allow him to give his reasons. When he is proposing legislation on this motion, he is completely out of order.

Mr. SWAYNE: In deference to your ruling, and leaving out the past, I should like to point out that in the future most certainly it is necessary that we have some legislative step—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman cannot discuss the future.

Mr. SWAYNE: It comes to this, that hon. gentlemen on the opposite side ask us to suggest a remedy, and we find that we are not allowed to suggest a remedy.

Mr. WELLINGTON: What would you do the work for?

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Mr. SWAYNE: That is not the question. It is obvious that it is very little use for us year by year voting large sums for the upkeep of these tribunals, if their awards can be flouted—

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): The local authorities in Townsville are placed in an unfortunate position at the present time. The Premier said that if the local authorities could not carry out the work, failure would have to be written up, and it would have to be put on to the Government. Have the local authorities received proper protection from the Government for the men who want to do the work? There are men there who are willing to carry out the work, but they are not allowed to do so, and it is impossible for the council to carry on. Has the Premier considered the question? We know that the climate is hot in Townsville; we know what it is like at this time of the year, yet for three weeks there has been no sanitary work carried out there! We have read in the papers where the people are burying the refuse in holes in their back yards. Is it right for the Government to gamble with the health of the people of Townsville in this way? I do not think it is. It is a serious position, and the Government are not doing their duty. We know perfectly well that the Commissioner for Health has got every power to take action if he wants to do it.

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman is not going over the ground already covered by the hon. member for Dalby.

Mr. MOORE: I consider this is an important question, and I consider the local authorities have a right to be supported by the Government. The local authorities have been elected by the people of Townsville to look after their interests, and the Government should assist them in carrying out their duties as a local authority. The council are prepared to pay the men more than the award given by the court. The aldermen attended the compulsory conference in order to settle the matter, but the council's proposals were rejected. The mayor offered, without prejudice, to give the men £5 a week if they resumed work, and then take a referendum on the question as to whether the men should be paid £6 a week. That offer was refused. Mr. Dash, the secretary of the Australian Workers' Union, suggested that the council should pay the £6 a week first, and then let the dissatisfied ratepayers petition to the council objecting to the increase. What sort of a time would the men have who signed such a petition? There would be victimisation and intimidation going on all the time. Is it a fair thing that the Government should stand supine and not back up the council? The Government say they believe in State enterprise and municipal enterprise, and they should stand behind the council. The council had started to run the sanitary service for themselves. They were going to put on three more men and three more carts. They offered the men 15s. a week more than the award, and, generally, were making things easier, but the men would not listen to anything under £6 a week. The Premier says he believes in conciliation and arbitration. The council offered to settle the matter by arbitration. The president of the Australian Workers' Union in Brisbane also sent a

[*Mr. Swayne.*

message up advising the men to accept the terms of the council, because they were fair.

Mr. SMITH: How much would you do the work for?

Mr. MOORE: That is not the question. They went to the court and put their case before the court and got an award. Full opportunity to give evidence was given to both sides. They would not accept that award. Is it a fair thing that the health of the people of Townsville should be jeopardised in this way? I do not think the Government realise the seriousness of the position. Surely the Government are not going to wait until an epidemic breaks out? Yet we have the Home Secretary wiring up and saying he will hold the local authorities responsible if an epidemic breaks out.

The HOME SECRETARY: So I will.

Mr. MOORE: Do you not think the Townsville council recognise their responsibility? Are they supposed to give in, merely because they have a certain amount of responsibility attached to it? It is the duty of the Health Commissioner to do it. The award of the court has been given, and as the Government believe in the Arbitration Court, they should stand by the council. Yet the Government stand by in a supine way without taking any action against the men. Is the attitude of the Government that they are not going to influence the case on the other side? Is there any other council in Queensland that would have done what the Townsville council have done in order to endeavour to carry out the services of the community, so that there should not be an epidemic? Even they were interfered with when they were trying to do their duty. The mayor was interfered with, and the foreman was not allowed to attend to absolutely necessitous cases. The aldermen are the custodians of the public funds, and the people put them there to spend them wisely and well. Surely it was a good offer when they offered to pay the men £5 a week, and then take a referendum. The strikers say that the ratepayers are behind them, so they should not be afraid of accepting that offer. But they will not accept anything less than £6 a week. I do not see where the conciliation comes in in cases like that, and I consider the Townsville council deserve support.

The HOME SECRETARY: What support would you give them? What support would you send the men?

Mr. MOORE: The support I would give them would be ample protection for the men who went to work.

The HOME SECRETARY: They will get that from the police.

Mr. MOORE: We have got the official report, which says that the men who are willing to do the work were stopped by pickets.

Mr. FRED: That is only the newspaper report.

Mr. MOORE: It is the official report of the council. The Premier has not said one word to disprove the correctness of it. The Premier has sheltered behind generalities. He has steered between two courses, and is afraid to offend either side. All he looks for is votes, and he is prepared to sacrifice the

health of the people for party purposes. The council have proved that they are willing to settle the dispute.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why don't they settle it by employing the men?

Mr. MOORE: Why don't they settle it by giving in? Is that what the hon. gentleman means? That is always the case. What about the conciliation and arbitration? Does the Home Secretary say that the council must give in? Does he realise that if the Townsville council gives in, then every other council in Queensland will have to give in? I do not think it is the place of the council to give in. They are the custodians of the public funds. The Government is prepared to give in on every possible occasion, but the council consider that they have a duty to the ratepayers and that they have to spend the money wisely and well. They are prepared to settle the matter by arbitration. I read the report in "The Townsville Bulletin" of the compulsory conference, and would like it put in as a record.

The PREMIER: I have expressed no opinion at all about the attitude of the council.

Mr. MOORE: The Premier says that the attitude of the Government is conciliation.

The PREMIER: Conciliation and arbitration. I am against anybody who does not stand for that.

Mr. MOORE: You are not standing for it. You are refusing every possible chance. I read the report of the meeting at Townsville.

Mr. FREE: From your own "rag."

Mr. MOORE: The men were asked to submit the matter to arbitration, but they indignantly refused, although the president of the Australian Workers' Union wired to them to accept the compromise.

Mr. FREE: Where did you get that from?

Mr. MOORE: I will quote from "The Townsville Bulletin" of 18th October—

"In reply to the telegram of Mr. J. Dash from Mr. J. J. McGee, Registrar of the Industrial Court, published in our issue of Thursday, in which it was stated that the president of the Australian Workers' Union strongly advised the men to accept the council's offer, Mr. J. Dash on Thursday telegraphed stating that the council's offer had been rejected by the men."

I do not make these statements offhand. I have read the telegram sent by Mr. Dash and the reply. Surely the council has shown its desire for conciliation. Surely they cannot go any further. Is it not the duty of the Government to step in?

The PREMIER: What will we do?

Mr. MOORE: Give protection for the men to work.

The PREMIER: I do not know that they want protection.

Mr. MOORE: I have read out showing you where the men were stopped by pickets.

The HOME SECRETARY: The police cannot be all over the place.

Mr. MOORE: They even tried to stop the mayor and tried to tip him off the cart himself.

The HOME SECRETARY: There are 14,000 people in Townsville.

Mr. MOORE: It is an absolute disgrace that the lives of the people of Townsville should be endangered. The Premier himself says he will not take action until something extraordinary happens. Have I not shown that extraordinary things have happened?

The PREMIER: It is certainly fast becoming such.

Mr. MOORE: I know a man who went to Townsville and he came back; he could not stand it. The time has come when something should be done by the Government.

The PREMIER: We offered to do something.

Mr. MOORE: How far does the Premier want the council to go? Does he want the council to go on their knees and say we will give in all round?

The PREMIER: No. I do not want any such thing. We asked them to guarantee to pay any expense the Government were put to. We can compel them if we like, but we showed them that consideration.

Mr. MOORE: The council are prepared to meet the men in conference.

The PREMIER: If we liked we could have taken the matter over and given way to the men and compelled the council to pay them.

Mr. MOORE: The Premier says he believes in conciliation and arbitration, and as the council have agreed to meet the men in every possible way, the Premier should back them up.

The PREMIER: If I believe what you say about the council; I have nothing to say against them.

Mr. MOORE: You have all the reports there in the papers. Is it not the duty of the Government to stand behind a council in its municipal enterprise? This will affect every municipality in Queensland.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are intensifying it.

Mr. MOORE: No. That is the last thing I want to do. I object to a place of the size of Townsville being treated like this where the health of the ratepayers is jeopardised. The Home Department have taken action before when necessary, and they should insist on the sanitary service being carried out now.

The PREMIER: What do you say should be paid to the men?

[8.30 p.m.]

Mr. MOORE: What the Commissioner should do is to go up to Townsville, and call for applications for the work, and then he should see that the men are protected in doing the work. The mayor says he can get men to do the work provided they are allowed to do it, but the men are not allowed to do it.

Mr. COLLINS: What wage would he pay?

Mr. MOORE: The award rate.

Mr. COLLINS: Suppose they cannot get men to do it at the award rate?

Mr. MOORE: They can. The mayor says they are able to get men.

The PREMIER: No; they are not able.

Mr. MOORE: It is no good the Premier saying they are not able. The hon. gentleman says: "I think they had a poll, and I think they did this."

The PREMIER: This is what I said: "If there is any breach of the law on the part

Mr. Moore.]

of the men the Townsville council can prosecute them. They have not done so, and, therefore, I assume there is no breach of the law."

Mr. MOORE: I am only going on the reports of the council. We have official reports of what the mayor said. They had a special meeting to decide what to do, and one man was put up by the union to go there and vote for the concession to the men, and it says in the report that when the letter of Mr. Dash was read he decided not to support it because it was in such outrageous terms.

The PREMIER: Mr. Dash is a very reasonable and a sensible officer.

Mr. MOORE: I am not here to judge Mr. Dash, but I am here to support the Townsville council in their endeavour to carry on their work at Townsville. They have endeavoured to carry out the wishes of the Government, and have the matter decided by conciliation, but the men have absolutely refused the offer. The men say, "If you pay us £6 a week we will go to work now, and if the ratepayers petition that it be reduced afterwards we will agree to it." Did not we have one member of the council pointing out what sort of a position the men would be in who signed that petition? We know what sort of a position they would be in. I do not think it is a fair thing to ask of anybody. The council are prepared to meet them—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is going over and over the same thing.

Mr. MOORE: I think it is such an important question.

The SPEAKER: The importance of a question does not justify tedious repetition.

Mr. MOORE: The local authority there are endeavouring to carry out a municipal enterprise to the best of their ability, and I want to see them carry it out successfully. I ask what sort of a position would the rest of the municipalities of Queensland be in if the Townsville council give in, and how is the fight going to be won unless they get proper support from the Government? I would like to see the Health Department step in, because we should not wait until an epidemic breaks out.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. MOORE: When it came before the council as to whether they should pay the £6 a week and let the Government do it, they said if they are going to give in like that they had better do it themselves.

The PREMIER: You say you can get it done cheaper than the council can.

Mr. MOORE: The council cannot get it done at less than £6 a week.

The PREMIER: Do you say we can?

Mr. MOORE: If it is going to cost £6 a week it is better that the Government should do it than that the council should have to give in. (Government laughter.)

A. GOVERNMENT MEMBER: The cat is out of the bag.

Mr. MOORE: There is no cat out of the bag.

The PREMIER: That is the whole point. You want us to do the climbing down.

Mr. MOORE: We don't want you to do the climbing down. (Interruption.) I do

[Mr. Moore.

not see that there is any cat out of the bag. The council are prepared to abide by the award.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed him by the Standing Orders.

Mr. SIZER (*Nundah*): Despite the ravings of the Premier, the hon. member for Dalby is to be congratulated upon bringing this matter under his notice. It seems remarkable that we have a Government emphasising conciliation and arbitration, and in this particular case, on the 28th June of this year, the Industrial Arbitration Court of Queensland, according to the "Industrial Gazette," page 465, made an award covering Townsville, in which it is provided that sanitary carters shall be paid not less than £4 5s. a week for night work—

The PREMIER: The contention the hon. gentleman is making is that this is not a dispute between the Townsville council and the Government, but between the Townsville council and the sanitary contractor.

Mr. SIZER: I do not say it is a dispute with the Townsville council. The Townsville council are charged with the sanitary duties. They made a contract and the contractor is responsible to the council. The contractor has to employ men, and he must not pay less than the award rates. Those rates were fixed on the 28th of June of this year, and the contractor has been paying 5s. a week over those award rates.

Mr. FREE: The contract has expired.

Mr. SIZER: You do not mean to say that because the contract has expired the sanitary service must lapse. If the council do not like to pay more than the award rates, the men should work for those rates, otherwise what is the use of having an award? Why not scrap the Arbitration Court and save the money? It is useless. In this hot weather we know what must happen before very long.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will have to introduce new matter.

Mr. SIZER: I want to point out the uselessness of having an Arbitration Court award covering those men, made as late as the 28th of June of this year—

Mr. FREE: That is the minimum rate.

Mr. SIZER: They paid over the minimum rate. The award was made on the 28th of June of this year, and at the beginning of October the men went on strike.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: They are justified.

Mr. SIZER: They are not justified, and if they are justified, then, when an award is given, men are justified in striking the next day if it does not suit them. It is an absolute farce, and the sooner we get rid of the court the better.

Mr. COLLINS: You want to abolish the Arbitration Court, and yet only seventeen men are affected.

Mr. SIZER: I want to abolish the Arbitration Court if the authorities are not prepared to stand by the Arbitration Court awards, because otherwise it is only making a farce of the Arbitration Court, and a farce of the law. You won't allow men to break the law in other ways.

The PREMIER: How is the law broken?

Mr. SIZER: The Premier is arguing on law quibbles. If an award is made—and it was made—and the men are now refusing to work, there must be something wrong.

The PREMIER: There is something wrong, but I am not to blame for it.

Mr. SIZER: I do not say the Premier personally is to blame.

The PREMIER: Nor the Government.

Mr. SIZER: But his department is charged with the responsibility of government.

The PREMIER: So is the local authority charged with government.

Mr. SIZER: And because the local authority is unable to provide the police—

The PREMIER: They are unable to govern within their sphere, and they asked me to govern for them.

Mr. SIZER: They are able to govern in a minor sense if the Government in a major sense will assist them. They cannot be expected to put men on to these carts unless those men are supplied with adequate police protection, and that can only be supplied by the Government.

The PREMIER: They never asked for that.

Mr. SIZER: And for that reason I think the Government are neglecting their duty. I notice they have not neglected it so much in so far as Hughenden is concerned. They sent the Police Force there, and I guarantee that the Hughenden trouble will be dealt with by the Government before the Townsville trouble.

The PREMIER: We hold the scales evenly.

Mr. SIZER: In this particular case they do not. It seems to me they are not prepared to back up the council, which has done its utmost, and it is for the Government to see that the award is carried out.

The SPEAKER: Order! Did the hon. member not hear other hon. members speaking?

Mr. SIZER: I was not in the Chamber all the time.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is repeating word for word what has already been said.

Mr. SIZER: I did hear the speech of the Premier and I think I will be in order in referring to one or two matters that the hon. gentleman made reference to.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must understand that the debate is to call attention to an important matter and not to repeat over and over again what has already been said.

Mr. SIZER: I would like to say that I did hear the Premier say that whether it was £6 a week or £12 a week, the Townsville Council would have to pay. In the midst of a strike, is that not a statement which is likely to give the men encouragement to go on?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. SIZER: Of course, that will encourage the men. They will say that the Premier said, and the Home Secretary by interjection also said, that the council will have to give in. The council is in the position of any other employer, and it strikes me that when an award is made and the men are not

satisfied, the employers or the council, as the case may be, have always to give in.

The PREMIER: No one has said that except yourself.

Mr. SIZER: If that is the position which the Home Secretary has taken up, I say again, that the sooner we get rid of the Arbitration Court and this farcical legislation and all this cant about arbitration and conciliation we hear so much of from hon. members opposite, the better.

The HOME SECRETARY: The debate this evening has been one of the most strange that I have ever heard in this House, and it appears to me that the Opposition are not prepared to do the right thing. The quotations given by the Premier from telegrams is sufficiently clear for anybody to recognise that a mistake was made by the leader of the Opposition in asking for an adjournment without first seeking information as to what has eventuated. I stated just now that eventually the question of payment has to be met, and I simply reiterate what the Premier has said, that if £6 a week or even £12 a week has to be paid to put Townsville in a sanitary condition, that it will be paid, or even more than that, and finally the council will have to pay it, because under section 20 of the Act the Commissioner has power in any case of emergency to step in and do the work and charge the cost up to the council. That is the position, and the Premier was quite right when he discussed the question of cleaning up the town. It will need plenty of cleaning from the 1st of October up till the 23rd, and we will be very lucky indeed if we can manage to get that cleaning done at £6 a week for each man who may be employed. It has been pointed out by the Premier and also by me by interjection that hon. members have misconceived the position. They are simply dealing with these men as sanitary men. When the contract finished on the 30th September these men ceased to be sanitary employees. They said they were quite prepared, when it came to the 1st of October, and the council was doing the work, to become sanitary employees again if the council would pay them £6 a week, but they would not do it for anything less, and hon. members should get that into their minds. Apart from what the Premier has said, I would like to take hon. members back to a time prior to the telegrams which were read by the Premier, and would like to read some of the telegrams that were received by the Commissioner of Public Health, who wrote to the Under Secretary of the department on the 18th October last. This is what he states—

“Herewith please find copies of telegrams concerning the sanitary strike at Townsville. It will be noted that, owing to the change in the work from the sanitary contractor to the Town Council, the men have not been actually engaged by the local authority on the expiration of the contract, therefore section 66 of the Health Acts 1900 to 1917 cannot be brought to bear on the men.”

They had no power to take those men to court, and the men stated that rather than take up sanitary work at £4 5s. or £4 10s. a week, they would go elsewhere and do other work.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Who put the pickets on? Did the unions put them on?

[Hon. J. Huxham.]

The HOME SECRETARY: I know nothing about that. I will now give the opinion of the Commissioner for Public Health on the matter. He said—

“I cannot see how this department could undertake the work unless the men's demand for £6 per week are granted.”

And if he had gone up to Townsville and taken a hand, what would he have done? He would have stepped in at once and done the work. A wire was sent, as has been read by the Premier to-night, asking the Council as to expenses incurred in cleaning up the city by the Health Department, but they would not concede beyond £5 a week. And I think that when the Government steps in and tries to settle the matter in a satisfactory way—because we cannot force men to work—hon. members should commend the Government, rather than take up the antagonistic attitude which they have taken up on this very important matter. I know the necessity of grappling with it, and I feel perfectly satisfied that if the deputy leader of the Opposition had only read the information contained in the telegrams which have been read here to-night, he would have taken up a different attitude. Here is the information clearly: Those men are not council employees, and they could not be forced into court, because the council stated that, having obtained legal advice, they could not take the men to court. If hon. gentlemen will bear with me for a few minutes they will recognise that what we are doing is only on similar lines to what was done previously with the Rockhampton council and the sanitary service employees. I wish now to refer to a letter from Inspector Cato, which reads as follows:—

“As wired to-day, the trouble between the Townsville City Council and the drivers of the sanitary wagons is still far from a settlement. As regards section 66 of the Health Acts, the matter of prosecuting the strikers was fully discussed with the mayor, who states that he has obtained legal opinion to the effect that prosecutions could not be successfully taken, as the men were not actually employed by the council, and that, as they (the men) had done no work since they were employed by the contractor, on the 30th ultimo, they could not be now considered as being employees engaged in the removal of nightsoil. In September the men were told that they would be considered as applicants for the work when the same was taken over by the council, but they received no intimation that the council had or would actually employ them. Knowing of the provisions of section 66, the men considered the time ripe to refuse to work until higher wages were paid.”

Now, I believe that this is a conspiracy on the part of the contractor for the sanitary work in Townsville to bring this trouble about. I believe he is instigating the men by saying “This work has been taken out of my hands; you are going to the council; you make them pay for it.” And further, I believe that information has come from Townsville to the deputy leader of the Opposition, apart from what has been sent to the department. But I feel perfectly

satisfied that if the hon. gentleman only knew the full facts of the case before he moved the motion for adjourning, this difficulty would not have arisen. I am quite prepared to help the council in any possible way, but when they won't meet us the responsibility rests largely with them. They know very well that when the Commissioner for Public Health steps in and does the necessary work, the question of expense won't be considered in Townsville any more than it was at Rockhampton. I fear that what has arisen this evening will cause other sanitary employees to take up a similar attitude. Therefore, I want hon. members opposite to help the Government in this matter, and not embarrass them, because if a similar attitude is taken up elsewhere with regard to sanitary services, I say it will be due to the attitude of the Opposition in not supporting the Government at the present time.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I think some of the remarks made by the Premier and the Home Secretary in connection with the object of the Opposition in bringing this matter forward are hardly fair. We have learnt to-night two or three things in connection with the dispute. One is that the men who are refusing to carry out the work in Townsville are not employees of the Council. Perhaps all of us did not know that; and, of course, such being the case, prosecutions cannot be made against the men. Where, I think, the Government are responsible for not shouldering more of this particular trouble is this: After all, what is a local authority? Is not a local authority a Government department—an unpaid Government department that can only carry out its duties within the four corners of the Local Authorities Act, and which is responsible to the Home Secretary and his department for every action? They send in reports to him; they have their books audited, and the whole work is controlled by the Home Department. And surely, if that is the case, a certain amount of responsibility attaches to the Government in connection with an unpaid department of their own which is only administering the laws which Parliament has passed, and the Government are here to see carried out.

The PREMIER: What do suggest we ought to do?

Mr. TAYLOR: The Premier sits there and every now and again whines, “What do you suggest?”

The PREMIER: I want to get something specific. I don't want generalities.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Premier, as leader of the Government, ought to play the part of a man, and do his duty in this particular instance—that is, to stand behind the Arbitration Court and the award and tell the Townsville council that the Government is here to help them. The Premier says the Government is in favour of conciliation and arbitration. What was this award made for? Was not the evidence in connection with this award given before an Arbitration Court, and did not the judge fix a certain amount of wages to be paid to these men? Neither the Premier nor the Home Secretary can deny that. The Act was brought into vogue by the present Government; and surely, if that is the case, they are prepared to stand by the judge and the court. And

[*Hon. J. Huxham.*]

we have found it, not only in this case, but in all the strikes. The Government does not stand behind—

The PREMIER: Can you tell me any magic way of compelling a man to work if he doesn't want to?

Mr. TAYLOR: I quite admit if a man does not want to work you cannot make him. But the Premier has said here to-night that if certain things happen in Townsville he is going to take action. Why is he going to allow them to happen? Surely it is far better to prevent them. He talks of doing things when an epidemic breaks out.

The PREMIER: It is the local council that are stopping it now.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not want to repeat what other speakers have said with regard to the local council stopping them at all. I do not think it fair for the Premier to say that. The council have stated they are willing to pay the men 15s. over the award. I do not know what the men were getting from the contractor prior to this unfortunate dispute—probably £4 5s. or £4 10s. At all events, they were getting the award rates, and probably a little more. It is a most remarkable thing that immediately the municipality of Townsville takes over the operations of this particular work, this trouble should arise.

Mr. ARMFIELD: These men have never been employed by the council.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not say they have, but I say the Government should have given their moral support to the Townsville council; and if the Government and the council found they could not get the men to work for £5, then they would have to pay them £6, or even £10. The work has to be done, and the whole power in connection with this matter lies in the hands of the Commissioner for Public Health. I quite admit he has done a wise thing in asking the council if they would be prepared to pay the necessary amount to have the work done, and when he found out that men could not be got at that, it was his duty to carry out the work and charge the Townsville council for it.

The PREMIER: What price?

Mr. TAYLOR: Whatever price he can get the work done for—the award rates if possible; but if he cannot get them at that, he has to pay more. I admit that. I am not so foolish as to say you could drive the men to work for an award rate.

The PREMIER: But they are practically saying this, "We won't back down, but you back down."

Mr. TAYLOR: What I contend is this: That the Government are weak on this arbitration matter in not supporting the judge, as they should do. If they had adopted a firmer attitude with regard to strikes in the past, the chances are that Townsville to-day would not be in this unfortunate position.

The PREMIER: When Judge Dickson made an award you wanted us to interfere with it, and we did not; and we are not interfering with this, either.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am not talking about Judge Dickson's award, or what he did. I am simply stressing the point of what was done by a judge in another place, and I contend the Government should stand to that award and assist the Townsville local

authority for all they are worth. We all know very well the serious nature of the trouble at the present time. Anyone who knows anything of local authority work knows that the standard pan is a standard size in all towns, and in local authorities, and that those pans in some instances—

The PREMIER: Well, I don't.

Mr. TAYLOR: Are attended to sometimes twice a week and in any case every week, and we know that very great danger exists at the present time, and if the Government confess their hopelessness and they cannot do anything, it is a most surprising attitude for the Premier to take up to-night. With regard to the matter that has been mentioned here—that they cannot get the men to do the work—what is the good of talking like that? We know in a place like Townsville, in particular, if any contractor carrying out any work—sanitary or otherwise—goes outside the unions to secure labour, he is going out looking for trouble and will get it. That is just what is happening in Townsville, and I certainly think the Government should be prepared to stand behind what I consider is simply a huge unpaid Government department, and give it all the assistance it can—which it is not doing, in my opinion, in this particular instance.

Mr. VOWLES: I would just like briefly to reply to the remarks of the Premier and also those of the Home Secretary. It seems to me that they have not put up much of a defence in their attitude on this matter.

We find the Premier trying to [9 p.m.] explain his position and his want of action, first of all, by telling us he knew very little about the business, and then falling back on the fact that he considered these men were not employees within the meaning of the Industrial Arbitration Act. But does it get away from the fact, whether they are employees or not within the strict meaning of the term, as far as the council is concerned, is not the whole matter in dispute a question of an award which has been legally come to, and whether these men are prepared to accept the rate of that award, or even an advance on it, or to allow other persons who are willing to work to do so? The Premier challenged me as regards peaceful picketing and interference with free labour. He suggested it was a fiction on my part.

The PREMIER: Peaceful picketing is allowed.

Mr. VOWLES: I know it is, when a strike is in progress. Only when a strike is legally in progress, and all the formalities of the law have been complied with, is it allowed. When they have not, it is unlawful and it is intimidation.

The PREMIER: There is no breach of the law at all.

Mr. VOWLES: When there is no breach of the law, what is this picketing? It is only lawful when all the formalities in connection with the strike have been complied with.

The PREMIER: You say picketing is lawful only when there is a breach of the law?

Mr. VOWLES: No. I say it is lawful only when all the conditions have been carried out as described by the Industrial Arbitration Act.

The PREMIER: There is no breach of the law at all.

Mr. Vowles.]

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman is quibbling again. At any rate, we can allow that to pass. The hon. gentleman has suggested I brought this matter forward for political kudos, to try and get some party gain. The reason this matter was brought forward was that every time we open a paper we find there are some disgraceful goings on in Townsville. We know that the law is being broken. We know that the town has been defiled by the contents of sanitary tins being spilt in public places when there is not sufficient police protection.

The PREMIER: You do not blame me for that.

Mr. VOWLES: We know all these things, yet the hon. gentleman, because he is not doing his duty in the matter as a public man, thinks members of the Opposition should stand by and take no action. What happened was, I sent a wire to-day to the mayor of Townsville in reference to these articles that appeared in the paper, and asked him to let me know what the position was. Five minutes ago I got his reply, and perhaps I might read it to the House. This is what the mayor of Townsville has sent to me—

“Your wire position re sanitary strike unaltered. Local A.W.U. demand wages shall be six pounds week, absolutely flout Arbitration Court. Council have offered five pounds, which they refuse. Position very serious. Diabolical acts vandalism perpetrated. Filth emptied entrances town hall and many hotels; also scattered over some streets, Police protection very inadequate. Large number Townsville force sent to Hughenden and town now practically unprotected. Have appealed Health Department time after time. Nothing done. Local health inspector states can do nothing unless council guarantees all expenses irrespective of rate, which we cannot agree to. Public opinion Townsville consider position outrageous in a country supposed to be governed by constitutional laws. Health of whole community at stake. No service four weeks.”

“CLEGG, Mayor.”

The PREMIER: Would you mind reading the telegram you sent to him?

Mr. VOWLES: Yes, I will give you the one I sent to him—

“Am to-day moving adjournment House—”

The PREMIER: Oh, I see. This was rigged up for the occasion. The very first sentence there gives you away.

Mr. VOWLES: I am not going to dodge the matter as the hon. gentleman would.

The PREMIER: “Am to-day moving adjournment. Send us along some ammunition.” (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES—

“Am to-day moving adjournment House to ventilate position Townsville on account sanitary workers flouting award and endangering public health. Further police not protecting public. Please advise present position. Understand Home Department refuses take action. Fullest details advisable. Reply urgent.”

At any rate, the public will judge as to whether the Opposition are doing their duty or whether the Government are. Our whole

[*Mr. Fowles.*

object is to keep the Government up to their responsibilities. We do not want to score off them, and we do not want the public to suffer through their partisanship.

The PREMIER: You want to score off us, but you will not score off us.

Mr. VOWLES: We want the Government to deal out justice evenly, and to carry out our laws. If they do not do that, they are not carrying out the functions of the Government. I consider that this matter has been sufficiently ventilated, and as is customary with motions of this sort, I now beg leave to withdraw the motion I have moved.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion of the hon. member for Dalby be withdrawn?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear hear!

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

CHILLAGOE AND ETHERIDGE RAILWAYS BILL.

MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Council of a message returning this Bill with amendments, in which they invited the concurrence of the Assembly.

The consideration of the message in Committee was made an Order of the Day for a later hour of the day.

STAMP ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL NO. 2.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Council of a message insisting on certain of their amendments in this Bill, not insisting on other amendments, and insisting on other amendments with further amendments in which they invited the concurrence of the Assembly.

CONSIDERATION OF THE MESSAGE IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Bertram, Mavree. in the chair.*)

HON. W. N. GILLIES: The managers of the two Houses arrived at an amicable understanding with regard to the points in dispute. In order to facilitate matters, I ask leave to move, in one motion, the result of the understanding.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. N. GILLIES: I move—

“Clause 7: That the Committee agree to the Legislative Council’s further amendment omitting the words ‘general or’ on line 38.

“Clause 9 (now 8), lines 15 and 16 and 17 and 18: That the Committee do not insist upon their disagreement.

“Clause 30 (now 26): That the Committee do not insist upon their disagreement to the amendment, and agree to the proposed further amendment of the Legislative Council after line 2 on page 19, clause 37.

“Clause 37 (now 33), page 14, lines 35 and 40: That the Committee do not insist upon their disagreement to the amendment.

“Clause 37 (now 33), page 16, line 44: That the Committee do not insist upon their disagreement to the amendment.

“Clause 37 (now 33), lines 43 to 45 and line 46: That the Committee agree to the Legislative Council’s Council’s proposal

in respect of lines 42 to 66 on page 17 and lines 1 to 20 on page 18."

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had not insisted upon some of their amendments to the Legislative Council's amendments, and had agreed to further proposed amendments.

The report was adopted.

MESSAGE TO COUNCIL.

The Bill was ordered to be returned to the Council with the following message:—

"Mr. President,—

"The Legislative Assembly having had under consideration the message of the Legislative Council, dated 23rd October, relative to the Stamp Act Amendment Bill, beg now to intimate that they—

"Agree to the further amendment of the Legislative Council in clause 7, line 38, omitting the words 'general or.'

"Do not insist upon their disagreement to the amendments in clause 9 (now 8), lines 15 and 16, and 17 and 18.

"Do not insist upon their disagreement to the amendment in clause 30 (now 26), and agree to the proposed further amendment of the Legislative Council after line 2, page 19, clause 37.

"Do not insist upon their disagreement to the amendment in clause 37 (now 33), page 14, lines 35 to 40.

"Do not insist upon their disagreement to the amendment in clause 37 (now 33), page 16, line 44; and

"Agree to the proposal of the Legislative Council in respect of lines 42 to 66 on page 17, and lines 1 to 20 on page 18."

INSURANCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council. (*Vote* page 3438.)

Ordered, that the consideration of the message in Committee be made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

DINGO AND MARSUPIAL DESTRUCTION BILL.

RETURNED FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council intimating that they did not insist on their amendments in the Dingo and Marsupial Destruction Bill to which the Legislative Assembly had disagreed.

CHILLAGOE AND ETHERIDGE RAILWAYS BILL.

CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL'S MESSAGE.

(*Mr. Bertram, Maree, in the chair.*)

HON. W. N. GILLIES (*Eacham*): Mr. Bertram,—The Bill as now before the Legislative Assembly has been amended by the Legislative Council pursuant to the report of the Select Committee on the Bill, and in consequence of the delay caused thereby in the passage of the measure. The Council's amendments in the clauses of the Bill as sent up from the Assembly are really a necessary consequence of the delay that has

taken place in the Council in dealing with the measure. By reason of this delay the times for payment of interest on the debentures have had to be brought forward, and other times have had to be extended. Moreover, by reason of the proposed amendments to the agreement the vendors must be given an opportunity of considering whether they will accept the modified agreement.

The proposed new clauses, although in several respects unreasonable, do not affect the relations between the Government and the vendors. Clause 5 is an accountancy clause, regarding revaluation of the property acquired. Clause 6 places a restriction on the Government, as it allows them to mine only at Einasleigh mine. The Council also suggests a sum of £50,000 to defray the initial cost of unwatering the Einasleigh mine and reopening the smelters and reduction works. This sum is not considered sufficient. £100,000 is required for this purpose, and it is intended to insert that sum in the blanks appearing in subclause (2) of clause 6. Clause 7 inserted by the Council deals with the appointment of a manager. With the permission of the Committee, and in view of the foregoing explanation, I would like, for simplification, to move the amendments as a whole.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. N. GILLIES: I beg, therefore, to move—

"That we disagree to the said amendments, but offer to accept all amendments proposed by the Legislative Council, provided that the Legislative Council agree to the following further amendments, viz:—

(1) In clause 2, subclause (2), on page 3, line 1, omit the words 'passing of this Act,' and insert in lieu thereof the words 'ratification and confirmation as provided for in section 4 hereof of the agreement set forth in the first schedule hereto as modified as set forth in section 2 of this Act.'

(2) The insertion in the Legislative Council's proposed new clause 6, subclause (2), page 5, line 32, after the word 'exceeding' the words 'one hundred thousand pounds,' an in line 38, after the word 'said,' the insertion of the words 'one hundred thousand pounds.'"

As regards amendment (1), this is necessary, because the Government do not want the railways until the agreement has been ratified by the vendors. As regards (2) I have already explained this. I beg to move accordingly.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee disagreed to the amendments, but offered to accept all amendments provided the Council agreed to further amendments. The report was adopted.

MESSAGE TO COUNCIL.

HON. W. N. GILLIES: I beg to move—

"That the Bill be returned to the Council with the following message:—

"Mr. President,—

"The Legislative Assembly having had under consideration the Legislative Council's amendments in the Chillagoe and Etheridge Railways Bill, beg now to intimate that they—

"Disagree to the said amendments—

Hon. W. N. Gillies.]

"But offer to accept all amendments proposed by the Legislative Council, provided that the Legislative Council agree to the following further amendments, viz. :—

"In clause 2 (subclause (2)) on page 3, line 1, omit the words 'passing of this Act' and insert in lieu thereof the words 'ratification and confirmation as provided for in section 4 hereof of the agreement set forth in the First Schedule hereto as modified as set forth in section 2 of this Act.'

"The insertion in the Legislative Council's proposed new clause 6, subclause (2), page 5, line 32, after the word 'exceeding' the words 'one hundred thousand pounds'; and in line 38, after the word 'said' the insertion of the words 'one hundred thousand pounds.'

"In which they invite the concurrence of the Legislative Council."

The PREMIER: I should like to say one word on this motion. There are certain amendments here which have to be accepted by the Assembly, otherwise the Bill would be lost. I refer particularly to that amendment which provides for the appointment of a Commissioner who is only removable by Parliament. That is quite an unnecessary provision, particularly as the proposition which he would be in charge of [9.30 p.m.] would only be a small one, not nearly as large as our State butchery establishments and many others. But the Bill would have been lost if this amendment had not been accepted. It is so important that that particular part of Queensland should not be left entirely idle with its large mineral resources that it is necessary to give way to what I consider to be an unreasonable amendment on the part of the Council.

Question put and passed.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—That this House, at its rising, do adjourn until 6.30 p.m. to-morrow. We shall then have some business from the Council.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at half-past 9 o'clock p.m.