

be best operated in limited areas; adult franchise and extended powers to be granted municipalities for this purpose.

The fourth point reads—

The government of nationalized industries by boards upon which the workers in the industry and the community shall have representation.

The fifth point is—

The establishment of elective supreme economic council by all nationalized industries.

That is the platform along which these men are still working. They seek eventually to dissolve this House and to replace it by the supreme economic council. The governing provision in this Bill relates to voting at Legislative Council elections and it states—

(1) Every person whose name is on an electoral roll for any subdivision shall subject to provisions of this Act be entitled at any election for the Council to vote in such subdivision at any polling place for such subdivision.

I direct the attention of members to paragraph (a) of the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. It states—

this House refuses to read this Bill a second time because while accepting the principle of adult suffrage it is of the opinion—

(a) that adult suffrage as the basis of election to a second Chamber without some variation of method such as a system directed to proportional representation would render such Chamber merely a reflection of the lower Chamber, destroy its true constitutional values, render it useless and thus conduce to its abolition, and ultimately set up a single Chamber legislature exercising uncontrolled power with its attendant evils, and to greater instability in our governmental system.

That paragraph emphasizes the evils surrounding the creation of a single legislative Chamber, the inherent dangers of which have been amply demonstrated in Queensland. I shall quote the recent Queensland election figures to emphasize those evils and also to illustrate the danger of deliberately gerrymandering boundaries so that the only party with any hope of winning an election is the "Left-wing" party. At the recent Queensland elections, Liberal and Country party candidates gained 309,000 odd votes, representing 49.1 per cent. of the

total, and won 28 seats. Labour candidates obtained 295,000 odd votes, representing 46 per cent. of the total, yet they gained 42 seats. An attempt is being made in this State to stab the Upper House in the back, the ultimate intention being to gerrymander the electorates for the benefit of the extreme "Left-wing" party.

Mr. HAYES.—The Labour party is not the Government.

Mr. McDONALD (Dundas).—If the Labour party was in power, it could not do this job itself. It can be carried out only by the present means. I appeal to members of the Country party to consider where they stand. In 1947, the majority of Country party members were elected as the opponents of Socialism. To-day, they are allowing their leaders to play them for "suckers." They are prepared to lend themselves to a Socialist organization, and thus they will betray their constituents. I urge Country party members who are not tied to the machine to vote according to the dictates of their conscience and the wishes of the people who sent them to this institution.

Mr. DOUBE (Oakleigh).—I congratulate the Government on the wisdom it has displayed in bringing down this measure. I think all members will agree that the Bill has come before us at a most appropriate time. Next year, Victoria will be celebrating the one-hundredth anniversary of parliamentary government. Criticism has been voiced on the ground that the historic event may not be celebrated adequately. However, by introducing the Bill at this stage, the Government is making a magnificent gesture, and is erecting a suitable monument to mark our legislative anniversary. After all, monuments of stone or metal crumble and decay, but this legislation will live as long as democracy survives. It has been long desired by the people, especially by members of the Labour party, who have fought for it over the years.

The forward march of democracy has for too long been stopped by Conservatives clinging to their privileges. Unfortunately, that has been one of the major problems of our time and the results are apparent throughout the world. In

making that comment, I am supported by an outstanding authority. Winston Churchill—I admire the man intensely although I disagree violently with his politics—made the point very strongly in 1911, when supporting the Parliament Act that drastically altered the power of the House of Lords. He described that Chamber as being “the weapon of a declining oligarchy.” I think we can aptly apply the term to the Legislative Council, and so I compliment the Government on doing its best to hasten the decline of that House.

The Labour party is not enamoured with the bicameral system. Indeed, when it has a mandate from the people and is returned to power it proposes to abolish it, but that has nothing to do with the present arrangement with the Country party. It has been clearly pointed out that this proposal does not necessarily mean the abolition of the Upper House; the electors of Victoria have to agree to that. We have not adopted our attitude because we are spiteful or resentful of the Upper House, although any student of history knows that because of actions in the past the Labour party has every right to feel indignant.

One reason why the Labour party considers that the Legislative Council should be abolished is that Australia is grossly over-governed. If a person in any electorate feels aggrieved about any particular matter he can communicate with fourteen members of Parliament. He can write to ten Senators, one member of the House of Representatives, two members of the Legislative Council, and one of this Assembly. Putting the position in another way, Australia has 688 members of Parliament. Taking the population as 8,000,000, there is one representative to every 11,000 people. In Great Britain, including the 700 members of the House of Lords and the 640 members of the House of Commons; the proportion is one member of Parliament to 36,000 electors. In America, where there are almost 8,000 representatives, the proportion is one in every 17,000. It will be seen, therefore, that Australia is a little over-generous regarding representation, although it has special problems because of greater distances and scattered population in many parts.

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At the same time, I think it will be agreed that there is a great deal of substance in the Labour party's claim that Australia is over-governed. Of the total of 680 representatives, 222 are members of Upper Houses; therefore, we feel that we would be doing the people a great service if those Houses were abolished. We propose to do that when the people wish us to. We look forward to the day when Upper Houses no longer exist. However, until that time arrives we intend to make **sure** that they shall be as democratic as possible. From time to time, our opponents have said that the Legislative Council is a House of review and there is no reason why it should be given complete adult suffrage. I do not know how that argument can be sustained, since members of the Legislative Council sit in party groups, meet in party rooms, and are subject to party discipline. I hope to prove conclusively that the Legislative Council has never been a House of review but instead has been a partisan and political Chamber. Even if it were true that the Council is a House of review, I do not think any member of the Liberal party could advance a reason why it should have a limited franchise. Am I expected to go into my electorate of 27,000 people, where only 8,000 have a vote for the Legislative Council, and say that certain people are not fit to vote at elections for the House of review?

I do not know whether members of the Opposition think that a person who happens to **own** property should be granted some special political privilege, or whether because a person is the lessee of a property he suddenly becomes endowed with some great political sagacity and insight into social problems, and should, therefore, have a vote; whereas his wife or his son, who might have fought for his country, should be denied a vote. It is utter nonsense to maintain that a House of review, if there was such a thing, should have a limited franchise. Unfortunately, however, members of the Liberal party do take that view, although to-night they have advanced the theory of proportional representation. It was very interesting to hear the speeches of Opposition members, because they did not say one word about proportional representation nor give any reason why it

should be adopted. An attack was made on the Government, but no constructive suggestions were advanced.

Members of the Opposition support the thesis that a House of review should have a limited franchise. The honorable member for Dandenong, who is absent from the Chamber for the moment, is of that opinion, or he was six weeks ago. When speaking on the motion of want of confidence in the Hollway Government, he was asked by the honorable member for Allendale what he thought about adult franchise for the Upper House and he replied "It is completely undemocratic."

Mr. WHITE (Allendale).—That is correct.

Mr. DOUBE.—If that is a true expression of opinion of the Liberal and Country party it is quite obvious that their idea of democracy is vastly different from that of members on this side of the House. The honorable member for Dandenong went on to say—

In the Labour party ranks there are many representatives of municipal councils, men who are doing a solid honorary job as councillors in different shires, boroughs, towns, and cities. They have never cavilled at the fact that there is no adult franchise at municipal elections.

When the Leader of the Labour party was speaking to-night the honorable member for Dandenong interjected, and one would have thought that he knew all about the platform of the Labour party. Unfortunately, I think he has read only page 72, of the *Constitution and Platform* of the Australian Labour party, where there is reference to the socialization of industry, distribution, and exchange. If he had studied pages 56 and 68, he would not have made such a ridiculous statement that we have never cavilled at municipal elections being conducted on the basis of a narrow franchise, because adult franchise in the municipal sphere has been in our platform for many years. He stated also that the Labour members of municipal councils—

realize that the householders, represented by the head of each house, appoint them to the municipal council.

He then made this amazing statement.—

I see nothing wrong with the head of the house, who has the responsibility of managing his home and family, electing members of a House of review which could be used

for the purpose of making abortive this attempt at an unholy alliance of incompatibles in politics.

To-night the honorable member said that he believes in adult franchise, provided that it has proportional representation behind it, but previously he believed in a House of review with a strictly limited franchise. He also admitted that the so-called House of review should have the right to tell the Legislative Assembly what sort of an alliance should be entered into. That is a clear indication, as I intend to prove later, that he does not really believe in his own heart that the Legislative Council is a House of review. I do not know whether the honorable member for Dandenong is still of that opinion, because from my reading of newspapers I understand that there has been some difficulty within the Liberal party. I suppose that we shall know the true position only when the vote is taken on the amendment.

We, on the Government side of the House, feel that there is no valid or logical reason why a House of review should have a limited franchise. We claim—and I believe that the vast majority of Victorian people support us—that the only decent and democratic thing to do is to give all those who vote for the Legislative Assembly a vote for the Legislative Council. Members of the Opposition should bear in mind that one of the marks of democracy is a belief in political equality. When only certain electors are entitled to vote for the Upper House, we are not living in a democracy in the full sense of that term. As I stated earlier, it is my opinion that the Legislative Council is not, and never has been, a House of review. From the time of its inception in 1851 it has been a party House, an instrument of conservatism. Certainly, the Conservative politicians of the day in Australia and in England had no delusions about the Legislative Council being a House of review.

Speaking in the House of Commons on constitutional reforms in 1850, Mr. Gladstone is reported as having said—

he wished to check democracy in New South Wales, but he wished to see it checked by stable institutions springing from the soil, rather than by influences from the Crown and enactments from Downing-street.

The Australian politician, Mr. Wentworth, was equally concerned and was even a little more conservative than Mr. Gladstone. It was Mr. Wentworth who fathered the idea of an hereditary Upper House in Australia. He said that he could see no reason why Australia should be denied the privilege of having a legislative Chamber similar to the House of Lords. His idea was that out of this type of aristocracy—I think they were to be baronets—Upper House members were to be elected. Growing Australian democracy in those days laughed him out of court; one party referred to it as the "Bunyip aristocracy." But I am not quite sure even now that it has been completely laughed out of court, because deep down in their hearts some Opposition members would still like to see that "Bunyip aristocracy" in this State.

As all members know, prior to the Imperial Parliament passing the Australian Colonies Government Act, Victoria was part of the Colony of New South Wales and, as such, was governed by the Legislative Council of that colony. The Act passed by the Imperial Parliament gave Victoria a Legislative Council of which two-thirds of the members were elected and one-third nominated. It was not until 1855 that the Victorian Legislative Council came into being as an elective body. The Leader of the Labour party has pointed out how narrow was the franchise in those days and what qualifications were necessary for membership of the Upper House. It would appear that in the last 100 years we have not achieved in that direction the improvement that a democracy has the right to expect, because—as the Chief Secretary has revealed—in 1947, only 550,000 people had a right to vote at Legislative Council elections, while there are 1,378,000 who have a vote at Legislative Assembly elections.

The evidence that I intend to produce is clear proof that the Legislative Council is not and never has been a House of review. Not long after the Upper House came into existence it became locked in a struggle with the new Legislative Assembly. It was already struggling over an Assembly motion to reduce the property qualifications of Council members, and to reduce the term of office

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from ten years to five years. The Premier of the day then introduced a tariff Bill, and deadlocks and manoeuvrings during that episode, and later in the Darling grant episode, are well known to all members. The actions taken by the Council on those occasions prove my point that Victoria had a conservative Upper House fighting the new radical democracy of Australia.

An interesting point arising from the introduction of the tariff Bill was that it embodied a policy of protection which has now become the settled policy of Australia. The attitude of the Council to that subject clearly demonstrates how much the Legislative Council of those days was out of touch with growing Australian sentiments. In 1877 a proposal for the payment of members of Parliament raised a further storm. Temporary Acts were passed embodying the principle, and from time to time the Government attempted to amend those Acts and make remuneration of members a permanent rule, but the Legislative Council continually rejected it. As the Legislative Assembly pointed out in a letter to the Home Secretary at that time, from 1856 to 1880, the Legislative Council had rejected 80 Bills outright, had so mutilated twenty Bills that the Government had to drop them, had ruined six Bills introduced to facilitate mining on private lands, had altered land Bills to suit the capitalist classes, had seven times rejected Bills for the payment of members, and had rejected outright an electoral Bill and a tariff Bill. The history books add to that list the expressive term "&c., &c."

In 1895 the Legislative Council did not return to the Assembly a Bill which had been passed in the Lower House to abolish plural voting and to grant the suffrage to women. The Legislative Council took a considerable time to make up its mind on the latter proposal because from 1895 to 1908 it was still undecided whether women should be given a vote. Council members seem to be a little afraid of the women's vote because an examination of the municipal rolls of to-day indicates that in nine cases out of ten the man of the house has the vote. I have been canvassing for a councillor in the Oak-

leigh district in the last few weeks and I have noticed particularly that that was the case in that municipality. Even today Opposition members do not seem to be inclined to give all women a vote.

Since 1903, when certain amendments were made to the legislation governing the Legislative Council, a number of actions not of a reviewing but of a political nature were taken by the Council. In 1909 this so-called House of review threw out a land tax Bill. In 1910 it compelled numerous amendments to be made in electoral and education Bills and, at the same time, it forced the Government to drop a preferential voting proposal which has since become the settled policy of this country.

In 1910 the Council refused to permit coal from the State Coal Mine to be sold direct to the public. In 1911 it would not accept a Wages Board Bill. Evidently Legislative Council members in those days did not approve of arbitration. In 1914, as one would have expected, the Council held up a price-fixing Bill which was introduced during the first world war. I could continue narrating instances which clearly indicate that the Council has never been a House of review. As one writer declared in 1940, "In the last ten years, from 1930 to 1940, 50 Bills have been lost in the Legislative Council."

Mr. LEMMON.—In the slaughter house!

Mr. DOUBE.—The Legislative Council has consistently refused to give returned soldiers a vote at Council elections, evidently considering that property qualifications are more important than the fact that servicemen were prepared to leave Australia and fight in its defence. The most dastardly political action of the Upper House of recent years was its refusal to grant Supply to the Cain Government in 1947. The action taken on that occasion was without precedent in the British Commonwealth but, as one can observe from the examples I have already quoted, the Council has always been "progressive," in this sense—it is always prepared to adopt new methods of being conservative.

When the Cain Government's Supply Bill was before the Upper House, Sir Frank Clarke was a little diffident about the unprecedented action that was contemplated. I am not acquainted with that gentleman, but I know he was not too sure of what the Council should do. Speaking in 1947, two months before the Supply Bill was thrown out, he said—

I feel that we in this Chamber should not interfere, but should leave it to the Assembly to decide the fate of the Government. We should not constitute ourselves an extra and super body to try to bring about a result that cannot be effected in the popular House.

No one could have any quarrel with that, if it had been carried out. However, he went on to say, at a later date, that he was taking up the attitude that as the so-called popular House refused to consult the people, members of the Council must, as plain citizens, do their duty for it, and see that the electors were consulted. That did not reflect the action of a House of review, but of a House which usurped the power of this Chamber. How any member of the Opposition can sit there and say it is merely a House of review, is beyond my comprehension.

Much more could be told, but it is not my intention to labour the point. After a trial lasting for almost 100 years, members of the Labour party have come to the conclusion that the evidence does not show that the Legislative Council has been a House of review, but rather that it has been a party House. The only way to give the word "democracy" real meaning in Australia is to vote for this measure. How members of the Opposition can think this is too bold a step to take, it is difficult for me to understand; but like Gladstone and Wentworth, they may be fearful of what the rising tide of democracy may do to them. Let me remind them of what Professor Sawyer says in his book *Australian Government To-day*—

Australians have a reputation in the world as advanced and even aggressive democrats; indeed, they have been pioneers in the use of such democratic measures as the secret ballot, universal suffrage, and compulsory voting.

Let us be pioneers again on the eve of the centenary of Parliamentary government in Australia—pioneers in reform of

the Upper House. Let us to-night see that the Bill has a safe passage through this House. When Mr. Churchill was a Liberal, he played an important part in the introduction of the Parliament Act of 1911, and his remarks to the Conservatives I now paraphrase for the benefit of members of the Opposition: We, on this side of the House, seek no privileges, we desire to obtain no handicap, we look for no facility which you do not already have and have not long enjoyed. All we seek, all we ask, all we demand, all we are willing to take is political equality for all parties in the State. We think that the electors whom we represent are entitled to be admitted to as full and as responsible citizenship, are just as competent to return a Government with plenary powers, as the electors who now elect the Legislative Council.

Members of the Opposition have always known that what they could carry through this House they could carry through the Legislative Council. Members on the Government side want to feel the same way to-night. I was a little disappointed by the arguments of honorable members opposite regarding proportional representation. Admittedly, it came as a surprise to members on the Government side of the House, and I think to certain members of the Opposition also. Not one of the Opposition members who have addressed themselves to the second reading of the Bill and the amendment advanced any claim for that method of election. Not one of them pointed out why this State should abandon the traditional method and adopt the new principle. I have not had much time to investigate the question of proportional representation, but I did look into it a few hours ago. I found that a Royal Commission reported on the subject in Great Britain in 1910.

Members of the Opposition would have been well advised to read that report before speaking to the amendment. According to it, there are 300 methods of proportional representation, and I want to know why they have selected one of them in particular. I should have thought they would have come here and said, "We have discarded such and such systems because they are no good, but

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we have adopted the two hundred and ninety-ninth." However, they did not say one word in favour of proportional representation. I am not entirely opposed to it. I want to make a closer examination of it. It is a big subject to attack at this time. The British Royal Commission stated—

The three chief methods adopted in other countries are the strict List system, the transferable vote, and the Hare-Clark system.

The Commission went to some length to point out that the Hare-Clark system was not true proportional representation, yet members of the Opposition say they are going to introduce proportional representation in the form of the Hare-Clark system. I refer them to the report of the Commission, which went on to say—

If it were decided that proportional representation in some form or other ought to be introduced, each of these systems would have a serious claim to consideration, for each has conspicuous merits which are not shared by the rest.

In view of such statements, perhaps a committee should be formed of members of this House to investigate the proposal. A further extract from the report of the Commission reads—

On the assumption, however, that proportional representation is desirable, can any system yet invented be guaranteed or reasonably be expected to ensure it? In our opinion only to a limited and generally unascertainable degree.

Witnesses before the Commission pointed out certain disadvantages, on which the Commission made findings. One witness said that candidates would lose personal touch, and another said that small parties would result. That has not happened in Tasmania, but it has in other countries. Another important point was that by-elections could not be held under the proportional representation system. I am sure that members of the Opposition would like to have a by-election before the next general election in order to find out which way the wind is blowing. Members of all parties know that they will lose a fine pulse-tester of the electorates if by-elections are abolished.

Another contention was that the system would lead to weak government. It has done so in France, but not in Tas-

mania, where it has produced a stalemate. It is a curse to any country to have a weak executive Government. Those are some of the arguments advanced from time to time. I remind honorable members that the proportional representation system was used for Lower House elections in New South Wales from 1918 until 1926. During that period both Labour and Conservative party Governments were in office. However, the system was abandoned because of its alleged complexity and failure to produce stable government. That might not have been a valid reason why the system should have been relinquished, but it indicates that before its adoption in this State is considered, the way in which it operated in other States should be studied. A report on the manner in which it worked could be obtained from the New South Wales Government.

The system of proportional representation was used, I think, for the election of the first Tasmanian team for the Senate—the honorable member for Williams-town will bear me out on that point—but evidently the system was dropped. Its implications should be studied before its introduction in this State is urged. Apparently, the system has worked fairly well in Tasmania, but it must be borne in mind that at present the representation in the Parliament of that State is fairly evenly divided, resulting in a stalemate and, of course, weak government. I urge Opposition members to consider this subject fairly. The principle of adult franchise is a subject quite apart from the question of how members will be elected, whether it be under the preferential, the proportional representation, or any other system.

I shall conclude by appealing to members of the Opposition to assist in helping democracy on its way. As the Leader of the Labour party pointed out, it is tragic that some people should be hindering the working of democracy. Their tactics are creating a certain reaction which members of the party to which I belong hope to eliminate. That can be done only by giving to the people the type of democracy they desire. I sound this note of warning: If members of the Opposition sit, King Canute-like,

in the face of the waves of advancing democracy, they may suffer the same fate as did that historic figure. If they resist this effort, when the next election takes place, annihilation will overtake not the members on this (the Government) side of the House, but members of the Opposition.

Mr. RYLAH (Kew).—I listened with great interest to the speech of the honorable member for Oakleigh. The House is indebted to him for his research into the subject with which he dealt. I approach the problem from a slightly different point of view. The Bill purports to be a measure for electoral reform. Probably no measure for electoral reform ever propounded in any Parliament in the British Empire has created, or will create, so many anomalies as will occur if the Bill now before the House is passed. One reason why such anomalies will crop up is the disproportionate value of the various electoral provinces represented in the Legislative Council. Some extraordinary figures have already been quoted in connection with the subject under discussion. I do not intend to traverse them again in detail, but I propose to deal with another aspect of the problem.

To-night the Leader of the Labour party stated frankly that it was the desire of his party to destroy the Upper House. It is incomprehensible to me why his party always wants to destroy something. It is even more incomprehensible to me that at this juncture this "Glory Without Power" Government is willing to assist the Labour party in achieving its objective in that direction. At the risk of wearying the House I intend to submit some facts and figures to illustrate what has happened in Queensland, where the Upper House was destroyed.

The Leader of the Labour party in the Legislative Council was much more frank on this topic than the Leader of the Labour party in this House. When he saw the text of the no-confidence motion moved by the Leader of my party, he said, "If I had known this a fortnight ago, I could have abolished this place." His outlook on the matter is the same as that of the Leader of the Labour party