

would be affected by a proposal such as this, but it was ascertained that 70 per cent. of that number already had the qualifications to exercise the franchise for the Legislative Council. I understand that that fact was ascertained by an analysis of a cross-section of those persons.

There remained a balance of 25,000 or 30,000 persons in Victoria who would be entitled to a vote under a measure such as that now before the House, or under the proposal submitted by Mr. Fraser. But there is a snag—they would have to make application to obtain the vote. It has been estimated by the authorities that not more than 10 per cent. of the persons concerned would voluntarily enroll unless some political party made it its business to see that they became enrolled. It has been stated that the additional number of Legislative Council electors would be approximately 1,500 or 3,000 for the whole of the State, but I do not accept those figures. Realizing what human nature is, if something is not done automatically—and it would not be so under this Bill—each and every person would have to apply to obtain the vote. I think we would be safe in saying that under the alternative proposition that has been put forward the maximum number of additional enrolments would be 5,000. I should say the extreme maximum would be 8,000 or 10,000 for all parts of Victoria. It must be realized that all citizens are growing older and becoming qualified otherwise for the Legislative Council franchise.

I think I have explained the Bill sufficiently. The proposal of the Government is to give every person who enlisted, including the seat warmers and clerks who were far removed from the fighting arena, the same qualification as those who saw active service. Possibly, it may not be as substantial a measure of justice as is indicated in another proposal, but I am inclined to agree with it. Changes are taking place in every-day life and that is so in regard to this Council. The nature of this House has been changed from one in which members gave service in an honorary capacity to a system under which they are now well paid. Therefore it is only reasonable to assume that a larger number of

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adult voters in Victoria should have the opportunity to record their vote. I do not agree with the statement made by the Minister that the introduction of the adult franchise would destroy the representative character of this Chamber.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Clifden Eager).—I am inclined to the view that the honorable member's remarks are becoming irrelevant to the Bill, for he is introducing entirely new subject matter. I do not say that the new subject matter could not be introduced under an appropriate motion at a later stage.

The Hon. W. J. BECKETT.—If proper steps were taken, a number of members of this House would agree that a very necessary reform could be achieved. However, to use a hackneyed phrase, the Bill is a step in the right direction; it is a measure of justice. If I cannot always get all I want, I take what I can obtain. From that point of view, I commend the measure to the House.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province).—I commend the Government for recognizing that men who were entrusted with our destinies on the fields of battle should no longer be prevented from exercising their vote in the peaceful destinies of our land. Those who fought should have a say as to who shall govern. Many young men who returned from the war must have been puzzled by the curious state of the law in Victoria, which entitled them to vote in Legislative Assembly elections, but debarred them from exercising the franchise at elections for the Upper House which, for all practical purposes, has the same powers as the Legislative Assembly.

This measure has been brought forward by the Government as a result of certain undertakings given at the recent Legislative Council elections. I reiterate my commendation of the Government for its proposals to give ex-servicemen the franchise for this House. However, I ask—as no doubt many honorable members will—why the Government has seen fit to exclude about two-thirds of the adult population from voting at Upper House elections. I have been at some pains to ascertain the academic reasoning behind the Government's refusal to allow those people to vote in elections

for this Chamber. I refer to *Senates and Upper Chambers* by Harold W. V. Temperley in which, at page 55, the following appears:—

It was a genuine conviction of the Home statesmen of the fifties—

He is referring, of course, to the English statesmen who composed the Constitution which brought the Upper Chamber into being—

that the Upper House ought to be based on a different principle from that of the Lower. The hereditary principle was discredited because heredity in England meant the power of a class, and of a class that could not be reproduced in the Colonies. But the principle of representing property in the Upper House was not only not discredited, but in the ascendant; the security of private property was the cornerstone of Whig and Cobdenite freedom. To compose the Senate out of men, who should guard that sacred right, was to create a really strong and representative Upper Chamber. It seemed quite right to defend property and to form the Upper House out of property holders; it was only wrong that property holders should possess a hereditary seat in the Upper House, or consist of holders of one kind of property only—i.e., land. The property holders, who ought to be most represented, were the trading and commercial classes, men whose intelligence had been proved by the acquisition of wealth and by success in business. In addition to these worthy citizens, the Upper House might be thrown open to men who had passed a good educational test—schoolmasters or officials or others of approved intelligence. Such were the general conceptions. The Upper House, when nominated, was to be filled with superior persons, possessing superior intelligence or business knowledge; if it was elected, the electorate was to consist of respectable persons, small shopkeepers, village schoolmasters, or the wealthier of the working men. The idea was always to represent the rights of property or the privileges of education in the Upper House, to oppose bourgeois respectability to democratic intensity, and the caution of age to the fire of youth.

I take it that the Government, in refusing to give two-thirds of the people a vote, has adopted the very principles laid down by the statesmen of the last century. The Victorian Constitution was established by an Act of the Imperial Parliament in 1855. I propose to refer briefly to the history of the franchise. The qualification of voters throughout history has depended to a large extent on their relation to what I might loosely

call real estate. Sometimes, the qualification depended on the ownership of land, dwellings, or tenements. At other times the qualification demanded occupancy or possession of land. In other instances the qualification rested on the payment of rates, hence the modern ratepayer. In very ancient times those who paid scot and bore lot were entitled to the franchise. The payment of scot related to a money burden, and members may see a slight resemblance to that in the modern conception of income tax. Those who bore lot were subject to a burden to fulfil a municipal office. In other instances those people who had the occupation of a single room having a fireplace were granted the franchise; they were known as "pot wallopers" or "pot boilers." There the franchise was democratic enough, but in these days of housing shortage many citizens would have some difficulty in fulfilling even such a simple requirement.

Such were the general conceptions of the franchise, but woven into them is one thread which is always to be seen—the idea of property. These conceptions are out of date; they do not agree with our modern views. A well-known New York physician once said, "If I were to practice my profession to-day as I did 25 years ago I would be gaoled for malpractice." The same view must be taken of the franchise. To-day we believe that every person in the community is entitled to a vote irrespective of class, or power; but the Government, in refusing to grant the franchise for this Chamber to the vast majority of adults in Victoria, must be regarded as giving way to the old medieval conceptions. If there is a good reason why the franchise should be refused to these citizens, let us have it. It certainly has not been heard in this Chamber, and it certainly did not fall from the lips of the Minister of Public Works when he introduced the Bill.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Clifden Eager).

—It would have been out of order for the Minister to have referred to the subject of adult franchise. That is not the subject of the Bill, which is limited to two matters—the extending of the franchise for the Council to officers of the Air Force, and to returned servicemen.