

Legislative Assembly.

Friday, 18 November, 1927.

Printed Questions and Answers—Sydney Corporation (Commissioners) Bill—Questions Without Notice—Public Works Committee—Sydney Corporation (Commissioners) Bill (Second Reading)—Allocation of Time for Business.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair.

PRINTED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

CESSNOCK SEWERAGE.

Mr. BADDELEY asked the MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS AND MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS,—Will he take the necessary steps to refer the sewerage system for Cessnock to the Public Works Committee this year, or early next year?

Answer,—The question of referring this proposal to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works will receive consideration.

UNEMPLOYMENT AT BROKEN HILL.

Mr. DAVIDSON asked the MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS AND MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS,—With a view of finding employment for the unemployed of Broken Hill, would it be possible for him to start the construction of the railway line from Hillston to Roto?

Answer,—This proposal was under reference to the Public Works Committee of the last Parliament, but that body did not complete its inquiries. A re-reference to the new Committee will be made at an early date.

WATERING PLACES: WILCANNIA DISTRICT.

Mr. HORSINGTON asked the MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS AND MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS,—(1) Has his attention been drawn to very serious statements that have been made concerning the public watering places in the Wilcannia district—that owing to neglect many of these places have been rendered useless

as far as travelling stock is concerned, and thousands of sheep have perished owing to being unable to travel to relief country? (2) Will he call for a report on the condition of these places, and also give instructions that all lessees of these places must keep them in good order.

Answer,—(1) No. (2) I will call for a report.

LICENSING OF RETAIL BUTCHERS.

Mr. MAIN asked the PREMIER,—In regard to the proposal of Mr. J. B. Cramsie, Chairman of the Metropolitan Meat Board, to issue licenses to retail butchers, will he have inquiries made as to the adverse effects of limiting competition to both producers of meat and the ultimate consumers?

Answer,—Full inquiries will be made as suggested by the hon. member before any action is taken.

UNEMPLOYED IN MAITLAND-GRETA DISTRICTS.

Mr. O'HEARN asked the PREMIER,—In view of the large number of unemployed in the Maitland-Greta districts, will he make available a sum of money to the councils in these districts so that councils could proceed with necessary works, and at the same time relieve the unemployed of the district?

Answer,—The question of unemployment is receiving consideration by a sub-committee of Cabinet appointed for the purpose, and everything that can be done is being done.

SYDNEY CORPORATION (COMMISSIONERS) BILL.

Mr. LANG: I wish to make a request to the Premier in regard to the proposed closing down of the guillotine on the Sydney Corporation (Commissioners) Bill at 4 o'clock. The Premier is aware of the special circumstances connected with the debate. I was desirous of speaking on the second reading, and the hon. member for Surry Hills, who was subjected to a good deal of criticism during the course of debate, wished to reply to his critics. I am willing to give way to that hon. member, but if the bill has to be

read a second time and passed through Committee before 4 o'clock, I shall be debarred as leader of the Opposition from taking part in the debate on the second reading. I would have no objection to that if I knew that opportunities would be presented to me for moving amendments in Committee, but under the circumstances there would not be sufficient time to allow of that. I had intended to permit new members to take part in the second-reading debate and to exercise my right of discussing the bill in Committee, but there would be no time to do that. I wonder whether the Premier would allow the consideration of the bill in Committee to be extended for a reasonable time after 4 o'clock. If that were done the hon. member for Surry Hills would be able to speak, and I could say what I wanted to say in Committee. I would be very much obliged if the Premier would adopt the course suggested, as otherwise I shall have to cut out my speech.

Mr. BAVIN: I do not know that there need be any difficulty. We shall have from 3 to 4 o'clock for the continuation of the debate on the second reading. I do not propose to close down necessarily at 4 o'clock. As the hon. member knows, under the standing order it is not necessary to move the closure at the time fixed.

Mr. LANG: I am taking your position into consideration and I realise that the House must adjourn at 6 o'clock.

Mr. BAVIN: Quite so. There will be an hour or an hour and a half for the continuation of the second reading debate. The bill contains only two or three clauses. The principal provisions of the bill have already been exhaustively discussed and the measure is hardly a Committee bill.

Mr. LANG: I do not desire the bill to go through without saying a word.

Mr. BAVIN: I would remind the hon. member that he spoke for an hour or an hour and a quarter on the motion for leave to introduce the bill. He then knew exactly what was in it.

Mr. LANG: I did not know what was in the bill.

Mr. BAVIN: I do not wish to curtail reasonable debate, but, as the hon. mem-

ber will understand, I am not in a position to give quite the same latitude as I hope to be able to give next session. We are bound to pass this bill early next week or else difficulties may arise and extra expense may be involved.

Mr. LANG: Suppose you leave the operation of the guillotine over until Tuesday. I am quite prepared to give way to the hon. member for Surry Hills.

Mr. BAVIN: I shall be glad to meet the hon. member if I can, and I shall see him a little later on. I do not wish to deprive him of an opportunity of speaking on the bill, nor do I wish to prevent the hon. member for Surry Hills from addressing the House, because I recognise he has the right to do so. So far as the Committee stage is concerned, I do not want to prevent hon. members from moving any reasonable amendments, and I am willing to meet the hon. member in that way, but he must realise the position we are in.

Mr. LANG: If the discussion of the bill in Committee is held over until Tuesday, I give the Premier my word that we shall offer no objection to the third reading going through on the same day.

Mr. BAVIN: If the hon. member is prepared to do that, I am agreeable.

Mr. LANG: I can give the Premier my assurance that if the second-reading debate is closed after the hon. member for Surry Hills and I have spoken, and the Committee stage is held over until Tuesday, we shall raise no objection to the third reading going through on that day.

Mr. BAVIN: I am obliged to the hon. member.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

DENTAL BOARD.

Major JARVIE: I wish to know from the Minister for Health whether it is a fact that the ex-president of the Dental Board, Mr. Smith, is likely to be appointed as president of the Dental Hospital, and to thus become an *ex officio* member of the Dental Board from which he had previously been removed.

Dr. ARTHUR: At present I am not aware of the facts. I will make inquiries.

NEW ZEALAND BUTTER.

Captain DUNN: I wish to know whether the Minister for Agriculture is aware that at a conference of Ministers of Agriculture held at Adelaide last May, a resolution was unanimously passed that the Commonwealth Government should be urged to impose an import duty on butter brought here from New Zealand. I wish to know whether the Minister has done anything in the matter.

Mr. THORBY: I am aware of the resolution referred to. The Federal Government has not acted in the matter up to the present. The papers bearing upon the subject were before me this morning, and I am giving further consideration to the whole matter.

SOUTH AFRICAN WOOL.

Mr. McKELL: Has the attention of the Minister for Agriculture been drawn to a cabled report published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* a few days ago quoting a statement made by the president of the British Wool Federation to the effect that the wool produced in South Africa was the finest in the world? Is the Minister aware that the wonderful advance made in the wool industry in South Africa is due to the importation of stud rams from Australia? Will the Minister, with a view to protecting our wool industry, make representations to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth that Australia should follow the same policy in respect of stud rams as South Africa has pursued in regard to ostriches, the exportation of which has been absolutely prohibited?

Mr. FOSTER: Can the Minister say whether it is a fact that some of the best flocks now in Australia originally came from South Africa?

Mr. THORBY: My attention has not been drawn to the remarks referred to. I shall give every consideration to the representation of Mr. McKell, but I can-

not hold out any hope of any restriction on the right of stock owners to sell their stud stock in the best market offering.

ST. JAMES RAILWAY STATION.

Mr. GOSLING: I desire to ask the Minister for Railways if he will ask the Railway Commissioners what has become of the report prepared in response to the request of Mr. Ness and myself respecting the danger to pedestrians using the Queen's-square entrance to St. James railway station? In view of the accidents that have recently occurred there, will the Minister ask the Commissioners to expedite the report on the respective merits of a bridge or subway at that point?

Mr. BUTTENSHAW: Yes.

WINDSOR HOSPITAL SUBSIDY.

Mr. WALKER: I desire to ask the Colonial Secretary if he can say why the subsidy, amounting to £80, on the amount derived from a carnival held at Windsor in aid of the local hospital has not been paid? Can he say when it is likely to be paid, and if there is any reason why it should not be paid in the same way as other subsidies of the kind are paid?

Mr. BRUNTNEILL: I shall make inquiries into the matter.

BROKEN HILL HOSPITAL.

Mr. HORSINGTON: I desire to ask the Minister for Public Health if it is not a fact that in connection with the sewerage of the Broken Hill Hospital the mining companies and the Government have come to an agreement under which the former are to pay two-fifths and the latter three-fifths of the costs. As the mining companies have signified their willingness to pay their portion of the amount at once, as the work has been approved by the Health Department and the Public Works Department, and as a contract has been let to carry it out, will the Minister say what is holding up the work?

Dr. ARTHUR: I shall be glad to give the hon. member information on the subject, but at the moment I really cannot. I shall make inquiries.

SEWERAGE WORKERS: ALLEGED VICTIMISATION.

Mr. T. KEEGAN: I desire to ask the Minister for Public Works and Railways if he is aware that Messrs. J. Williams and T. Kavanagh, recently employed at the Ryde sewerage works, have been in the service of the Public Works Department for the past five years, and because they interested themselves in the conditions of men employed on that work who were not receiving the proper rate of pay they have been victimised by having their wages reduced by 18s. a week, and their good conduct pay deducted.

Mr. BUTTENSHAW: I shall have inquiries made.

TERALBA RAILWAY STATION.

Mr. BOOTH: I desire to ask the Minister for Railways if his attention has been drawn to the dangerous state the railway station at Teralba is in owing to insufficient lighting? Is he aware that many of the travelling public are in constant danger there? Is he further aware that the Newcastle City Council has within 50 yards of the station full equipment to electrify the lighting of the building? Will he urge the Railway Commissioners to have the station fitted with electric light?

Mr. BUTTENSHAW: I am not aware that the travelling public are in danger because of insufficient lighting at the station, but I shall make inquiries.

HARBOUR DISASTER: RELIEF FUNDS.

Mr. FOSTER: A few days ago I asked the Colonial Secretary whether the board administering the National Relief Fund would assist those who have suffered as a result of the *Greycliffe* disaster. I should like to ask him now if the board has met since then, and, if so, what is its decision with regard to the matter?

Mr. BRUNTNEILL: The National Disaster Relief Board met to-day. It was unanimously decided to recognise

the disaster as a national disaster within the meaning of the Act. It was reported to the board that two funds were being contributed to by the general public, one the Lord Mayor's Fund, to which it was reported £1,590 had been subscribed to date, and the other the Vaucluse fund, to which up to date £2,110 had been subscribed. From those funds all immediate necessities are being met. The board, as the trustee of a public fund, felt that they had to consider present as well as future beneficiaries of the fund, and that it was not necessary for them to take any further action until requested to do so by those who are now administering relief.

Mr. WEARNE: Is it the Minister's intention to wait until some action is taken by those administering the two local funds? Is the hon. gentleman aware that some people in the country who were sufferers from the fatality, are not making any claim against either fund, pending the decision of the National Disaster Relief Board? Is he not prepared to have his board consider such claims from the country?

Mr. BADDELEY: On the same question, has the Colonial Secretary's attention been drawn to the money collected—between £8,000 and £10,000—for the benefit of dependants of the people who lost their lives in the Bellbird Colliery disaster, and will he see that that fund is administered in the interests of all concerned?

Mr. BRUNTNEILL: In reply to the hon. member for Barwon, it is the intention of the board to give necessary help in any case that is brought under its notice. The hon. member will see that this fund has been in existence for a number of years past, and at the present rate of disbursement, although the money is invested and earning interest, the amount is being reduced every year. By an actuarial investigation the board has to conserve the rights of those persons who are now in receipt of help from the fund, and who will be for a number of years hence. A sad case has been reported to the board from Moree, in the hon. member's district, and it is now being inquired into. I want to point out

that the immediate distress occasioned to persons through this dire disaster is really being attended to by the two public funds to which I referred, but cases which are likely to require the assistance of the board for some considerable period will be considered in due course. In reply to the hon. member for Cessnock, I understand the matter he refers to has been considered by the board, and I believe the whole of the moneys have been accounted for.

TRAM CONDUCTORS: ACCIDENTS AND SICKNESS.

Mr. McDICKEN: I desire to ask the Minister for Railways if he is aware that a number of serious accidents occur almost daily to conductors in the tramway Department as a result of walking the footboards? Is he also aware that many conductors are suffering from pulmonary and chest complaints as a result of working on the present obsolete trams? Will he urge the Commissioners to adopt the corridor style of cars when they are ordering new cars?

Mr. JAKES: Will the Minister at the same time obtain a return showing whether it is a fact that accidents of the kind suggested by the hon. member are of daily occurrence?

Mr. BUTTENSHAW: I shall call for a return showing the weekly number of accidents on the trams, and I shall ask the Commissioners to take Mr. McDicken's suggestion into consideration.

WYANGLA DAM.

Mr. BEST: Is the Minister for Public Works aware that during the recent election campaign the ex-Premier and his supporters stated that £100,000 had been provided for work to be proceeded with in connection with Wyangla dam? Will he inform the House whether such is the case, and whether that national work will be started forthwith?

Mr. BUTTENSHAW: As far as I know no provision was made in connection with that work. The matter will be taken into consideration in connection with other important public works.

SERGEANT FERRIS.

Mr. BRUNTNEILL: On the 16th instant the hon. member for Mudgee asked a question with regard to the transfer of Police Sergeant Ferris. I have obtained a report from which it appears that the sergeant is being transferred from Wellington to Parkes in the interests of the service. He is a man of excellent character and well fitted for the responsible position at Parkes. The resulting vacancy at Wellington will be filled by a competent officer.

PIPEHEAD WEIR, LITHGOW.

Mr. KNIGHT: Is the Minister for Public Works aware of the serious position likely to arise unless the pipehead weir at Middle River, Lithgow, is completed at an early date? Is he aware that the non-carrying out of this work seriously handicaps industries already existing, and absolutely prohibits others from being started? Also, is he aware of the serious menace to public health that will ensue in the event of a dry spell? Will the hon. gentleman take immediate steps to place on the Estimates a sum sufficient to have this work carried out immediately?

Mr. BUTTENSHAW: I am not aware that industries are being seriously handicapped by the failure to construct this particular work, but I will bear the matter in mind when the Estimates are being prepared.

USE OF CYANIDE.

Mr. KILPATRICK: In view of the urgency for amending legislation to prevent the use of cyanide, which has caused so much damage throughout the length and breadth of New South Wales, is the Premier now in a position to say that he will bring an amending bill down during the present session, seeing that every member of the House is in agreement with the proposal?

Mr. BAVIN: I have discovered during my short experience in Parliament that it is rather optimistic to imagine that every member of the House is in agreement about anything. I do not question what the hon. member says, but I am

afraid it is impossible for me to give a promise to bring in this session any legislation which has not already been outlined by the Government. However, if the hon. member will explain exactly what is the scope of the proposed measure, I can assure him I will give his suggestion every consideration, and if possible we may go on with it this session. I cannot give him any further promise than that.

EAST BANKSTOWN SCHOOL.

Mr. STANLEY: In the absence of the Minister for Education, I desire to ask the Premier what progress has been made in reference to a tender which was accepted in connection with the East Bankstown Public School?

Mr. BAVIN: The hon. member can find that out by asking at the department.

CITY TRAFFIC.

Mr. WEAVER: In view of the congestion and obstruction to city traffic caused by the loitering of taxi-cab drivers while seeking fares, will the Colonial Secretary enforce a regulation similar to the one in force in Melbourne prohibiting such loitering?

Mr. NESS: Regarding the whole question of traffic, will the Minister consider the advisableness of preventing motor-cars from parking for hours at a stretch in business thoroughfares such as Elizabeth-street, where private owners cannot get to business premises owing to the fact that there is no place in which to pull up their cars? Will he make some provision, say in Hyde Park, where business men will have an opportunity of parking their cars rather than have the streets congested by cars being allowed to remain there all day?

Mr. BRUNTNELL: The regulation of traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian, is becoming a very serious problem, and it is now being considered from every point of view by the authorities. Certainly some action will have to be taken in the direction indicated by the hon. member for Neutral Bay, if we are to facilitate the extraordinary volume of motor traffic which passes through our

streets. With regard to pedestrian traffic some arrangement such as is in operation in other large cities of the world will, it seems to me, very soon have to be introduced in Sydney, for there is no doubt that pedestrians use the main streets as though they were in a large unoccupied paddock.

UNEMPLOYMENT: DUTY ON STEEL.

Mr. D. MURRAY: Has the Premier's attention been drawn to a report in this morning's press that another 1,000 men will be put off at the steel works tomorrow? In view of the statement made by the company, that on account of the duty imposed upon partly-manufactured steel allowing it to come in here at a lower price than it can be manufactured in Australia, will the hon. gentleman make representations to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth to get the Tariff Board to meet and bring about an increase in the duty, in order to support the industry?

Mr. SANDERS: On the same question, will the Premier, before replying, read the article in the newspaper referred to and learn whether the whole reason has been stated by the hon. member for Hamilton, in asking his question? Will the Premier at the same time ascertain whether the dismissal of those men is not being brought about owing to the fact that many men were put on during the period of the coal strike in England, when orders for trade were being placed locally, and that now, when the coal strike is over, business has decreased?

Mr. BAVIN: I did see the paragraph to which the hon. member for Hamilton refers, but I did not understand that 1,000 additional men were being put off.

Mr. D. MURRAY: That is the statement!

Mr. BAVIN: I read that 1,000 men altogether were being put off. However, whichever it is I quite recognise that it is serious enough. But I do not know that it is my function to recommend to the Prime Minister that he should alter the tariff. I have not the slightest doubt that the owners of the steel works, the Broken Hill Proprietary

Company, Limited, have already stated to the Commonwealth Government whatever case they have for an increase in the duties, with just as much force as I could employ. I do not think it is the function of the State Government to make recommendations to the Commonwealth Government with regard to the tariff. There is nothing to stop the Federal member for Newcastle or the hon. member himself from making representations to the Commonwealth Government. I shall be quite prepared to mention it to the Commonwealth Government, at an interview I shall shortly have, and to ask that inquiries shall be made, but I do not think it is my function to recommend to the Commonwealth Government an increase in any duty.

WILD FLOWERS PRESERVATION.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I should like to ask the Colonial Secretary, who administers the Act for the protection of wild flowers, if he will furnish instructions to those who are engaged in the task of protecting those wild flowers to enforce the provisions of the Act most rigidly during the currency of the approaching Christmas season? Is the Minister aware that there is wholesale destruction of wild flowers by a lot of vandals who fly around the country in motor-cars every week-end, and will he see that the Act in question, having been placed on the statute book, is made of a useful character?

Mr. BRUNTNELL: I am aware that there is wilful destruction of our flowers and plants, and I have already given instructions to the officers of the department that the very strictest application of the Act must be enforced in all cases.

UNEMPLOYMENT: RELIEF FOR MARRIED MEN.

Mr. HORSINGTON: As it has been stated that the Colonial Secretary is responsible for the recent reduction in the relief allowance to unemployed, and as since his advent to office, the unfortunate persons who receive that relief have had their rations reduced by 25 per cent., will the Minister consider the ad-

visability of restoring that 25 per cent., so as to increase the allowance to that which was paid by his predecessor in office?

Mr. BRUNTNELL: I have already answered that question I think on two occasions. The scale as it originally applied was revised by the Colonial Secretary, then Mr. Lazzarini, and it was increased by 50 per cent. I do not mean 50 per cent. in price, but 50 per cent. in the quantity of rations. That scale operated during the whole time of the last Government's regime until August, September, and October of this year, when, for those three months, and for those three months only, the scale operated on a 25 per cent. increase. That scale ceased automatically at the end of October, and, naturally, the original distribution took its place. It is looked upon that the distribution as now given is a very liberal distribution, and meets the present needs of the case.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE.

Mr. SPEAKER declared the following duly elected as members of the committee:—Mr. D. M. Anderson, Mr. W. Cameron, Mr. W. T. Missingham, and Mr. D. Murray.

SYDNEY CORPORATION (COMMISSIONERS) BILL.

SECOND READING.

Debate resumed (from 17th November, *vide* page 409) on motion by Mr. Bavin:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr. LANG (Auburn) [3.8]: I hope I shall be pardoned for taking up the time of the House—

Mr. BAVIN: I understood that Mr. Shannon had the adjournment!

Mr. LANG: If there is any misunderstanding I will desist from speaking. I want the position to be quite clear, and I do not want any misunderstanding to exist between the Premier and myself. There was an undertaking that if Mr. Shannon and I were allowed to speak the Premier would allow the debate on the Committee stage to go over until Tuesday. I pointed out that otherwise he would get no further ahead,

because he would have to take the third reading of the bill on Tuesday. I said that if he allowed the Committee stage to remain over until Tuesday we would make no objection to the third reading being taken on that day, and thus there would be no delay in the receipt of the bill by the Legislative Council.

Mr. BAVIN: I understand that, but one or two other members desire to speak!

Mr. LANG: I gave the Premier the assurance that if myself and Mr. Shannon, who has been attacked, were allowed to speak, we should be satisfied.

Mr. BAVIN: Mr. Shannon was not attacked!

Mr. LANG: If the Premier thinks I am attempting to do anything he did not thoroughly understand I will resume my seat, and not make my speech.

Mr. BAVIN: The third reading must finish on Tuesday afternoon!

Mr. LANG: That is so, and if the Premier, who has the power to use the guillotine to-day at 4 o'clock, will allow the matter to go over till Tuesday, then, for my part, I agree absolutely that the third reading shall be allowed to be taken on that day.

Mr. BAVIN: The only thing is that one or two members on this side of the House wish to speak!

Mr. LANG: The hon. member can do as he likes about that. I want the Premier to understand that all I ask is that Mr. Shannon and I be allowed to speak, and that he take the Committee stage, and the third reading, on Tuesday. Is that quite clear?

Mr. BAVIN: Yes!

Mr. LANG: That matter having been cleared up, may I beg the indulgence of hon. members if I feel somewhat keenly on the matter that is under discussion. I hope I will be pardoned if I do, for, after all is said and done, all of us have respect and love for the place in which we were born. Being a native of the city of Sydney, the place of my nativity being in George-street, within a hop, skip, and a jump of the town hall, I admit I have, if you like to put it in that way, a very strong prejudice in favour of the city of my birth. I love the city of Sydney, and I feel very con-

cerned that anyone should cast a slur upon this, which is not only one of the greatest cities of the British Empire, but one of the greatest cities in the world, a city which is admitted to be not one of the most beautiful, but the most beautiful city in the world. I have listened as quietly and attentively as possible to the speeches which have been delivered by the Hon. the Premier and the hon. member for Coogee, Mr. Goldstein. They are the only two Government members who have spoken. I thought when I made a few cursory remarks at an earlier stage of the bill, the Premier would in this, the Parliament of my country, have made some definite charges, some outstanding charges of corruption or maladministration or inefficiency which would have made me look with shame on the administration of the city of Sydney. I listened attentively to what both those gentlemen had to say. And what did I hear? I speak subject to correction. I speak subject to having heard correctly what they said, and subject to putting the right construction upon it. The Premier, Mr. Bavin, repeated a lot of statements which have appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* with respect to charges against the city aldermen. If any ordinary member of this House got up and asked a question based on something that appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, or any other newspaper, he would rightly be called to order by the Speaker, and asked if he vouched for the correctness of the statement. Mr. Bavin has vouched for the correctness of nothing.

One of his statements was with regard to the Bunnerong power house, and I excuse him for what I think was a slip which he made. He said that it had cost the City Council £5,000,000. I think he meant that it would eventually cost £5,000,000.

Mr. BAVIN: That is what I said!

Mr. LANG: The hon. member repeated the statement two or three times. On one occasion Mr. Bavin added it to the list of debts. I have not looked into the finances of the city of Sydney, and I do not know exactly what the Bunnerong power house has cost, but I

know it has not cost anything like £5,000,000, although it is expected that when the scheme is in full operation it will have cost, at the outside, that amount. But that is neither here or there so far as the argument is concerned. The Hon. the Premier said that one of the aldermen of the city of Sydney moved a motion that a bore be put down to ascertain if there was coal available under the site where the Bunnerong power house is being built.

Mr. BAVIN: I did not say that. What I said was that Mr. Mackay, the engineer in charge, recommended that a bore be put down. Ultimately Alderman Milner Stephen moved a motion!

Mr. LANG: That is what I said.

Mr. BAVIN: But that was at the end of the negotiations. The first thing was that Mr. Mackay, the manager, recommended that a bore be put down!

Mr. LANG: The Premier will correct me if I make any mistakes.

Mr. BAVIN: I am correcting your quotation of my statement!

Mr. LANG: I have already said that I am speaking from memory. I understood you to say that an alderman moved a motion that a bore be put down. Why the alderman moved it I do not know, but the motion was moved, and I understand the Premier to say it was carried. The Premier will correct me now because if this is not the way it was put, there is nothing in it. If the Premier did not put it in this way, it is not worth answering. Let me make it quite plain, because if I am not correct I do not need to bother any more about it. What the Premier led me to believe, if my hearing was correct, was that an alderman named Milner Stephen moved a motion that a bore be put down on the Bunnerong power house site.

Mr. BAVIN: That was the ultimate result!

Mr. LANG: I cannot have any backing or filling.

Mr. BAVIN: I am not backing and filling, I am only asking you to quote correctly what I said. I never suggested there was anything wrong in putting down a bore at Bunnerong!

[*Mr. Lang.*

Mr. LANG: You will see what I am coming at, and I think I had better conclude what I was going to say and then see if the Premier still contradicts me. I must repeat it without interruption. The Premier said that Alderman Milner Stephen moved in the City Council that a bore be put down at Bunnerong to see if there was coal available under the power house site. The motion was carried. Then, says Mr. Bavin, that resolution was allowed to go by the board. Why? Because, in the meantime, these corrupt maladministrators, these unfitted persons, the whole twenty-six of them, in the Municipal Council of Sydney, not one of whom has any integrity or straightforwardness, set about looking for another coal mine. They would not bother about the bore any further. They ignored Alderman Stephen. They ignored Mr. Mackay. They went round the country everywhere to see if they could buy a ready-made coal-mine. And then came in the graft, then came in the thieving community, the corrupt people, who exist in the State of New South Wales and outside the State of New South Wales—jobbers and boodlers, who get together and form organisations, people who have a good thing, and who want to make money quickly, as all Nationalists do.

Mr. NESS: You are not quoting the Premier's statement!

Mr. LANG: The Premier is well able to protect himself and does not need the assistance of the hon. member. These people who had a good proposition, these company promoters who had a coal-mining lease, situated perhaps on Macarthur-Onslow's property, where the Premier spends his week-ends; this small, organised gang of wealthy men who had some scheme, put it before these venal and corrupt men, who were elected to the City Council and what happened? These corrupt members of the City Council went here, there, and everywhere looking at the proposals put before them by certain corrupt coteries, but they did nothing. They did not buy a coal mine, they did not get any money, they committed no corrupt act. They refused to

be corrupted by the men who had coal-mining leases at places like Douglas Park or Camden Park. They did not take a penny piece. The Premier started off by saying that Alderman Milner Stephen moved that resolution. Alderman Milner Stephen moved that resolution calmly and coldly as a lawyer would. Then they went round to see if there were any Nationalist company promoters who had hidden away somewhere pots of money which they could get. The Premier admitted that no coal mine was purchased, and then he said they went back to Bunnerong, where they should have stayed. Who can truthfully deny that?

Mr. NESS: The Premier said that Mr. Forbes Mackay recommended that a bore should be put down at Bunnerong and that his recommendation was turned down by the City Council!

Mr. LANG: Lord, save us! There are only a few hon. members of the Nationalist party present in the Chamber and I want to say to those few members that despite the denials of the Premier and the hon. member for Dulwich Hill, that is how it started. After I finished a chapter Mr. Ness said, "That is what he did say, and he went further." Mr. Bavin did go further, but he only said what I have said—that Mr. Forbes Mackay recommended that a bore should be put down at Bunnerong.

Mr. NESS: And the City Council would not adopt his recommendation until the Douglas Park lease and the lease offered by the Mines Department had been turned down!

Mr. LANG: That is what Mr. Bavin said. You and I are in absolute agreement. Mr. Bavin said that Mr. Forbes Mackay recommended that a bore should be put down to see if there was coal under the power house, which is being built at Bunnerong. That motion was moved by Alderman Milner Stephen and was carried by the City Council.

Mr. NESS: It was turned down!

Mr. LANG: I was not present at the meeting of the Council and I do not know. I am only saying what the Premier says—that it was carried.

Mr. NESS: After the others had been turned down!

Mr. LANG: No. I find that I am wrong as far as Alderman Milner Stephen is concerned. It was carried, but not on the motion of Alderman Stephen; it was carried on the motion of the Lord Mayor, Alderman Mostyn. After carrying that resolution the city aldermen were accused of ignoring it, and even of trying to do something corrupt in regard to a coal mine situated on the Onslow's property at Camden Park, which the alderman did not touch.

Mr. NESS: The Premier did not mention Camden Park. You cannot show from *Hansard* that he did!

Mr. LANG: Mr. Bavin would not say Camden Park; he would say Douglas Park.

Mr. NESS: He said Douglas Park!

Mr. LANG: Douglas Park and Camden Park are one and the same. I am speaking in defence of my native city, and I want hon. members supporting the Government to understand that the Premier charged the aldermen of the city of Sydney, the elect of the people of Sydney, with doing something corrupt, and then he admitted that they had done nothing corrupt, that they had not bought a coal mine from those wealthy people, those company promoters who hold options, and who always wax fat under a Nationalist Government. Those people failed to get the City Council to buy a coal mine at Douglas Park. After admitting that the Premier said that they passed another resolution to continue boring operations at Bunnerong.

Mr. ARKINS: Mr. Bavin said that certain Labour members of the Council tried to force the acceptance of this syndicate's offer!

Mr. LANG: All I have to say in reply to the hon. member for Rockdale, is that if I had knowledge that a syndicate wanted the city aldermen to do a corrupt thing—if I knew that a syndicate had offered a bribe to the city aldermen I would bring the guilty parties to book and make them pay the penalty of the law for their crime.

Mr. ARKINS: I do not know it!

Mr. LANG: Then I cannot take any further notice of the hon. member.

Mr. ARKINS: I only repeated what the Premier said!

Mr. LANG: If the Premier said that, the case is worse, because he has power to take action against people who are guilty of corrupt acts. The next thing the Premier mentioned was something regarding a man with an unpronounceable name. The whole thing was unsolved, and I do not quite know what was intended. It appeared that a certain property was purchased for £12,000 either before the resumption or after the resumption.

Mr. NESS: It was after the resumption was gazetted!

Mr. LANG: The Premier's statement was that a certain gentleman bought a property for £12,000 after it was gazetted for resumption, and some few months afterwards—

Mr. NESS: Two months!

Mr. LANG: Other hon. members say it was a longer period; but at any rate the Premier said that it was some months afterwards that the property was repurchased for £14,000. What an extraordinary thing! Just fancy being able to buy twenty-six aldermen with £2,000!

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: They were cheap at the price!

Mr. LANG: Cheap at the price!

Mr. ANDERSON: What was their price?

Mr. LANG: If the hon. member wants to know the exact price one has to pay for buying an alderman, I have no knowledge, but he can get the exact figures if he applies to Alderman Walder, a friend of Mr. Murray upstairs. I am not saying that there is a price; but if the hon. member believes there is a price and wants to know what it is, I can only refer him to Alderman Walder. Here we have a property purchased by some gentleman for £12,000 and repurchased for £14,000, and there is a scandal about it. Hon. members of the legal profession and business men in this House will know that if a property is really sold for £12,000 stamp duty has to be paid at the rate of 17s. 6d. for every £100. Therefore 120 times 17s. 6d.

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will have to be added to the cost to the purchaser, who did not get his property for £12,000, but for something considerably in excess of that amount. After the payment of stamp duty, solicitor's fees in connection with the transfer and other expenses, the chances are that the £12,000 would mount up to £13,000 or more.

Mr. NESS: The only point is that the matter was put through on the casting vote of the Mayor!

Mr. LANG: It is not my province to try the alderman or to stand up here and say that any aldermen are corrupt. I am not here to condemn them unheard, and I am not going to make charges against any man. All I desire to do is to show the House and the country the extremes to which the Premier has been forced in order to make a case. The sale of a property for £12,000 and a repurchase for £14,000 is one of the cases quoted by the Premier in which there might have been corruption. Any ordinary thinking person will see from what I have said that the person who purchased the property in the first instance would probably have to pay nearer £13,000 than £12,000.

Mr. MARTIN: The stamp duty would not amount to £200!

Mr. LANG: Under the most favourable circumstances there would not be more than £1,800 left as a margin between the purchase price, plus expenses, and the amount for which the property was repurchased. The purchaser of the property in the first instance would want some interest on his £12,000; but let us suppose he was generous and gave the whole of the £1,800 to the aldermen. Did any one ever hear of the name of a fair city like this being fouled, besmirched and libelled on such paltry information as this, which, after all, does not amount to more than mere suspicion. I would not defame the name of any individual on such information. The suggestion of corruption in this particular case is the result of a mere effort of the imagination. What else has the Premier said?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: He said the Labour aldermen were imbeciles!

Mr. LANG: Of course, we quite understand that from the point of view of hon. members opposite all people connected with the Labour movement are imbeciles. We have no objection to being called imbeciles. I cannot raise any legitimate objection to the forcefulness of the Premier's language. That is his business, not mine. He says the City Council is a corrupt Council; that it is not fit to control the affairs of the city because down somewhere—I suppose it is Woolloomooloo where he alleged the Council bought a playground—down somewhere in about the worst possible portion of Sydney the Council bought a piece of land to make a playground or a breathing space for the poor children of the city. Then he went on in his peculiar way to say that if it had searched all round the city the Council could not have found a worse place.

Mr. MARTIN: Did he not say "the most congested," not "the worst"?

Mr. LANG: No, that is another matter. I do not want to misstate anything the Premier has said. He said it was the worst possible place. His statement would have no point for me if he had said what Mr. Martin ascribes to him. If Mr. Bavin had said the City Council bought in the most congested portion of the city an open space for a playground or breathing space that would be a proper place for it. Mr. Bavin said the Council bought that piece of land in the worst portion of the city and after resuming it refused to go on with the playground. Why did the Council refuse to go on? It was, I presume, because it recognised the position to be as the Premier has put it—that it was in the wrong place. Then the Council set about getting another place; and because it did that, because after resuming a place unfit for a playground or breathing space, a place in the worst portion of the city of Sydney, the Council refused to go on with it, the Premier condemns it.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: And because the Council was brainless enough not to know what sort of a place ought to be resumed, the public has to pay!

Mr. LANG: The public has not to pay for it because it was not gone on with. Now, speaking entirely from memory, the Premier said that the Council did not go on with that playground although the owner objected to their not completing the resumption.

Then the Premier comes along with something about Brisbane-street or Frog Hollow, or both. We will take them both together. He talked about Frog Hollow, Little Albion-street, Lower Campbell-street, and so on, and then got on to Brisbane-street. He called that street and the streets around it by names which, had I used them, I would have been asked where I got my knowledge of such words. Mr. Bavin said there were Bludgers' Lane, Garrotters' Lane and Murderers' Lane. He was talking of Murderers' Lane, Garrotters' Lane and Bludgers' Lane quite a lot, as if he liked the names. I could not help thinking, while he was saying that, of Judge Jeffreys, who was always hanging people, so that he was called "Bloody Jeffreys." I think you could apply that name to Mr. Bavin, for the way in which he is defaming the name of this fair city. He used the names and applied them to the people of the city of Sydney—to men and women who are leading honorable and upright lives, and who are keeping the wheels of industry turning in this city. He called them the filthiest names, contemptible name that no man should ever utter against his fellow men and women and their children. He reviled them and said those were the people who really lived in such areas—garrotters, thieves, murderers and bludgers. That is what he said. All I have to say is that if the city of Sydney is a city in which murderers, bludgers, thieves and garrotters predominate, then we are entitled to ask what is the Colonial Secretary doing and what is Mr. Mitchell, the head of the police, doing to allow these awful lanes to continue with their dens of infamy and houses of immorality that the Premier said are there. He said that portion of the city of Sydney is full of murderers and bludgers, robbers and thieves, and the

Government has said that the police force is overstaffed—overmanned. Anyhow, now he is Premier and his Ministry is in power, if there are those places he should remove them.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: He has only just come in; you were here two and a-half years!

Mr. LANG: I say these things do not exist.

Mr. ARKINS: Do you not think you are tearing a passion to tatters?

Mr. LANG: No. I have heard that expression before. When I ask why if these places exist the forces of Government do not have them removed, Mr. Fitzpatrick interjects: "You were here two and a-half years; why did you not stop it." The answer to that is they do not exist, and what Mr. Bavin stated is a deliberate falsehood. Mr. Bavin, in defaming this country and dragging down the fair name of the city of Sydney, told a deliberate falsehood. Why is not Mr. Bavin here now? Every hon. member knows he was in the House when I started to speak, but he walked out. If these things were done it was the duty of the police, and not of the City Council, to take action.

Mr. Bavin further said that when the Council resumed certain areas in the city it should have pulled down the properties on them. It should have pulled down all Brisbane-street, all the little properties about Lower Campbell-street, and what is known as Frog Hollow, in order to remove those things which he said were blots on our fair city. Because the Council did not pull them down it is corrupt. I was Treasurer for some years, and so was the hon. member for Orange. Mr. Bavin has that position now. We all know that there are very many houses that should be pulled down. We did not pull them down for the simple reason that homes are needed there at rents which can be afforded by the men who work on the water-front, loading and unloading cargo and coaling ships. For that reason the homes are allowed to remain. They will remain, we hope, until such time as homes can be built elsewhere at rents which will be within the means of those

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who require them. Was it up to the City Council to pull homes down over the inmates' heads, and turn people into the street until the Council was prepared to find homes elsewhere for them? As Alderman Burke remarked, the reason the City Council wanted to go further afield, as the first step towards a Greater Sydney, was the urgent necessity for getting cheap land on which it could build homes for the people at rents they could afford to pay. There is no possibility of building homes for working-men on land costing £2,000 a foot. The interest on the cost of the land alone would represent a higher rent than they could pay. So they proposed to go out a little further, as far as La Perouse, where land might be purchased for £2 or £3 per foot, or less, and build workmen's homes. Then Frog Hollow and Brisbane-street could be demolished, and great warehouses, factories and emporiums built there. Fancy the Labour party turning men, women and children into the streets in these days, and telling them to go and buy homes, when I know that many members of the Opposition are trying to obtain houses and cannot get them at anything like decent rents! How can working-men, out of their paltry wages, pay the rents demanded by the people who own property to-day? There is no ground for any charge of corruption.

Supposing the justification and the need for this bill were that the City Council was corrupt, we should never attempt to try them here. How could Parliament do that—this partisan House, divided into three parties? Fancy this House sitting down to judge any man's probity! Fancy it conducting an inquiry as to whether a thing was right or wrong! Imagine our having the time to sit here and quietly and carefully sift the evidence to find out whether the City Council was corrupt or not. That is a duty that devolves upon a royal commission—upon some authority solely engaged upon that work. No man or woman should be accused and condemned without having a fair chance to defend himself or herself. If I had had any proof when Premier of this State, if I had been satisfied that

there was corruption in the city of Sydney, had any charges come before me showing sufficient ground for an inquiry, I would have done what anybody ought to do—appointed a royal commission to ascertain whether such charges were true. But I should want to be satisfied first that there was a case. Here, however, the Premier comes along and not only puts these flimsy charges before the House and the country, but holds them sufficient to condemn the City Council. Well, then, there ought to be sufficient ground for his appointing a royal commission to inquire into the matter. It ought not to be decided by hon. members on the floor of this House, who will have no opportunity of hearing what these men have to say in rebuttal.

Those are the reasons the Government advances for this extraordinary measure. They are so transparently flimsy, unreal and hypocritical that it will be surprising to me if intelligent members of this House and the general community outside attach any importance to them. I do not know whether hon. members on the Government side of the House realise it, but in this city of Sydney we have one of the greatest capital cities in the world. The only other member on the Government benches to address the House, besides the Premier, was Mr. Goldstein. Those two gentlemen deliberately stigmatised and defamed this great city, and I maintain that the first duty of the Government is to defend and uphold the honour of Sydney, which is one of the finest and fairest cities of the whole world.

Mr. REID: Has the leader of the Opposition any explanation to give in connection with the charge the Premier made in regard to Mr. Minahan's matter?

Mr. LANG: No. I assure the hon. member for Manly and the House that I do not know anything about that matter.

Mr. REID: It is a big matter!

Mr. LANG: I do not know whether it is or not, but when Mr. Minahan was contesting the recent elections as an opponent of mine, trying to defeat me in the interests of the Nationalists, I

offered an inquiry into the matter, but nobody wanted it. I do not know whether there is anything wrong about that matter, but if I had thought there was anything wrong about it I should have had to make some reference when appointing a royal commission. If there is any corruption or maladministration, and a royal commission is appointed to inquire into it, then the matter has to be set out in terms of a reference to the royal commission. How foolish the late Government would have looked had it appointed a royal commission and just said, "We want you to inquire into Minahan's affair." We should have had to say what the inquiry was for. I do not know anything about Mr. Minahan's affair except what I have read in the newspapers. I would give Mr. Minahan an opportunity to-morrow to defend himself if he liked, in regard to the matter, but if I did they would only say, "There is that man Lang again, seeking his blood. Poor Pat!" Mr. Minahan got quite enough from me at the elections, and he does not want any more.

Mr. REID: Mr. Bavin made very serious charges!

Mr. LANG: Does the hon. member think he did?

Mr. REID: Any man would think so!

Mr. LANG: Then if the hon. member for Manly thinks that the Premier made serious charges against Mr. Minahan—

Mr. REID: I do not say that he would do so outside the House, but he did it here!

Mr. LANG: When Mr. Bavin was in my present position, and he made charges against one of my colleagues, he asked me to appoint a royal commission, and I did so. But the Premier of the country is the only person who can do that. I cannot appoint a royal commission now; I can only ask the Premier if he will do so, and he can do it if he wishes. If the Premier wished to appoint a royal commission to inquire into matters relating to the City Council and Mr. Minahan, he could do it to-morrow, or he could do it this afternoon, but he is the only one who could do it.

Mr. REID: The hon. member had the opportunity for two years!

Mr. LANG: That is so. I have had ample opportunities of appointing royal commissions to inquire into all kinds of things. But everybody who has watched my Parliamentary career knows well enough that I am opposed to the appointment of royal commissions. I detest the idea of appointing them, because I have never known any of them to be of much use. I have generally found a royal commission to be a sort of whitewashing institution. It gives a finding, and that is the end of it. When we did appoint a royal commission, and when we said after it had given a finding, that the matter should not end there; that we would punish the offenders by placing them behind bars, then the Boyce-Bavin combination would not prosecute the offenders because they were the Fairfaxes.

The Premier has said that this bill is to fulfil his election pledges. He says it is just a temporary scheme, to lead up to a Greater Sydney. He says, "We will suspend the City Council, as I pledged myself to the electors I would, and appoint a commission for two years, and during the two years we will establish a Greater Sydney." I submit that neither of the statements of the Premier is true. The people of Sydney gave the Government no mandate at all. Every Nationalist candidate in the city of Sydney was rejected, not by a small majority, but contemptuously, by overwhelming majorities.

Mr. WALMSLEY: One was elected!

Mr. LANG: What one?

Mr. WALMSLEY: The hon. member forgets Paddington!

Mr. LANG: Paddington is not in the city area. Every Nationalist in the city area was rejected. Does the Premier wish this House and the community to believe that the electors of Albury, of Tamworth, of Orange and other outlying places in the country have the slightest interest in the question as to whether the City Council shall continue or not?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I made it a speciality!

Mr. LANG: I know that the hon. member did not. There was not one of the Nationalist candidates in the country, throughout the length and breadth

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of New South Wales, who had the slightest interest in what was occurring in the city of Sydney. Mr. Bavin has no mandate at all because of the elections for wiping out the City Council, as he made out in his statement.

Another point I want to put to hon. members as quietly as I can is that the present bill is a most damnable and cowardly attack on our most cherished and treasured principles. Throughout the Empire we have fought for and treasured the right to manage our own affairs. This bill is a negation of the universally accepted principle that there shall be no taxation without representation, and it is a complete negation of all that our forefathers have fought for. We have fought for and won the dearly-treasured right to manage our own affairs. That has always been claimed by the British people, who have fought and died and bled for the principle that there shall be no taxation without representation. I tell the good people of Sydney that, to my mind, every one who lives within the confines of this great city would be morally justified in refusing to pay a penny of taxation if this bill is passed. They would be morally justified in standing up for the right for which our forefathers fought, for the principles which were won for them, the right to control their own affairs, and to say that they shall not be taxed unless they are represented. More money comes into the coffers of the Council of the city of Sydney than flows into the coffers of the whole of the shires and municipalities of New South Wales put together. Take the city of Newcastle, the city of Broken Hill and every other centre in New South Wales where the people pay in their money and claim the right of representation. Put them all together, and we shall find that their officers handle less money than the officers of the city of Sydney Council. This degenerate Government would debar the people of Sydney of the right of saying who shall spend the money which, under the laws of this country, they are called upon to pay. And who is going to spend it? A hole-and-corner triumvirate. If

it were not so tragic it would be comical and would make a man laugh. Hon. members on the Government benches talk about Soviets and dictators. Half the population of New South Wales is in the city of Sydney.

Mr. ARKINS: Half the population of New South Wales is not within the area of the municipality of Sydney!

Mr. LANG: The Premier said it was; I do not know. But more money is paid into the coffers of the City Council than into all the municipalities and shires in the State. All that money will be spent by some individual in the city hall, who will carry out the instructions of the powers behind the Government. That man will sit in a secret room and will not be open to any criticism, and will not be bound to give one reason for his handling of the money. He will have no responsibility to anyone. All the powers of the city, its money, its wealth, and its future, its health and everything will be placed under the control of one individual who will be shut in a room that no one can approach. This Government is going to do it. What a shame! Let the Government try this system of repression. Repression will bring about revolt. I hope the people of Sydney are no less British and have within them no less a love of the spirit of liberty and self-government than the people of Boston had when they refused to submit to taxation without representation. There is no saying what these dictators will do—I like using that word now that I am in opposition. I like to throw back at those men who are trying to assume for themselves what they accused other people of being when they were not. They used to accuse me of being a dictator.

Mr. ARKINS: Not only us. What did Mr. Lazzarini say about you?

Mr. LANG: He did not say anything of the sort. Hon. members will, I hope, take it from me that I do not mean it offensively when I say that they said it about me. Good luck to them. I do not object. They used it for all it was worth. I know what political catch-cries are. It does not matter how untrue they are. It is what is called "good

dope." Hon. members opposite are dope manufacturers. They said, "Call this man a dictator," and they called me one. After they had called me a dictator for a month or two, they suddenly found it was not cutting much ice. Then they said, "We will call him a putty man, this dictator, this Mussolini, this Trotsky." My name is John, and I am nick-named Jack, so they said that I was a sort of "jumping-Jack" for someone else. How could I be a dictator and a jumping-jack at the same time? But all that does not worry me. They called me a dictator on the platform. The press, which is responsible for putting the present Government into office, called me that, in season and out of season. Now that there is no dictatorship, what does the Government propose to do? It proposes to establish a Soviet. They tell me that is what they do in Russia; I do not know. They are going to establish a Soviet, and the Soviet will appoint its dictator—its Lenin or its Trotsky. As in Russia, they are going to appoint three men, one of whom will be dictator. Who he will be, I do not know.

Mr. DAVIES: Sir Allen Taylor!

Mr. LANG: I tip Sir Mark Sheldon, who runs Anthony Hordern's. It is not unlikely that Mr. Lamb, K.C., who did his work so well for the *Herald*, the Cutlacks, and others, and Sir Arthur Cocks will also be members of this Soviet body. Whether they live at Vaucluse, Roseville, in the aristocratic centre of Potts Point, or in Auburn, the humble electorate which I represent, the right will be taken away from the ratepayers of the city of Sydney of electing their representatives to the City Council. The dictator of this Soviet body, which will control the civic destinies of the city of Sydney will be responsible only to an accidental junta. The present Government is only an accidental junta, because Mr. Bavin has returned from the country with a following of only thirty-three in a House of ninety, whilst the Labour party comprises forty pledged, solid, upright, honorable men. The victory achieved by Mr. Bavin recalls the rhyme about the Duke of York, who marched his soldiers up the hill and

marched them down again. In my early days in politics, when we had free-traders and protectionists, the Labour party said "a plague on both your Houses." At the last elections the Country party was in much the same position. Its slogan was "a plague on both your parties." It said, "The Labour party is no good, and the Nationalist party is mainly comprised of city lawyers like Boyce and Bavin, and we will have nothing to do with either party." The Country party exhorted the country people to have nothing to do with either the Nationalist party or the Labour party, but to trust only the Country party. In speech after speech Mr. Buttenshaw said to the people of New South Wales, "We have an arrangement with the Nationalist party to defeat the Labour party, nothing more."

MR. SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the hon. member to deal with the second reading of the bill. As leader of the Opposition, I am prepared to give him a great deal of latitude, but, at the same time, I must ask him to discuss the provisions of the measure now before the House, and to make his remarks relevant to it.

MR. LANG: I will make my remarks relevant to the bill by repeating what I have said. The Premier said that he had a mandate from the people, but I say he has not, because the Nationalist party was hopelessly defeated at the last election. Mr. Buttenshaw and the members of the Country party went round saying that they had nothing whatsoever to do with the Nationalist party, and they pledged themselves to maintain local government, and not to interfere in any way with the self-governing rights of the people. I repeat that the Premier has no mandate to interfere with any local governing body. He stated on the floor of this House that he had a mandate, but I deny it. The Nationalist party was hopelessly defeated in the metropolitan area, and the Country party pledged itself not to interfere with local government. If the Nationalist party resorts to any tomfoolery and attempts to side-step by saying that it has some sort of arrangement

with the Country party, I am compelled to quote Mr. Buttenshaw's statement that the coalition between the Nationalist and the Country parties was to remain in force only up to the time of the elections, and no longer. Every word I have said in regard to the mandate claimed by the Premier and as to what was contained in the platform put forward by the leader of the Country party is true, and I have proved up to the hilt all I have said as to this being a purely accidental Government. The Government has given the very worst advertisement it could to this great city, which is one of the fairest in the world.

This bill in effect says that in this great country of ours where we talk about freedom and democracy, we have in the city of Sydney a body of aldermen who are corrupt and that as these men have been elected on the democratic basis of government of the people by the people for the people, democracy has failed. Hon. members opposite will have to face the responsibility of having declared that the citizens of this great metropolis are not fit to be trusted with the franchise and left to choose representatives to govern their affairs. That is the advertisement which hon. members are giving to this fair city. The municipality of Sydney is one of the most democratic in the world. It is one of the most enlightened, and its municipal activities, its beautification schemes, its industrial enterprises, its free library, baths and musical recitals have called forth the admiration of visitors who have come here from all quarters of the world. It is one of the first cities in the world and yet this Government of contractors' tools is about to degrade it to the level of a Chinese village. It has immense wealth and immense works and any amount of money to spend and the only crime I can see that the citizens of Sydney are alleged to have committed, is the crime of having returned Labour men to administer their affairs. Beyond this I can see nothing wrong that has been done by the citizens. I admit that the policy carried out by the Labour Government and the Labour party in the city is repugnant to

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the big contractors and wealthy people who in the past secured control of the City Council and made fabulous fortunes out of municipal contracts. One of the main objects of this bill is the re-introduction of the old Tory system of graft and the manipulation of contracts. The principal movers for the bill are the wire-pullers of the Civic Reform Association, which in its application to the municipality of Sydney is just another name for the Nationalist consultative council, which operates in the political sphere. Both bodies are controlled by the same people and no alderman with any claim to honesty and uprightness would dare to stand up and deny the truth of that statement.

Every bill has something in it and there are two parts in this bill. The first part makes provision for jobs for three hungry and ambitious Nationalists for a couple of years at high salaries. At the same time the commissioners are to be empowered to help their friends to profitable contracts. If there is any evidence of corruption the Government should have appointed a commission of inquiry, meanwhile leaving the control of their own affairs in the hands of the citizens; but here we have the Premier coming along and asking us to declare that the twenty-six aldermen in the City Council are rotten and corrupt. The Premier went further than that. He said that this rottenness and corruption did not end with the aldermen, but extended to the officials of the City Council. Not only, according to the Nationalists, are the people's representatives in the City Council of Sydney rotten with corruption, but the officials of every department of the City Council are also corrupt. If they are all corrupt, who is going to guarantee the integrity or the honesty of the commissioners who are to hold such responsible positions? If the aldermen and the officials of the city of Sydney have been tried and found wanting, who is going to say where these three angels from heaven are to be found?

What the Government wants is not so much clean government, not so much to keep the affairs of the City Council

clean, as to get hold of the right of spending millions of money. It cannot get that through the polls; it cannot get it through the civic elections; but it can get it through the hands of the three men, the three dictators who are not to be responsible to the people. If it were that by any possible means the present Government had any sort of a mandate, which it has not, then I would like to draw the attention of the House to the treatment members of both sections of the Ministerial party—the Country party and the Nationalist party—meted out, both in this Chamber and in another place, when the late Government was in power. Every piece of legislation which went forward was put to the test of whether I had uttered it in my policy speech. Members of the nominee House wore out copies of my policy speech in seeing if everything submitted to them was in that policy speech. I have proved that one measure was not in the Premier's policy speech. I have shown that by proving that he has not a majority. I have shown that it was not in the Country party's policy. If the same test is put on this question the Government has no right to pass the bill. Either those who were opposed to the Labour party were wrong then or they are wrong now. They cannot have it both ways. At one time or other they must be wrong for they said we had no power to pass certain legislation inasmuch as it was not in my policy speech. It does not require a great deal of thought to understand why this bill has been brought into Parliament. Three years ago the citizens of Sydney elected a majority of Labour aldermen to the Council of the city of Sydney, and the Nationalists fear that if a poll were taken next month, as it must be taken if this bill is not passed, the citizens will return a similar civic government to control the City Council. Judging by the decision of the people at the general elections, the Nationalists see there would be no hope of their getting control of the Council of Sydney again. So they have resorted to the dictatorial methods of abolishing the Council altogether and setting up in its

place an authority that will be the mere puppet of the Nationalist consultative council.

My friend may ask where the Nationalist consultative council comes in. The individual who is most prominently before the public in this matter of the abolition of the City Council is Mr. Murdoch, M.L.C. Mr. Murdoch is one of the wealthiest merchants in the city of Sydney and a very large property owner. He is the spokesman of the wealthiest merchants in Sydney. In addition to his being one of the wealthiest merchants in Sydney, he is the prime mover behind this movement to abolish the City Council. He is one of the leading members of the Nationalist consultative council. That council will tell the Bavin-Boyce combination what it has to do. The Government is setting up this Soviet over the city of Sydney absolutely at the dictation of Mr. Murdoch, M.L.C., the wealthy merchant of Park-street, the very man who during the late referendum campaign paid thousands of pounds to a man to write imitations of Cicero's great letters to his son. He got that man to write *The Letters of a Successful Merchant to his son*. He got that written because he thought Mr. Bruce might give him a title. That is what is done by Mr. Murdoch, M.L.C., head of the Civic Reform Association; the rich merchant of Park-street; the man who sells his rags to the workers of the city of Sydney. He is a member of the Nationalist consultative council that controls Mr. Bavin. Not only is Mr. Murdoch, M.L.C., all those things, but he is also a director of the *Evening News*—that organ of democracy, which is owned by rich city merchants who control the Nationalist consultative council, which controls this Government and compels it to pass this bill. In his speech the Premier did nothing but quote a number of statements from the *Sydney Morning Herald* and other newspapers. It was Mr. Murdoch who, with his power on the *Evening News* and on the Civic Reform Association, worked up this agitation and tried to make out there was a popular demand for the abolition of the City Council.

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This gentleman is not new in the Nationalist consultative council; he is not new on the *Evening News*; he is not new to the Civic Reform Association. He has for many years been trying to get control of the City Council, and trying by a press campaign to bulldoze the Labour aldermen. The Civic Reform party miserably failed, although it used all the power of the Nationalist consultative council and the press of the day, in its attempt to control the affairs of the city. With all their wealth and power they have had to get back to a dictatorship, abolish the City Council, and put in control this Soviet organisation to administer the city of Sydney. These persistent merchants, who control the Government, and who sought to control the city, but failed, would not brook any delay, because they thought the council, in its own right and in its own power, would very likely take a referendum of the citizens of Sydney. If it did so, and it was shown that the citizens were opposed to handing over their own control and giving up their rights of self-government, they knew the Government would not dare to go on in the face of that. These wealthy manipulators of the Government determined not to be checked; and so pressure was brought to bear upon the Government to bring this bill in immediately. That is the reason for the haste. That is why they want to force it through. That is why a bill which will take away the rights and privileges the people have fought for is brought in quickly, and why there can be no delay. The matter is urgent because the men who control this Government from behind, feared the City Council might take a referendum. It would then be impossible to get such a bill through, and they would not be able to get into their own hands the handling of the millions of money of the people of Sydney.

The bill is an extraordinary document and is without a parallel in the history of the British Parliaments. It may be divided into two parts. The first part gives to the three commissioners the power to take on the rights and functions of the City Council, and the second

gives authority to inquire into the administration of the previous council. The measure contravenes a number of principles which many people believed the most Tory forces would have respected. First, the leading principle that is jettisoned in this bill is the principle of British polity—that there shall be no taxation without representation. That is a fundamental principle that has marked the whole of the political life of the British Empire since the days of George III. It was disregard of this principle during the reign of that monarch that lost the British Empire a continent. It might have been thought that a Ministry which is domineered by city lawyers, such as the Boyce-Bavin combination is, would hesitate before repeating an act which even in the comparatively dark days of George III was violently resented by the people. Second, the bill is contrary to the expressed wishes of the people of Sydney, who rejected the Nationalist policy by an overwhelming majority at the last elections. Third, it is a denial to the people of Sydney of their rights of self-government. Fourth, it is contrary to the democratic principle that the people should control, through their representatives, the collection and expenditure of public funds; and fifth, it transfers the power of the Government to appoint royal commissions to persons outside the Government. I do not know whether hon. members on the Government side of the House realise how serious the position is. Hitherto we have cherished the belief that the Cabinet, which is responsible to Parliament, is the only power that can appoint royal commissions and draw up references. Under this bill the power to appoint royal commissions is given away by the Government to three individuals, whoever they may be, who are to be appointed to control the destinies of the great city of Sydney. I submit that that portion of the bill is a most monstrous violation of the people's rights. The first part hands over the business of the City Council to three commissioners. There

is nothing in the bill to indicate what qualifications are required in the men who will be appointed.

Mr. JAKES: Yes, there is. The bill says "men of integrity"!

Mr. LANG: There is nothing in the bill to say what qualifications shall be held by the gentlemen appointed. But even supposing that were stated in the bill, the Government could still appoint any incapable, doddering old men who happened to be looking to the Nationalists for jobs. A man might be of the utmost integrity, but because he was out of a job or had rendered some service to the Nationalist party he could, on those grounds alone, be given one of these positions, costing not the Government and not the Nationalists, but the people of Sydney, many thousands of pounds. It was, I believe, deliberately intended by the Government that there should be that omission from this bill. The Boyce-Bavin combination does not want men of ability, character or integrity for these positions; they want men who will become the puppets of the Nationalist consultative council, and of Mr. Boyce and Mr. Bavin. The commissioners are not even to be selected by Parliament. This House will have no voice in their appointment. All this bill does is to give the Government, or the Nationalist consultative council, power to hand over the complete control of the City of Sydney to this triumvirate—this Soviet, one of whom shall be a dictator. These three puppets, or members of this proposed Soviet, will have tremendous power. They will have the right to levy taxes on all the people, all the wealth, and all the property of the city of Sydney. They will have power to let contracts, running into hundreds of thousands of pounds in a year. They will have power to compromise any claims against the city of Sydney. They will have the power to sell or lease or dispose of any available assets of the City Council, including, of course, the electricity department, and they may cancel or issue leases of all the valuable properties the City Council owns. They will have power over millions and millions of pounds of the people's money,

being answerable to nobody except the consultative council of the Boyce-Bavin combination.

Mr. JAKES: I know the hon. member would like to be fair. Has he read the bill? It says that they cannot sell!

Mr. LANG: I say they can.

Mr. JAKES: Read clause 3, which says they cannot!

Mr. LANG: I say they can, and the hon. member may contradict me. All this power I have mentioned will be vested in three unnamed individuals, who are to be responsible to nobody. That is a condition of affairs without parallel in municipal history. The only reckoning that these three individuals will have to make will be that once a year, after they have had a full run for twelve months, they will have to prepare a report, to be submitted to the Minister. That report will have nothing to do with us, or with anybody else but the Minister.

It is worth remembering, as we are giving the commissioners all these powers, that most valuable leases of city property are falling due in the City Council in the next two years. The great bulk—in fact, almost all—are leases of importance, and they will be handled by these three men, who will be responsible to nobody and checked by nobody. Do we not begin to see that it is worth somebody's while to besmirch the fair name of this city of Sydney, and appoint a dictator and a triumvirate, in order that the Nationalist consultative council may have the handling of all these valuable leases within the next two years? It has been said that most of the land held by the City Council is to be sold to the wealthy friends of the Nationalist party, and that this is one of the greatest motive powers causing the consultative council to push the Government in appointing this commission to control the city and wipe out the rights of the citizens.

A most extraordinary clause in this bill gives the right to any of the commissioners to also be the director of a banking company, with which the City has an account. It was because of this

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clause that I previously suggested certain names in connection with the commission. Why is such a clause required?

Mr. JAKES: Cannot a bank director serve as an alderman now?

Mr. LANG: I am pointing out that this is an extraordinary clause, and will permit a commissioner who is handling millions of pounds of the citizens' money to remain the director of a bank. There is an inflexible rule in public life that no person holding a public office shall at the same time have any connection with the control of any business dealing with the public body with which he is connected. He cannot hold an interest or office in a financial concern with which that body deals. Provision is absolutely made for that, and a British community always jealously guards the purity of public life. It has been its proud boast that this rule has been observed inflexibly, but this Government has deliberately inserted in this bill a clause which makes the way easy for the introduction into our public life of those forms of bribery and corruption which have been a feature in the affairs of other countries, and which we have always regarded with abhorrence. I want to know, if I can find out, why this particular clause was inserted in the bill. Was it done in order that a director of the Commonwealth Bank might be appointed to the commission? I understand that at the present time the City Council deals with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. Is this clause put in to enable one of the gentlemen whom the Bruce-Page Government has put on the directorship of the Commonwealth Bank to occupy a place on the commission? Is this clause, which breaks down all that British people have held to for generations, inserted so as to enable some friend of the wealthy to step from the directorship of the Commonwealth Bank on to this commission? If that gentleman is a man of honour and integrity and is prepared to make a sacrifice in order to serve the State of New South Wales and the City of Sydney, he will sacrifice his small position as a director of the Commonwealth Bank. This clause must have been deliberately put into the bill, and

the future will show if a director of the Commonwealth Bank goes on to the commission. If he does, we shall know that the bill has been deliberately framed for that purpose. If it is not for that purpose, it may have been done to enable the Hon. Sir Arthur Cocks to go on the commission.

Mr. JAKES: Or Mr. Treble, or anyone else!

Mr. LANG: Or Mr. Jaques, or Mr. Kay, or Miss Preston Stanley. Anyone can see that clause is put in for some purpose—

Lt.-Colonel BRUXNER: What purpose?

Mr. LANG: To appoint the director of a bank as one of the commissioners of the City of Sydney. We do not allow anyone to be placed in charge of the affairs of a municipal council if he is interested in some private concern or corporation which deals with that council. Yet here is a clause which has been deliberately put in the bill in order to enable a director of a bank to be made a commissioner. They can say what they like about it, it is a clause which has never been inserted in any bill in any other Parliament in the British Empire. It is a deliberate breaking down of one of the greatest bulwarks that have been erected in order to protect purity of administration. Here is a deliberate act of breaking down, and the reason for it is that the City Council deals with the Commonwealth Bank. If it is not for that reason, it is in order that Sir Arthur Cocks, who is a director of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney, may be appointed. If he is made a commissioner he may transfer the business of the City Council from the Commonwealth Bank to the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney.

Lt.-Colonel BRUXNER: You are still a long way off in your guess!

Mr. LANG: I have a third guess coming. The hon. member says it is no one in the Commonwealth Bank, and it is not Sir Arthur Cocks. I come now to the third one. There is an eminent gentleman who is now the managing director of Anthony Horderns Limited. I mean Sir Mark Sheldon. He is another wealthy man, and is a director of the Aus-

tralian Bank of Commerce. If he were appointed to the City Council he would be able to transfer all the banking business of the City Council to the Australian Bank of Commerce and not forfeit his right to be a commissioner.

Mr. NESS: You could have a clause put in to prevent that!

Mr. LANG: The point is that such a clause should never have been put in the bill. It is not permissible for a man to hold a high municipal office and at the same time be a director of some bank or company. It is recognised everywhere that it is an intolerable, un-British, and improper position to occupy. It has never been mentioned in any bill, because it is not allowed, but here in this bill permission is given to do something which has never been done before in the British Empire.

I now come to the second purpose of the bill, which is to give the commissioners the right to appoint a royal commission to investigate the affairs of the City Council. This has hitherto been the prerogative of the Crown and Parliament should be loath to part with the power of appointing royal commissions. Not only is the commission to be given all the rights of the City Council, but it is to be given the greatest prerogative of the Crown. No power like it has ever been delegated in the history of our politics. The royal commissioner, having been selected by the commission, will inquire into such transactions as the commission directs. It will not inquire into anything that Parliament or the people want inquired into; it will inquire into what the City Council commission requires it to investigate. It is an admirable arrangement for the wealthy friends of the Government, that the commission shall appoint the royal commissioner, who shall only inquire into what the commission instructs it to investigate. The pretence under which this Soviet is being set up in the city of Sydney is, as the hon. member for Coogee said, that somebody told somebody that somebody else told them that bribery was going on in the City Council. On the say-so of these people we have all this turmoil for the purpose of

shifting the present City Council. If definite or serious charges are made against the City Council, it is the duty of the Government to draw up the terms of reference, and then go to the Chief Justice and ask him to appoint one of the judges to act as royal commissioner. If one of the judges is not available, it is the duty of the Government to appoint a royal commissioner itself to inquire into definite charges of bribery and corruption, not the hearsay charges which have been recited by the Premier on the floor of this House. A proper inquiry should be held so that justice may be done. If bribery and corruption are going on in the City Council, why does not the Government follow the correct course and appoint a royal commission to investigate them? If any of the aldermen or officers are found guilty the Government should see that they, together with those who offered the bribes, are punished. Only after the fullest investigation, and only after the aldermen have been charged, tried, and found guilty, should any attempt be made to sweep away the City Council. Then, and not until then, should the City Council be suspended. Because newspapers make charges against aldermen, because some person on the street corner says something about the twenty-six upright men, twenty-six men of the highest integrity are condemned unheard. The next City Council election should be allowed to take place, and the people should be permitted to continue to control their own affairs. Why should the people be asked to surrender their right of self-government simply because these vague charges have been made? Why should there be a distinction in the case of the City Council? Why should the City Council be picked out? There must be some reason for it.

Mr. JAMES: Because the City Council does not work under the Local Government Act. The Cessnock Council, for instance, works under the Local Government Act, and the whole of the aldermen were "kicked out" and an administrator put in!

Mr. LANG: In recent years there have been irregularities in connection

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with other municipal councils in this State. The case of Cessnock is not the only one. I have a distinct recollection of trouble in connection with the Willoughby Council, and of the Assistant Treasurer, Mr. Stevens, being called upon to inquire and make a report on the matter of certain missing papers. Mr. Stevens duly reported, but nobody suggested that the Willoughby Council should be abolished and the municipality put under a commission. About the same time there was similar trouble in connection with the Kuringai Shire Council. Complaints were made that documents were missing, and that the accounts were inaccurate, but the shire was not placed under a commission. Will the hon. member for Hornsby say that because those complaints were made at Kuringai Shire the Council should be placed under the control of a commission? Charges of bribery were made in connection with a member of the Hurstville Council. It was alleged in regard to the Goulburn Council that tenderers were told to add £500 to their tenders so that the amount might be distributed amongst the aldermen.

Mr. SANDERS: Will you admit that your Government was asked to hold an inquiry into that matter and that it did not do it?

Mr. LANG: No.

Mr. SANDERS: Questions were asked in the House about the Goulburn Council!

Mr. LANG: It was alleged that tenderers were told to add £500 to their tenders so that the amount might be distributed amongst the aldermen. Similar criticism was levelled against the aristocratic Katoomba Council. Charges were also made with regard to irregularities and laxity in connection with the Manly Council, whilst the Parramatta Council was disturbed by charges of bribery against certain aldermen and officers. Nobody dreamt of suggesting that all these councils should be abolished and placed under commission, simply because some of the individuals associated with them had been charged with improper practices. The obvious course for the Premier to follow in the

case of the City Council is to institute an inquiry with a view to establishing the guilt, if any, of the persons charged with bribery and corruption. If they are found guilty, they should be punished. Again I ask why should there be a distinction between the Willoughby Council, the Kuring-gai Shire Council, the Hurstville Council, the Manly Council, the Parramatta Council, and the City Council of Sydney? Why not institute an inquiry to find out which of the city aldermen, if any, have been guilty of bribery and corruption and have the offenders punished? In that way justice would be done. In connection with the councils I have mentioned proper steps were taken to ascertain if there had been improper practices; and if there had been the offenders would have been punished.

I will conclude by repeating what I said at the beginning of my speech. I pointed out that the Government had no mandate to abolish the City Council and to put it under a commission, because, despite Mr. Bavin's utterances regarding the City Council, the candidates of the Nationalist party were rejected in the city electorates. The leader of the Country party is now in charge of the House, and I would remind him that in his policy speech he stated that he would do nothing which would whittle away the powers of local government. As a matter of fact, he said that he was rather in favour of the creation of new States. He said that he would endeavour to make local government a reality, and that he would extend it wherever it was possible. Those were the nice words uttered by Mr. Batten-shaw, who is now Deputy Premier of New South Wales. Although he said all these fine things about giving the people control of their own destinies, now at the whim of the Murdochs and the Nationalist consultative council he answers the whip and falls into line. Like the Bavin-Boyce crowd he must willy nilly let these people get control of the millions of money which pass annually through the City Treasury so that they may be able to assist the wealthy friends of the Nationalist party

to become still wealthier, and so that they may help the wealthy contractors who hover around like birds of prey ready to swoop down upon the resources of the City Council, which are supplied by the citizens of Sydney.

Mr. FOSTER (Vaucluse) [5.30]: I have on previous occasions listened to the leader of the Opposition with considerable interest, but the speech he made this afternoon was absolutely the worst I have ever heard him deliver. He was intoxicated with the exuberance of his own verbosity. As a physical feat the hon. member's performance was unexampled. There is one thing I have learned from the leader of the Opposition to-day and that is the meaning of the phrase "getting the wind up." The leader of the Opposition treated the Premier with scant courtesy. With tears in his eyes—crocodile tears—he implored the Premier to extend the time allowed for the debate in order that the hon. member for Surry Hills might have an opportunity of speaking.

Mr. DAVIES: Why are you taking his place now?

Mr. FOSTER: Because I have a perfect right to speak. Hon. members on this side have treated the Opposition most considerately, as only three members from the Government benches have spoken on the bill. The leader of the Opposition has resorted to stone walling tactics to exclude the very man whom he told the Premier the House was anxious to hear and who should be heard. In addition to that he forgot himself to the extent of speaking of the Premier as "Bloody Bavin."

HON. MEMBERS: No, no, he did not say that!

Mr. FOSTER: The Speaker's attention was engaged elsewhere at the moment or he would not have allowed such an expression to pass. He likened Mr. Bavin to Lord Chief Justice Jeffreys of infamous memory and said that as Judge Jeffreys was called "Bloody Judge Jeffreys" so he would be entitled to call the Premier "Bloody Bavin." If there was anything in the life of the Premier that would

permit of a comparison between him and "bloody Judge Jeffreys" who was steeped in iniquity the Premier would never for one moment control the men who sit behind him. He could not have insulted the Premier of a great State more effectively. But I think he was suffering from mental aberration.

I greatly regret the necessity of having to vote for the removal of a local governing body, but I am forced to vote because I believe the circumstances of the case warrant it. If the Premier has not given the leader of the Opposition a sufficient number of cases to warrant the action he is now taking I propose to some extent to supply the deficiency. I regard local governing bodies as being of the utmost importance to any community. Local government has been one of the crowning achievements of the British race and we in Australia have learned something from Great Britain in the art of local government. We have proved to the whole world our capacity to govern ourselves. I do not know if members of this House are aware that the actual number of local governing bodies in this State amounts to 320. In all those our citizens are giving honorary service faithfully and well. I want to emphasise something Mr. Goldstein said last night which I do not think he made clear. We of the Nationalist party believe that the Civic Reform party in the City Council has done good service for the citizens of this State. They have for the last few years been fighting against the iniquities that are being perpetrated or are being attempted by the Labour party in the City Council under the name of democracy. One cannot mention names here, but there is one citizen there who has served, I think twenty-two years in the City Council. He is a barrister by profession. That man has contributed in honorary service to the value, if it can be put in terms of cash, of many thousands of pounds. The thing I regret in connection with the proposed commission is that what has been attempted, and sometimes effectively done, by men who give their services to the State, will have to be taken up now by men who will reap great remuneration.

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I suggest to the Premier that if it is possible at least one man should be placed upon that commission—

An HON. MEMBER: Name him!

Mr. FOSTER: Hon. members may surmise whomsoever they like. An hon. member has mentioned the name of Mr. Milner Stephen. The man I had in my mind when I was speaking of the alderman who gave twenty years of service was Mr. Milner Stephen. If the Premier, who has stated he will have no political appointments to these positions, appointed Mr. Milner Stephen as one of the commissioners, I venture to say that the whole community would acclaim that appointment as one of the best that could possibly be made. The hon. member stated that I was referring to Mr. Milner Stephen. I do not know what warrant he has for making that statement. He cannot forget that I myself have some municipal experience. How does he know that the Premier is not considering me?

It is a tribute to local government in this State that since 1906 the accounts of all local governing bodies have been subjected to audit, and also to examination by the inspectors of various departments, and on not one occasion has anything seriously wrong been found with those accounts. I speak of those municipalities which are under the domination of the Local Government Department. We do not want to wipe out any of those bodies, which are performing their work so well. Throughout the State there is only one council which has been put under a commission. I refer to the Cessnock Council, and it was not due to corruption, but only to the fact of quarrels occurring among members of the council. Hon. members must realise with what regret I support such a motion as this. Many are aware that there are hon. members not connected with the Sydney Municipal Council, whose names have been respected for civic work done. I feel the greatest regret at being compelled to be one of those who must vote for the temporary abrogation of the rights of any local government body.

An HON. MEMBER: Just so; you are compelled!

Mr. FOSTER: I speak of my own conscience as the compelling force. A couple of nights ago the leader of the Opposition asked me to tell him what I knew about anything corrupt, or savouring of graft, in the City Council.

Debate adjourned.

ALLOCATION OF TIME FOR BUSINESS.

Mr. BAVIN: In pursuance of standing order 175B I wish to give notice that the business to be dealt with on Tuesday next will be as follows:—Sydney Corporation (Commissioners) Bill, second reading to be completed in the House at 4.30 p.m., and the Committee and report stages, third reading, and message to the Council, at 6 p.m.

House adjourned at 5.47 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 22nd November, 1927.

Assent to Bills—Leave of Absence—Petition—Women's College Amendment Bill—Amendment of Standing Orders—Conveyancing Amendment Bill (Second Reading)—Adjournment (Sydney Corporation (Commissioners) Bill).

The PRESIDENT took the chair.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Royal assent to the following bills reported:—

Supply Bill.

Income Tax (Companies) Bill.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

The PRESIDENT announced the receipt of a message from his Excellency the Governor intimating that he had granted leave of absence for a further period of six months from 26th October, 1927, to the Hon. H. D. McIntosh.

PETITION.

The Hon. J. F. COATES presented a petition from the Municipal Corporation of Sydney against the passing of

the Sydney Corporation (Commissioners) Bill and praying that the petitioners be heard at the bar of the House through counsel, Mr. G. E. Flannery, K.C.

Petition received and read by the Clerk.

Motion (by the Hon. J. F. Coates) proposed:

That upon the order of the day being read for the second reading of the Sydney Corporation (Commissioners) Bill the Municipal Council of Sydney, whose petition to this House was received this day, be heard by counsel at the bar of the House in support of the prayer of the petition.

The Hon. F. S. BOYCE: The Government offers no objection to Mr. Flannery's being heard, but it is of great importance that expedition should be used with respect to this measure. Nominations for the City Council close on 1st December, and it is desired to get the measure through well before that time. I was acquainted with this motion and I have arranged, subject always to the consent of the House, that when we get the measure from the Legislative Assembly, which I anticipate will be immediately after the tea adjournment, I shall move the first reading. I shall then ask the House to adjourn the second reading till a little later, and let counsel address the House. I do not propose to go on with the second reading to-night, but in order to meet the convenience of Mr. Flannery, K.C., as well as of hon. members, and the Government, I have arranged for Mr. Flannery to make his address about a quarter past 7. I shall then move the adjournment of the House, and shall take the second reading in the ordinary way to-morrow afternoon.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

WOMEN'S COLLEGE AMENDMENT BILL.

Bill presented and (on motion by the Hon. J. Ryan) read a first time.

AMENDMENT OF STANDING ORDERS.

Motion (by the Hon. F. S. Boyce) agreed to:

That the report of the Standing Orders Committee in reference to the proposed