

H USE F KEYS.

DOUGLAS, TUESDAY, MAY 14 1918.

Present: The Speaker (Mr Dalrymple Maitland, J.P.), Messrs W. H. Kitto, F. Dalgleish, E. Callister, W. C. Southward, W. F. Cowell, W. Christian, E. J. Curphey, J. R. Kerruish, W. T. Crennell, T. H. Cormode, S. Walker Anderson, J. Qualtrough, A. Qualtrough, J. Garside, M. Carine, and R. Clucas.

INCOME TAX.

The Speaker: I have received a resolution from the Manx Labour Party. The enclosing letter does not say I am to read it to the House, but I take it that is what they mean. The resolution reads: "That the Executive Committee of the Manx Labour Party welcomes the application of the principle of Income Tax in the Isle of Man, and protests against the lowering of the minimum below the English minimum." That comes from Mr Emery, the hon. secretary.

SUGAR FOR BLACKBERRIES.

The Speaker: The following has been received from his Excellency with reference to the request about sugar for blackberries. Up to now we have discussed this in private. Perhaps it is as well now the public should know what decision has been come to.

Government Office, Isle of Man, 4th May, 1918.
Sir.—With reference to the deputation which waited on His Excellency, relative to a supply of sugar being allotted for making jam of blackberries, I am directed by His Excellency the Lieut. Governor to inform you that the Ministry of Food has been approached on the subject, and the Department regrets that it is unable to adopt the proposal that the total allotment of sugar under the Home Grown Fruit Scheme should be allocated to this Government for the purposes of a separate scheme for jam-making for the Isle of Man, which would embrace blackberries.—I am, Sir, Your obedient servant,
B. E. SARGEANT.

The Secretary, House of Keys.

Mr Crennell: The reading of that letter will not, I think, convey adequately to the

public what the attitude of this House has been in the matter, and it may be well, in a few words, to state what steps this House took. The House unanimously felt that the arrangement by which persons who were in the fortunate position of growing fruit of their own should be supplied with a certain amount of sugar for preserving that fruit, was unfair to the working classes of the Island, who undoubtedly need jam more than those who have gardens of their own—chiefly the wealthier classes. The view the House took was this—in the case of the working classes, all provisions are very dear just now, and they may find it difficult to get eggs, bacon, and other foods, and it is all the more necessary they should be able to obtain, if possible, cheap jam. The class for whom sugar is being provided, in the great majority of cases, will be people who can better afford to provide some substitute for jam. Then the Isle of Man is in a peculiar position, we think, in that it is a great place for growing blackberries, and our landowners and tenants in the Isle of Man are not so selfish or exclusive in their views, and it is well-known that blackberry-picking is allowed, and in a great many places large quantities of blackberries are picked. Great numbers of the working class and other people gather blackberries and make them into jam. Now, under the arrangement which is in existence, except such blackberry jam as could be made by professional jam manufacturers and by people who saved sugar out of their ordinary rationed allowance, not a single blackberry could be preserved in the Isle of Man this year. Now, that seemed to the House a monstrous arrangement. Gooseberries and other very acid fruits can be made into jam, and, as the hon. member for Rushen, Mr Quine, pointed out, those fruits require far more sugar per pound for preserving than blackberries require; so for every pound of sugar you could get far more blackberry jam than you could

from more acid fruit. So the House unanimously agreed to suggest to his Excellency that he should take the matter up with the English Government, and endeavour, if possible, to get an increased allowance of sugar for the Island, to be allotted to persons here who would undertake to make blackberry jam, and failing that, that he would get the consent of the English Government to our allotting such sugar as might be allocated to persons all over the Island who are entitled to sugar rations for jam-making, on their undertaking to make it into jam without any limitation, without any condition that the fruit so preserved must be fruit of their own growing. His Excellency very cordially approved of the suggestion made, and promised to do his very utmost to get the English Government, at least, to allow us to distribute such sugar as they did allot to us as we thought best for the Island. We had all very good hopes that would be accomplished, as it was so eminently reasonable for the good of the public, but the letter which you, Mr Speaker, have read shows that his Excellency's efforts and our efforts have failed. I very much regret that is so, and I think the public generally will regret it. At any rate, this House has done all it could do in the interests of the community at large, and especially of the working classes, who need and could have had a great deal of blackberry jam preserved under the conditions we suggested.

Mr Culphey: I do not think there is very much to regret after all. I was one of those who voted with the hon. member for Ramsey in this matter, but I did not think there was much in it. We only get six pounds per head for this Island for fruit of our own growing. Very little fruit is grown in the towns of the Island. I suppose I would be safe in saying that for every one who gets six pounds of sugar, there would be five or six persons who would not get it, so that if you divide the six pounds over the population, it only means one pound or so of sugar per head.

Mr Crennell: Ten pounds per head was suggested when we made the application.

Mr Culphey: When it comes to be divided up, it would not fall over one or one-and-a-half pounds per head, and it is not much less that anyone will suffer.

Mr Cowell: I do not agree with the hon.

member for Michael. I think, as has been pointed out, that the hardship is going to fall on those who are going to pay the extra cost of jam and who can least afford it. As regards fruit-growing, I instance my own case—a farmer who grows a certain quantity of apples, gooscherries, and so on. He is able to put a pig in salt, he can kill a duck or a fowl, he has many ways of providing food. On the other hand, the poor labouring man with a family cannot afford to put a pig in a barrel, or to give eggs to his children. Again, most of the children of the working classes take their dinners to school with them. The price of butter is high to-day, and I am certain it is going to appreciate all over the country. Now, if these people could go round the country and pick half-a-dozen quarts of blackberries, I am satisfied, like the hon. member for Ramsey, it would be a great boon to the working classes.

Mr Cornode: I do not think at this stage, we should go back on the merits of the case, which have already been discussed. There was absolute unanimity, and earnest unanimity, on the part of members when this resolution was passed. I rather regret the remarks of the hon. member for Michael, who "pooh-poohs" the thing as if it was not worth talking about, because it is an important question to a large class of this community. A numerous class of children bring their dinners to school; they cannot afford to buy butter by way of relish, but they could manage to get blackberries. It was not a case of making jam to last 12 months. A very little sugar would have been sufficient to put with the blackberries to make it appetising, and it would have been a boon to the working classes of this country. The arrangement suggested was one that should have commended itself to reasonable people. I am sure that we all do regret that the people across the water would not allow us to make use of the sugar in the way we thought the best for the community.

Mr Callister: Is it reasonable to ask for the letter which was sent on to England, or could we have the purport of it? There may be some little misunderstanding. I cannot, for the life of me, understand why the Imperial Parliament will not allow us to have the same amount of sugar per head, to be distributed by us as we think best. I, along with the hon. member for Ramsey, think it is most unreasonable to

give to those who have sufficient all round, and refuse the poor. If it was made clear, I think, even yet, something might be done to distribute to the people who really are in need. I would like this matter handed to a deputation—

The Speaker: We cannot push the matter any further at present.

Mr Crennell: I would like to remind the hon. member that the deputation saw his Excellency, and our Government Office took it up with the English Government. At first there was a misunderstanding. The first letter showed that he had not put the matter as the House wished. He had suggested they should give us an extra allowance, but the House again appointed a deputation, and pointed out that we did not ask for an ounce more sugar, but merely a promise that we could use such sugar as they sent to the Island for jam-making as we thought best. I do not think there is any possible room for a mistake, especially as I read the letter—to distribute the sugar they allotted to us in the way we think best. I am afraid it is impossible for the House to proceed any further.

The matter then dropped.

PROTECTION OF THE FISHING FLEET.

The Speaker: I have a reply from Mr Sargeant to the communication from the House as to protection for herring boats. His Excellency has not yet arrived, but he is receiving another deputation at twelve o'clock, and he will let me know as soon as possible when his Excellency will receive our deputation.

ADULT SUFFRAGE.

On the motion of Mr Cormode, the House proceeded with the further consideration of the Adult Suffrage Bill (second reading).

Mr Crennell: It will be remembered that the House had carried section 5, which is the central principle of the whole Bill. It is the clause which extends the franchise to all adult persons. The House had further carried an addition that all persons serving in his Majesty's forces in the present war, aged 18 and upwards, should have the privilege of exercising their vote, and also that any conscientious objector who had refused work of national importance should be debarred for five years from

exercising the franchise. Then the House further threw out a clause providing for the abolition of the plural voter. That necessitated the re-drafting of the Bill. Members will have had the amended clauses circulated. It will be seen that although we have carried clause 5, in order to give proper effect in the best way to the additions, a new clause 5 has been substituted providing that everybody who is the owner of real estate—that is re-enacting the present law—of the annual value of £4, or the occupier of real estate of the annual value of £4, can have a vote; also, all adults who live in the district for 12 months are to be entitled to vote. Then sub-section 4, new section 5, gives effect to the wish of the House with regard to persons serving in the forces—that is, "being of the age of not less than eighteen years and having his usual place of abode in this Island and not otherwise qualified as a voter, has served with his Majesty's forces during the present war." Then there is this proviso:—

Provided always that, notwithstanding anything herein contained, for a period of five years from the termination of the war, no one shall be allowed to vote who has claimed exemption from military service on the grounds of conscientious objection, and has refused to do work of national importance.

That is simply re-enacting what we have already done. I do not need to say anything about it. I shall ask the House to accept that.

The Speaker: You have not referred to what you have proposed to add to the section.

Mr Crennell: That is in the definition clause. We have not taken the definition clause at all yet. I move section 5.

Mr Anderson seconded.

Mr Cormode: Of course the House has settled this, but I would express the hope that hon. members who are responsible for re-enacting this property qualification, now they see it in print, will feel proud of it—an annual value of £4. One hundred pounds will give a man a qualification to vote in an election, so £1,000, if used properly, would give him a qualification in every constituency in this Island. That is a wonderful thing. A thousand pounds worth ten votes, while a human being is only worth one!

Mr Garside: Can this be divided up? We are voting on all these clauses.

The Speaker: I think so. We want to substitute this new clause for the other.

Mr Carside: Which new one? I do not understand. Every one of these amendments to clause 5 we made in additions; then clause 5, with amendments, was put to the vote and carried, because we went forward in the Bill and went to clause 6 and carried it; then clause 7 was rejected. So I consider clause 5 was voted upon.

Mr Cormode: I have no objection to division, but I think we are doing the same thing. We voted in the sense of destroying what was provided first, but not in building up the new idea. I quite agree it would not be in order to have a discussion on that, but you can vote against everything.

The House divided on clause 5 as amended. For: Messrs Kitto, Callister, Curphey, Southward, Anderson, Walton, Kerruish, Cowell, W. Christian, A. Christian, J. Cunningham, R. Moughtin, Crennell, Carine, Garside, R. Lucas, and the Speaker—17. Against: Messrs Dalgleish, J. Qualtrough, A. Qualtrough, and Cormode—4. Clause passed.

Mr Crennell: Then clause 6. New clause 6 is the purest matter of form, because it provides that every person who comes in under the new arrangement—that is as an adult voter or as having served in his Majesty's forces—it provides simply how he shall be registered and where. It does not affect the register of other voters, which is left exactly as it was in the old proposal.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 7 (substituted) was also passed.

Section 8—after "voters" add "qualified under subsection 3 of section 5."

Mr Crennell: The effect of that is this. Clause 8 in the Bill reads "elector." That is not necessary under the present law; it is only necessary for the new voters who shall come in, so we insert after the new voter—"qualified under sub-section 3 of section 5."

Agreed.

Clauses 9 and 10 of the old print were struck out.

Mr Crennell: New section 9 provides that "except in cases of franchises expressly repealed in this Act"—that refers to the lodger vote which is obviously unnecessary now—the franchise conferred by this new Bill shall be in addition to and

not in substitution for any existing franchises. That is the effect of the proposal. I move that clause.

Mr Cormode seconded.—Carried.

New section 10.

Mr Crennell: I move that in this form:

In section 23, and in heading of last column in forms 1 and 2, of Schedule 9, of principal Act, add—"And in case of persons qualified as owners or occupiers of real estate."

I will give the House the effect of that. It is in the preparing of the list. Section 23 of the principal Act which is amended now reads as follows:—

The collector of every parish shall between the 12th and 31st May, in every year, make or cause to be made out accordingly to the form No 1 to this Act annexed accordingly to form 2 for each town lists of voters, etc.

It is only to carry out the wish of the House with regard to separate voting.

Amendment agreed to.

Section 21 provides in the electoral district of Douglas for the deposit of copies of the lists of voters at the Free Library.

Mr Crennell: The new schedule repeals section 8. Schedule 2 applies purely to lodger claims which obviously are quite unnecessary; now a man is entitled to vote when he gets 21, it is unnecessary to prove he occupied rooms, and so on. Sections 4 and 7 of the Act of 1903 are repealed. One provides for household suffrage. That has been repealed because we have re-enacted new section 5. No. 7 is practically identical with our new section 9, saying the franchises then granted were in addition to and not in substitution for existing franchises, but there will be a slight alteration in this Act, so new section 9 does away with the necessity for it.

Agreed.

Mr Carine: I do not know whether I shall be quite in order in moving a clause which has been passed and which I omitted to speak upon at the time—that is clause 12. I wanted to point out one matter with regard to posting up lists. All the provision that is made is for posting up. I suggest they should be made into book form. It is exceedingly hard to read the lists without a step-ladder as they are posted up on the Court House. If there was provision made to publish them in book form similar to what is done across the water, I think it would be a great improvement.

Mr Crennell: I think that is the intention.

The Speaker: I think the list we have is in book form. There was a case outside the Court House, and you could take the list out and read it.

Mr Carine: I have not seen it.

Mr Orennell: It is quite in line with the present arrangement.

Mr Carine: It is quite all right.

Definition clause.

Mr Orennell: I move the section. There are only two definitions—"electoral district" and the definition of "owner of real estate shall include a married woman legally possessed," etc. That simply means we are now giving the vote to married women on the basis of adult suffrage, but we also give them the same right to any other vote they may possess, the same as men have.

Agreed.

The preamble and short title were passed, and the Bill was read a second time.

REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS.

Mr Carine moved:—

"That a Committee of this House be appointed to consider and report upon a scheme for a redistribution of seats, so as to provide an equitable representation of members for the several shreadings and towns of this Island; the Committee to have power to take evidence."

Mr Carine: In moving the resolution which is down in my name, I do not think the House will expect me to enlarge upon this question to any great extent, because I am quite sure every member of this House is thoroughly conversant with the state of the different shreadings and towns with regard to their electoral representation, and, therefore, it is quite unnecessary to cite figures and persons in that light. With regard to the question of shreadings as against towns, and towns as against shreadings, if you look at the figures, you will find there is a considerable disparity in the proportionate representation of the shreadings themselves, even without comparing the shreadings against the towns. Add to that the question of this Bill which is before us this morning, and which is in a fair way to being put on the Statute Book. There is no doubt these anomalies will be subjected to revision more than at present, and the necessity will be so much the greater that the question of redistribution should be considered in all its aspects. It may be said, Why not have brought in a

Bill? Well, if a Bill had been brought in, on a question of this sort, I think there is very little chance of anyone carrying it, because there are as many divergent opinions as to how to allocate the redistribution of seats as there are on—I may say—the licensing question. Therefore, in order to bring this matter to a head, the most feasible way of bringing it into effect is that of referring it to a committee. I hope every district will be fairly represented, and in that way we shall attain the object, which will certainly be necessary if the Adult Suffrage Bill comes into operation. I, therefore, move the resolution.

Mr Garside: I beg to second the recommendation, reserving my remarks.

Mr Cornode: The difficulty is, supposing you do appoint a committee, the committee may devote a great deal of time in preparing a very elaborate scheme, perhaps a very fair scheme, but when we bring it back to the House they say "We never approved of the principle," and they may kick it out without ceremony. I remember that happening on a former occasion. I remember, when the present Receiver-General occupied the position of member for North Douglas, a committee took evidence. I remember them coming back with a scheme, but the scheme was rejected with very scant courtesy and little discussion. I think it is always right to take up the principle first. Move a resolution in favour of redistribution, and then if you carry that, move for a committee to carry it out in the fairest way. If members would be bound by the principle and abide by it, I could understand it, but I know the ways of the House. They do not look upon the appointment of a committee as an acceptance of principle. I would ask the hon. member to move at the right end—to move a resolution affirming the desirability of redistribution. I am sure I could not serve on a committee of that sort, for I should feel all the time that I was wasting time. I am not going to discuss the merits of redistribution at present, but I do think we should have something affirming the merits of redistribution before we discuss the other matter.

Mr J. Qualtrough: Of many times in the history of the Isle of Man I think this is the least opportune to bring this question forward. I do not want to say a word on the merits, but here we have a despised population. Some places are hit, worse than others. Douglas, for instance, has many empty houses. I think this question

must, in the interests of Douglas itself, stand over until the population has got back to normal times. I think the members for Douglas will be well advised not to bring this forward at the present moment. I do not want it to be said that I am against this; I am rather in favour of it, because I am satisfied we in the south of the Island are not properly represented by our members. We are entitled to a larger share of representation in this House. But apart from that question, this is not the time, and I am satisfied members of this House will agree with me that of every time in the history of the Isle of Man this is the most inopportune.

Mr Garside: I would like to reply to what has been said, though nothing seriously opposed to the motion has been said. There is only one remark, that of the hon. member for Rushen, that this is not the time. If we take that as an axiom, it will apply to a lot of other bills in the same way; several bills have been before us lately for which I consider the time has been most inopportune. In this case I feel that this is a far more urgent measure than many that have been before us. We have voted on the Adult Suffrage Bill, a measure that will make vast changes in the electorate, and this matter ought to be considered along with it. I might point out to the House that the same question arose in the English Parliament, and there they appointed an important committee known as the Speaker's Committee, to deal with it. For the Speaker of the British House of Commons to take any part on a committee, and the fact that the House requested him to be an arbitrator, shows the importance that was attached to the matter. We know the anomalies that at present exist in the electorate, whether it is considered on a population basis, on the number of electors basis, or on a rateable value basis. As my colleague has pointed out, the anomaly is not only between the towns and the shreadings, it is between one shreading and another. The work of a committee of this nature will be of the utmost value in re-ordering any differences there may be, and finding out what changes are desirable. I think on these grounds that the formation of a committee to make inquiries and report to the House is most advisable under the present circumstances.

Mr Orennell: I do not like giving a silent vote on this question. The hon. member for Peel goes to the root of the

question when he asks that the principle should first be decided. It all depends on what sort of a Committee you want to appoint. If the House is of opinion that the present political power is not equitable, and desires reform in that direction, and wishes the Committee to prepare a scheme to give effect to that, the Committee would have something to work on. I do not know whether that is the idea of the mover of the resolution. It might be held that the inclusion of the words "So as to provide an equitable representation of members" commits the House to the principle that the present representation is not equitable. It is somewhat befuddled. It might be that the House simply wants to ascertain the view of the people of the Island, whether there is general dissatisfaction at the present distribution of power, to inquire from different parts of the Island, whether there is a serious demand for redistribution. That would simply be a Committee of Inquiry, and I must admit, that it is not a Committee I would be anxious to serve on. It would take evidence, and hear the views of people all over the Island, as to whether there is genuine dissatisfaction at the present distribution of political power. If that is the intention, there is no need for the House to commit itself to any opinion. They simply appoint a Committee of Inquiry to see whether there is any legitimate grievance, and report to the House. It certainly makes the work of a Committee much more likely to be productive of good if the House declares their view before they appoint a Committee. Redistribution is not a very burning question with us in the north of the Island just at present, but I dare say, it will become more so, if my friends will persist in treating town interests, and country interests as if they were different. I can remember in my younger day, that it was always held that the interests of the Island were one—(hear, hear)—that what was good for the country, was good for the towns. That certainly holds good to day. What is good for the Northern Shreadings of the Island is of equal interest to the town. (Mr Curphoy: "Question!") I know that my hon. friend considers that the interests are opposite. The time was when the north of the Island sent five or six members to the House as a solid body, for the good of the north, town and country. It is as true to-day, as it was then that what is good for the country must be good for the town, and vice versa. But, if members will persist in acting and thinking otherwise, and

endeavour to keep the towns under, then they force this on us. It was pointed out to me this morning that in the High-Bailiff's district of the north of the Island, the populations of the town and country were about equal. There is a hundred or so of difference, yet the country has seven members. If Ramsey was represented on the same proportion, she would be entitled to six members. As I have said before, if redistribution is to be pressed it cannot be logically resisted, and it is likely to become more and more a burning question if members insist on treating the interests of town and country, as opposed to each other.

Mr Cursphey: It is because of your action.

Mr Crennell: I know that my hon. friend persists in blaming the town members. It is frequently said in this House, and outside, that majorities must rule. Majorities must rule, democracy is entitled to have its own way, and, therefore, no matter what stand the House may take the claim for redistribution cannot be resisted. It may be a long struggle, and a difficult one, but in the end it is bound to come. I do not think that the demand for redistribution can be logically resisted. It may give rise to heart burnings, but it must come in the end. The demand at first will not be increased so long as no injustice is being felt. For my own part, feeling that I cannot legitimately oppose any demand for redistribution, I propose to vote for the Committee whether they are to inquire to ascertain the feeling of the people of the Island, to see whether there is a legitimate grievance, or whether the House accepts the view that, under existing circumstances, redistribution is advisable. In either case, I shall vote for the Committee. I do not think the objection that has been raised, that the times are abnormal, really matters. We are not legislating for the present time, but for the future, as far as we can see it. I support the appointment of the Committee.

Mr Carine: In regard to the question raised by the hon. member for Peel, that we should first vote on the principle, that is all right as far as it goes. Had it not been that the Adult Suffrage Bill had been passed I would not have raised this question now, but one is a necessary corollary of the other. I do not see how we can leave the question of redistribution so long as Adult Suffrage is likely to become law. As far as the question raised by the hon.

member for Rushen is concerned, that the time is not opportune, he knows perfectly well that the same objection that he has raised applies across the water. Many towns and districts have been affected quite as much, if not more so, than we have been in the Isle of Man. With regard to what kind of a committee should be appointed, that is a matter entirely for the House. I will approve of any committee that is fairly representative of town and country. There is a very strong feeling that if Adult Suffrage is to become law, Redistribution ought to come in with it. That is the sole reason I have for bringing the matter forward now.

The motion was put to the House and lost, the division being:—For: Messrs Walton, W. Christian, A. Qualtrough, Cormode, Crennell, Carine, Garside, and Clucas—8. Against: Messrs Kitto, Callister, Dalgleish, Cursphey, Southward, Anderson, Kerruish, Cowell, and the Speaker—9.

PROTECTION OF THE FISHING FLEET.

The Speaker: His Excellency will receive a deputation at 12.30. I nominated the hon. member for Peel, the senior and junior members for Glanfaba, the hon. member for Rushen, Mr A. Qualtrough, and the hon. member for Ramsey.

Mr Cormode: Are the deputation to inquire what is the position of the Income Tax Bill?

The Speaker: Yes; and you might also inquire when there is likely to be a Tynwald Court, and we might adjourn to the same date and take the third reading of the Adult Suffrage Bill on that day.

ADULT SUFFRAGE: THIRD READING.

Mr Crennell: If the House is agreeable, we can take the third reading to-day. I move that the Standing Orders be suspended so that we can take the third reading.

Mr Cowell seconded, and it was carried.

Mr Crennell: I move the third reading.

Mr Cowell seconded, and it was carried.

The deputation left the House to interview the Governor.

On returning to the House,

Mr Cormode, speaking for the deputa-

tion, said: With regard to the main object of our interview, namely, the protection of the Manx fishing fleet from the U-boats, his Excellency promised that he would write to the Admiralty at once, and do what he could. With regard to the Income Tax Bill, he has not received any reply yet from the Treasury, and in the meantime his Excellency does not think it advisable to take any steps with regard to the Bill. His Excellency is not sure when the next Tynwald will be. We reported to him that we proposed to adjourn for three weeks if a Tynwald Court was to be held on that day. While we were there his Excellency mentioned that he was anxious to make progress with the Brewers Act, increasing

the duty on Manx beer. We might deal with that to-day.

Agreed.

INCREASING THE BEER DUTY.

* Mr Cormode: I move that we take the first reading.

Agreed.

The Bill increases the duty on beer brewed in the Isle of Man from 9s a barrel to 36s, as from 23rd April, 1918.

The Standing Orders were suspended, and the Bill read a second and third time, and passed.

The House stood adjourned to June 4th, at a time to be fixed by the Speaker.