

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 6 OCTOBER 1898**

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THURSDAY, 6 OCTOBER, 1898.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

# OBJECTIONABLE WORDS NOT HEARD BY MR. SPEAKER.

The SPEAKER: My attention has been drawn to a paragraph in the *Brisbane Courier*, which I shall read to the House. Mr. King, in the course of his speech last night, is reported to have said—

He did not think that the House had any confidence in the Speaker. He had not, at any rate. He had got to say what he had to say under the motion for the introduction of the Bill. He would be a mean, contemptible individual if he did not say what he had to say now, after seeing his colleague shifted from the floor of the House—not through the action of the Government, but through the Speaker's action. He would be as mean and contemptible as he held him (the Speaker) to be at the present time. He would say this, even if he was suspended.

Not a word of this fell upon my ears. When the hon. member for Maranoa was speaking several hon. members pressed round me asking for tickets of admission to the galleries, and this language must have been used at the time. I feel constrained to make this explanation, not only in justice to myself at what would appear to be unpardonable leniency, but so that these expressions may not be quoted at some future time as a precedent.

# CAIRNS GAS COMPANY, LIMITED, BILL.

On the motion of Mr. DRAKE, leave was given to introduce a Bill to enable the Cairns Gas Company, Limited, a company duly incorporated and registered under the provisions of the Companies Acts, 1863 to 1896, to supply with gas or other light the town of Cairns and its suburbs, and for other purposes.

# RABBIT BOARDS BILL.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS, it was resolved—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the advisableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Rabbit Boards Act, 1898.

# RELIEF FOR THE AGED POOR.

Mr. JACKSON, in moving—

1. That the present system of relief for the aged poor is capable of much improvement, inasmuch as many deserving aged poor cannot or will not avail themselves of the assistance afforded by asylums, and others only accept such help by stern compulsion.

2. That the Government should introduce legislation providing for a system of old age pensions, and thus by Act of Parliament make provision for the deserving aged poor passing their last years in the society of their friends and free from the restraints and monotony of asylum life—

said: I have had this notice upon the business-paper for some time, as hon. members are aware, but I thought I should be wanting in good feel-

ing if I did not offer to make room for the hon. member for Cairns so that his motion could take precedence of mine if he desired. However, the hon. member asked me to proceed with my motion, and I now do so accordingly. This motion naturally divides itself into two parts, and I shall deal with the first part of the resolution first. Hon. members will notice that I give in the first part of the resolution a reason why the present system of relief for the aged poor is capable of improvement. That reason is the main one I shall use, but, of course, I shall touch upon many other reasons in the course of my speech. In illustration of the reason given in the first paragraph of the resolution that "many deserving aged poor cannot or will not avail themselves of the assistance afforded by asylums," I shall just quote a line or two from the report of the Victorian Royal Commission on old age pensions of last year. That report says—

Before the inquiry had proceeded far we were impressed with the glaring injustice occasionally inflicted upon the aged and destitute, against whom there is no allegation of crime, of being charged under the Police Offences Act with having no lawful visible means of support, and sent to gaol. A progress report dealing with this phase of the question was submitted to Your Excellency on the 1st July last.

That report shows that in Victoria there are numbers of destitute poor who will not take advantage of the asylum system of relief. I would also draw attention to a few sentences in this year's report of Captain Pennefather, Comptroller-General of Prisons, from which it will be seen that the same state of things exists in Queensland as the report of the Victorian Royal Commission shows exists in Victoria. Captain Pennefather says—

I would also draw your attention to the fact that considerable expense is incurred by this department by the detention in the various prisons of persons who in my opinion should be treated elsewhere—viz., a certain class of so-called vagrants—i.e., those who are really destitute or are physically unable to earn a living, inebriates, suspected lunatics, and others remanded for "medical observation." Many of these cases are fit subjects for either a benevolent or inebriate asylum, a reception house or hospital.

I do not wish to bring forward any indictment against the Government for mismanagement of our asylums, nor do I wish to bring any charge of inhumanity against the people of Queensland, or to say that they are lacking in charity. I believe that our old age asylum down at Dunwich is about as fair a specimen of old age retreats as there is in Australia, or perhaps in the world. I believe that we spend something like £200,000 a year in charity of one sort or the other—on hospitals, benevolent asylums, lunatic asylums, reception houses, orphan asylums, and so on. £30,000 or £40,000 of that sum has probably been contributed by private individuals, but the bulk of it is expenditure by the State. Charity is not conspicuous by its absence in Queenslanders or Australians. Then I have no charge to bring against the working classes of not being thrifty. The figures that one could quote if necessary in connection with our friendly societies prove conclusively that Queenslanders are a thrifty people. As I have said, I have no fault to find with the management of Dunwich. I remember reading a statement made by a New South Wales member of Parliament two or three years ago, when the question of old age pensions was before the Legislative Assembly of that colony. The gentleman I refer to drew a very nice picture indeed of our old age asylum in Moreton Bay, and seemed to think there was something particularly romantic in the idea of having an old age retreat on one of the islands in Moreton Bay. I propose to draw a contrast, in order to show the bright as well as the dark side

of the sheet. I believe that the management of Dunwich is good; I have never heard any fault found with the superintendent, Dr. Smith, or any complaint of any lack of consideration on the part of the assistants in the asylum. The inmates of the institution have plenty of food, and plenty of liberty to stroll about the grounds. They can go down and sit on the benches under the trees, gazing at the sunlight dancing on the waves, or at the hills on the mainland in the distance.

Mr. DANIELS: They cannot.

Mr. JACKSON: I should be very glad to know why the hon. member makes that interjection.

Mr. DANIELS: They are restricted, and cannot go outside a certain part.

Mr. JACKSON: I have been down there several times, and as far as I have been able to observe they have the utmost liberty and can stroll about the grounds in any direction they think fit. Hon. members must have seen them sitting on the benches and strolling about the grounds, and as far as I know the inmates are not restricted in that respect, but may even go outside the grounds if they think fit; but of course the old and feeble people are not likely to want any more liberty or any more ground to roam over than they have within the precincts of the institution. Then, again, they have a good library and plenty of reading matter, and they have also a concert hall in which entertainments are held several times in the year. I do not know whether I am under-estimating the advantages of the old people at Dunwich. I do not think I am, but believe that I am drawing a fair picture. But there is another side to the sheet, and that is a dark side, which I shall proceed now to give to the House. On going down to Dunwich, what do we see? To the right, to the left, and in front of us we see paupers. Dunwich is simply a pauper town; the trail of the pauper is over them all; and when we go up among the buildings we find long rows of barrack-like buildings.

Mr. KEOGH: A poorhouse.

Mr. JACKSON: It is practically a poorhouse, as the hon. member interjects. We find there long rows of buildings, containing long tables and benches. There is nothing very attractive about that system of pauper relief; there is no privacy, as the superintendent of Dunwich mentions in his report, which I shall read by-and-by to the House. There is the monotony of system and restraint over all the inmates, because although they have, as I have said, liberty to walk about the grounds, still there is that monotony of system and restraint which is most objectionable to those of us who are most disciplined. And therefore I do not think it is the highest form of old age relief that we see in evidence at Dunwich. We must remember that many of those old inmates of Dunwich have been pioneers of the country. Perhaps next to the Arabs or some nomadic tribes there is no race of people in the world who love liberty more than Australians do. Those old pioneers, many of them, have been accustomed to wander from goldfield to goldfield, from shearing shed to shearing shed, from station to station. Therefore I think we will all admit that a life such as this—"cribb'd, cabin'd and confined" as they are—must be very hurtful to the feelings of those old people. Then there is the most objectionable reason of all against this asylum system of relief. In that system of relief the good, bad, and indifferent are herded together. Perhaps I am not using a very good expression in referring to the destitute aged poor as being bad. The commissioners appointed in Victoria draw a distinction; they say one class of poor are deserving, and the other less deserving. However, we find what I suppose is inevitable in the

asylum system of relief, that the deserving and the less deserving poor are herded together in one common building. It is not creditable to our humanity that that should be so. For a moment I want to draw attention to Dr. Smith's last report. If there were time I should like to read several extracts from that report for the sake of getting them into *Hansard* and before the country. I have no doubt hon. members themselves are well acquainted with this report, so I shall not unduly take up the time of the House, seeing that this is private members' day and other hon. members may want to speak to the motion. Yet the question is a very important one, and as this is the first time, as far as I know, that the old age pension system has been discussed in the Parliament of Queensland, there would be considerable justification for my taking up rather more time than private members usually do in introducing their motions to the House. I want to point out that in this report my case for old age pensions is practically proved by the superintendent of the asylum at Dunwich. Dr. Smith, referring to the decrease in the number of inmates, says—

This result was partly due to a heavier mortality than usual, and partly to the system recently begun, of granting to married couples chiefly (as also to a few single men and women) a weekly money allowance about equal to the cost of their maintenance in the institution. The recipients of this allowance, who would otherwise have lived in the institution, are thus enabled to eke out a livelihood among old friends and acquaintances, and in localities where they have spent the best part of their life.

The Government have thus practically instituted this system of old age pensions. What I want to do is, instead of leaving this to Executive authority, to have it sanctioned by parliamentary authority. That is the difference between the system I am advocating and the system the Government, on their own initiative, have introduced. I should not like to say that under the Government system there is the opportunity of favouritism, though I may go so far as to say that from my own experience there is very considerable difficulty in getting this allowance made by the Government to deserving old persons. And I do not think it is the duty of members of Parliament to run after the Home Secretary, who has charge of this department, and spend a great deal of time in asking for the favour that is in a measure implied when a request is made for an allowance such as Dr. Smith mentions. It should be a right; there is no doubt about that. Dr. Smith, besides making this recommendation, makes three other suggestions on account of the overcrowding at Dunwich. It is hardly necessary to draw attention to the fact that Dunwich is getting overcrowded. It is, as I said, a pauper town, and some change will have to be made. I remember reading a speech made by the late Premier on his Northern tour, in which he condemned the present system of dragging old people away from the localities where they have spent the greatest part of their lives as barbarous. And I am quite sure that if Mr. Byrnes had been alive at the present time, and had been able to take charge of the Government of the colony during this session, he would have lent a sympathetic ear to the motion I am bringing on to-day, and would have made some change in the direction of the system I am advocating. Dr. Smith draws attention also in his report to a fact which I am sure every member of the House must be aware of—namely, that it is a very difficult matter indeed for old persons to get work, even though they are fairly well in health and are capable of doing a certain amount of work, such is the stress of competition nowadays. And I notice a telegram in this morning's *Courier*, which proves my contention, to the effect that the colliery owners in Lancashire are discharging the infirm

and elderly miners in order to minimise their liabilities and claims from accidents under the Workmen's Compensation Act. I do not want to say a word in condemnation of the Lancashire colliery proprietors. It is possible that competition may have forced them to do that. I only want to draw attention to the fact that old men cannot nowadays get work, and that therefore they cannot be expected to provide for their last days. Besides the recommendation Dr. Smith makes with regard to old age pensions, he makes three other suggestions which are well worthy of the consideration of the Government. The second suggested remedy for the present overcrowding of Dunwich is to adopt a system of boarding out similar to that already in existence in connection with the orphan children; the third is, that benevolent boards should be established in connection with the different hospitals scattered throughout the country, so that the old people would not be taken far away from the districts where they had spent the greater part of their lives; and the fourth suggestion—which certainly does not go very far to meet my wishes, but would be better than the present system—is to establish a Government institution in the North and one in the West, on the same lines, I presume, as the present institution at Dunwich. I shall not deal any more with the first part of my resolution, but will endeavour to the best of my ability to make out a case in favour of the step I propose—that is, that the Government should introduce legislation providing for a system of old age pensions. I won't take up any time by indulging in any platitudes as to its being the duty of society or the duty of the State to make provision for the aged poor. I think that goes without saying. There are two periods in our lives—helpless childhood and helpless old age—that are deserving of our kindest consideration, therefore I won't take up any time by indulging in any platitudes or arguments to prove that; I think that will be admitted. What will probably be disputed is as to the best manner of procedure. It will be a question of ways and means. Sometimes I wonder whether we who are the heirs of all the ages could not take a lesson in the treatment of our aged poor from the aborigines of this country. I have had some experience of the aborigines of Queensland, and as far as my experience goes it has always led me to believe that they treat their old people in the most kindly manner. I remember once reading in the journals of one of the early Australian explorers an incident that came under his notice. I forget whether it was Sturt or Eyre, but the explorer was travelling in the interior of Australia and his party came across an abandoned aboriginal lying under a tree alongside a fast drying-up waterhole. On reading or listening to that incident now hon. members will feel a thrill of horror at the barbarity, perhaps, of those people of the stone age in leaving this aged member of their tribe to perish from starvation and thirst. But there is another picture to which I will ask the attention of the House. Those of us who have read something of early Australian exploration, those of us who know something of bush life, must know that there have been times of drought when the aborigines of the interior of the country have found it very difficult indeed to exist at all, when "famine has stalked through the land," and poor wretches emaciated and weak have had to labour with the utmost difficulty to get a living. In this case it is easy to imagine a drought-stricken land, the sun beating down from a cloudless sky, the game all dead or fled, the aborigines weak and forced by stern necessity to move along, perhaps to some distant waterhole where they could get the means of subsistence;

and therefore I think it is easy enough to come to the conclusion that even in this case these poor wretched aborigines had some excuse for deserting the aged member of their tribe. But let us look at quite another picture and see what happens sometimes in our civilisation, with plenty all over the land. I shall read what, perhaps, the House will consider extreme cases, but the extracts will show at any rate that these things do happen sometimes, even in Queensland. I want to draw the attention of the House to three extracts from the history book of the Clermont Hospital—

John Finan, age 77 years.—Admitted 4th January, 1897; died 12th January, 1897. Disease: 1, primary old age; 2, developed into imbecility; 3, cause of death, old age and exposure, want of food. Remarks: Was brought in by police. Supposed to have been found twenty miles from Clermont at a place called Expedition Dam. Seems to have no friends, and appears to be an old digger, quite unable to look after himself. Was in a very feeble and starving condition when brought to hospital.

Charles Baker, aged 43.—Admitted 22nd January, died 23rd, 1897; cause of death, starvation and want of sleep. Remarks: Was brought in from Wolflog. Sent in by Mr. Coltham. Not employed on the station, but arrived there in a sick and starving state. From his own account had no sleep for over four days. During that time hardly any food. Had not been in hospital twenty-four hours before he died.

Jim Kay.—Admitted 14th July, 1897; died, 18th August; age 63. Cause of death: Starvation, old age, exposure. Remarks: Stayed away from the hospital on Monday morning, 14th August. As he did not return during the day the matter was reported to the police by the matron. On the morning of the 18th he was brought back to the hospital in an unconscious condition by the police.

After reading those extracts—when we think that men are dying of starvation, occasionally at any rate, in our midst—we should consider well before we hurl a stone at the poor aborigines who deserted the abandoned member of the tribe to which I have referred. But I do not want to build up my case by sentiment or any theatrical exhibitions, or by any extreme extracts such as I have read. I wish to show if I can by argument that we have a good case in asking the Government to take steps towards initiating a system of old age pensions. The principal objections that will spring up, I dare say, in the minds of opponents will be that a scheme of old age pensions will be likely to discourage thrift—will be likely to undermine the self-reliance of the industrial classes of the community; and, secondly, the objection will be taken probably that the expense will be too great. So far as the expense goes I will just mention before I go any further in case I should forget it—because I do not intend to dwell much on that aspect of the matter—that the report of the recent English Royal Commission, whilst unfavourable, I admit, to a system of old age pensions, admitted that on the question of expense there was no special objection if it was felt desirable in the interests of the State that a system of old age pensions should be introduced. But that commission did make a special objection against any system of old age pensions on the ground that thrift would be discouraged. I propose now to deal shortly with that argument; but, before doing so, I shall better lead up to my point if I mention what has been done in connection with old age pensions in England, and I will then lead up to the objections urged by the members of the recent Royal Commission which sat in England. First of all, I might say that some seven or eight years ago a commission on the aged poor sat in England. I suppose every hon. member is well aware of the part Mr. Chamberlain took in connection with the matter, and I think that the commission was

appointed partly through his action. The commission came to no decided conclusions, but recommended that the English Government should appoint a smaller commission. In 1896 a smaller commission was appointed, and it laid its report before the English Government last July. I do not believe at all in the principle of abusing your opponent if you have no case. I should be very sorry, indeed, to take any exception to the *personnel* of the commission. I may say it consisted of nine members. Baron Rothschild was the chairman, four members consisted of high State officials, and the other four members were the representatives of insurance or friendly societies. As I said, I should be very sorry to throw stones at the *personnel* of the commission, but I shall quote the opinion, not of a Labour representative, but of a Conservative member of the House of Commons—Mr. Lionel Holland—which hon. members may find if they turn up the *National Review* for July in the library. Mr. Lionel Holland severely criticises, not only the finding of the commission, but its *personnel*. Referring to the four high Treasury officials who were members of the commission, he says that they are not popularly supposed to be charmed with legislative departures involving any additional load upon the national expenditure, while with respect to the members who were representatives of the insurance and friendly societies he said that it was well known they were antagonistic to a scheme of old age pensions, and that one of those gentlemen had stated publicly that he was opposed to the scheme. Now, could we expect anything very much different from the report of a commission so constituted? But, as I said before, I do not intend to take exception to the *personnel* of the commission. I only intend to reply to its arguments. I maintain that their reasoning is illogical. I also wish to mention that a protest has been made against the report by no less than 121 members of the House of Commons, protesting against the report, and favouring a system of old age pensions. They carried several resolutions at a meeting they held, and they said—

In view of the inconclusive results of the inquiry undertaken by the committee on old age pensions and the restricted character of the reference to the committee—

I shall deal with that presently—

and having regard,—

1. To the importance of securing some better provision for the aged poor than now exists;

2. To the expectations of legislation raised among the electors at the last election; and

3. To the length of time that has elapsed since then without any progress having been made towards the solution of the question, the following members of Parliament, supporters of the Government—

Supporters of the Government, recollect—

respectfully submit that a definite attempt should be made by the Government next session to legislate in fulfilment of the pledges given at the last general election by members of the Government on the subject of old age pensions.

Hon. members who have not read up the question may not quite understand what is meant by "the restricted character of the reference to the committee." I shall explain that point, because it is very important indeed. The members of the commission interpreted the terms of the reference to be that they had no power to consider any scheme of old age pensions that did not require a contribution from the pensioner. Now, if such a proviso had been inserted in the commissions issued in New South Wales, Victoria, and New Zealand, it is very doubtful whether they would have been able to bring up reports favouring a system of old age pensions. I think every hon. member will agree that it is unfair, when asking a Royal Com-

mission to report on a system of old age pensions, to practically shut out from consideration the scheme which has been reported favourably upon in those three colonies—I mean a scheme which provides that the State shall find the whole of the pensions. But this English commission interpreted the terms of their reference to mean that they could not entertain any scheme which did not require the pensioner to contribute some portion of the pension. The English commission reported unfavourably. They said—

Very slowly and with great reluctance, we come to the conclusion that none of the schemes submitted to us would attain the object the Government had in view. But there was a rider by Sir Spencer Walpole to this effect—

Sufficient prominence has not been given to the many advantages which would ensue from a broad and liberal arrangement providing for the old age of the industrial classes.

There were in all about 100 schemes submitted to the commission, and they were able to group them pretty well into four groups. The first group was what might be called the compulsory scheme. That is on the same lines as the German system. The commission laid that scheme on one side altogether. It might be working all right in Germany—it was Bismarck's scheme—but the commission felt that any scheme which required a compulsory contribution from the individuals who were to get the advantage of the pensions would be entirely unworkable in England. The next group may be called the schemes dealing with a universal system of pensions—that is, to apply to everybody. Mr. Charles Booth, I think, may be taken as the principal exponent of those schemes. Then the third group consisted of what might be called the voluntary scheme—a scheme that would be optional on the part of the working classes to take advantage of but would require the individuals themselves to find a portion of the pension. They would subscribe so much per week or month, and that would be subsidised by the State. That voluntary system was the only one that the Royal Commission entertained at all favourably, but they were not able to recommend even it. The fourth scheme was one dealing with friendly societies, and that also the Royal Commission laid on one side. I have now led up to the point I referred to some time ago when I said that the principal objection which would be raised in the minds of hon. members who opposed any system would be that a system of State pensions would be likely to discourage thrift and undermine the self-reliance which, I think, we all agree ought to be a trait in the character of all classes of the community. I think it would be just as well if I gave a few moments to considering that objection, as it is really the most important objection that has been urged by the English Royal Commission. To my mind it has always seemed that thrift was more a matter of temperament than anything else. It is possible, of course, that laws may influence thrift more or less, but, in my opinion, thrift being a matter of temperament and heredity, is not so easily influenced—at any rate in one generation. Professor Drummond says that the security of evolution lies in the environment. I believe in that as a general principle, but with regard to temperament and our passions generally I do not think that environment has a very large influence over special characteristics. But even supposing that it has—even supposing that laws can influence thrift and self-reliance—then my deduction would be quite opposite to the deduction drawn by the English Royal Commission. I will drop the argument I have used that thrift is a mere matter of temperament and that laws

will not influence it very much, and I will join issue with the English Royal Commission and will draw quite a different deduction to that which they have drawn. What I shall argue is, that if laws can influence thrift, then to adopt a system of old age pensions will be to decidedly encourage thrift. That is the view that Mr. Seddon, the Premier of New Zealand takes, and I think it is the correct one. Fancy a pension of 7s. 6d. or 10s. a week at the age of sixty-five discouraging thrift! It is only mockery—it is only irony—to use an argument of that sort. But if we let the industrial classes know that at the age of sixty or sixty-five—I am not going into the details of the scheme that I think should be adopted—they will be entitled to a pension of 10s. a week, I venture to think that that would be an incentive rather than a discouragement to the poorer classes to save up something for the time when they would be able to draw their pensions and increase the amount. What is 10s. a week to look forward to at the age of sixty-five? But £1 a week would be something to look forward to, and my argument is that by giving a pension of 10s. a week we should encourage thriftiness amongst the working classes, because they would come to the conclusion at once that by saving, or by moderate investment, or by the purchase of an annuity, they would be enabled to increase the State pension, and so be able to live, not in luxury—because £1 a week will not enable any old man or woman to live in luxury—but, at any rate, it would allow them to live a decent, honest life.

The PREMIER: Why confine that to one class of the community?

Mr. GLASSEY: He says nothing about confining it to one class, but he refers to the industrial class as the most numerous class.

Mr. JACKSON: The Premier asks—Why confine it to one class of the community? I do not know whether he thinks we ought to adopt the universal pension.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Which do you favour?

Mr. JACKSON: I favour the State contributing the whole amount out of the State revenues. The New Zealand Bill proceeds on that basis, and that is the recommendation of the Royal Commissions of New South Wales and Victoria.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Is that a universal pension?

Mr. JACKSON: No, it is not. The question of a universal pension is, I think, out of court altogether. The objection urged by the English Royal Commission against a universal pension was that they considered it would be useless, almost foolish, to raise a very large sum of money—something like £20,000,000—to give every person in the State a pension when many of them would not require it. It would be silly to offer a man like Baron Rothschild or other members of the wealthy class an old age pension. The scheme that I personally favour is the one which the New Zealand Government have embodied in their Bill. Of course I have not come here this afternoon to go into details; I think it would be out of place for me to do that. I do not set up my wisdom against the wisdom of the House and of all other hon. members. I simply advocate a general principle, and to that I shall confine myself. Moreover, there would scarcely be time, unless I chose to occupy the whole afternoon, which I have no intention of doing, to go into details, such as those hinted at by the Premier. But there is another question I want to refer to in connection with this objection, and that is the question of whether the industrial classes, considering their pecuniary position and their

earnings, are capable of providing for their old age. I will not go so far as to say that the industrial classes cannot, if they choose, by the exercise of their will, lay by a sufficient sum to provide a moderate pension in their old age, but I would point out that it is a very difficult matter to induce them to do so. Even those who advocate that it is possible for these people, by putting by 6d. a week from the age of twenty-one to sixty-five, to provide themselves with a pension of 7s. 6d. or 10s. a week, admit that they are not willing to do it; so that we might just as well face the position. I am not going to make the statement that the working classes are not able to provide these pensions, but what I should prefer to do is to quote the findings of the Victorian Royal Commission upon old age pensions, because I am sure that that report will have much more weight than any opinions I may give utterance to this afternoon. I shall also give the House a quotation from the report on the subject of thrift—

Several of the witnesses emphasised the necessity for increased thrift. This is highly desirable; but with the majority any further effort in this direction is almost impossible. This is shown by a glance at the average earnings of the working classes.

This is in Victoria, an adjoining colony, and I take it that the condition of the working classes in Queensland must be very much the same as the condition of those in Victoria and New South Wales. The report goes on—

For example, it was proved that the miners, who, in consequence of their unhealthy and hazardous work, do not live to be much over forty years of age, receive upon an average from 25s. to 30s. a week during their efficient years, and it is only by rigid economy and frugal habits that they are able to make both ends meet and pay their "lodge money." They are unable to provide for a rainy day, much less for the "sere-and-yellow-leaf" period. Numbers of them have to make lifelong sacrifices in the effort to rear large families and make them worthy citizens.

I am inclined to think that if the industrial classes provide for their sick days, by becoming members of friendly societies, and their funeral expenses, it is just about as much as one can reasonably expect them to do. When I hear people saying that the working classes ought to be thrifty and so on, I think of myself. I think how difficult it is for myself to save anything, and I certainly draw a much larger income than the average working man. I may say that since I have been a member of Parliament I have never been able to live within my income, but have always been something out at the end of the year, and, therefore, I have very little sympathy with those who expect the working classes upon incomes varying from 30s. to £3 a week to put by something for old age pensions. Whilst upon that point I may say that the English Royal Commission came to the conclusion that no working man receiving an income of less than £1 per week could be expected to find any portion of the money to provide for an old age pension; and in Queensland and Australia generally, where employment is very intermittent—where we have not the regular employment that they have in the old country—there is less reason to expect the working classes to contribute anything. They lead a nomadic life, and men such as miners and prospectors have to live on credit for months. I have mentioned the main objection urged by the Royal Commission, but there are three other objections printed in their report which I shall touch upon briefly. The second objection is that wages will be affected—that the employers will receive the benefit, and the wage-earning classes will receive no benefit whatever. I am astonished at an argument of that sort coming from such gentlemen as those who composed that commission. I have read articles pointing out

the fallacy of saving and condemning thrift, principally written by socialistic writers, but I never expected such argument from those who formed this Royal Commission. Their opinion is that if the State relieve the poorer classes by providing old age pensions for them the employers would immediately get the benefit.

Mr. HARDACRE: It would take a very long time.

Mr. JACKSON: I do not think it would ever happen, and in proof of my view I could quote Professor Marshall, an eminent political economist. Mr. Lionel Holland quotes Professor Marshall upon that point, and his contention is that the argument of the Royal Commission is futile; that the employers could not get the benefit, because we might just as well contend that all savings would have the same effect—that wages would be cut down. The third question asked by the Royal Commission is, "Would not the pension have the taint of pauperism?" I suppose it would to an infinitesimal degree, unless it were a universal pension such as the Premier referred to a few minutes ago.

Mr. GLASSEY: Some of the richest persons in England draw pensions now, and they do not consider there is any taint of pauperism about it.

Mr. JACKSON: Just so; and in this colony too; but nobody ever thinks of urging that these gentlemen are paupers because they are drawing pensions from the State.

Mr. DANIELS: It is a sign of respectability.

Mr. JACKSON: There would not be the same taint of pauperism that there is about the asylum system of relief. Of course at Dunwich we do not clothe people in a pauper's garb, the same as used to be done in England when I was a boy. I do not know whether it is done now; but I remember seeing people in the workhouses clothed in a pauper's garb.

Mr. GLASSEY: And their clothes branded.

Mr. JACKSON: That is not done here, I am glad to say, because we have more humanity about us. I think the third objection is a very weak one; but the fourth is simply ridiculous. I am sorry to have to use such strong language in regard to a report furnished by such distinguished men, but they actually urge as an objection that old men and old women over sixty-five years of age drawing pensions of 7s. 6d. or 10s. per week would be able to outbid other competitors in the labour market. Did ever anyone hear of such a paltry objection as that? I can scarcely find language strong enough to condemn such findings by a commission of the kind I have mentioned. I shall not go into the question of old age pensions in the countries of Europe. There are several countries in Europe—Denmark, Austria, and Germany—where the system of old age pensions has been tried, and as far as my information goes the schemes adopted in those countries are working very satisfactorily.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I think there is a forced contribution in each case.

Mr. JACKSON: I think the hon. gentleman is wrong, except as regards Germany.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I did not affirm it; I simply said I thought it was so.

Mr. JACKSON: There are forced contributions in the case of Germany, and I understand from recent reports that the system there is not working very well, principally, I believe, on account of the compulsory contributions, and partly on account of the small amount that is contributed by the State. I may say that pensioners in Germany do not draw their pensions until they are seventy years of age, and the total amount they draw is very small, varying from £5

to £14 or £15 a year. It is a very paltry amount indeed. When the late Prince Bismarck introduced the system of old age pensions in Germany, it was meant, I believe, to kill State socialism among the masses of the people, but, in my opinion, a scheme of that sort would stimulate rather than kill schemes of State socialism. But the Danish and Austrian systems do not, as far as my information goes, require any contribution from the pensioner. However, I shall say nothing of continental schemes, but shall come nearer home—to Australia. Hon. members are familiar with what has been done in Australia during the last few years. New Zealand stands pre-eminently in advance of the other colonies in the direction of social legislation. In New South Wales a select committee was appointed in September, 1896, and they came to the conclusion that a scheme of old age pensions was well within the range of practical politics; they considered that it was desirable and practicable. They recommended that the pension should start at sixty-five years of age, that the pensioners should have resided fifteen years in the colony, and that they should not be drawing an income exceeding £50 per annum; secondly, they recommended an invalidity pension scheme and the adoption of the boarding-out system. The committee further stated in their report that as military and naval pensions are justifiable, they held that "men and women may serve their country as well in the paths of peace as soldiers and sailors do in time of war, and the former are therefore just as worthy of consideration as the latter." They also came to the conclusion that old age pensions should be a free gift from the State. The estimated cost of providing these pensions in New South Wales was £90,000. The New South Wales committee and the Victorian commission both made recommendations as to how the amount that would be required for old age pensions should be raised by different forms of taxation. I shall not go into that matter, but I may say, though I have not prepared any figures as to the probable cost in this colony, seeing that the estimated cost in New South Wales is £90,000 per annum, and seeing that our population is only about one-third of that of New South Wales, I take it for granted that the expense in Queensland would be about £30,000 a year. But we must recollect that, with the establishment of old age pensions, a considerable saving would take place in the present expenditure on pauper relief, so that the real cost to the State would certainly not be anything like £30,000. The Victorian Royal Commission estimated that the expense in that colony would be about £89,000 per annum, and like the New South Wales commission they go into the question of ways and means. But there is no occasion for me to go into that question; it would be out of place for me to go into details of that description on what is really an academic motion. There is a telegram in to-day's *Courier* stating that Sir George Turner, the Premier of Victoria, promised in the Legislative Assembly only yesterday that the Government would take up the question of old age pensions, and introduce legislation in connection with the matter next session; so that it is quite evident that this very important question is a burning question, and one well within the sphere of practical politics. In New Zealand a commission was appointed to consider the matter; they brought up a favourable report, and in 1896 an Act was passed called the Registration of People's Claims Act. It was a very proper thing to pass an Act providing that those people who were entitled to pensions should be able to register their claims, and by that means the New Zealand Government were able to ascertain accurately what number of people

were entitled to pensions. Mr. Seddon, when moving the second reading of the Registration of Claims Bill in 1896, said—

This is the most important Bill that ever I moved the second reading of in this House.

I may say that the Bill at present before the New Zealand Parliament is very much on the same lines as the Bill of 1896, except that the period is extended from twenty to twenty-five years, and that the amount of the pension has been slightly reduced. It may possibly be urged that I ought to have moved for a select committee or a Royal Commission in connection with this matter, but when we recollect the position of affairs in Queensland at the present time—that this is the last session of this Parliament, and that we have gone a considerable length in the session, and that three commissions in Australia—in New South Wales, Victoria, and New Zealand—have reported favourably on the subject—I think there is really no necessity whatever for either a select committee or a Royal Commission. In conclusion, I may say that I regret that a noble cause like this has not had a better advocate than myself, but I feel satisfied that the poorest advocate could not spoil so good a cause. It seems to me that in these times when the industrial masses of the people in the countries of the old world, if not in the new, seem only too ready to take up with any new-fledged schemes of State socialism, it is the duty of the legislators of a country, and of those who have inherited wealth, or who have been endowed with sufficient capacity to acquire wealth—I say it seems to me that it is the duty of these people to endeavour, if possible, to render the last steps of the old and destitute poor a little easier on that road which is so soon to terminate in the grave. In these days we hear a good deal of certain scientific doctrines. We are told in discussions on social questions that Nature is “red in tooth and claw”; that the law of competition must exist, that it is necessary for progress; that natural selection is the way in which Nature works; that not only must the fit survive and the strong acquire the prizes of life, but actually that the weak must be sacrificed as an offering to the strong. I do not agree with such cruel doctrines as those. They may be applicable to the lower forms of life, but I repudiate them when applied to human society. I would substitute for competition co-operation; for natural selection I would substitute rational selection; for the survival of the fittest I would substitute the survival of all under a better environment, under an environment which would render them all fit; for the struggle for existence I would substitute the struggle for the life of others. As Professor Drummond beautifully expresses it in his great book, “The Ascent of Man”—I think I can quote the passage from memory—

The ascent of man and of society is bound up henceforth with the conflict and the intensification of the struggle for the life of others. This is the further evolution, the object of history, that is before us, the closing act in the drama of man. The struggle may be long or short, but by all scientific analogy the result is sure. Evolution always attains, always rounds off, its work. It struggled for millenniums to bring the vegetable kingdom up to the flowering plants and in the animal kingdom the struggle never ceased until all the possibilities of organisation were exhausted in mammals. Kindled by the past, man may surely say “I shall survive.” The further evolution must go on, the higher kingdom come; at first the blade, where we are to-day; then the leaf, where we shall be to-morrow; then the full corn in the ear, which awaits our children's children, and which we live to hasten.

I think we might well take notice of those words. And when the time comes to depart—suddenly it may be like the able and great man who passed away last week—when that time comes it will be well for us if we have done something to improve

the position of the people of the country. I do not wish it to be understood by the House that I come here with any out and dried schemes for the reconstruction of society. I must confess that when I think of the great problems that are involved in the reconstruction of society I feel that they are too great for me to solve; and I am ready to re-echo the words of Professor Tyndall at the Belfast meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science some quarter of a century ago when dealing with a much grander problem—namely, the origin and mystery of life—

Here I must quit a theme too great for me to handle, but which will be handled by the loftiest minds when you and I, like streaks of morning cloud, shall have melted into the infinite azure of the past.

I appeal to the House to pass this resolution, and thus hasten the time when, in the words of the inspired writer—

In the evening time there shall be light.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I congratulate the hon. member on the very interesting and I may say emotional speech which he has addressed to us upon this subject—a subject which commands the sympathy even of those who do not admit the practicability of any attempt to deal with it based on those committees of inquiry which have been held in connection with this important social problem. The relief of the aged poor and the destitute is a matter which commends itself to the sympathy of every right-thinking man in the community; and if the question were as easy of solution as the hon. member appears to imagine it is, I should promise him at once, on behalf of the Government, every assistance to bring about that much to be desired result. It is one of the most serious problems of the day, and in my position as Home Secretary my attention has been continuously directed to the best means of providing relief for the really deserving poor, and at the same time to prevent imposition on the part of those who prefer mendicancy to work. I do not think for one moment that the introduction of the system advocated by the hon. member would relieve our present institutions, such as Dunwich, from being applied to by those who have not contributed—if that be the basis upon which this scheme is to be framed—in the past to some provision for their old age. In this colony we are being continually assailed by men who have not been a very long time in the country, but who have been reduced to destitution by sickness, by accident, or by other circumstances beyond their control; but in the majority of cases it is providence which has prevented them from making provision for “a rainy day.” We cannot allow these men to die in the streets. They have contributed nothing to the revenue which would justify the application of a pension, and we therefore offer them the shelter of Dunwich, which must exist for all time—

Mr. KIDSTON: Do you say “for all time?”

The PREMIER: I say that an institution like Dunwich will have to exist for all time, for “the poor you will always have with you.”

Mr. GLASSET: And the rich too.

The PREMIER: Hon. gentlemen opposite may disabuse their minds of the idea that there will be a common levelling of mankind. I am quite convinced of the eternal truth of that statement that “the poor you always have with you.” There will always be some men who by their own improvidence, or other causes, are reduced to such destitution that the State must step in to relieve their distress; but the circumstances of this country are very different from those which exist in Great Britain and the thickly-settled countries of Europe. There they



have settled populations, and there is an average amount of distress and destitution which can be gauged in a statistical sense, and provided for on the lines of certain averages. Here we have nothing of that sort. We have a growing population, not arising chiefly from natural causes, but we have immigration attracted to our shores by many fortuitous circumstances: in addition to our natural increase, and a considerable portion of the immigration so attracted may become a burden on the State to an extent we cannot anticipate. There are many men in advanced years who come to our shores for the purpose of advancing the interests of their relatives—their sons and daughters—for whom they see a larger horizon in Australia than in the old countries of Europe.

Mr. GLASSEY: Hear, hear! That is exactly my position.

The PREMIER: Men who have perhaps served the best years of their lives—I do not say that is the hon. gentleman's position—but there are several who have served the best years of their lives in the old country, and come here for the purpose of advancing the prospects of their children. They have passed their time of usefulness, their children have enough to do possibly to maintain themselves and their belongings, and the aged parents have to seek the shelter frequently of Dunwich. Therefore the conditions of our social life in this colony in connection with the poor and destitute are not at all on a par with the average condition of social life in the older countries of Europe. I desire to say, however, that I should have been glad to have heard from the hon. gentleman some practicable scheme—I do not think he has promulgated any—for endeavouring to arrive at some basis for action. The hon. gentleman will admit that some of the ablest minds in Europe and in the colonies have been directed to the consideration of this question with a view to bringing about its settlement. The inquiry held by Lord Rothschild and the other eminent men who acted with him on the recent Royal Commission shows the extreme difficulties which beset the path of anyone attempting to arrive at any conclusion. Out of 100 schemes submitted, only nine came upon the platform for consideration, and those nine were ultimately reduced to one, and even that one was found impracticable. Again, in Victoria there has been no common assent to any scheme deemed worthy of legislative action, and I consider that before any legislative action is undertaken by the present Government there must be some much larger amount of information obtained, and that might be obtained by a parliamentary committee of inquiry, which I should not have the slightest objection to see appointed. The question is in too crude a form for us to deal with it at present. Let us, as practical men, place it in this light: The first thing to consider is, whence are the funds to be derived to provide for these old age pensions? Is it to come out of the consolidated revenue without any contribution whatever on the part of the pensioners?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Where do the present pensioners get theirs from?

The PREMIER: Our present system is something like the Austrian system of payment for services rendered. The question to be seriously considered is whether the State is to provide for pensioners solely without any contribution whatever, without any consideration of whence the claimants have come, how long their residence has been in the State—in short, of what are their claims on the State. And then comes the question as to whom are these pensions to be awarded. Are they simply to be awarded to what we call the working classes?

Mr. GLASSEY: To all the aged who are in need.

The PREMIER: That enlarges the circle of benevolence tremendously, because we know that during the trying vicissitudes of the last four or five years men who were at one time considered wealthy, whose families were supposed to be beyond the reach of any vicissitudes whatever, are at the present day in the greatest destitution, and suffering, perhaps, more severe distress—as I have said on a former occasion concealing the fox which is under their robes gnawing at their vitals—suffering quietly more severe distress than even the working man who is temporarily thrown out of employment.

Mr. GLASSEY: It should be given to anyone who is aged and poor, no matter what class he belongs to.

The PREMIER: That is a distinct statement, and I am glad to hear the hon. gentleman enunciate it. That statement was not made by the hon. member who has addressed the House at such great length, though I endeavoured to extract it from him. That simplifies the matter at once. Every aged man and woman who can prove that he or she is without means of support is to derive a revenue from the State without any contribution on their part.

Mr. GLASSEY: I did not say that.

The PREMIER: That is an intelligible position. I want distinctly to put this on a practical plane, as all other questions which will come under the consideration of this House. Let us put away all sentimental considerations, and deal with stern facts of necessity. I am quite prepared to deal with the question on its merits. Is a Government pension to be awarded to every man and woman in the colony on arriving at a certain age and being in a destitute condition without having contributed anything themselves to provide for such pension?

Mr. KIDSTON: They would have to prove that they had been a certain time in the colony.

The PREMIER: If that position is clearly arrived at, this discussion will have done some good; and it will have enabled us to concentrate our gaze on the exact position the question should hold. I did not intend to address the House at length or follow the hon. gentleman in his Darwinian or Tennysonian flights—in the eloquent peroration with which he closed his speech—at the same time this is a matter which I want to reduce to the arena of practical politics—to approach it in a practical manner and place it on an intelligible basis. In that light I may say that I am certain it will not relieve us of the existing institutions such as Dunwich and the benevolent societies which we have—

Mr. GLASSEY: It will do away with them.

The PREMIER: And which are assuming such formidable dimensions and entailing such an enormous charge upon the consolidated revenue that the question of poor rates is looming on the political horizon, and a revision of our existing benevolences will have to be speedily undertaken. Anyone who has had any experience of the demands upon the Treasury by the aged and destitute classes in the community will admit that the whole system of our benevolences will have to be systematised and reduced to some principle. The system of old age pensions set forth in the reports of the Royal Commissions in Great Britain and Victoria do not justify us yet in arriving at the opinion that we could by adopting such a scheme thereby dispense with granting Government relief in other shapes. The hon. member for Kennedy will excuse me for saying that I think he shirked the question which the leader of the Opposition has now set fairly before us—that to every man and woman who has arrived at a certain age and

is in destitute circumstances, and without any contribution on their part, shall be given a pension.

Mr. GLASSEY: I did not say the latter. That is a matter for further consideration.

The PREMIER: I am perfectly honest with hon. members opposite. I would like to know their exact view. Is it to afford relief by way of pension to every man and woman in the colony who have arrived at a certain age, whose relatives cannot support them, and who have not contributed anything to the State themselves in the shape of direct contributions to a pension fund?

Mr. JACKSON: That is the scheme I favour.

The PREMIER: What does that lead us to? In Great Britain it is admitted that to produce a pension of 5s. a week to all who are in need of it no less a sum than £20,000,000 per annum would have to be provided. It is admitted that in Victoria it would entail an annual charge on the revenue of no less than £2,600,000. And yet the hon. member for Kennedy imagines that a pension could be provided in Queensland for this large circle of beneficiaries at a cost considerably within £30,000 per annum.

Mr. JACKSON: The hon. gentleman misunderstands me. I do not mean the pension to apply to every individual over a certain age, but only to those who are in need of it.

The PREMIER: Of course. I do not for one moment suppose that it is proposed to offer a pension to men who have their thousands a year, or to men who have the means of a livelihood within their grasp; but I understand the leader of the Opposition to say that every individual who has arrived at a certain age and is in destitute circumstances, and without relatives to support them, shall be entitled to receive a pension from the State.

Mr. GLASSEY: And who have lived a certain number of years in the colony.

The PREMIER: That introduces a further complication. The hon. member also declines to commit himself as to whether there should be any contributions by the beneficiaries, which is, of course, a very important condition, because we have had experience in that connection in this colony. We have had an illustration in connection with the Civil Service superannuation fund of how impatient the contributors to such a fund may be. The younger members of the service contributing towards that fund—most unwisely, allow me to say—prevailed upon this House to repeal that fund, and everyone who is connected with the Civil Service will deplore the placing of that repealing measure upon our statute-book, for there are men at present retained in the service who are kept at their posts out of sheer compassion for what might befall them if they were summarily dismissed. Through the absence of the most salutary provision made by the superannuation fund they are kept on, though their time of usefulness has passed. That fund was repealed through the exigencies of the younger members of the service—who, I admit, were in the majority. We yielded to their importunity, and I say now that it was a most injudicious course to adopt. At any rate I pointed out at the time the evil of repealing the fund, and I voted against it. I must say that my observation of society, and of the provision which prudent men make for themselves and for those whom they may leave behind—for death comes to us, as we have recently seen, without any possible preparation or notice—my observation extends to this—that many of the working classes in this colony, who are in receipt of very good wages and who have been in permanent employment, do not as a rule make provision by life assurance or otherwise to the

extent to which other classes of the community do. I am sure the statistics of our insurance societies will corroborate my statement.

Mr. KIDSTON: It is really very difficult for many of them to do it.

The PREMIER: Insurance companies have of recent years been established which offer the most liberal terms in the matter of contributions.

Mr. KIDSTON: They take it out of them.

The PREMIER: I do not think that is a correct statement, if the hon. member will excuse me for saying so, because no mutual company could do that, and no respectable company would do it.

Mr. JACKSON: The Victorian Royal Commission said that the working classes of Victoria cannot make provision for pensions.

The PREMIER: Certainly, I admit that to provide an annuity is a somewhat difficult matter; but at the same time I believe it will be ascertained that the working classes of the colony, as a whole, do not make adequate provision for the future. Those who are disposed to contribute to such a fund would easily find private companies prepared to meet them. I do not intend to take up the time of the House. In fact I did not intend to address the House at such length as I have done, although I have merely touched the fringe of the subject. Before the Government could promise legislation, we all require to have a great deal more information on the subject than is to be obtained from the reports of the Royal Commissions. I do not think the time has been wasted this afternoon in discussing this question, and I commend the hon. member for Kennedy for having given us a most interesting and sympathetic speech. As a citizen, I am thoroughly in accord with him, and, as a practical man of business and as a member of the Government, I think it my duty to say that the Government will be quite prepared to consider the appointment of a parliamentary committee to inquire into the question and to give us much fuller information for our future consideration. As this is a question of great social importance, and as I recognise the growing extent of our eleemosynary institutions, I would be very much gratified indeed to have a larger amount of information on the subject than has been supplied in the report of either the Imperial Commission or that of Victoria, or even by the very able speech of the hon. member for Kennedy.

Mr. GLASSEY: I should much prefer to have said something on this very important question on another day, but I will avail myself of the present opportunity to make a few observations. I consider it is one of the most important questions that could be considered by any legislature, and I know of no more urgent subject or one more deeply interesting to the community. I congratulate the hon. member for Kennedy most heartily on his admirable speech—a speech well thought out and requiring much preparation. The Premier expresses his sympathy with the motion. That of course is something gained. He also says that before dealing with this matter the legislature requires further information. Perhaps it might be desirable to appoint a committee to go more fully into the question—members generally may share that sentiment—but I think, seeing the vast amount of information which is now lying in our library, gathered from all parts of the world, the Government have ample information at hand, and the Premier might fairly have promised that the matter would be dealt with this session—provided we are able to deal with any legislation at all. But we want a little more than sympathy in this matter. If it is considered indispensable to appoint a committee to make further inquiries, I hope those gentlemen may get to work at an

early date, and that before many months are over we will have before us the result of their deliberations. The hon. gentleman says the problem is a most difficult one. Most persons will admit that, but the longer it remains untackled the more difficult it is likely to become. I think we could tackle it with some degree of advantage to our old people—to numbers of persons such as those to whom the hon. member for Kennedy alluded as having died recently in the Clermont Hospital. It is very sad indeed to think that there are all over the colony old pioneer diggers and Western bushmen who have gone beyond the stage when they are able to care for themselves. Clermont is not alone in that respect; there are numbers who die in the same manner as those persons at Clermont to whom the hon. member alluded. The hon. gentleman also says that supposing the question was dealt with in the manner foreshadowed, it would not relieve us of much of our difficulty as far as Dunwich was concerned. I do not agree with him. I think we would relieve Dunwich of a great amount of work and expense. There are many persons who are compelled to go to Dunwich who are dragged away from the neighbourhood in which they have lived for many years, and in some instances from those who are nearest and dearest to them, yet who may not be in sufficiently good worldly circumstances to support them. If persons of that character could be relieved they would not be compelled to go to Dunwich, and the State would be relieved to that extent. During the last few years I have had to approach the hon. gentleman's predecessor with regard to many aged persons, and I am glad to say that it is to the credit and honour of the late Home Secretary that I never yet approached that gentleman with a deserving case that he did not readily respond, and when he could do so make a grant of money to aged persons so that they might reside in their own neighbourhood and amongst their friends and relatives. I will say also that a few cases I have brought before the present Home Secretary have been liberally dealt with, and I contend therefore that if some system such as that foreshadowed were established it would mean the saving of money to the State in conjunction with bringing happiness and peace of mind to many aged persons. Notwithstanding all the hon. gentleman has said with regard to postponing this question, I would ask—if the session is to be prolonged, which I hope it will not be—that its urgency may be considered and some temporary relief given, to be followed at a later date by a more comprehensive scheme. The hon. gentleman uses the old argument that many of our people are improvident. Of course many of them unfortunately are, but is improvidence confined to any one section of the community? I think not. It is not only those who earn their living by the sweat of their brow who are improvident. There is improvidence among all ranks and conditions of society, and the greatest improvidence is certainly not to be found amongst the industrial classes, but amongst those who have had greater advantages and ought to set a better example. It does not follow that because a man is driven to seek relief that he has been improvident. The Royal Commission of Victoria say that in the vast majority of instances the wages of the working classes are insufficient to enable them to effect savings, and that they are therefore ultimately driven to the charitable institutions for relief. The hon. gentleman referred to those who a few years ago might have been in a state of affluence and were now poor. Does he imagine that the promoters of that scheme would be so heartless as to deny the advantages of an

old age pension to such persons? So far as I am concerned it would not matter in the slightest degree what the past had been so far as worldly wealth was concerned. It is sufficient for me to know that persons are aged, and that they have not got a sufficient income. They belong to the human family and deserve consideration and relief. That is sufficient for me, but the hon. gentleman tried to draw from those who urge this question some cut-and-dried and well-defined scheme, in order that they might have something tangible to consider. But in a resolution of this kind, it is quite sufficient to embody the principle, and leave it to the executive authority to embody the will and sentiments and desires of this House, when such a resolution is passed, in a concrete form and carry it into effect. So far as this side of the House is concerned, we are unanimous on the point, and so far as our ability will permit we shall render all the assistance we can in carrying out the details. Then the Premier said the circumstances of this country are somewhat different from those of older countries, where society is more settled. We all admit that employment here is more precarious and more uncertain in many instances than in the old country, and that in many instances also persons engaged in various industries here are not very much better remunerated than in older countries. In Victoria, New South Wales, and New Zealand the legislatures have either dealt with this matter or are considering the advisability of doing so, and, therefore, I do not think there is anything in the argument of the hon. gentleman that circumstances here are more favourable than in the old country, and, consequently, such legislation is not necessary. It has been announced from time to time, more particularly when we are considering the question of immigration, that in some instances employment in the old country is quite as well remunerated as here. In fact, the Agent-General has told us that it is impossible to get immigrants to come here in consequence of the fair amount of prosperity which prevails in Great Britain, and in consequence of the rates of wages offered here not being sufficient to induce people to come. Then the hon. member urged—I presume by way of arguing that nothing should be done in this matter—that a number of persons might come here for the purpose of advancing the interests of their children. No doubt that is so. I myself am a living instance; but he added that those who might come here to advance the interests of their children have generally arrived at a period of life which would compel them in a short time to become a charge upon the State. I do not think that argument will hold, but even supposing that people did come here in such a condition, their families at any rate would be of some importance to the State. In some of the older countries the birth of a citizen was regarded as of some value to the State, and, therefore, I do not think there is very much in the argument, even supposing it were true. I came here in the interests of my children. Prior to leaving the old country I was doing fairly well myself, but I thought that in a land like this, with such possibilities, the interests of my children would be much better served than there. Notwithstanding that I had eight children, I came here in the prime of life, and was not in the condition alluded to by the Premier, but was able to render some service to the country and provide for my own maintenance and support. The bulk of the men who came out in the same ship with me, and the bulk of those who have come out since, were not in that condition of age or infirmity which would prevent them from being of service to the colony; on the contrary, most of them became valuable citizens, and with their families rendered considerable

aid to our industries. Of course the Premier was very anxious that hon. members on this side should commit themselves to some definite proposal, and he wished us to say that the State should provide pensions irrespective of any contributions from the recipients, but I do not think any hon. member on this side has urged that. That is a matter of detail; but I think it is fair to say that every person having arrived at a certain stage of life, whether man or woman, in straightened circumstances, and with no other means of support, and who has lived a certain time in Queensland, should receive consideration. That is a fair starting point, after which all the details can be considered and worked out. I know of no subject in regard to which I feel more enthusiasm, or a deeper interest than this, and I sincerely hope that before very long this colony will do itself the credit of considering this subject in all its details and aspects, and make ample provision for the age and infirmity of its people, without lowering manhood or womanhood by compelling them to apply from time to time at the office of the Home Secretary for an admission ticket to Dunwich, where they may spend their last days under conditions not too pleasant or agreeable to themselves, and certainly very often painful and disagreeable to their friends. I hope no attempt will be made to talk this matter out, but that those who follow will allow reasonable time for my hon. friend to make provision for getting the order placed upon the paper in such a way that we shall be able to reach it on another occasion, and arrive at a definite conclusion which will be satisfactory to those favourable to the system we are advocating.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I have not the slightest desire to talk this matter out, but when two or three speakers only have addressed themselves to the subject, and talked till twenty minutes to 6 o'clock, it is rather too much to expect that no other member should address himself to the subject. The hon. member who spoke last—and I entirely agree with him that this is one of the most important subjects we can possibly grapple with—must at once see that to dismiss it without giving it some attention would be scarcely proper; it would certainly not be attaching that importance to the subject which the hon. member himself attaches to it. The hon. member who introduced the subject did so, I must admit—and I think the House generally must admit—in a very admirable speech, couched in very admirable language, and in a way which showed that he was in sympathy with the object he desired to attain, and which aroused a sympathy in others. I desire, first of all, to address myself more particularly to what has fallen from the lips of the leader of the Opposition. We have heard hon. members opposite speak on more than one occasion of the extreme impropriety of going on with the business of the session; the Estimates, it has been said, should not be gone on with, and no Bills should be introduced. I must say, in the words of my hon. friend the member for Fassifern, that I certainly am extremely surprised that, under the circumstances, the leader of the Opposition should propose to the Government that they should take up a new measure, and that they should do this really—for so I understood the hon. member—without even appointing a commission to report on the subject. I venture to say that to appoint a commission on this matter is eminently reasonable. The hon. member will probably say that commissions have been appointed in New Zealand and elsewhere, but I presume the Victorian people knew very well that a commission had been appointed in

New Zealand when they appointed their commission. And the fact of one, two, or three colonies having appointed commissions, by no means renders it inadvisable for another colony which proposes to try the experiment—and it is a very serious experiment, in every way involving serious consequences—should not proceed with reasonable deliberation. If my own concerns were at stake in, say, a mine, and I did not expect to strike a reef for a long time, I should not be in a violent hurry to expend a large amount of money in the enterprise, but should rather allow my friends and neighbours to prove it for me, and so avoid a risk which would be very costly. I honestly say that where social experiments are really being tried by your neighbours, it is by no means advisable to proceed hastily, but you may take the old proverb to be your guide, and say, "Let us advance slowly."

Mr. KIDSTON: We have advanced very slowly.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Advancing slowly very frequently means that when you take your steps forward there is no necessity to take any steps backward, whereas when you advance hastily there is often a necessity to take a step back. I do not wish to remind hon. members of one social experiment which advanced in a Royal vessel; that was supposed to be a royal road, but the advance was not satisfactory. However, I do not wish to pursue that subject. The leader of the Opposition made one statement with which I entirely agree, and that was with reference to a remark of the Premier concerning children who are born in the colony. The leader of the Opposition took exception to what he inferred the Premier implied—namely, that children born in the colony were of no particular advantage.

Mr. GLASSEY: That is not the point. It was with reference to those parents who had passed their day of usefulness, and who were likely to become a yearly charge on the State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member made the statement that the birth of a citizen was very valuable to the State, and I am not going to take any exception to that statement. I am not prepared to say that when children are born in the colony it is not a real advantage to the State. I firmly believe it is a great advantage to the colony, and that the more young people we have in the colony the better it is for us; but I would point out that the hon. member has not advanced that argument in the past. He has referred to the enormous number of girls and boys in the colony as a matter that we should deplore, because they would add to the number of unemployed. I simply refer to this because both these statements cannot very well be true. I believe the hon. member is quite right to-day—that the birth of a citizen is a matter for congratulation—but on other occasions, when the hon. member perhaps desires to prove something else, the presence of young and vigorous citizens in the colony has a most depressing effect on his mind. Passing away from the remarks of the leader of the Opposition, I shall deal with the question generally as presented by the hon. member for Kennedy. I entirely agree with him and with other hon. members who have spoken since, that it is a very deplorable thing indeed to find persons of considerable age with no friends apparently to help them, and who are not helped by their children, but are compelled to have recourse to the State for aid. It is a still more lamentable thing that there should be such occurrences as that which happened in the West, and which happen in a great many parts of the earth, where a poor weak woman is left to perish

as a dumb animal might, without any Christian sympathy or assistance. But in dealing with a matter of this sort we have not to address ourselves particularly to the fact that much evil exists in the world, but to approach the subject with the firm determination that in endeavouring to alter the existing state of things we shall add to the sum of good, and not diminish it. There are occasions when by endeavouring to do good you do evil. The hon. member for Kennedy, who so impressed the House with his eloquence, mentioned certain conclusions arrived at by commissions, and urged that we should endeavour to assist those who are suffering. But if the result of our endeavours to do that is to add to the suffering of the world, we shall be doing evil and not good. In some cases it is undoubtedly true that by unadvised, and perhaps hasty, action, though perfectly sympathetic action, great evil is done. There are undoubtedly instances of what is known as indiscriminate charity, and I believe the hon. member will agree with me when I say that indiscriminate charity is generally charity which proceeds from a sympathetic nature, but is not guided by a sufficiently enlightened intellect.

MR. JACKSON: I do not propose to give indiscriminate old age pensions.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member said he could not deal with the subject as a whole, that he was putting forward a few general principles without going into details. I may say that I am at present only approaching the fringe of this very important subject. I am endeavouring to illustrate a principle which I consider a truism, that "evil is wrought by want of thought, as well as by want of heart," and I mention indiscriminate charity as a case in point. Admitting, to begin with, that it is desirable—if we can do so without causing some greater evil—to assist persons who are aged and destitute of means, the question arises, how is it to be done? To deal with the question in a general manner, as the hon. member did, is perhaps justifiable from an academic point of view. The hon. member spoke of this as an academic debate. Now, although an academic debate is useful in drawing public attention to some particular subject, yet the moment it is taken up by Parliament it enters into a different category. This particular subject calls for expenditure, which will cause taxation; and we want to know the details; we want to know how much it will cost. It behoves us to consider the matter from a business point of view; and yet the hon. member for Kennedy, in his speech, which I listened to with very great admiration, admitted that he did not attempt to address himself to the subject from that particular point of view. Granting that the object is one with which we fully sympathise, we have yet to consider whether it is practicable or not. We want to know also—at least I want to know—exactly who is to be assisted, and how they are to be assisted, how many will the State be called upon to assist, and whether we are to discriminate between the deserving poor and the undeserving poor, and how we are to discriminate between them. I agree with the hon. member who last spoke that practically there can be no such discrimination, and that even if there is a system of State pensions we shall be compelled to keep up Dunwich. What are we to do, for instance, if a man is destitute and very old, no matter what his previous life has been? We shall be compelled, for the sake of humanity, to relieve him in some way or other, and to put him in some such place as our existing institution. The hon. member for Kennedy has referred to the stigma which is often undeservedly placed upon people because they happen to go into

Dunwich—people who have been simply unfortunate, whom a bank smash has ruined or who find that certain shares they held instead of being an asset are a liability, and who from causes they could not calculate upon find themselves in a state of destitution; and he endeavoured to show that because under this new system they would be pensioners there would be no stigma upon them. He argued that on the ground that certain people at present in the community had pensions and were rather a subject of congratulation than otherwise. But why? Because the people who draw pensions now have rendered some distinct service to the State, or because it is a part of a recompense for which they entered into a contract. But the moment it becomes out-door relief, and is only given to one class of people, the needy—people who cannot keep themselves, who have neither friends nor children nor relatives sufficiently interested in them to supply the means for their livelihood, and are compelled to apply to the State for a pension—there is the same stigma. The hon. member for Bundaberg knows that in the United Kingdom two kinds of relief are given to the poor, indoor relief and outdoor relief, and also knows that the small class who receive outdoor relief, who are a sort of pensioners, are considered by their more fortunate brethren to have lost status by taking it. I have heard many honest self-reliant people say that although they were poor they thanked Heaven they had never had any of their family in the poorhouse, nor had they ever received any aid from the State. If this system the hon. member advocates is adopted here, and pensions are given to only one class in the State, the class who are destitute and who have no friends or relatives to help them, I venture to prophesy—although it is an extremely dangerous thing to prophesy, but it seems safe enough in this case—that the receipt of such pension will carry with it just as much stigma and loss of status as the present system of relief at Dunwich. It will be an outdoor Dunwich.

*At 7 o'clock the House, in accordance with Sessional Order, proceeded with Government business.*

## SLAUGHTERING BILL.

### FIRST READING.

On the Order of the Day being read—

Consideration in committee of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to provide for the licensing and inspection of slaughter-houses, and to regulate the slaughter and sale of meat—

The PREMIER announced that His Excellency the Governor, having been informed of the objects of the Bill, recommended the necessary appropriation to give effect to its provisions.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I move, Mr. Speaker, that you do now leave the chair.

MR. LEAHY: Before you leave the chair, Mr. Speaker, there is a matter of public importance to which I would like to call attention. It is not of such wonderfully great importance, but being a matter of a public nature relating to public men and to the conduct of the business of this House, I think if it is not fairly put before the country it is our duty to do so. I refer now to a report which appears in yesterday morning's *Courier*, also the report which appears in yesterday's *Telegraph*—a report headed "The Political Situation," giving particulars of a meeting which was held—

THE SPEAKER: Order! I think the hon. member is out of order in dealing with a question like that on this motion. This is not a motion to go into Committee of Supply; it is a

motion to go into committee to consider the desirableness of introducing this Bill, and that is the only question that can be discussed.

Mr. LEAHY: I understood that this was, to a certain extent, a motion to go into Committee of Ways and Means, because there has been a recommendation from His Excellency the Governor to grant the necessary supply; but if I am wrong I will take a later opportunity of bringing the matter forward. I could put myself in order, however, as it is, because I could give reasons why we should not go on with business under present circumstances; but if you rule that I had better leave it over I will give way, and take the opportunity later on of bringing it forward on the motion to go into Committee of Supply. But I would ask you whether, supposing I brought forward the matter on the ground that no business should be done until it had been discussed, I would be right in discussing it on that ground?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member might possibly put himself in order, but it would be rather a difficult matter to do so. He would be in order in bringing it up on the motion to go into Committee of Supply, but I do not think it would be satisfactory to himself or to the House, and would probably be verging on disorder to bring it up at the present time.

Mr. LEAHY: I agree with you that it would be as well to discuss it on the motion to go into Committee of Supply; at the same time I know sufficient of the Standing Orders to know that I would be acting within my rights in bringing the matter up now. If, however, you think it will be more convenient to take the discussion at another time, I will drop it for the present and bring it up later on.

Question put and passed.

The desirableness of introducing the Bill having been affirmed in committee, it was presented and read a first time, and the second reading made an order for Tuesday next.

#### PASTORAL LEASES EXTENSION BILL.

##### FIRST READING.

The House, having in committee affirmed the desirableness of introducing this Bill, it was presented, and read a first time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved that the second reading of the Bill stand an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

Mr. BATTERSBY: I hope the Minister will not press the motion. I do not believe the second reading will come on on Tuesday next in any case, but, in order to give the small selectors in the coastal districts time to consider the Bill, I would ask the hon. gentleman to fix the second reading for Tuesday week?

Question put and passed.

#### DISEASES IN STOCK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On clause 4—"Power to impound stray stock"—

Mr. DANIELS: It might be all very well to give inspectors power to impound and destroy diseased stock, but the clause also empowered them to seize all stock found straying on a road or reserve, and, if unclaimed within ten days, to cause the stock to be sold. That would enable an inspector to seize, for instance, a traveller's horse if it was turned out on to a road. Then there were hundreds of reserves in Queensland where small selectors ran a few head of stock, and there was nothing in the Bill to prevent those stock being impounded. The clause seemed very drastic, and the Secretary for Agriculture had a right to give some explanation of it.

Mr. BATTERSBY: Under the Divisional Boards Act, local authorities were given control

of all roads and reserves, but the Bill proposed to take that control out of their hands, and he would like to know from the Minister how it was going to work? That control could only be taken away from the local authorities by amending the Divisional Boards Act. If the Government were going to take over the control, were they prepared also to defray the cost involved in exercising that control?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The clause was not so drastic as it appeared at first sight. At present the local authorities had, under the Diseases in Stock Act, the power to do exactly what the Bill asked inspectors should have power to do.

Mr. DANIELS: They have to notify the people first.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member was quite wrong.

Mr. DANIELS: Well, they do it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member was entirely wrong. Section 21 of the Diseases in Stock Act provided that any local authority might cause to be destroyed, without making any compensation to the owner, any diseased stock found straying upon any road or land under the control of the local authority:

Provided that the local authority shall forthwith give notice of the fact to an inspector, and to the owner of the stock if such owner is known to the local authority.

It had been found in practice that it was very difficult to make local authorities destroy cancerous cattle. When the Stock Department had given notice to local authorities that there were cancerous cattle running about in their jurisdiction, they had refused to take action to destroy them, and in some cases asked who was to pay the cost. The powers which were proposed to be given to the department had been suggested by a conference of stockowners at Rockhampton. The clause really gave inspectors the power which was now in the hands of local authorities.

Mr. BOLES: The hon. gentleman had not made one point clear. The clause also referred to stock which were impounded but not diseased. Those cattle might be sold within ten days, whereas under the Impounding Act the owner must get notice. Ten days was altogether too short notice. He was quite with the department in wishing to get authority to destroy diseased cattle, but the provision to which he referred was most drastic. It was possible that cattle would stray on to reserves and public highways, and after being impounded they would be sold within ten days.

Mr. BELL: Before hon. members applied the word "drastic" to the measure they should remember that they were legislating under peculiar circumstances. They were endeavouring to meet a special kind of disease which was affecting the cattle industry, and in addition to satisfying themselves they had to deal with the matter in such a manner as to satisfy their neighbour, New South Wales. Hon. members would see that it was only diseased stock which could be destroyed, and the definition clause in the principal Act would show what diseases were referred to. There was a very comprehensive list of diseases in that Act, the existence of any one of which in cattle should lead to their destruction. In giving an inspector power to destroy an infected beast they were only giving a power which it was necessary to exercise in the interests of the country. With regard to the objection of the hon. member for Port Curtis, he would point out that the inspector's functions only extended to diseased stock. It was quite beside the question to assume that the inspectors were going to perform the functions of inspectors of reserves and

main roads, looking for cattle that had no owners. Any steps the inspectors would take they might be perfectly certain would only be taken in regard to cattle which they had grave reason for suspecting were a source of danger to other cattle. They might be quite sure that the Act would not be anything like so formidable as the hon. member anticipated.

Mr. LEAHY: No doubt the measure was drastic, but it must of necessity be so in order to be effective. On one occasion they heard hon. members clamouring and moving the adjournment of the House to call attention to the movements of stock, and asking why the Government did not control them, and now they objected to the Government taking the necessary power to control them. How were the Government to act if they had not the necessary power from Parliament, and if they abused the power Parliament would very soon let them know. There was something in the contention of the hon. member for Port Curtis. According to the 3rd paragraph of clause 4 cattle were to be kept in pound for ten days, but there was no provision as to how notice was to be issued in regard to that stock. How were the public to know that the stock had been impounded? If the advertisements were to be published in the ordinary way it would be utterly impossible to do so in ten days. Under the Impounding Act it required twenty-one days. He noticed that there was a provision that might very well be left out—that referring to the proceeds arising from sale of cattle. That matter was regulated by the Impounding Act of 1863. After expenses were paid the proceeds went to the owner, and if the applicant did not satisfy the poundkeeper that he was the owner the money was remitted to the Treasury. Even then the owner had two years in which to satisfy the Treasury that he was the real owner. At any rate the provision was that at the end of two years, if the money was not claimed, it went to the local charities, and he did not see any reason to alter that. He happened to know something about poundkeeping, as did most men who had lived in the back country, and his opinion was that the provision made by the Impounding Act was more satisfactory than that proposed in this Bill. It was no use overloading the Bill by dealing with matters that were already sufficiently provided for.

Mr. BELL did not quite follow the contention of the hon. member for Bulloo, who failed to draw a distinction between stock impounded under this Bill and stock impounded under the Impounding Act. Any stock impounded at the instigation of an inspector under this Bill would be impounded, not because they were wandering or trespassing, but because they were stock to which some stigma of disease attached. If stock were impounded on the initiative of an inspector under this Bill and were sold, the proceeds should go into the fund out of which all the inspectors appointed under the Bill were maintained.

Mr. LEAHY: He might reply to the hon. member that pounds were established by the public treasury, and therefore the proceeds arising from the sale of impounded cattle should go to the fund out of which pounds were erected. If the analogy were correct in one case it was correct in the other.

Mr. STORY did not follow the argument of the hon. member for Dalby. It was perfectly plain that an inspector might, at any time, order to be impounded any stock found trespassing or straying upon any road or reserve, and therefore it would be simply a race between the local poundkeeper and the inspector. If stock were

impounded, and found not to be diseased, they should be handed over to the poundkeeper under the Impounding Act.

Mr. BELL asked the Secretary for Agriculture what he thought the duties of an inspector would be in regard to wandering stock?

**THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE:** The object of the Bill was to deal with diseased stock. Inspectors had power already under clause 17 of the Act to deal with suspicious stock; they could impound any stock where there was any risk of their going on to infected country or mixing with infected stock; but that was not really the power desired. Diseased cattle had been impounded and had been released on the payment of a few shillings, and there was no power to get rid of them. Inspectors had neither the time nor the intention to harass people. The difficulty was always to keep them up to the mark. If they had an inspector of nuisances in a municipality, he was always just as active as the aldermen desired him to be, and no more; and if they had an inspector in the bush, unless they insisted upon his doing his duty, he would do just as little as would enable him to fail as softly as possible. Hon. members could imagine the surroundings of these inspectors, travelling from station to station amongst people they knew, and, instead of casting any slur upon them, they should be encouraged to do their duty honestly. From every point of view it was necessary and desirable that somebody who would be responsible to the Minister should have power to deal with disease. Local authorities were not responsible, and the Government desired, and he thought the pastoralists generally desired also, that there should not be knocking about the roads and reserves stray diseased cattle which nobody would claim.

Mr. LEAHY: It is the mode of procedure we object to.

Mr. STORY thought the Minister hardly understood the surroundings of stockowners out in the West. The roads which ran through very large pastoral properties were not fenced, and a beast might be on the road when it went to drink, but might be off the road again in an hour or two. Eight or ten head of cattle suffering from pleuro might be dropped out of a travelling mob, but the inspector could not impound them unless they were on the road, and the owner of the country simply gave notice to the poundkeeper that there were stray stock on his run, and the poundkeeper would take them. If stock impounded under those conditions were found to be diseased, the best thing to do would be to destroy them at once, but if they were not they should be dealt with in the ordinary way. The actual fact would be that the stray cattle would not be upon the roads, and therefore the inspector under this Bill could not deal with them at all.

Mr. BATTERSBY: The hon. members for Bulloo and Balonne seemed to be concerned about the Western districts, and nothing more; but if they would go with him he would show them plenty of unfenced land with any number of cattle straying upon it, much nearer to Brisbane. It would take a very long time to fence in all the land that had been taken up in the Western district, or in the coastal, Northern, and Central districts, in order to stop that trouble. The hon. member for Bulloo had made a very long speech. There was a provision in the Constitution Act which said that members had no right to be there while he was receiving pay for doing Government work.

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the question before the Committee.



Mr. BATTERSBY apologised, but wished to ask the Minister a question through the Chairman. The hon. member for Bulloo had been fighting the question of pastoral rents, and he had been appointed by the Government as an arbitrator, or something else.

The CHAIRMAN. The remarks of the hon. member do not apply to the question before the Committee, and I trust he will confine his remarks to clause 4.

Mr. BATTERSBY had no desire to be nasty or awkward, but he would point out first of all that the hon. member for Bulloo was appointed

The CHAIRMAN: I must call the attention of the Committee to the irrelevance and tedious repetition on the part of the hon. member, and I now warn him that he must not continue that line of conduct.

Mr. BATTERSBY: I thank you for your compliment.

Mr. LORD did not think the clause was at all too drastic, when it was remembered that they were dealing with diseased stock. Everybody was aware that it was the constant practice of drovers and persons in charge of stock to turn them out and leave them on reserves and roads, and it was necessary to have a clause like this giving the Government power to perform a duty which the divisional boards at present neglected to do. There were any amount of reserves in the country districts, but, unfortunately, they were not put to the use for which they were intended—to afford food and water to travelling stock. His idea was that they should be fenced in by the Government, and that caretakers should be placed in charge of them, for at present they were perfectly useless to travelling stock, owing to the fact that neighbouring cattle were allowed to stray on them and eat the grass.

Mr. KEOGH regarded the clause before the Committee as the crux of the Bill. The Minister had stated that it was only diseased cattle that were to be impounded, but he would point out that the 2nd paragraph provided that "an inspector may at any time cause to be impounded any stock found straying upon any road or reserve." That did not confine it to diseased stock. Moreover, the provision clashed with the functions of local authorities, whose duty it was to impound stock found straying on public roads.

Mr. LORD: They do not do it.

Mr. KEOGH: They might not do it at the present time, but he hoped that when the Local Government Bill was introduced it would contain a provision compelling them to discharge that duty. Diseased cattle ought certainly to be destroyed, so as to prevent diseased meat being distributed among the people of the colony, for he was afraid there had been too much of that sort of thing in the past. It had been shown on a previous occasion by the junior member for Drayton and Toowoomba and others that a Bill of that sort was required, and he did not think the clause they were discussing was too drastic. Cattle had no doubt been offered for sale which were not fit for human consumption, and this provision would check that evil in the future. Personally he tendered to the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill his sincere thanks for having introduced it.

Mr. BOLES: No one complained of stringency with regard to cattle suffering from disease. The point raised was with reference to cattle that were not diseased, and it was contended that the ten days of impounding was too short. It would be advisable to substitute twenty-one days for ten days.

Mr. GLASSEY: On the second reading, while expressing his satisfaction at the introduction of a Bill for the purpose of protecting the herds of the country from being contaminated by

other cattle suffering from disease, he urged that something should be said with regard to the losses sustained by those persons whose cattle had been destroyed. He was just as anxious as the Minister to protect sound cattle from contamination, but when a man's cattle were destroyed to preserve the herds of the community some compensation ought certainly to be paid to him. He was anxious to hear the hon. gentleman's opinion on that subject. He was willing to arm the inspectors with every reasonable authority to destroy diseased cattle for the sake of protecting the herds of other people, but he was not prepared to agree that the owner of the cattle so destroyed—he might be a man with only two or three head of stock—should suffer the entire loss when his cattle had been destroyed for the benefit of the community. He contended strongly that in such cases compensation should be given.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member did not seem to realise what the clause was intended to apply to. It was not a question of a struggling selector having one or two diseased cattle destroyed for the benefit of the community. That was not the position at all. The clause applied mainly to unowned cattle. If they could find the owners they could find means to make them pay for their destruction. In farming districts drovers were constantly dropping diseased stock, tainting the reserves and the roads before they were discovered. Now it was said they should go after the drover, whom they could not find, and compensate him because he had left stock on the road and put the Government to a considerable expense to destroy them. The 21st section of the existing Act gave power to local authorities to destroy such cattle without any compensation.

Mr. GLASSEY: But section 22 says that under certain circumstances compensation shall be granted.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Not where the cattle were diseased. Section 22 provided that half compensation was to be given in connection with stock and gear on a man's own property, not left behind on a public road. Diseased stock were destroyed now without compensation.

Mr. GLASSEY: But is it right?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Perfectly right. The individual must suffer for the benefit of the community, more especially in the case of stock left along the roads because they were worthless. The difficulty in such a case was to find the owner.

Mr. JACKSON: The Secretary for Agriculture was right in his contention. Under clause 21 of the Act no compensation was payable where the local authority destroyed stock straying on the roads or on the land under their control; where compensation was paid was in the case of travelling stock impounded from main roads. He was amazed that the hon. gentleman intended to proceed with the Bill in its present form. The Bill was too drastic in some respects; in others it was not drastic enough. It was too drastic in paragraph 2 of clause 4, where it read, "An inspector may at any time cause to be impounded any stock found straying or trespassing upon any road or reserve." He thought that after the word "stock" they might insert "suspected to be diseased." That would qualify it a little, but would not get over his principal objection, which was in connection with the word "reserve." He pointed out on the second reading that if the clause went through as it was it would be possible to destroy without compensation stock on any goldfield or mineral field reserve. There were thousands of head on gold and mineral fields, and the owners contributed



to the Brands Act fund from which this compensation was paid, and why should they be subjected to an imposition of this kind? It was monstrous, and he hoped the hon. gentleman would modify the clause, particularly seeing that in consequence of what took place yesterday so many hon. members representing goldfields were absent to-night. He suggested the addition after the word "reserve" of the words "not being a gold or mineral field reserve." When he said the Bill did not go far enough he referred to the inspectors having power to go on runs but not to enter upon freehold land.

Mr. LEAHY: You are wrong there.

Mr. BELL: Look at the definition of "run" in the interpretation clause of the principal Act. It includes any land.

Mr. JACKSON: That certainly got over his objection with regard to the powers of the inspector, and he was much obliged to the hon. member for pointing it out, but he would ask the Minister if he would modify the word "reserve."

Mr. BATTERSBY hoped the discussion would come to an end, because he thought the sooner they went to a division the better. Where he was living at present, within three miles of Brisbane—at Eagle Junction—there were cancerous cows running. He had given notice to the local authority, and the local authority had taken steps to do away with them. He had been eighteen years a member of a divisional board, and chairman for nine of those years, and he had never experienced any difficulty in regard to the destruction of diseased cattle. He hoped the Secretary for Agriculture would allow the local authorities to continue to exercise that power.

Mr. DANIELS considered the clause too drastic, inasmuch as it did not limit the power of the inspectors to impounding stock which were at least suspected of being diseased. The time provided during which stray stock might be claimed was too short. At present the local authorities seldom impounded stray stock, and when they did they always previously notified the stockowners in the district of their intention to do so. Of course the ratepayers had really control over the members of local authorities at election times, so that the local authorities did not enforce the impounding provisions very frequently. But the people would have no such power over an inspector, and undue influence might be used to persuade him to impound stock. It was a benefit to the owner of the diseased stock that they should be destroyed as well as to the general public, because the destruction of such cattle in the first instance might save the owner from very heavy losses through the infection of the rest of his stock. He objected very strongly, however, to an inspector being allowed to impound stock that were not even suspected of being diseased.

Mr. BELL certainly did not view inspectors with that want of confidence with which a number of members appeared to view them, but the objection of those hon. members might be removed by the insertion after the word "stock," in the 10th line, of the words "which he may suspect of being diseased or infected."

Mr. HARDACRE was afraid that that amendment would not be satisfactory either. The clause was too drastic in more ways than one. The Bill described a beast which had ticks on it as a diseased beast.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It does not do anything of the sort. That has been omitted already.

Mr. HARDACRE: That was an improvement, but even with the amendment suggested by the hon. member for Dalby it would be unfair to the owners of beasts which were destroyed. Seeing they were to be destroyed in the interests of stockowners generally, it was only

fair that they should pay the owners some compensation, and the payment of such compensation would give the inspectors ampler powers than they would have under the Bill. If an inspector destroyed any cattle on a reserve or road without any provision for compensation being made, it would give rise to such indignation as to greatly curtail his powers. He certainly would oppose the clause as it stood, because it gave too great powers to the inspectors, who had often very little responsibility, and who had often prejudices owing to differences of opinion with stockowners. It was actually proposed to give those large powers to inspectors without any appeal to the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: As the amendment of the hon. member for Dalby met the views of the Committee, and certainly carried out the intention of the Bill, he should be very pleased to accept it.

Mr. BATTERSBY would like to know from the Minister and the mover of the amendment what it was proposed to do with local authorities in the outside districts who were in charge of the roads.

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that there is an amendment before the Committee, and he must strictly confine his remarks to it.

Mr. BATTERSBY quite agreed with that, but hoped he would be allowed to explain to the Minister what information he required from him.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will not be in order unless his remarks apply to the amendment.

Mr. BATTERSBY was simply trying to get an explanation, but if he could not get it he would go without it.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. JACKSON thought the Minister would have made some remarks in reference to his objection to the word "reserve." The amendment of the hon. member for Dalby had modified the clause, and there was now not so much objection to it, but he would also like to have his suggestion in reference to mineral reserves accepted.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It seemed to him very dangerous to except one kind of reserve from the operation of the Act and apply it to others. The hon. member had given no reason why his amendment should be accepted. It was true that in many cases a very large number of cattle ran on the reserves to which the hon. member alluded, and it was to be hoped they were not diseased cattle. He did not think the Committee could see its way to exempt one kind of reserve and include another.

Mr. JACKSON thought the hon. gentleman could not have been listening to him. He had pointed out that stockowners on goldfields paid towards a fund out of which compensation was made. Could the Minister give any reason why the owners of stock on goldfields should not be paid compensation for stock destroyed under the Act and squatters should be paid for their stock when destroyed? The men on goldfields had to pay for the cattle that ran on the reserves, and also contributed to the brands fund.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Did the hon. member assume that the squatters obtained compensation and other people did not?

Mr. JACKSON: That is what it means.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE failed to follow the hon. member. For diseased stock slaughtered after being found straying there was no compensation.

Mr. BELL asked, Did the hon. member for Kennedy remember that the Bill would only apply to stock found straying or trespassing?

If cattle were run on a goldfields reserve in conformity with the Goldfields Act, they could not be said to be straying cattle. It had been suggested to him by the senior member for South Brisbane, that after the word "reserve," on the 10th line, it would be advisable to insert "or unoccupied Crown lands." That would increase the scope of the clause, and certainly attain the object of the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE did not see any objection to the further amendment. It would probably be a very good one.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. GLASSEY was not content with the explanation that had been given by the Minister. It was all very well for him to say that the individual must be sacrificed for the good of the community, but still the community should compensate him.

Mr. SMITH: But the diseased animal would have no value.

Mr. GLASSEY: A thing that might not be of any value to the hon. member might be of very great value to him (Mr. Glassey). It might be necessary in consequence of an outbreak of disease that a piece of furniture, which might have no market value, but which might be very precious to him, might have to be destroyed, and he certainly thought he should be entitled to some compensation.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: But you would not leave such a piece of furniture lying in the road.

Mr. GLASSEY agreed that the interests of the community came before the interests of the individual, but was the community at large to receive a benefit at the expense of the individual without compensating him? He thought it would be a manifest injustice. A man might have to leave his team of bullocks which might stray in his absence, and contract a disease, and very rightly be destroyed; but would not that man be entitled to some compensation for his loss? He was not inclined to allow the community to receive a benefit without paying for it, and would move the omission of the words "but no compensation shall be made to the owner in respect of such stock."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE said he could not accept such an amendment. If the case the hon. member had mentioned existed it would be a very hard one, but if they were compelled to pay compensation under those circumstances the Bill would be absolutely unworkable. The trouble was that they could not find the owners of diseased stock, and were therefore unable to make them pay for their destruction, which they ought to do.

Mr. GLASSEY: What about the brands?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The brand did not prove ownership. If they omitted those words, this was what might happen: They would destroy a cancerous cow branded "T G 1"—presumed to belong to the leader of the Opposition. The drover would take the rest of the mob, say, to Sydney, and deliver them. Then in six months' time the owner of this cow would come back and say it was a most valuable cow; that it had belonged to his mother; that he had the greatest affection for that cow—that it was an old piece of family furniture. There would be no evidence to show that it was not an old family cow, and the Government would probably have to pay a great deal more than it was worth in its prime.

Mr. GLASSEY: The hon. member might indulge in a little pleasantry, but that would not make him shirk the question. There was nothing unreasonable in his contention. If the owner of an animal could not be found, of course no compensation would be paid, but if a man could prove that he was the lawful owner, then he should

receive compensation. He had been a member of a board of health in the old country, and took some interest in these matters. During that period there was an outbreak of smallpox, and it was found necessary to destroy people's clothing and furniture. Several members of the board preached the old doctrine that the individual must be sacrificed for the good of the community; but he would not agree, unless the community paid something for the benefit it received by the destruction of those articles. That was the position he took up now, and if necessary he would press his amendment to a division.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE pointed out that the principle which the hon. member now so emphatically opposed he accepted in 1896. The words in the Act of 1896 were practically the same as those in the Bill. Section 21 provided that any local authority might cause any diseased stock, straying upon any road or land under their control, to be destroyed "without making any compensation to the owner."

Mr. BELL: The leader of the Opposition had done nothing but reiterate his belief that a certain thing should be done; he had not given a single reason why it should be done. Stock was a thing which was common to the whole of the Australian colonies, and in legislation respecting stock the main principles were similar throughout Australia. He defied the hon. member to point to one colony in Australia where the principle he advocated in connection with the destruction of diseased stock was in operation. If the hon. member wanted to give compensation for a diseased beast, by what standard was he to arrive at its value? The definition of disease in the principal Act was—

Actinomycosis, anthrax, cancer, foot and mouth disease, glanders and farcy, pleuro-pneumonia, rinderpest, Texas or tick fever, tuberculosis, variola or sheep-pox, or any other disease which the Governor in Council may, by Order in Council, bring under the provisions of this Act.

What was a beast afflicted in the slightest degree with any one of those diseases worth? The hon. member had not one iota of a practical basis for his argument.

Mr. GRIMES did not see how a person could have any claim for compensation for the destruction of diseased cattle, but it was very possible that in the destruction of a number of cattle a beast that was perfectly sound might be destroyed, and in that case compensation might be allowed. In the southern colonies the owner of a beast which was pronounced to be diseased could claim to have it examined when it was slaughtered, and if the inspector could not show that it was diseased, as he alleged, the owner was allowed fair compensation. Such a provision might be adopted here, and he thought the inspector condemning the beast in such a case should pay the compensation, but a beast suffering from any of the diseases mentioned in the Act was perfectly valueless.

Mr. HARDACRE contended that so far from the hon. member for Dalby having offered any reasons in support of his argument, he had supplied an argument in favour of the contention of the leader of the Opposition. There were thousands of beasts in the colony affected with glanders, or tuberculosis, and many of them were worth a considerable amount. Was it fair then that those beasts should be destroyed in the interests of stockowners without any compensation being paid to the owners? Hon. members must remember that the country was occupied by men holding large cattle runs and other areas under occupation licenses, which could not be fenced.

Mr. BELL: Land held under occupation licenses can be fenced.

Mr. HARDACRE: They could, but it would not pay to fence them, as they were generally the worst of land—covered with impassable scrub, and worth only about 5s. or 7s. 6d. per square mile. The reserves on which the cattle grazing on runs and occupation licenses might stray were not fenced, and yet an inspector, simply because the cattle were straying there, might slaughter them wholesale.

Mr. LORD: They are all diseased then?

Mr. HARDACRE: They might be affected with disease in a slight degree. The Minister had said that they accepted the principle of non-compensation in the Act of 1896, but he would point out that in that Act the Government accepted the principle of compensation, as section 22 provided that where stock or any articles or things used in connection with stock had been destroyed the owner should receive compensation, and it fixed the rate of compensation at an amount not exceeding "one-half the actual current value of healthy stock or articles, or things," of the same description as those destroyed. Had there been any difficulty in working that provision? Before altering the existing law giving half compensation, some substantial reason ought to be given. If left as it was the Act would be far more effective and fewer difficulties would be placed in the way of the inspectors. If the proposal was carried it would only result in members going every few days to the Minister and complaining of injustice that had been perpetrated on some of their constituents. If compensation were given diseased stock could be destroyed in a firm way with benefit to the community and without injustice to the individual owner.

Mr. GLASSEY: The hon. member for Dalby raised two points—first, that he (Mr. Glassey) had mentioned no standard of value; and secondly, that none of the other colonies had taken the course he was now advocating. It was a very poor argument to say that because an injustice had been committed somewhere else, therefore it should be committed here. With regard to the standard of value, that was already provided for in the Act; but supposing it was not surely some competent person could be found to place a value on a beast. If it was worth nothing, nothing would be given. If it was not very badly diseased, and had any value at all, that could be easily ascertained. If it was a good animal, it would be worth the current price in the district in which it was destroyed.

The PREMIER: He was certain the remarks of the hon. member would not commend themselves to the practical common-sense of the Committee. The fact of the matter was that the hon. member wanted the State to become the purchaser of diseased cattle. The 21st section of the Act distinctly waived compensation; and why should they offer compensation for the protection of the community to persons who had diseased stock which were unmarketable, and which should be? Yet the State was to be the purchaser of that diseased stock. There was no injury inflicted upon the owner of the diseased stock, and for the State to become the purchaser of unmarketable stock at a valuation would be to inflict a gross injustice on the taxpayers of the colony. It would also be an incentive to make claims on the Government of a novel character by men who had diseased cattle in their herds. Why should not their sympathies be extended to the pastoralists who lost thousands of cattle from ticks? They suffered in silence, and no compensation was awarded to them. To introduce the principle of compensation would interfere with the principle of the Bill to such an extent that he did not think the Government could proceed with it.

Mr. GLASSEY: He was tired of listening to all this talk about sympathy. It reminded him of the story of the man who had once been in affluent circumstances, but who had come down in the world and was reduced to selling pies on London Bridge. A friend of happier days saw him following that vocation, and said to him, "I sympathise most deeply with you." "Confound your sympathy," he replied, "I am selling pies; do you want any?" He wanted to see some practical sympathy with the persons who had to suffer in the interests of the community, and he intended to take the sense of the Committee with regard to it.

Mr. CALLAN: The hon. member's arguments were based entirely on theory; he evidently knew nothing of the subject he was talking about. He (Mr. Callan) had spent the greater part of forty years amongst cattle, and he could say positively that cattle-owners who looked after their business rarely had any diseased beasts on their runs. If pleuro broke out, the cattle could not be shifted, and in a case of tuberculosis the disease was seen at once and the beast was taken into the yard and slaughtered. In such cases no remuneration was dreamed of. As to giving compensation for the destruction of diseased cattle found on roads or reserves, the thing was preposterous, and he should oppose it.

Mr. LEAHY would point out to the hon. member the consequence of passing the amendment. Take, for instance, the case of North Queensland, where tick-infested cattle had died in great numbers. In a case like that any business man would gather together all his diseased stock, take them to a place from which they would be impounded and destroyed, and would then be paid compensation for them at the expense of the State. He thought they had discussed the question long enough, and they might as well go to a division now if the hon. gentleman intended to press his amendment.

Mr. FITZGERALD pointed out that this Bill was only an amendment of the Impounding Act, and the owner would be charged 2s. 6d. a head damages, besides driving expenses, as a set-off against any compensation he might claim, so that he would not make such a nice thing out of it as the hon. member for Bulloo seemed to think.

Mr. TOOTH hoped the amendment would not be carried, because his long connection with local government convinced him that if it were known that compensation would be given for any diseased beast that had to be destroyed, people who had diseased or old stock would turn them out on the public roads in the hope that they would be destroyed and compensation given. In a portion of the district he represented there was a disease amongst the dairy cattle known as anthrax, which was doing as much harm there as the ticks were doing in other parts of the colony. It was spreading over the coast district in that part of the colony simply from the fact that dairymen, when they found their cattle dying from this disease, quietly turned them out on the public road in the hope that the divisional board would burn them when they died. And if it was known that, in addition to having his diseased cattle destroyed, the owner would receive compensation, the inducement to turn them out would be so great that he was afraid it would become a very serious matter.

Mr. KEOGH was astonished at hon. members on the other side not being willing to accept the amendment. The hon. member for Bulloo had spoken on the matter no doubt forcibly and well, still he must know that it would be beneficial to those gentlemen that they should get compensation for their cattle; and it affected hon.

members on the other side, more than the members on the Opposition side because they had more cattle to deal with. He thought it would be one of the best things included in the Bill that compensation should be given to cattle-owners. No doubt hon. gentlemen on the other side held the opinion that small graziers and owners of dairies would be the recipients of this compensation, but he took it that the greater amount of the money derivable from those cattle would go to the large squatters. Therefore they ought to support the amendment.

Mr. SMITH: In his opinion diseased stock had no value, and if the amendment were agreed to there would be never-ending difficulty in deciding as to the value of the stock which had been destroyed. They were losing sight of the amendment which had been suggested by the hon. member for Oxley—that when stock were destroyed which were found not to be diseased, then compensation should be given. That was a reasonable proposition, but it would be a great mistake to give compensation for diseased stock. The community at present suffered greatly through diseased cattle getting to our meat markets, and the provisions of the Bill could not be too drastic in order to prevent such cattle finding their way to the consumer. If the amendment was made, diseased stock would not be slaughtered except in very rare instances, and they wanted to encourage people to destroy such stock. The amendment would give rise to complications of which the hon. member for Bundaberg had no idea at the present time. It would take a Philadelphia lawyer to decide as to the compensation to be paid. He hoped the hon. member would withdraw the amendment.

Mr. FOGARTY could not vote for the amendment. Under the Act passed in 1896 the local authorities had power to destroy stock without compensation, and he was very much surprised at the hon. member for Bundaberg moving the amendment. If a beast was diseased, it was practically valueless, and in such cases it was absurd to propose that compensation should be given.

Mr. DANIELS: When he had previously stated that local authorities had power to destroy cattle found straying, he had been contradicted, but section 21 of the Act of 1896 provided that local authorities might destroy stray cattle without paying compensation. He did not believe in giving compensation for diseased beasts. He had seen the day when he had sworn under his breath at people allowing cancerous cattle to run round his fences. If the amendment was pressed, he would have to vote against it.

Mr. HARDACRE: Some hon. members who represented cattle-owners did not appear to know the provisions of the Diseases in Stock Act. If the members of the Government and cattle-owners were opposed to the principle of granting compensation, why had they supported the principle in 1896? Even the Premier had tried to make out that it would be a dangerous principle to establish, and yet it was at present in force. In 1896 the late Home Secretary said—

The next clause is one which is contained in all Acts. If it is found necessary, in the interests of the public, to use the arbitrary powers contained in the Bill—to go on a man's run and destroy his property—he shall be compensated from the assurance fund. The clause, therefore, provides that such an owner will receive two-thirds of the actual current value of the stock.

That was similar to the provision in the Brands Act, under which the owner of sheep destroyed for scab should receive two-thirds of the value of the sheep.

Mr. STORY: Scab is not a disease that destroys stock.

Mr. HARDACRE: Local authorities had no power to pay compensation when they destroyed stock, but when stock were destroyed by the Minister, acting through an inspector, compensation had to be paid, not exceeding half the actual current value of the stock.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: And nobody ever got one shilling out of the fund, and never will.

Mr. HARDACRE: They had been told again and again that diseased stock had no value, but he would point out that it might be diseased only in a very slight form, and for boiling-down purposes it might be worth £1 a head. In a case of that sort why should the owner suffer more than the rest of the community? At least he ought to be allowed the value of the stock when boiled down. He would point out one other vital distinction. Where they gave the local authorities power to destroy cattle, the power only referred to cattle straying on roads or on lands under their control.

Mr. LEAHY: Are you stonewalling the Bill?

Mr. HARDACRE: The hon. member for Bulloo had an axe of his own to grind. He (Mr. Hardacre) was representing the interests of his constituents. He knew of many arbitrary actions on the part of inspectors which had caused a considerable amount of friction in his district, and they were now giving inspectors greater powers than were given to local authorities.

The CHAIRMAN: I must draw the hon. member's attention to the amendment before the Committee. The question is the omission of the words "no compensation shall be paid to the owner in respect of such stock." The hon. member will see that the question is entirely one whether compensation shall be granted or not.

Mr. HARDACRE: Quite so. He was pointing out that the power granted to local authorities to destroy stock was more limited than the power proposed to be given to inspectors. There were reserves and unfenced Crown lands upon which cattle might stray, and how could the owner possibly prevent them? Only recently the hon. member for Woolloongabba informed the House that he knew of some diseased stock which had been sold at the rate of £2 a head. Under those circumstances it would be a gross injustice if such stock was destroyed without the owner getting compensation.

Mr. W. THORN did not intend to support the amendment, especially after the hon. member's reference to diseased cattle being sold at £2 a head. Those cattle were cut up and sold to the people of Brisbane, and in his opinion life was short enough without people being fed on diseased meat. He was quite sure the owners would be very glad to get rid of their diseased stock.

Mr. BATTERSBY intended to vote against the amendment—that was the addition of the words proposed by the hon. member for Dalby.

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that the amendment is for the omission of certain words from the clause.

Mr. BATTERSBY: Mr. Annear—

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 41.

Messrs. Dickson, Chataway, Philp, Foxton, Dalrymple, Murray, Macdonald-Paterson, Petrie, Stodart, Collins, Callan, McMaster, Jenkinson, Bales, Story, Stephenson, Bell, Finney, Curtis, Fogarty, Groom, Fraser, Daniels, Castling, Newell, McGahan, W. Thorn, Lissner, Bridges, Lord, Corfield, Cribb, Moore, O'Connell, Tooth, Leahy, Battersby, Hamilton, Slumm, Stephens, and Grimes.

NOES, 11.

Messrs. Glassey, Keogh, Stewart, Kidston, Jackson, Dibley, Kerr, Fitzgerald, Cross, Hardacre, and Maughan.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. BOLES moved that the word "ten" in line 17 be omitted with a view of inserting the words "twenty-one."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE explained that the term of ten days was chosen at the instigation of the Stock Conference held at Rockhampton, but now that they had settled the question of diseases in cattle, it would, perhaps, be better if the term were extended in accordance with the suggestion of the hon. member. He would accept the amendment.

Mr. BATTERSBY: What rot!

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. BATTERSBY said he would like to have the interpretation of the Chairman as to the effect the amendment would have. If they went into Queen street they could see cows straying—within the boundaries of the municipality at any rate. Did the Government intend to fence in all the roads in the colony, and say "Thus far shalt thou go and no further?" If they were prepared to fence off all the roads he would vote for the Bill, but if not he did not think they ought to be asked to vote for it. Hon. members might say or do what they liked, but he would do what was fair.

The CHAIRMAN: I would ask the hon. member to consider seriously if the time has not arrived when he should confine his remarks to the question before the Committee, which is that clause 4 stand part of the Bill. I trust that the hon. member will not make a burlesque of our proceedings.

Mr. BATTERSBY: Mr. Annear—

The CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. member comply with the Standing Orders, and be seated?

Mr. BATTERSBY: You are going to pass clause 4? What are the words?

Mr. FRASER: I move that the question be now put.

Mr. BATTERSBY: Mr. Annear—

The CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. member be seated? There can be no debate.

Question—That the question be now put—put and passed.

Clause 4, as amended, put and passed.

Mr. BATTERSBY, the hon. member for Moreton, here addressed some remarks to the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Fraser, in which he used the words, "you bugger."

Mr. FRASER asked the Chairman to call the hon. member for Moreton to order, and to direct that his words be taken down.

Mr. BATTERSBY: If I have said anything offensive, I am prepared to withdraw.

The CHAIRMAN: I did not catch the words.

Mr. BATTERSBY: I will deal with you before you go. Come outside.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

Clause 5—"Amendment of 60 Vic. No. 1, 23"—put and passed.

On clause 6—"Manner of showing amendments"—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE wished to inform hon. members that he should be compelled to ask for the recommittal of the Bill to remedy a matter to which the hon. member for Bulloo had called attention the other evening.

#### SUSPENSION OF MEMBER.

Mr. BATTERSBY (who had taken his seat alongside Mr. Fraser, and was talking in a loud tone of voice) was here heard to say, "Come outside— Oh, damn you."

The CHAIRMAN: I now name the hon. member for Moreton, Mr. Battersby, for disorderly conduct.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BATTERSBY: What conduct?

The House resumed.

The matter having been reported to the Speaker,

The PREMIER moved, "That the hon. member for Moreton, Mr. Battersby, be suspended from the service of the House for a period of one week."

Question put and passed.

Mr. BATTERSBY had by this time left the Chamber.

#### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On clause 6—"Manner of showing amendments"—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member for Bulloo had asked the other evening under what authority district inspectors were appointed, and on looking up the matter he (Mr. Chataway) found that although they had district inspectors appointed to certain districts, yet in the original Act "districts" were not defined. He should therefore be compelled to ask for the recommittal of the Bill in order to insert a definition of the word "district," and give the necessary authority for the appointment of district inspectors.

Clause put and passed.

The House resumed; and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved that the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of considering three new clauses to follow clause 1.

Question put and passed.

#### RECOMMITTAL.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved that the following new clause be inserted after clause 1:—

The following words are added at the end of section 3 of the principal Act: "District—a district appointed under this Act"

Mr. BELL: Perhaps the hon. gentleman would state what consequential amendments he intended to move.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He intended to amend section 4 by providing for the appointment of a chief inspector and other inspectors to whom districts might be assigned, and to propose another amendment in the same section providing for the proclamation of districts for the purposes of the Act.

Mr. BELL agreed with the amendments, and would suggest as a further amendment a definition of the words "inspector of the district."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was exactly on all fours with the Land Act, which provided for the appointment of a commissioner, not for any particular district. Then there was power to proclaim districts to which a commissioner might be assigned, and he would become the commissioner for that district.

Question put and passed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved the insertion of the following new clause—

In section 4 of the principal Act, after the words "execution of this Act," the words "and may assign a district or districts to such inspectors or officers" are inserted.

Question put and passed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved the insertion of the following new clause:—

The Governor in Council may by proclamation appoint any portion or portions of the colony to be a district or districts for the purposes of this Act, and may alter the boundaries of any district.

Up to the present they had used the ordinary petty sessions districts. The amendment would enable them to effect the alterations suggested by the hon. member for Bulloo, which, in case of trouble, would be very desirable.

Question put and passed.

Mr. BELL: He would suggest a further amendment in section 15 of the principal Act in which notice was required to be given to the inspector of the district. The words ought to be added "in which the run is situated."

The CHAIRMAN: The Bill has been re-committed for a special purpose, but under the Standing Orders it may be re-committed as often as is deemed necessary.

Mr. BELL: The matter was not of sufficient importance to warrant another recommitment of the Bill.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with further amendments.

The Bill, as amended, was taken into consideration, and its third reading made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at 10 o'clock.