Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 24 OCTOBER 1901

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The SPEAKER (Hon. Arthur Morgan, *Warwick*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

PAPERS.

The following papers, laid on the table of the House, were ordered to be printed :—

(1) Despatch, dated 23rd August, 1901, transmitting Order in Council for giving effect to extradition treaty between Great Britain and Servia.

(2) Return to an Order relative to public holidays in Queensland, made by the House, on motion of Mr. McDonnell, on the 8th instant.

QUESTIONS.

COST OF BRISBANE RIVER IMPROVEMENTS.

Mr. CURTIS (*Rockhampton*) asked the Treasurer—

What amount (if any) in excess of the harbour dues actually received has been spent in connection with the Brisbane River improvements from 30th June, 1899, to date?

The TREASURER (Hon. T. B. Cribb, *Ipswich*) replied—

	£	s.	d.
From loan fund—endowment to harbour boards	56,375	3	3
From trust fund	24,566	15	10
	£80,941	19	1

DREDGING OF THE BRISBANE RIVER.

Mr. TURLEY (*Brisbane South*) asked the Premier—

1. Has the Premier complied with the request of the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce *re* supplying information in connection with the dredge plant and the work of dredging the Brisbane River?

2. If so, will he lay a copy of the information supplied on the table of the House?

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) replied—

No.

LEPERS IN LAZARETS.

Mr. TURLEY asked the Home Secretary—

1. What is the number of lepers at present in the lazarets at Stradbroke Island and Friday Island respectively?

2. What is the number of persons of European descent suffering from leprosy at present in the lazarets?

3. What is the number of coloured persons suffering from leprosy at present in the lazarets?

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carnarvon*) replied—

1. Stradbroke Island, 12; Friday Island, 18.

2. Nine.

3. Twenty-one.

LEASING LANDS TO CHINESE ALIENS.

Mr. GIVENS (*Cairns*) : I beg to move—

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable and necessary, in the best interests of this State, to introduce and pass a Bill prohibiting the leasing of lands to Chinese aliens.

This resolution is somewhat similar to the resolution which I moved in this House last year, with the same object in view—that is, to prohibit the leasing of lands, particularly agricultural lands, to Chinese aliens. The resolution I moved last year was somewhat differently worded to the resolution which I now have the pleasure of moving. In the resolution I moved last year I referred to all Asiatic aliens, no matter what their country of birth was. I then wished them all to be excluded from the right of leasing the lands of this colony. Since then some difficulties have arisen with regard to the people of one Asiatic country, which might place difficulties in the way of a legislative measure of this kind having the desired effect, but as no difficulty has arisen with regard to the Chinese in this connection, I propose this year to restrict the motion to the leasing of the lands to Chinese aliens only. I have very considerable hope that this motion will get a more favourable reception than the resolution I proposed last year received. There was a discussion on this matter near the close of last session, and a vote was taken, and that vote was given strictly on party lines. Hon. members on this side voted in a body for the resolution, and hon. members on the Government side, with one honourable exception—with the exception of Mr. Bridges—voted against the resolution in a body.

The PREMIER : That shows that it was not a party question on this side.

Mr. GIVENS : Since that vote was taken a considerable change has come over public opinion in this colony, if we judge from the public expressions of our public men at various times —particularly at the time when the federal elections were on. Every hon. member on the other side who expressed any opinion at all expressed this opinion : That while everyone was in favour of excluding Asiatics from this State, their attitude was that the kanaka was harmless. They said, "Leave us the kanaka, and we will be perfectly satisfied to exclude the Chinese and other coloured aliens." There is no doubt that that was the attitude assumed by those hon. members then, and I think this motion will put them to the test—to see whether there is any truth in their professed desire to make this State unattractive to these aliens. Hon. members may say that the restrictions with regard to these Chinese aliens are sufficiently severe in order to keep them out ; but restrictive measures in this connection will not be effective so long as the conditions in this State are made so attractive that it will be profitable for these aliens to evade or to comply with these restrictions, and still come here. I maintain that the very best way in which we can keep these people out is to make this colony unattractive for them. If they find no attraction they will not come here. At the present time the chief attraction they have is that they can get cheap land under conditions under which they cannot get it in any other State in the world. They therefore come here and work that land at the expense mainly of the white people who want to get that land and work it, because it must be remembered that the white people have to compete for the possession of this land against the Chinese ; and I shall show before I sit down what an almost impossible struggle that is. The leasing of land to Chinese is, I believe, a greater evil in the electorate which I represent than in any other part of Queensland or, perhaps, in Australia. There we have some of the finest land that it is possible to conceive of—land which is fit to grow anything—and with a climate which is equal to anything in Australia. We find that large areas of that land are being leased to Chinamen, under conditions that it is impossible for any white man to make a living if he has to pay the same rental for the land. This pernicious system was first initiated some years ago by a system of absentee landlordism. I would mention that there are several big estates of very fine agricultural land in the Cairns district which were selected in the first place by people who never intended to farm those lands themselves, and who took them up purely for speculative purposes. They found there was a demand for those lands, and that Chinese were willing to give them very high rentals—giving them in some cases, I believe, as high as £1 per acre per annum, although it cost the original owners not one single shilling except the price that they originally paid to the State for it. And here I may mention one argument which seems to me to be entirely conclusive in this connection, and which should induce hon. members on the opposite side to vote for the motion. It is well known to every hon. member of this House that in our scheme of land settlement there is absolutely no provision made for settling Chinese aliens upon any portion of our public lands, and more particularly upon our agricultural lands.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY : Nor any other alien.

Mr. GIVENS : That is so ; but it must be remembered that the conditions under which Chinese can become naturalised are far more severe than they are in connection with the naturalisation of any other aliens. Whereas the Frenchman, the German, the Italian, the Dane, or the Swede can become naturalised after a short residence without any other condition being imposed but taking the oath of allegiance, it is impossible for a Chinaman to become naturalised unless he gets some unfortunate white woman to marry him, and then he has to fulfil other conditions. So you see that the position is this : That our land laws never contemplated the leasing or occupation of land by these Chinese aliens ; and I maintain that this position is incontrovertible—that if it is a good thing to lease our lands, and especially our agricultural lands, to Chinese aliens, then the State should reap the whole of the profit for itself, instead of allowing the individual to select the land and then lease it to the Chinaman, so that that individual will have the whole profit. Again, this system mainly arises from the system of absentee landlordism. This arose from allowing the land to be selected by people who had no intention of putting it to proper account, but merely held it for speculative purposes. I might mention scores of cases in my district in which first-class agricultural land was selected by people who never intended to reside on it, or cultivate it, or to put it to any profitable use. I will mention a few cases which are known to hon. members in this Chamber. Take the case of a big Brisbane merchant like Mr. Tom Finney, who not long ago was a member of this House. I think he held a selection in the Cairns district of about 1,280 acres of real good agricultural land, and the only use he put that land to was to let it to Chinese aliens.

Mr. LESINA : The Home Secretary is doing exactly the same thing in his district.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE : The usual slander, I suppose.

Mr. LESINA : It is not. I can prove it.

The SPEAKER : Order !

Mr. GIVENS: I am speaking facts. Another case is that of a sawmiller—Mr. Pettigrew. He selected—as is known to the hon. member for Woothakata, I think—some very fine land about 4 miles from Cairns. There is not a white man on that land cultivating it, or using it, and the only use it has been put to is that it has been rented to Chinese. I do not blame those gentlemen at all for having taken advantage of our land laws, or of the system of administration. I think they were perfectly entitled to do so, and the fault appears to be either bad legislation or bad administration. But it is not too late to correct that fault; and that is what I am asking now. It is very easy for this House—if it chooses to do so, and if it sees the desirability of doing so—to pass a short measure of one or two, or at most of three, clauses, to prohibit the leasing of these lands to Chinese aliens. That would get over the whole difficulty. We cannot interfere with what has gone by. We can only take a lesson from it for our future guidance. But we can, at any rate, rectify the mistakes of the past to the extent of making it impossible for the future. Since I last called attention to this evil in this House it has been accentuated, and for that the Government are responsible, seeing that at that time I pointed out the then existing evils, which have since been accentuated, and in some cases doubled. Let me give another instance that has occurred at Cairns. At the present time the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company own a very large amount of land there, and a very large amount which they do not own is under cultivation for them to supply cane to their mill, and I have been supplied with the actual figures with regard to the cultivation of the cane on that particular estate for that particular mill. Here I might say, by way of interpolation, that in working up this subject I have been placed at a very great disadvantage, inasmuch at there are no official figures obtainable as to the amount of land which is under Chinese occupation in this State. But I have these figures from the most reliable authority I could have—that is from the Hambledon Planters' Association. That is an association of all the planters who are engaged in growing cane for the Hambledon Mill in the Cairns district. The figures with which they supplied me are as follows:—There are a total of 4,700 acres of land under sugar cultivation for the supply of the Hambledon Mill, and of that area no less than 2,360 acres—that is more than half—are occupied by Chinese, and all the cane grown on that area is grown by Chinese for that particular mill. These are the people who have told us that they do not want the Chinese—that all they want is the kanaka—and here we find that they have no less than 2,360 acres of the very best agricultural and sugar lands in the colony under cultivation, for the supply of cane for their mills, worked by Chinese. Now let me point out that, when I moved my motion on this subject last year, there was not one-half that quantity of land under cultivation by Chinese for that particular mill. Whose fault is that? It is the fault of the Government, who refused to take action when it was pointed out to them, that these agricultural lands have now fallen into the hands of the Chinese. In addition to that particular estate, this company have another very fine estate in the Cairns district, called the Green Hills Estate, on which there are about 1,000 acres under cultivation, mainly for maize and bananas. There is no sugar grown on that particular estate, and, though there are about 1,000 acres under cultivation, there are only two white men employed on the estate—one the superintendent and one who drives the horses on the tramway—both of whom are paid by the company. The rest are all Chinamen, and that magnificent estate is occupied by Chinese. This is the great company that Brisbane is up in arms to protect for fear that it will be hurt—giving up the best of its land to Asiatics who six months ago they did not want, and were prepared to run out of the country. We now see that their particular professions in that connection were not worth the breath that was wasted upon them. I have pointed out the attitude that they assumed six months ago, and I want to find out whether they were sincere in that or not. They took this action with regard to the Chinese before even the kanaka was threatened. Now, what has been the effect of these aliens growing sugar for the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company in the Cairns district? The effect of it is this: That it is impossible for white men to compete with the Chinese, and the result is that, as the Chinese work longer hours, work even on Sundays, and live a dog's life in a kennel, and in all sorts of bad conditions, with a lower standard of living generally, it is impossible for white men to offer the same amount of rent as the Chinese. The result is that the white men are being forced out, and the land is going into the occupation of the Chinese. I pointed out last year that this effect must inevitably accrue, and the result has borne out the truth of my assertion, because, as I have pointed out, the number of Chinese has more than doubled. Last year on the Alloomba Estate there were twenty white farmers growing cane for the mill, and at the present time there are only four. All the rest of the land is occupied by Chinese, and that for the simple season that the Chinese are able to offer higher rents for the land than the white farmers, who have a higher standard of living, and want to live a little like human beings. Under this state of things it is inevitable that the Chinese must obtain possession of all our good agricultural lands, particularly in this district. It is a very cruel thing to see our own people being forced out of a big industry, and the industry falling into the hands of an alien race—a race which even the hon. members on the other side of the House have been forced to admit during the last twelve months are an undesirable race to have in our midst. And, as I have pointed out, where twelve months ago there were twenty white farmers engaged in growing cane there are now only four.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: Where is that?

Mr. GIVENS: On the Alloomba Estate.

The PREMIER: That does not belong to the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company.

Mr. GIVENS: I do not say it belongs to the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company. I say that it belongs to other people, but it is occupied for the purpose of growing sugar for that company, and the result of the leasing of the land to Chinese has been that the white growers have been forced out. Let me make myself understood on this point. I say that the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company are renting land for canegrowing purposes directly to the Chinese, and if this condition of things is allowed to go on, instead of one-third of the land being in the hands of white people, it will all be in the hands of the Chinese. Of course to those who love the Chinaman, this will appeal as a most admirable thing. We shall be told of the immense amount of good that the Chinese do in that district. We shall be told, as the Premier said last week, that the Chinese have made the Cairns district. I deny that that has been so. I say that the Chinese——

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If you deny the multiplication table, it would not affect the table.

Mr. GIVENS: I am not going to deny the multiplication table in response to the interjection of the Minister for Agriculture. The only thing I hope is that the multiplication

table will never be applied to him, because one Minister for Agriculture of his calibre is quite enough for this colony to bear.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is a very poor retort, after taking some time to think about it.

Mr. GIVENS: I know several districts in my own electorate where there is some of the finest agricultural land that it would be possible to imagine. There is one, for instance, at Freshwater Creek, which the Hon. the Premier knows probably just as well as I do. That district has fallen entirely into the hands of the Chinese occupiers, and with the most disastrous results. After about sixteen years' occupation of this magnificent scrub land, the Chinese have handed it back to the original owners in an exhausted and foul condition. It was so foul with weeds and noxious pests that it was impossible to do anything with it except at enormous expense, and that is the condition in which the Chinese always hand back land to the original owners. Simply because they can get a high rent from the Chinese for a few years, to the extent perhaps of £1 an acre per annum, for land that originally cost only 10s. an acre to buy, lock, stock, and barrel from the Crown, these men, to gratify their greed and to make profits without any exertion on their part, let the land to Chinese, and they get it handed back in a foul condition. I maintain that it is not even a good thing for the selectors themselves. The selectors have said to themselves, "If we rent our land to the Chinese, the Chinese will clear it, and they will hand it back to us fit for the plough at the end of five years," but the result has been very often that after the whites have leased their land in this way to the Chinese, they have become demoralised, and no longer care to cultivate it for themselves. They have been encouraged in that by the fact of the land being handed back to them in such a foul condition that it was almost impossible for them to tackle the job. This evil is not confined to the selectors, nor is it confined to the Northern portion of the colony. This evil exists all over Queensland. There are several other districts in which the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company have large areas of land, of which they lease considerable areas to the Chinese. I have quoted the case of the Cairns electorate, because I am perfectly acquainted with the effects of the evil in that district, but there are other districts in which the evil is equally as apparent, and equally as varied. I would like to point out that right down the coast there are lands [4 p.m.] occupied by Chinese which the State has refused to allow them to occupy in the first instance, but after we refuse to give it to them we give it over to selectors and allow them to lease to the Chinese. The position is not logical, and I defy the Secretary for Agriculture with all his inventive genius to argue that it is. Not only have the white farmers in the Northern portion of the colony to compete for the possession of the land with the Chinese, but the white farmer and gardener is brought into direct competition with the Chinese. Everything a man grows upon the land he must grow in competition with the Chinamen, and why should we subject our farmers and gardeners to this degrading Chinese competition? The ultimate result must inevitably be that the white gardeners and farmers will be reduced to the same degraded standard of living which the Chinese are content with. During my residence in Brisbane for the last four or five months, I have gone out into the suburbs every Sunday afternoon for a walk. In doing so I pass a great many Chinese gardens, and I have never once passed one that I have not seen the Chinese at work. If we are going to compel our gardeners to work on Sundays so that they may compete with the Chinese—because that is exactly what it means—then I say it is a most inhuman policy, and one which no freely-governed State should tolerate. The Chinamen even in the vicinity of Brisbane live in miserable hovels. Their standard of living is a low one. They are prepared to work not only six days a week, but a little longer on the seventh. A white man demands a higher standard of living. He wants a respectable habitation in which to live; he wants decent food, and decent clothing, and he does not want to work extraordinarily long hours; nor does he want to work on Sundays. But if we allow this Chinese competition, and this Chinese occupation of our lands, it is inevitable that the white gardeners and farmers will be forced down to a degraded standard of living, and the present Government will be responsible for it, because they have power to put a stop to this state of affairs if they wish. Nor is it only in the coastal districts that this evil exists. We have another important industry which is carried on on the borders of New South Wales—I allude to the tobacco-growing industry—in which the Chinese are largely engaged. I am credibly informed, and the facts have been made public in the newspapers, that out of a total value of tobacco production in the Texas district amounting to £30,000, no less than £25,000 worth was produced by the Chinese.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That does not correspond with the official figures.

Mr. GIVENS: I am taking the figures published in the newspapers here, and in the district where the industry is carried on. That is the best information at my disposal, and it may be slightly incorrect.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The figures were given last week.

Mr. GIVENS: There have been no official figures given which purport to be absolutely correct. No official figures are available which are absolutely correct, because there is no department which has the means at its disposal of arriving at the correct figures. The Government may know how much land is leased by the State to Chinamen, but they do not know how much is leased by private individuals to Chinamen.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The last returns were only approximate.

Mr. GIVENS: I am quoting from last year's figures and do not know whether they are absolutely correct, nor does it so much matter for my particular purpose. My purpose is to show that a very large and important industry in the Southern portion of the colony—a portion which is recognised to be very suitable for white labour—in a district which is in an elevated position and with a cool climate, the Chinese have a large proportion of the land in their hands, and that a large and rising industry is falling into their hands also. I am also informed that one of the gentlemen who is responsible for the initiation of this system—I give the statement with the reservation that it is only hearsay evidence—but I have been given to understand, and, in fact, the distinct statement has been made to me that the Home Secretary was one of the first individuals who, in company with a man named Greenup, leased land to Chinese in that district. Whether it is true or not, I do not know, but it has been so stated. If it is so, it is a most regrettable fact that a Minister of the Crown should have initiated a pernicious system of this kind. Even if it is a fact, the hon. gentleman was quite within his rights, nor do I quarrel with him for doing so as a private individual, but it is very regrettable that a Minister of the Crown should do such a thing.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have not owned any land in that district for fifteen years.

Mr. GIVENS: This occurred some years ago.

The HOME SECRETARY: I was not a Minister of the Crown some years ago.

Mr. GIVENS: I think it is equally regrettable that in a colony like this, which is supposed to be a white man's colony, a person who initiates such a system should be capable of rising to be a Minister of the Crown. We want a man to be a white man before he becomes a Minister of the Crown as well as after.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are not quite sure of your facts.

Mr. GIVENS: I gave the statement with a reservation, and I ask the Home Secretary to correct me if I am wrong. I shall be only too happy to receive his correction. If he has no connection with any firm or individual who has leased land to Chinamen he has an opportunity of saying so. He has a perfect right to give or withhold the information if he likes. I merely give the statement for what it is worth; and furthermore, the statement was publicly made.

The HOME SECRETARY: There are a lot of statements publicly made that are not true.

Mr. GIVENS: With regard to the Texas district, I am not acquainted with it personally. I am merely giving the statements as published in the newspapers, and the Secretary for Agriculture admits that to a large extent the facts are correct.

The HOME SECRETARY: As far as I recollect my tenant's name was "William Hamilton." It does not sound like a Chinese name.

Mr. LESINA: You are leasing land to Chinese up there now.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is not so.

Mr. LESINA: It is so. I have the correspondence.

Mr. GIVENS: I am quite willing to accept the Home Secretary's disclaimer; but the fact that he is so anxious to disclaim it shows that he does not think that it is a creditable thing, and I am pleased to have even that admission from him. The facts that I have adduced go to show that this evil is spreading all over the colony, and in every district, and although it is particularly accentuated in the district which I represent, yet I think I have advanced sufficient proof to show that it is not an evil confined to that portion of the colony, but that it exists in every portion of the colony, and even in the coolest portions which possess a climate sui able to white people. One of the main points I desire to make is that the State has taken up the position that it offers no facilities for Chinese getting on the land, that it places many difficulties in the way of Chinese becoming owners of land, and that it has always looked upon Chinese settlement on our land as an evil. If that be so, I maintain that while the State refuses to give or sell land to Chinamen, or to encourage Chinamen to occupy the land, there is no sense whatever in giving the land to individual owners in order that those individual owners may allow the occupation of the land to pass into the hands of Chinese. Either the position taken up by the Government in refusing to encourage the occupation of the land by Chinese is wrong, or the Government should put their foot down and take steps to prevent individual owners leasing their land to Chinese. I have been in receipt of information from a number of persons on this subject, and they state that it is impossible for them to compete in the growing of cane as long as Chinese grow cane for the mills, and that no matter what is done for the sugar industry they will always be under a disadvantage so long as they have to compete with the Chinese growing cane for sugar mills—particularly for the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: Do Chinese grow cane for the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company?

Mr. GIVENS: Yes.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: Do you know that for a fact?

Mr. GIVENS: Yes, I am positive of it; they are growing cane on the Hambledon Plantation for the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: Is the land leased to Chinamen?

Mr. GIVENS: Yes, I believe so.

The HOME SECRETARY: You said you were positive of it.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: I want to know if it is a fact.

Mr. GIVENS: It is a fact. The land is leased to and occupied by Chinese. I do not know the length of the term of the lease—it may be from year to year—but the land is leased to them. Whether the lease is drawn up in proper form, and lodged in the Real Property Office, I do not know; but the fact is that the land is leased to Chinese. On the Hambledon Estate there are something like 360 acres leased to Chinese by the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company, and outside the Hambledon Plantation leases are given to Chinese on other private freeholds, and the evil is spreading. I am quite positive that unless something is done to prevent the spread of the evil, the greater part of that estate, as well as many other freeholds, will be leased to Chinamen. Then what credence will be given to the professed demand for fair play to those engaged in the sugar industry, when the wealthiest sugar corporation in Australia is allowing its lands to be occupied by Chinese, so that they may grow cane for their mills? This is an important point, to which I invite the hon. member for Herbert to turn his attention. In other cases the persons I have referred to told me that owing to Chinese competition they are offered terms which render it absolutely impossible for them to grow cane at a profit, simply because they cannot, and I do not think they should be asked, bring down their standard of living to the Chinese level. These men should not be asked to work all sorts of hours, and even on Sundays, in order to be able to compete with the Chinese. There is another aspect of the question to which I would invite the attention of hon. members for a few moments. If our lands, particularly our rich agricultural lands, are allowed to fall into the occupation of Chinese mainly, then it will be impossible for us to have a large rural population of white people. We cannot have a large rural white population unless the lands are occupied by white people. By and by the time may come when everyone of us may have to fight in defence of our country. The mother country may become involved in European complications, and be brought face to face with difficulties which may result in a death struggle, and then instead of being a burden to her in her hour of trial, we should be able to defend ourselves. But if we are called upon to defend ourselves, and have no rural white population to fall back upon, and have to get the Chinaman, the kanaka, and the Jap to fight for us, and defend the property of those people who brought them here and encouraged them by every means to stop here, it will be a very poor lookout indeed for Australia. These people who lease land to Chinamen—these large absentee landowners—seem to have no regard for anything in the world but profit. That is the whole sum and substance of their creed. They are dead to all feeling of patriotism, and have no desire to populate this country with people of their own race and colour. All they want is Chinamen in order that they may make a large profit. No later than last March, during the

federal elections, they told us, "You can drive the Chinaman out of the country so long as you leave us the kanaka," and further said that the Chinaman was so undesirable that his presence here was a menace to the wellbeing of the people. I ask them now to prove the sincerity of their utterances by making this State as little attractive to Chinamen as possible, and the way to do that is not to allow Chinese to become occupiers of our lands. If the lands of the colony are occupied by white people of our own race and colour, then every £1 of wealth which they produce out of the soil will make the State so much the richer, because those people will settle down and make homes in the State, and the more wealth they produce the better it will be for everybody. But if we allow our lands to be occupied by Chinese every shilling of profit they make out of the land will be sent by them to their own country, or they will take it to China with them, and this State will be impoverished and so much the poorer. I appeal to hon. members to give this matter a fair discussion.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Give us a show.

Mr. GIVENS: In moving an important motion like this I have not occupied a very great length of time.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: Go on, go on!

Mr. GIVENS: I will give hon. members any amount of show to discuss the matter, and I hope that after a fair discussion we shall be able to go to a vote, and that when we do go to a vote on the matter, hon. members opposite will vote in accordance with their professions at the time of the federal elections of the present year, when they said they were prepared to drive every Chinaman out of the country if we would only allow them the kanaka. Let us see whether hon. members were sincere or not, whether they are prepared to act up to their professions, and protect the white market gardeners of the colony from the degrading competition they have to undergo in competing against men who live in hovels and under inhuman conditions, and who even have to work on Sundays in order to make their gardens pay. It is impossible for white gardeners to compete with them. It may be said—it was said last year—that white men are not prepared to go in for gardening. If that is so, free the gardeners from degrading Chinese competition, and you will find that white people are able to do all the gardening necessary to supply fruit and vegetables to all Queensland, and all Australia if necessary. It cannot be contended that gardening is work which white men will not do. Gardening is most congenial work to white men, but they won't go in for it when it is made so unprofitable by unrestricted Chinese competition. In order to make it pay they would have to live under the same conditions as the Chinese, to work the same long hours, and be guilty of the same desecration of the Sabbath.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: A lot that would trouble you.

Mr. GIVENS: I don't know that it would trouble the Secretary for Railways very much.

Mr. TURLEY: Don't you know they are going to stop the sale of newspapers on Sunday?

Mr. GIVENS: The present Ministry are so pious and holy, and have such a desire for preserving the sacredness of the Sabbath that they have introduced a Bill to prohibit the sale of newspapers on Sundays.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GIVENS: I am only introducing this illustration to show why they should free white people from the competition of the Chinese, who continually desecrate the Sabbath in order to make their business profitable to them. And the remarks I have made with respect to gardening apply also to farming. Our white farmers should be free also from this degrading competition, and the settlement of a white farming population should be encouraged, but so long as the leasing of land to Chinese is allowed we shall never attain to that ideal. I think I have said enough to show the urgent necessity for the introduction as is asked for in this motion, and I hope hon. members will give the subject the consideration which it merits. I am sure that if they do that, if they are prepared to study the welfare of the great majority of the white people of the colony, they will do exactly as the motion asks them to do—that is, introduce and pass a measure prohibiting the leasing of lands——

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why don't you introduce the Bill?

Mr. GIVENS: If I introduced the Bill the Government would immediately tell me the same as they told the hon. member for Gympie when he introduced his Workmen's Compensation Bill—that it should be a Government measure.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They are bringing it in.

Mr. GIVENS: It took three years to induce them to bring it in.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I should think three minutes would induce you.

Mr. GIVENS: I think I have said enough to show the desirability of this motion being passed. I do not desire to take up more time, but I do hope hon. members will rise above mere party politics on this particular question, will be true to the professions they so recently made, and will determine to preserve the lands of this colony for the use of white people. I beg to move the motion.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. D. H. Dalrymple, *Mackay*): Mr. Speaker——

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Thursday afternoon. (Opposition laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Occasionally I accept the statements of hon. members on the other side as being conceivably possible, but when the hon. member for Cairns said he desired full discussion I don't suppose anyone took what the hon. member said as being genuine. I thought the fact of anyone getting up in this House to discuss this question would be received as something intensely absurd or intensely comical, and I see that it behoves even the hon. member for Cairns, Mr. Givens, to have misgivings when he makes statements of that kind. (Laughter.) I am not talking here to please the hon. member for Cairns, or to displease hon. members opposite, no matter what turmoil they may make; I am talking because I think it is desirable that when motions of this kind are introduced discussion should take place. If hon. members do not think discussion should take place on Thursday afternoon, which is devoted specially to their delectation, they should bring in a motion to the effect that on Thursday afternoon no discussion should take place.

Mr. TURLEY: Except by the Minister for Agriculture.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I just wish to place it on record that the hon. member I am replying to has spoken during the session from two to three times as often and as long as I have; and anyone who looks at *Hansard* will find that on Thursday afternoon for any hour I have occupied he has occupied two. So the ridiculous charge that I monopolise private members' time has no foundation; and if we are going to talk of Thursday afternoon being taken up it is not fair and it is not correct to attribute

it to the Secretary for Agriculture, and you had better go and bonnet the chief offender who sits on your own side. Let us have some degree of justice in the House. As far as I am concerned it does not matter whether the hon. member for Cairns has spoken for three days or ten days. I don't quarrel with his speaking excessively. If it pleases him possibly it is a good thing. That reminds me of the saying of Mrs. Poyser with regard to the way some people's tongues wag. It reminded her of a clock that went on striking, striking, not because it wanted to tell folks the time o' day, but because there was sommat wrong with its inside. (Laughter.) Probably the hon. member suffers in the same way. Though he is the most talkative member in this Chamber, even when he is in the street he insists on talking two ordinary men down, and in addition to that he actually goes to public meetings and talks there. We found him talking at one last evening. I think there should be a public meeting every Saturday so that the hon. member might be relieved on Saturday. I don't know what he does on Saturday, but I think it comes with a bad grace from the hon. member——

Mr. GIVENS: I don't object to you discussing the motion.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: "A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind," and perhaps the hon. member has sympathy with others who want to talk—(laughter)—but it comes with a bad grace from the hon. and truculent member for South Brisbane. If I am allowed to get to my subject and accept the invitation so kindly extended to me by the hon. member for Cairns, it might perhaps be rather a happy thought if we began to debate the question. That I have not done so is entirely owing to the hon. member for South Brisbane, who doubtless is not in sympathy with the motion of the hon. member for Cairns; but I deem it to be my duty to assist in discussing subjects of this kind on Thursday afternoon. What are they brought forward for if it is not discussion? I think I am promoting the public well-being in taking up the task if other people do not feel disposed to engage in it themselves, when I accept the invitation of the hon. member for Cairns and say, "Let us discuss the question." I take it in any case that on a Thursday afternoon this House resolves itself into
[4·30 p.m.] a kind of debating society. Nothing comes of it. It is intended that some subject shall be discussed for and against, and with the desire that the truth may be made manifest and error be confronted with truth, it is my plain duty—even supposing I am entirely in accord with the hon. member for Cairns, in the absence of anybody else who will see that those formalities are complied with—to take the negative side on the question he has initiated.

Mr. LESINA: Let us hear about the pigtails.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member can deal with his own pigtail and his own relations. (Laughter.) I am not in the habit of interfering with other people's families. If I am allowed to go on without these unmannerly interruptions I will proceed to the discussion on the Chinese. When the hon. member says that the presence of Chinese in some way interferes with the presence of Europeans in this Commonwealth, because Chinamen take up leases and Europeans are driven out of the country; and when he goes further, and says that this great evil which he so much bemoans is a consequence of an absentee landlord system, which enables people from Brisbane and Melbourne to take up land at Cairns without occupying it themselves, but allowing others to occupy it, he is making statements which may be more or less in accordance with the fact. Anyhow, that is a system which the hon. member deplores, and to which he is thoroughly opposed. He holds that a man should cultivate the land he takes up—that his superior right to that land arises from the fact that he is occupying and using it. Apparently the hon. member has a notion that if a man takes up land that land should be utilised.

Mr. GIVENS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He desires the land to be used. But he says that men who do not live on the land have taken it up, and let it out to Chinese. We will follow up that argument, which to a certain extent I believe is sound. According to that the justification for us in driving away a race who have inhabited this country for untold ages is that they did not utilise that country as we do. I do not know any right that we have to drive the aboriginal tribes—which may be likened to the Scottish clans or the Irish septs in their respective countries—away from their home, unless we can establish a claim to utilise the land better than they have done. The hon. member tells us about our duties to the Empire, and so on, and tells us it would be better to have white men settled in the North who, on occasion, could be formed in line of battle. But the fact is that one cannot utilise the land. It is monstrous and ridiculous that the 5,000,000 people in Australia can utilise this great continent. It is monstrous and ridiculous to suppose that the people of Cairns, however energetic they may be—even if they are as energetic as their hon. member; energetic in a wrong direction, I admit—can cultivate 1,000,000 acres. I believe I am within the mark in stating that on that coast, within 40 or 50 miles of Cairns, there are over 1,000,000 acres of virgin jungle scrub land that cannot be cultivated by the people of Cairns.

Mr. GIVENS: There are people willing to take up that land and utilise it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How many people will it take to work a square mile of jungle? If you had twenty times the population of Cairns, with Townsville thrown in, they could not do it. There are not enough people in the colony to develop one-tenth part of it. How is it we happen to hold Australia at present when we do not occupy it and when we do not utilise it? According to the hon. member's argument, we ought to get out of the country because we do not fulfil those conditions—because we have not the men to do so. The hon. member's conclusion that we should prevent foreign settlement is diametrically opposed to his argument, which is that we have no right to take up or hold land unless it is used. He thinks Mr. Finney, Queen street draper, has no right to take up land at Cairns. If it be wrong for a man in Queen street to take up land in the Johnstone or Cairns district, that wrong is being permitted at the present time by Queensland holding land as against the world. That is clear if the justification for taking up land is using it—if it is not bought to be utilised but for the purpose of speculation. What does that mean? That they are holding it for the future. He forgets that we have only 500,000 people living in a country as big as Austria, the United Kingdom, and Germany, with a population of 130,000,000 or 140,000,000. If we take men from one part of the colony, that part of the colony will suffer. Even the Darling Downs would need ten times its present population to develop its natural resources. It is capable of supporting 100,000 people, and so it is throughout the whole of the colony. We are languishing for the want of population——

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Nature has provided this great colony with vast

resources, and I would like to point out a weak point in the argument of the hon. member for Cairns. It may be right or it may be wrong—I am not pronouncing any judgment on it—I only wish to point out the inconsistency of the hon. member's arguments. In the first place he advocates that we having dispossessed the original inhabitants of their land by no other power than force—we being the stronger—unless we use this land we are doing wrong, and now he says that whereas it is a most abominable thing for a private individual to hold land and not utilise it—hold it as a speculation—which may be in the interests of his children—it is perfectly right for the State to lock up this land from use. He admits that a lot of this land is all jungle, and it will remain jungle for generations if we cannot get, and do not permit, people to clear and cultivate it. The hon. member, I suppose, thinks that some day some of our descendants will want this land, but nothing is clearer than that the 500,000 people we have in Queensland are insufficient—even if they were multiplied fivefold—to develop the huge goldfields which are lying undeveloped or to develop the otherwise rich country which runs from the Flinders to the borders of the colony, and in addition to develop the tropical coast lands.

Mr. DUNSFORD: You want the Chinese to develop the goldfields then?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am dealing with the hon. member's argument. My argument is an absolutely impersonal one. I do not employ Chinese; neither do I lease lands to Chinese. I am advocating fair play, whether to Chinese, Irish, Scotch, English, or any other people. I am advocating sound logic. If we reason let us reason soundly. The hon. member for Cairns talks about being logical, but I say that if his argument were carried out to its logical conclusion, it should induce him to say that we have not sufficient numbers of people to occupy the lands in this country, and to utilise them, and that that is all the more reason why other people should be called in. We have no true title, the hon. member said, I am not arguing whether that argument is sound or not, but it is one of the hon. member's premises, and a more damning premise I do not think he could have established with regard to his own argument. Then the hon. member spoke about Chinese as market gardeners, and said that the European gardeners suffered from their competition in regard to the purchase of vegetables required for the community. It is easy to make that assertion, and if no trial had been given I should not have come into conflict with that assertion. But a trial has been given. A few years ago there was a great agitation with regard to the Chinese in this colony. The hon. member for Charters Towers and others know that. The hon. member must know that that is an historical fact—they were driven from Charters Towers, the Croydon, the Etheridge, and other goldfields. The Europeans there said the Chinese had to go; the European population, acting on that, chased the Asiatic, and he went. And what was the result? Did the Europeans supply the miners on these various fields with vegetables? I should have been glad to say that they did, but they did not. Speaking generally, the European gardener is not disposed to go through the same patient, laborious toil which the Chinese gardener is willing to indulge in, and when there is a drought for any long period the European gardener is not accustomed to water his garden repeatedly during the day, and the result has been that the European population have had to depend on the Chinese for vegetables when there has been a long period of drought. I do not think that that can be controverted, especially in connection with mining fields. There was the strongest possible objection to Chinese being on both big and small goldfields, and the people there were quite willing to sacrifice their interests, from some patriotic feeling, or from some racial feeling, or prejudice. So they chased the Chinese away.

Mr. DUNSFORD: You are talking about mining legislation.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I know what I am talking about. I am dealing with the position taken up by the mining population at one time. There is no doubt that the Chinese were driven away, and there were no Chinese gardeners to be found on many fields.

Mr. DUNSFORD: That is not so. There are quite a number of these Chinese on some goldfields.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am speaking of the past. There may have been a few left, but there were none on some fields. The hon. member cannot contradict that, and even where they remained they were in bodily fear. Supposing there had been one left on a field, the hon. member might have protected him, out of a Christian feeling, and out of compassion. There might have been one or two remaining, but I know that in some places in the North, where the Chinese stood "not on the order of their going," and did not go quickly enough, their houses were set on fire.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Mining legislation has done more to prevent the Chinese going on to goldfields than any individual action.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not talking of mining legislation. I make the statement that the Chinese were driven away from the goldfields, and then the population there got no vegetables, in many cases. Then how was it that the Chinese came back again? They came back to the Towers, Mackay, and to other places, which at one time the bulk of the Chinese had left. How was that? Was it because the people there were so in love with the Chinese that they could not do without them—that they wanted somebody to spend the afternoon playing fan-tan with? If there was any necessity for excluding them why were they allowed to go back again? The fact was that the people there could not get vegetables in their absence. The male digger is like a commander-in-chief, but there is generally another commander-in-chief who manages him. (Laughter.) Probably the female population there went out on strike because they could not get vegetables—they did not want to do without vegetables—probably they feared scurvy. They knew it was not healthy for their children to go without vegetables.

Mr. DUNSFORD: What year was this?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Perhaps before the hon. member was born—about twenty years ago. The hon. member affects ignorance which, I am sure, he is not guilty of. He knows perfectly well that this matter occupied public attention all over the colony. There was a great cry with regard to Chinese, far more vigorous than the present cry for "A white Australia," which covers the continent. The cry was, "The Chinese must go." I do not know whether the hon. member for Charters Towers wishes the unfortunate gentleman who has brought this motion in ever to arrive at a division; but all I can say is that he is not proceeding in a likely manner if he wishes to attain that end. I am endeavouring to carry out an argument, and the hon. member is apparently endeavouring to throw me off that argument, and to have in exchange a series of personal encounters. The hon. member may be interested in the motion, but in one way he is not affected by the motion. We are dealing with aliens, and I do not think the hon. member is an alien, and I think he had better allow me to proceed with my theme.

Mr. DUNSFORD: You invite interjections.

Mr. LESINA: Stonewalling.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I wish to come back to my argument that it is the duty of other persons, who question my facts or my statements with regard to Chinamen having been driven away—legislated away, if you like—got rid of—from the main goldfields of this country for a time, and having got back to those goldfields again—this, I say, has got to be explained in some way, and, if not in the way that I offer as an explanation—namely, that, when the Chinese were driven away, the supply of vegetables did not come into being, as the hon. member for Cairns says it would come into being if the Chinese were out of the field. I say that, if a plentiful supply of vegetables is not produced somehow for the use of the people of the colony, then the effect upon the health of the people will be exceedingly serious. And if the Chinese will produce vegetables when other people will not produce them, then, if the Chinese do no other good, that is something which may count in their favour—that they are satisfying a want—it is more than a want—it is actually a necessity for the health of the community. I may be pardoned, I think, for speaking upon this question, because I took no part in the debate which, according to the hon. member for Cairns, took place last year. The hon. member states on this occasion that the Chinese are not allowed to hold land as freehold. Therefore, he says, it is exceedingly illogical and inconsistent to allow them to lease land—or, I suppose, to walk on land. There is nothing particularly inconsistent about it that I am aware of, because, if the hon. member had only known it—he did not appear to know it—there is no disability imposed upon Chinese for holding land as Chinese at all. There is no disability imposed upon Europeans as Europeans. But there is a disability imposed upon everyone who is not a naturalised citizen. No one is allowed to own freehold land—neither German nor Dane—no matter how desirable he may be as a citizen. He is allowed to lease land and to occupy land when he comes here, but unless he is a naturalised citizen he is not allowed to own land. Therefore, when the hon. member says we must be logical, let us be logical and say that, because a Chinaman is not allowed to own land—perhaps he must not walk over it, perhaps he must not do a day's labour on it. The hon. member desires to be logical, though I will say that he very seldom is logical—he very seldom carries out his arguments logically—he is generally inconsistent. If he is logical in this case, then his argument, being a good one, must be applied to every man who is not born in the British dominions. No German is to be allowed——

Mr. GIVENS: If we put a special provision in——

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is no special condition. The hon. member will prove a great many conclusions if we allow him to lay down his own premises. I do not know what I could not prove if a man allowed me to choose my premises arbitrarily without any regard to their truth. Now, there is no special condition imposed upon Chinese as Chinese.

Mr. GIVENS: There is.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Well, I would like to know it.

Mr. GIVENS: They cannot select or own land unless they are naturalised and are married to a white woman.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: Entirely wrong.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Of course he is wrong. The hon. member is mostly wrong. I should be staggered and astonished if I found him right. I should believe there was something wrong with me if I found the hon. member was systematically right. But he is exceedingly fluent—that I will say; he is exceedingly argumentative—that I will admit; but I say that his premises, as a rule, are utterly wrong. When the hon. member says—and he has based a good deal of his speech upon the assumption—that there is some special condition imposed upon a Chinese, because he is a Chinese, with regard to land, and therefore we must have exceptional legislation and he must not be allowed even to lease land, because he is not allowed to buy land—because that is the hon. member's argument—then he had better carry it further if he wants to be thoroughly consistent. He must apply his argument equally as strongly to the German, the Dane, or any other foreigner who is not naturalised and who is not allowed to purchase land in freehold. He must say, "We allow these people at present to lease land, but to be consistent we must not allow them to do so, seeing that they cannot own land in freehold." I hope that when the hon. member comes to deal with the subject by and by he will give that criticism the benefit of his study and see whether he himself in this case desires to be logical, and to extend his argument to apply to those other people on precisely the same grounds. If it is right—and the hon. member says it is right; that is one of the arguments he uses to sustain his motion—to prevent a Chinaman having a freehold, and we must necessarily prevent him having a leasehold, then let the hon. member apply that doctrine without any restriction at all, because, as the same law exists with regard to all foreigners, he is illogical unless he insists that this shall apply to all persons simply because they are foreigners. If a Chinaman becomes a naturalised British subject—and I believe he can by marrying a European woman—and it is right, according to the law, to grant him a freehold, then all married Chinamen and all naturalised Chinamen must be excluded from the operations of the law which the hon. member desires to have brought into vogue. The hon. member told us that there are 4,700 acres of land devoted to growing cane for the Hambledon Mill, and that out of that area 2,360 acres, or about half, are being grown by Chinese.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: Let to Chinamen—not grown by Chinamen.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member tells us that there is competition, and that the white man, in some way, is crowded out. The hon. member forgets the very small amount of land which is cultivated in the Cairns district in proportion to the amount of land which is available for cultivation in that district. I do not think a man is crowded out by competition, because one man [5 p.m.] gets a piece of land in country where there are millions of acres of vacant land. The probabilities are that the persons who are connected with the sugar-mills, would prefer that the cane should be grown by white men. I know that that is the case in the district which I represent. There may be Chinamen growing cane there, but I do not know whether there are or not. I am quite sure that if Chinamen are growing cane there they are not chosen by the millowners or by the central millowners, which as a rule are comprised of democratic working men. They do not pick out the Chinamen. They would rather have Europeans, but, if the Chinese do not grow the cane, the probabilities are that it would not be grown at all. If there were a sufficient number of Europeans willing to grow cane for the mill people they would rather have them; but I believe, and I shall continue

to believe, unless there is some proof to the contrary, that there are not sufficient Europeans available to grow cane for the mills. We also know—I do not know whether the hon. member knows it, but Dr. Maxwell does—that the mills must be kept going. If you do not grow a sufficient quantity of cane to keep a mill going for the five or six months that it is in operation—that is going at its full working power—then it is quite apparent that the full working power of that mill is not being utilised, and a large amount of capital is sunk in it, without any return. It is a most important thing that the sugar-mills should be kept going. I do not at all admit the argument, that because a certain number of Chinese are growing cane, that they are reducing the price of cane.

Mr. GIVENS: No, they are increasing the price of land.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Well, it is the European who has the land. I do not know how the hon. gentleman can make out that an improvement in the general value of the land in a district is an indication that that district is suffering from the industry of those who have brought about that increase in value. That is a new argument. The more industrious the people are, probably the greater is the value of their products, and the greater price the land will be. If we want to keep the land at the lowest price we must bundle out all the Europeans and have the aboriginals back again, and when under the aboriginal *régime* the value of land sinks to zero, the hon. member for Cairns will be perfectly happy, and will sing a jubilee for the triumphant black democracy.

Mr. LESINA: What side of the question are you on?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I should say in regard the Cairns district that the land there suitable for cultivation amounted to some millions of acres, at all events to hundreds of thousands of acres.

Mr. GIVENS: There is only a small portion of it accessible to the mills.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Just so. There is only a small amount that is accessible to the mills. I do not think there is any particular rush of people who desire to grow cane to get that land at all. The position of affairs at Cairns has been this: A great many people have had land, and a great many people have entirely declined to go through the labour and the risk to their health which would be required to clear that land and place it under cultivation. The function of the Chinaman has been largely this: He has taken up land in a state of jungle, and cleared it, and he has prepared the way for the white man. In some cases white men may prefer to give leases of their land to Chinese. If you stop Chinamen from taking up that land, which is a great part of the cultivated land in that district, and which is being put to good purposes, that cultivated land would not be cultivated at all.

Mr. GIVENS: That is not so.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member can make that statement, but I do not attach much weight to it, and no one else will who knows the facts. All I am saying now is absolutely true. The bulk of land in the Cairns district, I assert—and not without hesitation, because no one can assert anything in this House without hesitation—and when hon. members make these bold statements it appears to me that they are bold in risking nothing, and they make statements in this House they would never make before half-a-dozen merchants or men with any knowledge of business—I make the assertion that the land generally in the vicinity of Cairns, now cultivated, has been cleared by Chinamen. In some cases they have been paid by the week, and in a great many cases they have taken up the land under a clearing lease. The hon. member can contradict if he likes—is that true, or is it not?

Mr. GIVENS: No; it is not true.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Well, I am glad that the hon. member pins himself to a statement of that sort, because his constituents will be able to judge, probably——

Mr. GIVENS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I should like to ask the hon. member if it is not so—whether any portion of the land in the vicinity of Cairns has ever been cleared by Chinese?

Mr. GIVENS: A considerable portion.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Well, that admission is sufficient, at any rate. If that is the case, and the Chinese who have taken up land have cleared that land, it is evident that they are one of the factors in the settlement of the place. If the Chinamen did not clear the land, the probabilities are that it would not have been cleared at all, and it would not have been cultivated at all; and if there was no other reason for Chinamen being allowed to take up country, I should say this would be sufficient. I am not putting this forward as an advocate of the Chinese, but as one who wishes all sides of the case to be stated—that, apparently, on the statement of the hon. member for Cairns, some of the cultivation that has taken place in the Cairns district is the direct result of the existence of the Chinamen. No Chinamen, no cultivation, and the cultivation in some cases——

Mr. TURLEY: That does not follow.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member may say it does not follow. There are a good many things that do not absolutely follow, which, nevertheless, would probably ensue. It is the truth all the same.

Mr. TURLEY: No.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Well, the hon. member may keep his opinion and I shall keep mine. A great deal of land is cultivated alone by the Chinese. That of course is looked upon as a terrible evil in the Cairns district; but if the land was not cultivated by Chinese, how can the hon. member assert that it is going to be cultivated by white men? Are white people walking about the country with capital in their pockets who want to cultivate farms and cannot get them? Where are they going to come from? If they come from Killarney, where they are cultivating the land, they leave so much land there uncultivated. If the working men who are working at Killarney go to Cairns, then by so much is Killarney made the poorer by the removal of these European labourers. It seems to me that the Chinaman has been a co-operating factor in the cultivation around about Cairns at the present moment.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Why don't you remove the poll-tax, then?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member can tax his own poll. I am not talking about the poll-tax. (Laughter.)

Mr. DUNSFORD: Sooner the jungle than the Chinese.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: In the case of the Hambledon Mill, which received cane from Chinamen, although it would be better to have Europeans cultivating the soil, yet it is a great deal better to have Chinamen cultivating 50,000 tons of cane than have no production at all. White men are earning a living to a large extent by the production of the colony, and outside the people who produce there are the people who live on the trade which is begotten of what is produced. Must I repeat that there are steamship companies on our coast, wharf

lumpers on the wharves, business people, and railways, and that they all benefit by the production of the colony? So long as there are products in Queensland which have to be exchanged with other parts of the world, so long will a large amount of employment be afforded to the European workers of the colony. That is one side of the case. The hon. member may say it is not relevant. He may be able to maintain—which he does not—that he is prepared to sacrifice the welfare of the white population so long as Chinese are kept out of the colony. That may be a perfectly rational view to take, but when he says that these people can be dispensed with not only without doing any harm, but with positive benefit to the white population, then I join issue with him. You will have to pay for it if you clear them out. If they are producing what no one else would produce, and you turn them out, then whatever benefit arises from what they do produce you would lose.

Mr. DUNSFORD: There are plenty of white tenants.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member persists in talking absolute nonsense. The number of white tenants is limited. If you go to the Darling Downs at the present moment, one of the greatest agricultural districts in the colony, the farmers will tell you that their operations are seriously hampered because they cannot get a sufficient number of white labourers. If you go to the sugar plantations or farms, you will find exactly the same thing is complained of. I do not understand the attitude of the hon. member. Why should the men go there? What is said at present is that the men will not work; that the pay is not sufficient.

Mr. DUNSFORD: The rent is too high to enable them to live under white conditions.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Very well, then what the hon. member would approve of is that there should be no production there at all.

Mr. DUNSFORD: There should be no Chinese competition.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is any quantity of land in the various sugar districts which is awaiting tenants at the present time at a low rental. There is the greatest difficulty in getting men to go upon the land and grow cane. Sometimes that is caused through want of capital, but in the Mackay district it has been the practice for a long time for the mills to finance people. Certainly they prefer a farmer who has capital, but in many cases if a man is of good character, and is a man who from his previous conduct can be trusted, the co-operative companies will practically advance everything to enable him to go upon the land. It is evident therefore that there is a demand for farmers, and I can only suppose that if the Chinese are to be found growing cane it is because there are no white men to occupy the land. That is a very reasonable explanation.

Mr. DUNSFORD: They are gradually dispossessing the white man.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If what the hon. member means is that the white farmers are gradually becoming less, I can only point out that the price of cane is the same.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: The rent is too high.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: As a rule the rent is a royalty—1s. per ton—and if they grow a lot of cane they pay a lot of royalty. It is just like the dividend tax. If you get a huge dividend you will have to pay a big dividend tax, but it is a very gratifying thing to do. That is one of the best features of the conditions as to rent. If a man has a poor crop he pays very little rent; if he has a large crop he pays a much larger rent. I should be disposed to think that if you find the white man is going out of the cultivation of sugar-cane, and the Chinaman is taking his place, it will be because the white man finds he can do better, and I do not know why hon. members, who profess to represent the working classes should be so desirous of keeping them at an uncongenial occupation. Supposing the white man can better himself, why should he not? I do not want to see white people working on farms unless I believe that in the main it is a desirable thing for them to do, and that their condition as farmers is better than it would be if they were engaged in any other occupation.

Mr. DUNSFORD: You ask them to compete against Chinamen.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We do not.

Mr. DUNSFORD: You permit it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Chinamen are permitted to take up land which otherwise would probably never be cultivated. That seems to be the object of hon. members opposite, not to have any land occupied. Anyone would suppose that the lands in the North consisted of a few acres, and that if you put ten men on them they would be overstocked. Hon. members are thinking of Japan or Belgium. They cannot rise to the occasion and look at Queensland practically as an empire. There is hardly any population on the land. That is the position. It is not that men are looking for land. The land is looking for the men, and if you spread all the men in the colony over the whole colony, I reckon every man would have at least 1,200 acres, and how many acres can a man cultivate? I know the hon. member for Charters Towers came to Mackay once and told the people that he and his colleague were going to send a lot of Charters Towers men to take up land. They never took it up; whether because of competition, or that they did not like the climate, or that there would not be profit enough, I do not know. The position is that the land is there, and whoever occupies it, other people in their turn must benefit. The occupants of the land are producing wealth, and that wealth must be an advantage to others when put into circulation. Another feature of the matter is this: The Chinese are allowed here by law. They are not allowed to have freeholds, but they are allowed to go upon the land. If we allow them to come here, we must surely allow them to make a living. Why should they not be allowed to make a living for themselves when, at the same time, they are making a living for others? The hon. member has an objection to the Chinese, and he objects to the man who gets money from the Chinese, even although he is a European. There is no competition in any case. The hon. member cannot allege that Chinese bring down the price of cane. The price of cane remains the same, and the amount of difference to the market of the world—which has been our market up till now—is practically insignificant, and the price of cane would no be affected by what is grown in Queensland. The price of cane would remain the same, the European grower would get the same price. If the European grower is going out of the industry it is probably because the climate and the working of long hours in the moist atmosphere of the tropics are conditions which are objectionable to Europeans.

Mr. GIVENS: That is not so.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member can give me his opinion. I accept it for what it is worth, but I have my own

opinion on the subject, and I say that the climate of the electorate which the hon. member represents is most oppressive in summer.

Mr. GIVENS: It is not as bad as Bundaberg, according to Dr. Maxwell's report.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: According to Dr. Maxwell's report, I believe it is possible for Europeans to do the work—it is possible for Europeans to act as firemen in the Red Sea. I say if there are fewer Europeans growing cane in the Cairns district, and I am talking of the Cairns district, that is easily accounted for by the fact that the labour of cane-growing in the moist atmosphere of that district is exceedingly trying to Europeans, and very naturally people after a time, if they can possibly find anything else to do and can get rid of their property by leasing it, will be disposed to do so.

Mr. GIVENS: Does that reason apply to the cool climate at Texas and round by the border?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member is not satisfied with talking about Cairns and the sugar district, but has wandered down to the extreme limits of the country and got to Texas. As I am, fortunately or unfortunately, following him—I did not propose to do so, but the Premier is away and somebody has to follow the hon. member—it appears to me that I have got to go to Texas.

Mr. GIVENS: You are talking a long time.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member must not talk to me about a long time. The hon. member has talked twice as much on Thursdays as I have, and three times as much as other hon. members, as far as I can judge. This motion is brought forward for the express purpose of eliciting discussion. I suppose the hon. member will admit that.

Mr. GIVENS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why, then, should the hon. member take exception to my doing what I am doing, when I am trying my utmost to place him under a personal obligation?

Mr. GIVENS: You are not trying to discuss the question.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is the fault of the hon. member for discussing so many subjects. I am not responsible for the number of fallacies of the hon. member which I feel it my painful duty to refute. The hon. member stated that there had been twenty European farmers in this particular place, and that there are now only four. Well, I am quite sure that if I went farming in Cairns there would soon be one European less there. The hon. member does not stop in Cairns himself. The climate is exceedingly oppressive and trying to a white man.

Mr. GIVENS: Dr. Maxwell does not express that opinion.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member has now opened up a new branch of the subject. Dr. Maxwell has given certain opinions with regard to coloured aliens. The hon. member did not deal with all those opinions, because, as he said, it would probably be more judicious to confine his attention to the Chinese alien to begin with. But his objection is to the coloured alien at large; he desires that all foreign coloured men shall be excluded from the colony. I believe he is not particular as regards aliens. The Maori would be excluded by him, I am sure, and he is a kanaka. Possibly it is one of the causes of the prosperity of New Zealand that there are at least 40,000 kanakas in that colony. But I do not advance that as an argument. I am sure the hon. member would advance it as an argument if he was taking my side of the question, and had such a weapon in his vocabulary. But with regard to this coloured question, three-fourths of the population of the world are coloured people. Even the hon. member for Cairns and myself might have been coloured under other circumstances; if we had lived a long time in Cairns our light complexions would have disappeared and we should have become darker. There is an aspect of the question to which I would invite the hon. member for Cairns to give his best attention. I believe that by legislation we can keep away a coloured population from Queensland, that we can retain a European population by force of law, perhaps by the force of arms, but we have no guarantee that their descendants will not be greatly modified by time and climate. If we increase a little faster than we are doing, if our rate of increase does not fall off as it has done—I believe we are next to France; one of the striking biological and social facts of the present century is that the rate of increase in the white population is steadily diminishing—we are following the example of France—supposing that goes on, and it may go on—hon. members opposite would argue that if a thing is going on it must go on to infinity——

The SPEAKER: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am aware that in endeavouring to meet the arguments of the hon. member fully, I am somewhat amplifying—almost getting out of bounds. But I think the question of the Chinese is one which it is well within my right to discuss, and I shall go back to these Celestials, who seem to be in a troubled state in their own country. Although the hon. member for Cairns looks with intense indignation on any suggestion that money should be made out of the Celestial, yet I am certain that our brothers in Europe have an entirely different notion. They want him to pay £60,000,000 sterling. They will take all they can make out of the Chinese. But apparently the hon. member for Cairns would turn him out, even although it was found that he was economically rather valuable to the colony, and although it was admitted and discovered that he adds to some extent to the prosperity of the white men who live here. The hon. member made one statement, which being made by a member of Parliament I must of course accept. But if it had not been made by a member of Parliament I am sure it would have been received with a considerable amount of incredulity. The statement is that Chinamen at Cairns have leased land, and cleared it, and kept it for five years, and have then handed it back to the owner with the most disastrous results, the land having been exhausted.

Mr. GIVENS: Exhausted and fouled.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: As a rule it would take a Chinaman pretty well the whole of the five years to clear the land.

Mr. GIVENS: No, it does not take five months.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Chinaman only clears a part every year.

Mr. GIVENS: How long have you been there?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There are members in this House who have been longer in the tropics of Queensland than the hon. member for Cairns.

Mr. GIVENS: Who have?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I have for one, and there are many other members who have been longer in the tropics than the hon. member for Cairns. I am talking of the statement the hon. member ventured to make to the effect that Chinamen after clearing the land handed it back to the owner in a vile state of culture. That is totally contrary to [5·30 p.m.] our experience. There are no people who are so painstaking, whose gardens are such a model of all that is desirable, as the Chinese. The statement is that the

Chinaman takes the land for five years—scrub—on a clearing lease, and clears it, and at the end of five years it is in a foul condition. But there is another way of explaining it. The Chinaman tackles a job which the European won't tackle at all. The European says to the Chinaman, "Take the land if you like to clear it." The Chinaman takes it on a clearing lease, perhaps paying £1 a year as well. He holds it five years, in which time he would get the best of the land—so would the European if he held it. If the European grows corn and bananas—especially bananas—for three years, he will have exhausted the soil. Bananas are a crop requiring a succession of virgin soil or very high fertilisation. If the savage grows bananas in his own country—in the South Sea Islands—his practice is to take three crops and then go to another piece of land. That was the practice of our forefathers generally in regard to agriculture. If the Chinaman takes the land which the European won't clear, and clears it for him, and leaves it at the end of five years, he does so because he prefers another piece of land and virgin soil, even with all the hard work of clearing.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: Strawberry planters do it every year.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The European says the land is foul after the Chinaman has had it five years, but the European would not clear it himself because of the toil involved. He will not plough it up; he will say the Chinaman left it dirty; but I guarantee that the labour in cleaning a field used for growing bananas is a great deal less than the labour necessary in clearing the scrub jungle to begin with; and I think it is much more likely that the reason it is not utilised for culture is that the European in Cairns has not any particular craving generally for doing that kind of work himself, and when the Chinaman ceases to cultivate the European is not disposed to go on cultivating the land, because it is not congenial to his disposition in that part of the world. There is one feature about the Chinaman's conduct which seems to have greatly affected the hon. member's sense of propriety—that is, the Chinaman's love of work on a Sunday. If the Chinaman were a Christian and worked on Sunday that would be extremely discreditable to him; but if he is not a Christian, and does work on a Sunday, and is not aware that he is doing any harm by working on a Sunday, it seems to me that he is not the same monster that he would be if he were a Christian serving in a bar on Sunday; he would be doing something highly improper. The hon. member's view is that if the Chinaman works on Sunday he is entering into competition with some man who does not work on Sunday; and he evidently thinks that the Chinaman working on Sunday is an injustice to people who don't work on Sunday; and he would have a law to deal with the matter. I don't know what more he wants than the present law. The Chinaman is not allowed to work on Sunday. No one is allowed to follow his ordinary occupation on the Lord's Day. That is the law; and I am surprised that the hon member has not initiated a prosecution against any Chinaman doing as he says—desecrating the Lord's Day. It is a monstrous dereliction of duty on the hon. member's part. I wonder he could come to the House and tell us he is more or less a party to an outrage of that description. He has seen Chinamen working on the Lord's Day, and he has bottled it all up, instead of insisting that the right was done—instead of insisting that the law should be vindicated. He is a lawgiver—one of the seventy-two wise men and elders responsible for the control of the affairs of this colony—and he has so far forgotten himself as to allow that to go on. I think whatever blame may be meted out to the heathen Chinaman must be shared by the hon. member who did not institute a prosecution. But if the Chinaman is competing against the white man because he works seven days against six days worked by any other citizen, it is a very simple thing to make everybody's lot easier by preventing anyone from working more than one day a week.

Mr. GIVENS: Do you think it is a good thing to work seven days a week?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not; I think it is decidedly the contrary; but I don't know whether, from a moral point of view, it is worse than playing football matches on Sunday. I leave that to ministers of religion, who have opinions on that subject; but some think it is worse in the case of a football match, where people unnecessarily desecrate a day set apart for another purpose, than in the case of men who do necessary work as a means of earning their livelihood, and who will perhaps be beaten with few stripes for that reason. In the one case the man's necessities prompt him to do what he does, while in the other case it is simply voluntary and gratuitous wickedness. I have another page of notes, but I feel that I have done my duty towards the hon. member for Cairns, who has implored me to discuss the question. I am afraid it would take me longer than the time afforded to private members' business to attempt to do justice to the notes I have made. With regard to certain statements made by the hon. member, I presume that when the hon. member takes up time he considers it justifiable to do so because he regards the matter as important, and a want of appreciation would be shown on this side if we did not attempt to deal with the matter he has contributed to the discussion.

Mr. GIVENS: I feel highly complimented.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Well, I am extremely gratified. (Laughter.) I feel that it is my duty to put forward certain views irrespective of any personal feelings of my own, because the matter requires discussion. I feel, however, at present that I have done what is fair to the hon. member. Moreover, I have no doubt that the same old spooks—those political properties which are brought in from time to time—I have no doubt they will all be brought up again, and no doubt at some future time I shall have the pleasure of resolving these difficulties, which at the present time, in deference to the hon. member and the time at our disposal for private business, I shall pass. The hon. member may hope to meet me, however, on another occasion. Probably during the rest of the session he will bring forward some more arguments, and I shall be able to take up a few fish which I am not able to carry home in my net at present. (Laughter.)

Mr. RYLAND (*Gympie*): The reason why the white man does not go into competition with the Chinaman in this matter is because it is not fair competition. The Chinaman is prepared to give the landlord a higher rent for this land than the white man, and why is he prepared to do so? Because his standard of living and of comfort is lower than that adopted by the white man, and until the white man comes down to the same standard of living, how can he enter into competition with the Chinaman?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You would not call John the Baptist a white man because he lived as he did?

Mr. RYLAND: The white man has his family to keep in food and clothes, he has to send his children to school, he has to have a house for them to live in, and he has many other expenses which the Chinaman has not. That is

the position. If there was fair competition in it, the man that would give the most for the use of the land should get it, but the land is in private hands in this respect. It is simply a question of rent; the man who will pay the highest rent to the landlord gets the use of the land. The hon. gentleman referred also to the condition of Australia when it was in the possession of its aboriginal population. They certainly were not utilising the land; they were only using it as a hunting ground. He then asked, were we justified in taking those lands from the aboriginals and putting them to a better use? Certainly we were; but I do not think the hon. gentleman would advocate the action of the earlier white settlers in dispersing the aboriginals whose lands we wanted to put to the best advantage any more than we advocate the "dispersing" of those private owners and taking possession of their lands because they are not utilising them to the best advantage. It is all nonsense to talk about fair play. If we want to keep a nation here with a high standard of living and a high form of civilisation, we must not allow a lower race, like the Chinese, to come in and have the immense natural resources of the colony at their disposal. If we do, the white worker will necessarily be brought down to the same condition as the Chinese. But this state of things is not confined to the Northern portion of the colony. We find that in the Texas district a large percentage of those engaged in the tobacco-growing industry are Chinese. They also pay high rents to the owners of the land for the permission to use it. On the Gympie Gold Field there were Chinese paid as much as £5 an acre for clearing leases to owners of scrub land. The owner of the land is actually renting it from the Government at 1s. an acre, and very often grumbles that he is paying too much; and yet from the Chinese he was getting as much as £2, £3, and in one case £5 an acre.

Mr. JENKINSON: You ought to expose them. Give us the names, so that we can identify them.

Mr. RYLAND: I am told that the man who received £5 an acre is the Hon. F. I. Power. I am also told that Mr. Stumm, one of the proprietors of the *Gympie Times*, was a holder of goldfields homesteads relet to Chinese at a large rental—that he drew a big income from the Chinese.

Mr. JENKINSON: Do you know those to be facts?

Mr. RYLAND: I am quite satisfied they are true; the evidence I have heard leads me to believe they are true.

Mr. JENKINSON: Then it is something scandalous.

Mr. RYLAND: It certainly is, as the hon. member remarks. The question is: Shall we allow this state of things to continue? Shall we, by voting for the motion of the hon. member for Cairns, say that this thing has existed too long in our midst, and that it is time it was done away with? I hope that is what the House will do. How can a white man live in decency and respectability, and have the civilisation we should like to see in a country like this, if he has to come into competition with the Chinese? The Secretary for Agriculture said that if those lands in the Cairns district were not worked by the Chinese they would not be worked at all. Admitting all that, what does it mean? It simply means that, having the Chinese here, adopting a low standard of comfort and paying a high rent, has reduced the margin of cultivation. It might be asked, why did not the white men take up the land from which they could get a fair remuneration? The reason was that to the white man the rent was prohibitory; the Chinese, with their low standard of living, were prepared to pay more for it than a white man could afford. What would happen if the white man agreed to pay the same rent as a Chinaman? He would be pulled down to the Chinaman's level in his standard of living. He would have to work twelve or fifteen hours a day every day in the week. Instead of living in a decent house, with decent furniture, a piano for his wife and family, and all the other accessories to comfort, he would have to live in a hovel, hardly fit for a pig-stye. His furniture would consist of old packing-cases, and the only musical instrument for his children would be an empty kerosene tin. Are we prepared, as a white community, to suffer a thing of that kind in order that white men may pay a high rent to absentee owners of land—no knives and forks, no silver on the table, no serviettes, nothing that we look upon as necessary to a decent existence. That is the position of affairs. All we ask is that the House will, in its wisdom, set its face against that being the condition of things under which those lands may be taken up and worked by white men.

Mr. MCMASTER: Where are those lands?

Mr. RYLAND: Right all over the colony of Queensland—perhaps all over the Commonwealth of Australia, as far as I know. I am giving one case that I do know of in my own electorate. The hon. member for Cairns has referred to cases of this sort in his electorate, and we have strong evidence that in some portions of Queensland these lands have been taken up by Chinamen, and big rents have been paid for them, and that the white worker has been thrown out. That is the position of affairs. It is simply bringing the white worker down to the level of the Chinaman, for the Chinese work for less than a white man does, and they pay more to the owner of the land. It comes to the same thing—paying a higher rent means a reduction of wages. The hon. member who last spoke in opposition to this motion tried to draw a distinction between the dividend tax, which is a royalty on gold at so much per ounce over a certain amount, and the royalty paid on cane to the private landlord. Now, with regard to the dividend tax, the royalty derived therefrom goes to the State to meet taxation which would otherwise have to be collected from the people; while in the other case the private landlord gets the royalty. That money does not go to the State—it goes into the pockets of private individuals, and it might make one or two men rich. It is no consolation for me to know that one or two men are made rich in this way. I know that in my own country this sort of thing has happened—that landlords have been made rich at the expense of other people. It is no consolation for me to know that Chinamen have been blackmailed in the interests of white landlords. This may make some white men rich, but hundreds of other white men may be made poor. What has our present Chief Justice said in connection with this matter? He said that the great problem of the age was not so much the matter of production of wealth, but its more equal distribution.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you now accept him as an authority on these matters?

Mr. RYLAND: I shall always accept that gentleman's dictum on these matters, when he is left free to express his mind on them. (Laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. RYLAND: This is a very big question in which the interests of the whole of Queensland are wrapped up. If we allow this sort of thing to go on, what will be the result? It will

mean that, if white men are to do this work, they will have to come down to the standard of Chinamen. I am surprised at the hon. member who has just spoken saying that it is degrading for a white man to cultivate the soil, for I consider that the cultivation of the soil is one of the best and most ennobling occupations that any man could take part in. I do not know any more healthy or more independent occupation so long as the work is done in an independent manner. I think a man has a right to get the profits of his labours—that he should be allowed to say: "What I produce on my land is my own;" but if any man is engaged in this occupation, it amounts to the basest slavery if he has to hand over three-quarters or over half of his profits to his landlord or anyone else. That is where the pressing down comes in, and that is where the finger of scorn is pointed at the farming community.

Mr. MCMASTER: That is not so. Who points the finger of scorn at these people?

Mr. RYLAND: The finger of scorn has been pointed at them.

MEMBERS on the Government side: No, no!

Mr. RYLAND: It has been said that white men can't grow cabbages and other vegetables.

Mr. J. C. CRIBB: Who said so?

Mr. RYLAND: I hope that this House will decide that no more lands shall be let to Chinamen.

HON. A. S. COWLEY (*Herbert*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

The resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for Friday, the 8th November.

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

PUBLIC SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 3, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 4, as follows:—

From and after the commencement of this Act, the Public Service Board constituted by the principal Act shall be abolished, and the three members thereof shall retire from office as such members:

Provided that the said members shall continue to receive their respective salaries during a period of six months after such retirement—that is to say, the chairman at the rate of one thousand pounds per annum, and each of the other members at the rate of eight hundred pounds per annum; and the consolidated revenue fund is hereby appropriated for that purpose.

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) said that on the second reading it seemed to be the opinion of hon. members that nothing in the nature of a gratuity should be given to the members of the board on their retirement. Two of the members of the board would retire on their pensions, and they would, under the clause, have got £300 between them in addition to their pensions, whilst Mr. O'Malley would have got £400, provided he got nothing else to do. Of course, as soon as he got something else to do that payment would stop at once. He had no wish to press the matter, however, and therefore proposed to omit the 2nd paragraph.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. A. S. COWLEY (*Herbert*) asked whether the Premier intended to find Mr. O'Malley employment at once, and that there would be no loss of time?

The PREMIER: There will not be much loss of time.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: If that was the understanding, he had no objection to the omission of the paragraph. Mr. O'Malley was a very old servant of the State, and he was perfectly competent and able to fulfil the duties of a police magistrate or of any other responsible position. He did not think it was the wish of the Committee that Mr. O'Malley's services should be dispensed with simply because he happened to be a member of the Public Service Board.

Mr. PLUNKETT: Nobody said so.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: No. It was all right so long as they understood that his services were not to be dispensed with without any hope of being appointed to some other position.

Mr. MAXWELL: You can leave him alone. He has plenty of good friends.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: And he deserved them. He had known Mr. O'Malley for very many years, and knew that he was a very good officer and administrator, and he should be very sorry to think that no provision was to be made for him. So long as it was an understood thing that he was to receive another appointment, he had no objection to the amendment.

The PREMIER: He intended to give Mr. O'Malley some temporary employment in the Public Service Board, at all events until Parliament rose—Ministers were pretty busy at the present time—and by the close of the session he hoped there would be a vacancy in the police magistracy, and he would give Mr. O'Malley the first vacancy.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*) was very glad the hon. gentleman was omitting that paragraph. When the estimates for the Public Service Board were under discussion the Premier distinctly stated that two members of the board were entitled to retire on pensions, and that he was going to provide Mr. O'Malley with other employment. Of course the board practically ceased to exist at the end of this month. It was said the previous day that any servant with a twelve months' engagement had a right to six months' notice. He did not know whether that was the usual practice in private firms, but in this case when the term of office of the board expired last year it was only renewed for twelve months.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 5—"Administration of the public service by Ministers of the Crown"—

Mr. JENKINSON (*Wide Bay*): He found that this clause placed the administration of the public service in the hands of the Ministers, who would perform the duties now devolving upon the Public Service Board. Referring to clause 18 of the Act, he found that the board once each year were supposed to make themselves personally acquainted with each department, and with the character of the work performed by each officer. Was it the intention of the Ministers to fulfil the purposes of that clause? He himself failed to see how it could be carried out by the Ministers, but surely it was the intention of the Act that that should be done, so that the merits of each officer should be ascertained.

The PREMIER: The board found that it was possible to do this, and the Ministers would find it possible. They would have the advice of the Under Secretaries in charge of the different departments, and with the personal knowledge which the Minister had, no deserving officer would suffer.

Mr. JENKINSON pointed out that the public service was not entirely confined to Brisbane, but that there were other portions of the colony where there were deserving officers, and though the Under Secretaries might have some knowledge of the work performed by these people, it was impossible for them to go thoroughly into the merits of each officer. It was contemplated by the Act that the Civil Service Board should pay

this annual visit to the outside places, but he questioned whether the Government would be able to do that, and there was a chance of some deserving officers being overlooked.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knew that it was quite impossible for the board or the Ministry to go over the whole of Queensland. At the present time the Ministers, through the Under Secretaries, had some knowledge of the different officers. The Under Secretary saw all the correspondence, which the board did not, so that, on the whole, the Under Secretaries must know the merits of the different officers better than the board. He saw no difficulty in administering this Act fairly well, and he did not think anybody would suffer by the course they were now taking, and certainly the colony would save a good deal of money. He was not with those who spoke on the previous day about the abolition of this board. The board had done very well. He was in the House when the Act was passed, and he was of opinion that if the board, instead of being comprised of three civil servants, had included one gentleman who had some knowledge of mercantile life, it would have saved a great deal of money, and it would have tended to make the service better than it was.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: His experience of civil servants was that in some cases they were worked very hard, and there were very few drones now in the service. At one time there were some, but the board had been keeping a tight rein on things, and whenever opportunity offered had eliminated them. Our service would compare with any civil service in Australia. If they went to Sydney and some other cities in Australia they would find things very much worse.

Clause 5 put and passed.

Mr. TOLMIE (*Drayton and Toowoomba*): When speaking on the second reading of this Bill, he intimated that he proposed to introduce an amendment in the form of a new clause dealing with the case of a number of public servants who were somewhat harshly treated under the provisions of the principal Act. There were in the service a number of very competent men who, owing to the age at which they joined, were incapacitated from obtaining classification, and, though they had done excellent work, were debarred from obtaining preferment. The clause which he had circulated proposed that if, in the course of five years, they had done good work, they should be given a certificate which would act instead of examination, and enable them to obtain the same position as the other members of the public service, and in due time receive promotion. He hoped the clause would be accepted as it stood, or with very slight alteration. He moved that a new clause be inserted as follows:—

> Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in section thirty of the principal Act, any person who has heretofore been or may hereafter be continuously employed in the unclassified division of or otherwise in the public service for a period of five years or upwards shall, on obtaining the certificate of the Ministerial or permanent head of the department in which he is employed as to his fitness, be eligible to be admitted without examination into the classified division of the public service according to the remuneration which he is receiving at the date of such admission.

The clause did not entitle a person to admission; it only made him eligible, and his admission would depend upon the certificate of the head of the department. He thought the interests of everybody were safeguarded, and he trusted the Premier would see his way to accept the clause.

The PREMIER admitted that they had a few men—perhaps twenty or thirty—who had been for some time in the service in receipt of 10s. a day, and in many cases they were good officers. He knew of three or four men in that position. He thought the term ought to be made longer than five years; if it was made seven years he did not think much harm would be done to the rest of the service. If a man had been seven years at supernumerary work, and had given satisfaction to the head of the department, he ought to be some good to the service.

r. GIVENS: Five years is a fairly long period.

The PREMIER: He thought they ought to make it seven years. He knew that in the Treasury alone there were some men doing accountant's work who were capable men and to whom they could not give more than 10s. a day. Certainly after serving for five or seven years they ought to be put upon the classified staff.

Mr. GIVENS: Five years ought to be long enough.

The PREMIER: If it was the wish of the Committee he would not insist upon seven years. They ought to know what a man was worth in five years. At the same time they did not want to fill the service with men when there were young fellows growing up. Still, if a man was a good man after being five years in the service, and he was wanted by the department, he did not see how they could refuse to put him in the classified division.

Mr. AIREY (*Flinders*): The clause on the face of it looked a very fair thing. Of course when a man had been five or seven years in the service and had done good work, it seemed very hard that he should not be allowed to receive some increase; but he would point out that examinations had been instituted in order to avoid if possible all improper promotions. He did not say that examinations were an invariable test; in fact, very often they were a poor sort of test. None the less, the system had been instituted for a very good reason, and that reason was that all suspicion of favouritism as far as possible might be avoided. The clause would institute in the service a very vicious principle if one set of men were to be promoted by examination and another set according to the period of service.

The HOME SECRETARY: They are to be admitted into the service.

Mr. AIREY submitted that they should have one system applicable to the whole of the service, and that there should not be any modification. If they allowed a modification there was a chance of favouritism. Ministers were not infallible; they were likely to make mistakes, more especially if a clause of that sort was enacted. There were some meritorious men who suffered injustice under the present system, but the injustice that would be caused under that clause would be very much greater, and he hoped the Committee would not accept it.

The PREMIER: Outside the Education Department there was only one examination. It was only at a certain age that a boy could come into the service. After a man was over twenty-five years of age he was not allowed to pass the examination. He could assure members that the experience a man obtained in a merchant's office as an accountant was far greater than he would ever get in the Government service, and it was indispensable sometimes to have in the service men who could write commercial letters. If they allowed the service to go on as at present, they would have a lot of boys in it who had had no experience outside. A case had come under his notice some time ago when the Mines Department were shipping specimens by one of the boats to London for the Earl's Court Exhibition. They were put on board a steamer which broke down, and there was not a single man in the Mines Department who knew what to do. They never thought of shipping by some other boat *viâ* Sydney. If some outsider had not come in the colony

would not have been represented at Earl's Court at all. He did not blame the officers of the Mines Department, because they had had no shipping experience. He was convinced that a lad in a merchant's office would learn more in three or four years than in the Government service in ten or twenty.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: There is too much routine.

The PREMIER: Civil servants did the work put before them, but it was mechanical work mostly, and they did not think much for themselves. It was very difficult to get a good correspondence clerk at times. They had one or two good men, but it was sometimes necessary to get an outsider. If a man had been in the service for five years at 10s. a day, and he was a good man, there would be no harm in classifying him.

Mr. BROWNE: It is a good apprenticeship.

The PREMIER: The member for Flinders of course had in view the teachers under the Education Department, but it was very rarely that strangers were brought in. If they were they had to have certificates from some other colony or from England, so that the clause would not affect the Education Department at all. Certainly it would be a very great help to other departments if occasionally an outsider who had had commercial experience could be brought in.

Mr. TOLMIE was indebted to the Home Secretary for calling attention to a defect in the clause by which some of the men whom it was proposed to benefit would be left outside. With the permission of the Committee, he wished to add, after the words "unclassified division of," the words "or upon supernumerary work." That would embrace the whole of the men who were affected.

Mr. JENKINSON: Would not the word "otherwise" cover them?

Mr. TOLMIE: Perhaps it would, so that there would be no occasion to move his amendment.

Mr. JACKSON (*Kennedy*): With regard to what had been said by the hon. member for Flinders about examinations being some sort of a test, but not a very satisfactory test of competency, he was inclined to think that on the whole they were a pretty good test of ability. He had had occasion now and again to look through the examination papers set for candidates for admission to the public service, and he considered that those who were able to pass those examinations must be pretty smart young men. Of course it was possible to "cram" for examinations, but "cram" required a considerable amount of memory, and it was recognised that memory was a sign of ability. With regard to the statement of the Premier that it was sometimes difficult to get persons in the service competent to do the work required of them, particularly commercial work, he was of opinion that there ought to be two examinations, and that in the second examination, which should take place after an officer had been four or five years in the service, higher papers should be set, and that they should include commercial questions. If that were done, it would be a stimulus to officers to qualify for the higher grades.

[7·30 p.m.]

Mr. AIREY: Examinations are dispensed with in certain cases.

Mr. JACKSON: In cases where there was no one in the service competent to do the work required, where an expert or some professional man was wanted, the Government naturally went outside the service, and examination was dispensed with. No doubt the new clause would be an advantage to some men in the service, but whether it would be an advantage to the State, he did not know. Under the clause as it stood the Government could appoint some young fellow of sixteen to a position in the service, and then after five years' service that young fellow could become classified without going through any examination whatever, and be put on exactly the same footing as another young man who had passed the entrance examination. There was that danger in adopting the clause, but he should not vote against it. He was, however, in favour of the Premier's suggestion to make the period of service seven instead of five years.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carnarvon*) suggested that the words "or otherwise" should be omitted, and that they should insert in lieu thereof the words "or supernumerary clerical work."

Mr. TOLMIE: Yes, I accept that.

The HOME SECRETARY: It was quite true that it was necessary that a certificate should be obtained from the Ministerial or permanent head of a department; but what hon. members who had spoken against the clause feared was the possibility of political influence being used to secure that certificate. They could quite understand that a Minister might be pressed by a member of Parliament or anybody else to give a certificate against his better judgment. Therefore it was desirable to hedge round as much as possible the opportunities people might have to do that sort of thing, always provided that they left an opening to the men who it was proposed should be allowed admission. The persons whom it was desired to get in were those who were or might hereafter be in the unclassified division of the public service, and those who were now or might in future be engaged in the clerical and supernumerary work of various departments for a period of five years. He did not think it was desirable that a man who had been, say, a fitter in a workshop, should, under the cloak of a provision such as this, merely because some Minister was willing to certify as to his fitness, be transferred to a position where he would probably be of very little use, notwithstanding that certificate. A certificate would not make him competent. Five years' service in the employment, which would give him the necessary experience, was what was desired, not five years' service in any branch of the public service. Those were his objections to the wording of the clause, and he thought it should be narrowed down so as to prevent pressure being brought to bear, or attempted to be brought to bear, on either Ministers or the heads of the departments to give certificates to persons who were incompetent.

Mr. FOX (*Normanby*) thought that the objections raised to the clause would be met if the amendment were made retrospective, simply so that in future the departments could only employ those boys who had passed the entrance examination. The promotion of officers in the Savings Bank had, he thought, been more or less overlooked, and he would suggest that those men who had been a long time in the service, and had shown an interest in the department, should receive consideration from the head of the department.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the Committee that the proposed new clause be amended by the omission of the words "or otherwise," and the substitution in their place of the words "or supernumerary clerical work"?

Mr. CAMPBELL (*Moreton*): The Home Secretary had objected to a fitter, for instance, being entitled to the benefit of the proposed clause. In this connection he might mention that harm would possibly result to other officers if the suggested amendment were made. He referred particularly to inspectors in connection with the Railway Department and the Works

Department, who were not classified, and who would be debarred under the term "clerical." He suggested the addition of the word "professional."

The HOME SECRETARY: Make it "clerical or professional."

Mr. TOLMIE: He was quite willing to accept the suggested amendment. The object of the clause was to enable those who had served five years to obtain admission into the classified divisions. The reason why he said nothing about an examination in the clause was because the Public Service Act prohibited persons from being admitted to the service without examination. He did not think any ill-effects were likely to follow from adopting the proposed clause. The Ministerial or permanent head would not make a recommendation unless the person was qualified, and then those recommended would only be continued in the service doing the same work they were qualified to perform. They would not be transferred from one department to another.

The PREMIER thought that when a man had been five years in the public service the permanent head of his department would know whether he was fit to be classified or not. There were plenty of good men who could not pass an examination. In merchants' offices there were far better men to be found than many of the men in the Government service, although they had not passed examinations. The persons to whom this amendment would apply were not boys at all. Most of them were men from thirty-five to forty years of age. There were some splendid accountants working for the Government at 10s. a day, and they were some of the men to whom the amendment would apply. He did not think an Under Secretary would recommend incompetent men, because it would be to his interests to have men capable of doing the work. He did not suppose there were more than twenty or thirty men who would come under this category.

Mr. JACKSON: Are you going to make it seven years?

The PREMIER thought five years would be sufficient. If it was not known in that time whether a man was capable or not it would not be known in seven years.

Mr. FITZGERALD (*Mitchell*): There seemed to be some misunderstanding on this side with regard to the proposed new clause and the amendment which the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba was prepared to accept. There were in the Government service men who were neither classified nor unclassified. The other day when the Home Secretary's Estimates were under consideration attention was drawn to the fact that certain employees in the Government Printing Office had to put a twopenny stamp on their pay-sheets. The hon. gentleman said these men were classified, but many of them were only paid during the time Parliament was in session, and the moment the session was over they were cleared off. These men were not classified.

The HOME SECRETARY: They are not continuously in the service.

Mr. FITZGERALD thought the amendment as it stood seemed to cover everything, although the words "or otherwise" might bring in anybody. There were unclassified men in all the public departments, with five or six years' service, who could not pass an examination to save their lives. He did not see why they should not be given a chance of employment.

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that the mover of the new clause wishes, with the permission of the Committee, to amend it by omitting the words "or otherwise" and inserting the words "or on supernumerary clerical or professional work."

Mr. FITZGERALD: What does clerical work mean?

The HOME SECRETARY: It meant the work of clerks. It meant that they could not take, say, a lighthouse-keeper, and put him to what was known as clerical work.

Mr. FITZGERALD: What about a long-service messenger?

The HOME SECRETARY: He should not think a messenger was fit for it, unless he had been employed in some other work.

Mr. FITZGERALD: He does not come under this Bill?

The HOME SECRETARY: No. He wished it to be narrowed as much as possible. Every man in receipt of Government pay would be eligible under the words "or otherwise."

Mr. MAXWELL: And why not?

The HOME SECRETARY: He was not prepared to place such power in the hands of one Minister. For the sake of that Minister himself there ought to be some additional guarantee that he should not be pestered with giving certificates against his better judgment. He could foresee no end of political pressure being used to get friends into Government billets. The man in the lighthouse might get a certificate, and if so he would immediately become eligible for a position for which his previous experience had unfitted him. His contention was that only those who had had experience in the particular work in which they were likely to be employed should be appointed, and that experience should be gained in the clerical or the professional branch of the public service. That should be the test to guide the Minister.

The PREMIER did not agree with his hon. colleague in that matter. Why should not a messenger, if he was qualified, get a permanent position? He would give a case in point. He took a young man as messenger who was a bricklayer, and he was astonished how that lad improved. He was his messenger for about three years, when unfortunately he got bleeding of the lungs and had to leave Brisbane. He put him temporarily in the border customs, and he had performed the work of a duly qualified man very satisfactorily ever since. He thought merit ought to be recognised, and that would never be so long as they kept to the hard-and-fast lines of those examinations. No Minister, for his own sake, would make an appointment which he would not answer for afterwards, and he believed the appointments would be more carefully scrutinised in the future than they had been in the past. If a man or a lad showed extraordinary merit he ought to be able to get into the public service. One good man in an office would make all the rest good. A man wanted outside experience more than inside experience; he could learn more by being eight or ten years in a merchant's office than by being twenty years in the public service.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: You are advocating far and away beyond this amendment.

The PREMIER: No; for those men must have been five years in the service continually. With regard to the lightshipman referred to, there might be in a lightship a wonderfully able man who would be an acquisition to the public service. But, in any case, no Minister would make an appointment which he could not justify.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*): The proposed new clause, with the suggested amendment, would have his hearty support. He had not much belief in examinations. Some time ago, in consequence of the investigations of the Works Commission, applications were invited for inspectors, who had to undergo a certain examination. He knew for a fact that that examination did not result in the best men being appointed. Some without the

necessary practical knowledge, but with technical knowledge, were able to pass, and in one case an inspector was appointed who had not been much credit to the department. Better men who were employed before were unable to get on the staff or be classified. He was not saying anything derogatory to some inspectors of works, but he was [8 p.m.] showing instances that he knew of in connection with the building trade. It was apparent to anyone who knew anything about that trade that the examination was a rotten proceeding—that the questions put were simply ridiculous. Good men who knew how to erect a building from the foundation to roof were unable to pass the examination, and yet inferior men passed the examination and were appointed inspectors. He thought it was very unfair. They had men in the Public Works Department who had been inspectors for some years—who had never been on the staff—subject to a day or a week's notice of dismissal; and he thought if these men had served five or seven years—he thought five years was plenty—that these men should be entitled, if they gave faithful and good service, and carried out their work properly, to be put on to the staff of the colony.

Mr. BARNES (*Bulimba*): It seemed to him that the principal object of this new clause was to deal with cases of people at present in the service, although there seemed to be a desire on the part of many hon. members to provide for cases that might arise in the future. In following the Premier he could quite understand some of the arguments that he put forward in connection with men who had, practically speaking, risen from the ranks. But while he was anxious to assist any they found in the service to-day, and who were debarred from rising as they should rise, it seemed to him that the removal of the Public Service Board opened the door for very dangerous things in the future. They all knew something of the pressure that was brought to bear from time to time on gentlemen occupying the positions of Ministers of the Crown—and they could scarcely foresee where they were drifting if they practically opened the way for a great deal of pressure to be brought upon Ministers in connection with appointments; because every person seeking for promotion had a certain number of friends, and those friends would naturally exert themselves for all they were worth, and he thought, without in any way desiring to reflect upon gentlemen who now occupied positions in the Cabinet or who might occupy positions in the Cabinet, that they themselves might be liable to a certain amount of pressure.

Mr. TOLMIE: Did you find they were liable to pressure.

Mr. BARNES: He had found the Ministers very reasonable, and he did not think that any representative in the Chamber could ask for more than that. Still he thought they should not provide for cases in the future which might arise in which injustice might be done through too much pressure being brought to bear on the Ministers. He would be better pleased if the amendment was made retrospective, and allow other cases to be dealt with as they arose in the future.

The HOME SECRETARY: He had had the same thought which the hon. member who had just spoken had given expression to, and he had drafted an amendment in the proposed new clause, which he thought would be an improvement. It would not perpetuate what was proposed to be done, but the experiment would simply be made, and that would give relief to a number of men whom hon. members had in their minds' eyes, who were deserving of relief. The amendment he proposed was this:—"No person who, at the passing of this Act, has been continuously employed," and so on. That would leave future cases to be dealt with in the future.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The HOME SECRETARY: If that were accepted they would deal with rights which had already accrued—moral rights—and if the experiment was found not to work well it would not be renewed.

Mr. TOLMIE asked if the Minister referred to the term five years?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. TOLMIE: Then what about men who had been four years and six months in the service?

The HOME SECRETARY: You must draw the line somewhere.

Mr. McDONNELL (*Fortitude Valley*) was strongly in favour of the amendment. He knew several cases where men were employed in different departments, but owing to the age limit they were prevented from becoming classified public servants. He was quite at one with the Minister when he said that there were men who had been continuously employed by departments who were not classified, and that the heads of the departments had found them very good officers. He remembered one case in the Customs, but as that department had been taken out of the hands of the State Government they could not deal with that department; but he knew other departments in which good men were employed in the unclassified division, and in many cases these men were prevented, on account of the age limit, from competing in the examinations. There were also a number of cases where men were employed in non-clerical work, and the heads of the departments knew that they were eligible for permanent positions. He was at one with the Minister that this clause should be amended so as to provide that those who had been continuously in the service for five years previous to the passing of this Act, should get the benefits under this clause. He thought it was a wise provision, and that it would obviate very largely what the hon. member for Bulimba complained of. It rather surprised him to hear hon. members on the other side show such little faith in Ministers. They were evidently afraid that so much political pressure would be brought to bear upon them that they would be compelled to give appointments to men who were not competent.

Mr. BARNES: It will react upon ourselves.

Mr. McDONNELL: He was inclined to think that the permanent heads of departments would have a very large say in the matter. He believed that the Under Secretaries were men who would not be very largely influenced by political pressure, and that they would give an unbiassed opinion with regard to the merits of the men who would be affected by the clause. He knew a good few men who were filling non-clerical positions in the service, and if those men were admitted into the classified division, they would give satisfaction to the heads of the departments. They were equally as intelligent as many of those at present occupying positions in the classified division, and it was only because they were prevented by the age limit from competing in the entrance examination that they were prevented from attaining to those positions. He hoped that the new clause would not be confined merely to the professional and clerical branches of the service. In several departments for years past—particularly in departments working under the loan funds—the men had never been classified, and they were in fear that their positions were not secure because they were

unclassified. The majority of those men were just as competent to occupy their positions as the men who were in the classified division.

* HON. A. S. COWLEY: The proposal contained in the new clause now before the Committee was one that struck at a vital principle in the principal Act. In the Public Service Act provision was made by which persons should be allowed to enter the public service, and it was also provided that they could only come in in a certain manner and under a certain age. Before he dealt with the clause, he was going to ask for the ruling of the Chairman as to whether they could deal with that question at all. He thought it would be recognised, first of all, that the proposed new clause embodied a vital principle. Now, what was their business there to-night? It was not to consider the principles of a Bill; it was not to deal with any other principles which were contained in the principal Act; it was simply to deal with a Bill which was brought down to amend the principal Act. They could do that, and they could do no more. Anything contained in the Bill they were entitled to amend or to omit; but anything which was not contained in the Bill—any new principle which it was proposed to embody in the Bill—he maintained they had no power to deal with, unless the House conferred that power upon them, either on the second reading or by an instruction to the Committee. Anyone who read the proposed new clause must admit that it was a matter of principle—and a vital principle. What did their Standing Orders say upon the question? Standing Order 157 said—

> The Committee shall consider such matters only as have been referred to it by the House.

This matter had never been referred to them by the House.

The HOME SECRETARY: "A Bill to amend the Public Service Act."

HON. A. S. COWLEY: "A Bill to amend the Public Service Act" had been referred to them, but they were not dealing with the Public Service Act as a whole. They were dealing with the amending Bill, and with that alone.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We can cover the whole ground.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: If that was so, then they could amend every section and strike at every principle that was contained in the principal Act. Such a statement coming from the Attorney-General was simply astounding. (Laughter.) It must be admitted that the power of the Committee was confined by the Standing Orders to the Bill which was presented to them. They could no more go outside that Bill than they could introduce in it an amendment of any other Act which stood on their statute-book. The new clause practically proposed to repeal section 30 of the principal Act, but that section had never been referred to the Committee. All that had been referred to the Committee was to consider the advisableness——

The HOME SECRETARY: And amend.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: They were not bound to amend, but to consider the advisableness of amending the principal Act only in the direction laid down in the Bill before them.

The HOME SECRETARY: Then you can only omit from the printed Bill.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: They could amend the present Bill in so far as the amendments dealt with matters contained in the Bill, or they could omit anything, but they could not go outside the Bill as it was brought in and read a second time, and referred to the Committee. Now, look at Standing Order 260—

> Any amendment may be made to a clause or other part of a Bill provided that the amendment is relevant to the subject-matter of the Bill.

Not of the Act which the Bill sought to amend, but of the Bill which was submitted to them.

The HOME SECRETARY: Well, this is "a Bill to amend the Public Service Act."

HON. A. S. COWLEY: Just so, and they were confined to the four corners of that Bill, and could not deal with the Act which the Bill proposed to amend otherwise than as specified in the Bill. Hon. members seemed to be under the impression that when an amending Bill was brought in the whole of the principal Act was open to review by the Committee. That was a mistake. What a state they would be in if members of the House could bring in amendments of any section of the principal Act that they liked. It would be absurd. It was never contemplated by the Standing Orders, and it was foreign to their practice, and to the practice of the Commons. This amendment was clearly within the title, but it was not within the scope, and if they went outside the scope of the Bill, they would make a fatal mistake. This was a very serious matter. What was the use of having a second reading at all—what was the use of debating the principle of the Bill? The two stages were entirely different, and they had no connection with each other. In dealing with the second reading of a Bill they dealt with the principles, and not with the details; and you could no more introduce into a Bill in committee a new principle than you could discuss or eliminate details on the second reading. This amendment introduced a principle which was opposed to the vital principle of the principal Act, which was that no one should be admitted to the public service unless he had passed an examination showing his competency and unless he was of a certain age; and under this clause it was sought to introduce, without the House having any knowledge of it, or without the House having any opportunity of negativing it or questioning it, a principle which was abrogating that principle. He asked the ruling of the Chairman whether that was in order.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge, *Maranoa*): The hon. gentleman had sprung this point upon the Committee, and it might have been as well under the circumstances to have had an opportunity of discussing it, but the occasion did not admit of very much time being devoted to it. The Bill that had been brought in was a Bill to amend the Public Service Act. The title did not specify in what particulars the Bill was to amend that Act, but the Bill contained some particulars in which it was proposed to amend the principal Act. He took it that it did not follow because a Bill declared some of the particulars in which it was proposed to amend the principal Act that in no other particular whatever could the principal Act be amended. That would be a very strange kind of limitation to impose. He maintained that they had power to do what was proposed to be done by this amendment, and he would refer to page 618 of "Bourinot on Parliamentary Practice" for a precedent—

> A Committee of the Whole have now power to make amendments not within the scope and title of the Bill. A rule of the English Commons provides—
>
> > That any amendments may be made to a clause, provided the same be relevant to the subject matter of the Bill, or pursuant to any instructions, and be otherwise in conformity with the rules and orders of the House; but if any amendment be not within the title of the Bill, the Committee are to amend the title accordingly, and report the same specially to the House.
>
> In the session of 1875, the House went into committee on a Bill "to amend the general Acts respecting railways," and a question arose whether it was competent to add a clause requiring the Government to purchase goods for the use of dominion railways upon public tender and contract only; and the Committee

having arisen for the purpose of receiving instructions from the House upon the point at issue, Mr. Speaker Anglin decided that such an amendment would be regular without an instruction. A similar decision was given in Committee of the Whole on a Bill to repeal the insolvency laws now in force in Canada. It was proposed to make some amendments which would have the effect of adding certain provisions with respect to preferential assignments and priority of judgment, and in that way avert certain dangers likely to result, in the opinion of many persons, from the total repeal of the Act as provided for in the Bill. The amendments were decided to be in order.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: Can you give us an illustration from England

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He had not had time to consult the English authorities, but this being a decision of the Speaker of the Dominion House of Commons in Canada, it was quite good enough for a colonial House of Parliament like this. There was nothing foreign in the amendment proposed to be inserted in the Bill to the subject-matter of the Bill itself. According to the hon. member for Herbert, the only thing they could do was to move an amendment with regard to the constitution of the board.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: No, I did not say so.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He understood the hon. member for Herbert to say they were so limited in the kind of amendment which they could propose, and if he did not say that he did not know what this discussion was about. This was a Bill to amend the Public Service Act, and anything that was relevant to the Public Service Act which it was sought to amend here, was relevant as an amendment to be introduced into the Bill. He was sorry that the hon. member had raised this point because, with all respect to the great constitutional knowledge, the ability, and the experience of the hon. member for Herbert, he thought in this case he was not justified in raising the point that he had submitted. Surely if it was competent in this Bill to amend the Public Service Act in such a way as to change the constitution of the board altogether, and to change all the provisions that were contained in sections 6 to 12 in the principal Act, it was competent for the Committee to introduce an amendment in reference to a minor matter such as the status of persons who had been employed in the public service in one or other capacity, so as to give them something like a permanency, whereas before they only had a temporary occupation thereof. He submitted that the Chairman would be right in ruling that the amendment was perfectly relevant.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: He was really surprised at the statement made by the Attorney-General. The hon. gentleman said that surely they had the right to amend the principal Act in a minor matter when they could amend it in all the clauses from 6 to 12 of the principal Act. That was an extraordinary statement to make to an intelligent body of men. (Laughter.) That was what he was contending for. That was embodied in the Bill, and therefore they had the right to do it. Everything embodied in the Bill they had the right to consider, amend, or reject.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Could not you amend or omit some other clause in the Act?

HON. A. S. COWLEY: Certainly not, if it contained a principle. The Ministry had power to put anything into this Bill that they liked, and they had brought it down saying that they proposed to amend the Public Service Act in these directions. If the principle now sought to be introduced had been embodied in the Bill, the probabilities were that instead of having six men voting against the second reading, they would have had thirty-six. That principle was never discussed by the House.

The HOME SECRETARY: Thirty-six can still vote on the third reading.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: He knew there were no restrictions upon the rights of hon. members to vote, but that was not the question. The question was whether they were prepared to proceed in an orderly way or a disorderly way. Would the hon. gentleman show him a single precedent from "May" which would bear out his contention? If so, he would give way at once. If the hon. gentleman thought he was raising the point as a trivial matter, he was mistaken. He was in deadly earnest, and was jealous of the reputation of the House and Committee. He did not wish to depart from their own practice, or from the practice of the House of Commons. If the hon. gentleman's argument was right, he could bring down a Bill to amend any Act. He could have one clause in that Bill, and then he could amend every other clause in the Act. That was monstrous and absurd. [8·30 p.m.]

The HOME SECRETARY said the Attorney-General had put the matter very plainly before the Committee, and he need not go over the ground he had trodden. The hon. member for Herbert had asked for a precedent from "May." That was a Bill to amend the Public Service Act, and the new clause of the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba was also a clause to amend the Public Service Act. He contended that, instead of the hon. member asking them to produce precedents for allowing the clause to be introduced, he should produce, from the Commons or elsewhere, precedents to show that it should not be allowed.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: I have quoted our Standing Orders.

The HOME SECRETARY did not agree with the hon. gentleman that the Standing Orders covered the point. If he could show that the Standing Orders had been interpreted in such a way as to exclude such an amendment as the one before them he would say he was right, but he did not produce any such precedent. What they were doing was to amend the Public Service Act both by the Bill and by the proposed new clause.

Mr. BELL (*Dalby*) contended that the hon. gentleman who had just addressed the Committee was out of order. When an hon. member rose to a point of order no other hon. member could speak on that point unless the Chairman extended an invitation to the Committee to speak, and he was not aware that such an invitation had been extended.

Mr. JACKSON: Silence gives consent.

Mr. BELL: He thought it did in relation to the other sex, but it certainly did not in proceedings of that Committee.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. D. H. Dalrymple, *Mackay*) rose to a point of order. The hon. member had himself informed the Chairman that he was out of order.

The CHAIRMAN: In reference to the point just raised by the hon. member for Dalby, if I had not thought that the discussion would be useful to me, I should have stopped it. As I considered it might be useful to me, I allowed it to go on. With reference to the point of order raised by the hon. member for Herbert, whether this amendment is relevant to the Bill, I may point out that we very recently had a ruling from our Speaker on a point which seems to be altogether on all fours with this. When the Bill to amend the Sugar Works Guarantee Acts of 1893-1900 was before us, it was sought to

move an amendment at the report stage, and I find that the hon. member for Herbert objected to it on much the same ground as he has objected to this new clause. The Speaker on that occasion said—

> In this instance the House has referred to a Committee of the Whole a Bill to amend the Sugar Works Guarantee Act of 1893 to 1895, and if the amendment is relevant to the provisions of either of those two Acts it is in order.

Now we cannot question that the new clause proposed by the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba is relevant to the principal Act, and I therefore think that according to the ruling given to our Speaker, which is up to date, I cannot object to the new clause.

Mr. BELL considered it his duty to move that the Chairman's ruling be disagreed to. He disassociated himself entirely with the criticisms that the hon. member for Herbert made on the point of order that was raised, and he said that possibly there was no man in the Chamber who knew more, or probably nobody who knew as much, about the Standing Orders and procedure as the hon. member for Herbert. The Chamber might feel disposed to take a course which suggested itself as the line of least resistance; but if it wanted to take a safe course—if it wanted to establish a system under which safeguards in public administration, and in the conduct of public business were always preserved, undoubtedly it would think several times before it entered upon a course that seemed most convenient for the moment, and disregarded the principles of procedure which had hitherto prevailed. Now, the Attorney-General had given the Chamber an example of what was done on a certain occasion in the Dominion House of Parliament; but the information which the hon. gentleman laid before the Committee was so meagre—he admitted from the nature of the case it was not in the hon. gentleman's power to go into much more detail—that he defied any hon. member to find excuse for departing from the principles which the hon. member for Herbert had laid down—principles which were well recognised and sound in regard to the course which should be taken on a matter such as that. The principle which they would find laid down in "May," and which their Standing Orders had attempted to give expression to, was that no amendment should be made to a Bill other than was consistent with the spirit of the Bill as it passed its second reading. It was obvious that if the House, as a House, with the Speaker in the chair, affirmed the principle of a Bill, the Committee, which probably was in a less dignified and responsible position, could not make an alteration which was not intended or conceived when the Bill was discussed with the Speaker in the chair. If any member had it in his mind to make any addition, such as was proposed in this case, he should not do it as a kind of afterthought in committee; but when the House was sitting, and the Bill was under its second reading, he should move that it be an instruction to the Committee to deal with the amendment he desired to submit. That was the principle laid down in the House of Commons, and it was the principle which was attempted to be reproduced when our Standing Orders were framed. And, however convenient it might be to yield to the passing of this amendment—and he said at once to the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba that he was thoroughly in accord with the amendment—yet much more important than the passing of the amendment at the present moment was the preservation of their procedure in all its purity, and they would undoubtedly be selling the purity of their procedure if in a slipshod way they allowed this amendment to go into the Bill. He understood the Attorney-General to remark that for a Chamber of this kind the procedure of the Dominion House of Parliament was good enough. He did not think it was good enough. If the legislatures of the different parts of the Empire were going to keep their eyes on each other, and find an excuse for any course they wished to take in some action of another colonial legislature, they would soon find their procedure in confusion. He had always deprecated looking to the other colonies for precedents as to procedure. He should not follow the procedure of the Parliament of New South Wales in any respect whatever, because he had seen enough of that legislature to know that their parliamentary procedure was not sufficiently admirable to be taken as an example for Queensland. There were only two sources to which they should look when they wanted a guide as to their practice here. One was their own Standing Orders, and when those Standing Orders were not sufficiently explicit they should go to "May." If they applied that test, and looked beyond their own Standing Orders, as they must do in the present case, then undoubtedly the contention of the hon. member for Herbert was right, and the ruling of the Chairman was wrong. He therefore moved that the ruling of the Chairman be disagreed to.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There was one circumstance the hon. member for Dalby had not explained. The hon. member had said that they must look to their own Standing Orders and to the practice of the House of Commons. But he must admit that they must also look to the decisions which had been given in that Chamber on previous occasions. Although the hon. member had dealt with the question tolerably fully, yet he had evaded the decision the Chairman was good enough to quote. The hon. member had not explained away the ruling of the Speaker on a previous occasion. He was quite as desirous as the hon. member that they should follow precedents and not get involved in disorder; but he should like the hon. member to explain in what respect the present Speaker had erred in the decision which the Chairman had cited. They ought to pay probably as much respect to the rulings given in this House as to precedents of the House of Commons. The precedents which they themselves had set were probably as important as, if not more important than, precedents established elsewhere, and he should like the hon. member to explain what fault he had to find with the ruling of the present Speaker, if that ruling was a case in point.

Mr. JACKSON: The hon. member for Dalby in challenging the ruling of the Chairman on this occasion was challenging the decision of the present Speaker in a case which was on all-fours with the present one. He (Mr. Jackson) was not much of a stickler for forms and ceremonies and precedents, but at the same time, he recognised that in a House of Parliament they must be guided to a large extent by precedents, otherwise they would land themselves in inextricable confusion. The proposed new clause was quite in accord with the title of the Bill, but if they considered the scope of the Bill, then it was decidedly out of order, as it was not in accord with the spirit of the Bill. When the Bill was introduced hon. members recognised that it was brought in for the purpose of abolishing the Public Service Board.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: For that one specific purpose.

Mr. JACKSON: There might be members of the House, who, if they had known that in committee it was proposed to amend the principal Act in other respects, would have been

present that evening prepared to move amendments in various directions. He remembered having a conversation with the late Mr. Byrnes, who had been Premier of the colony, and that gentleman stated that it was not a matter of very great importance to have a knowledge of the Standing Orders of Parliament, because the majority could always decide any question whether it was in accord with the Standing Orders or not—that they could practically make their own Standing Orders from time to time.

Mr. BELL: Are you quite sure he said that?

Mr. JACKSON: He was quite sure of what he was saying. Personally, he did not agree with the sentiments of the late Mr. Byrnes, because if they did not act in accordance with system and order they would land themselves in confusion. The Bill dealt with a specified subject, and the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba proposed to insert a clause dealing with a matter quite outside the scope of the Bill. If a member should hereafter turn up an Act to look up a particular question in connection with the public service, he would never dream of looking into this Bill to find a provision dealing with the classification of the public service. For the reasons he had given, he was very much inclined to support the motion of the hon. member for Dalby, though he recognised that the Chairman was acting on the precedent laid down by the Speaker. It might be contended that the point on which the ruling was given by the Speaker in connection with the Sugar Works Guarantee Act was not on all-fours with this, but it seemed to him that it was. It was certainly a bad practice for the Committee to insert clauses outside the scope of the Bill, and it seemed to him that the Government, in supporting the proposal to insert this clause, were not consistent. A week or two ago there was under consideration the Mining Act Amendment Bill—a Bill to amend the Mining Act of 1898. That Bill dealt principally with tramway leases, and the Premier would not accept any amendments outside the principles of the Bill as adopted on the second reading.

The HOME SECRETARY: That was a case of the Premier representing the majority and backed up by the majority.

Mr. JACKSON: He thought the Government were quite right on that occasion.

The HOME SECRETARY: That was a matter of Government policy; it was not a question of Standing Orders at all.

Mr. JACKSON: He thought it was both.

The HOME SECRETARY: The point was not raised.

Mr. JACKSON admitted that the point was not raised; but the Premier said he would not accept any amendments outside the scope of the Bill, and his decision was not questioned. Seeing that it was a bad practice to introduce amendments outside the scope of a Bill he was inclined to support the motion of the hon. member for Dalby.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Leahy, *Bulloo*) said he had such a very great respect for the hon. member for Dalby that when the hon. member invited him to speak he felt bound to do so, particularly when asked for information. He thought they must all agree with the general principles laid down by the hon. member for Herbert to some extent, but when they were told that a little matter of this kind dealing with twenty or thirty men was a vital principle of the Bill, surely words had no meaning whatever! The thing resolved itself into what they called a principle and what they called a detail. This was the merest detail. It was a matter of individual opinion—a matter quite unimportant. What was the principle involved? It was that some man who had been five years employed might be made eligible for a certain position. Even now, outside the Public Service Act, the Government could take any one of those men and make him a police magistrate, or an inspector of works, or a Crown lands ranger, and there was no principle involved. It was contended that a vital principle was involved in this matter. It was well known that occasionally a matter came up for consideration, which was considered by members on one side to be of supreme importance to the country, while members on the other side said it was a mere cipher. Who was going to decide what was a principle, and what was a detail? That was a question which must be settled by common sense, according to the merits, and according to the importance of the matter. What was the importance attached to this matter? There were twenty or thirty men who might be made something higher, if the Government, exercising the functions of the board in future, saw fit to take action in that direction. He thought it was very different from a principle; and, even supposing it was a principle, his friend the hon. member for Dalby was wrong. The hon. gentleman laid it down that on the second reading of the Bill a certain principle was affirmed. That was all very well; but if the House afterwards discovered something else, no matter how important, if it related to the subject, the House could still direct the Committee to deal with it—by way of instruction. He thought it would be absurd to take up the time of the Chamber with this matter by having the Speaker in the chair and going through all the forms of the House before they considered this matter in committee. He submitted there was no principle involved. This was a Bill regulating the civil service, and if an amendment with regard to pensions, for instance, were proposed that would be a vital principle; but a pettifogging thing of this kind could not be elevated to the height of a principle, and therefore he submitted that the Chairman's ruling was in order.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: Without wishing to give way in any shape or form in the opinion he held, he certainly thought the hon. member for Dalby should withdraw his motion. He had never approved of the principle of members moving that the ruling of the Speaker or the Chairman be disagreed to without due consideration. It was much better for all concerned when that was done, that the question should be dealt with in cold blood. He was astonished at the view taken of the matter by the Secretary for Railways. The hon. gentleman said it would be a vital principle of the Bill if this repealed the section which provided that no one should be admitted into the public service without passing an examination.

[9 p.m.]

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I did not say so.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: That was the inference.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I can say what I mean without leaving anything to be inferred.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: The hon. gentleman said it was only a matter of twenty or thirty men. But whether it applied to ten men or 100 the principle was the same. What he rose for was to advise the hon. member for Dalby to withdraw his motion to disagree with the Chairman's ruling. It was a very important point, he admitted; but if they were to have a debate upon

it notice should be given, and the question should be debated after due consideration in all its bearings. If the clause went to a division he should vote against it.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*): He could hardly agree with the hon. member for Herbert that a motion disagreeing with the Chairman's ruling should never be moved without consideration, for practically there was no other time to move it than at the actual moment the issue was raised. At the same time, he agreed with the hon. member that nothing should be proposed in committee which was not within the scope of a Bill when it was presented and read a second time, unless there had been a special instruction given to that effect. Otherwise, amendments might be proposed which, if the House had known they were going to be put into a Bill, would have led to its being refused a second reading. In his judgment, the proposed amendment was not outside the scope of the Bill; it was quite within the scope of the Bill as assented to on the second reading.

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: Then you approve of the Chairman's ruling.

Mr. HARDACRE: Yes, for that reason. He proposed to amend the principal Act in one respect. That Act provided that there should be no entrance to the classified service except through the process of examination, and even it made certain exceptions. But a new order of things was now proposed. The board was to be abolished, and Ministers were to take its place. Under that altered system it might be necessary in certain cases to permit the Minister to appoint men without going through the process of examination, and for that reason it was a consequential amendment under the new system of things. He could understand that in certain contingencies a Minister might want to appoint a certain man to a certain position. Such a case had never arisen under the old order of things, because the board had the control, and the applications had to be made to the board. He thought they were perfectly right in proposing the amendment under the new circumstances. The hon. member for Herbert was generally correct on matters of procedure, but he did not think he was right on this occasion, and for the reasons he (Mr. Hardacre) had given he thought the amendment was quite in order.

Mr. STORY (*Balonne*) thought that most of the members had arrived at a decision on this matter. Some time before this discussion came on he was handed the amendment, and directly he read it he said that it had nothing to do with this Bill, which provided for dispensing with the services of the members of the board. The member who handed him the amendment said it was coming on to-night, and he (Mr. Story) understood him to say that it was going to be introduced in a Bill later on. He approved of the amendment, but it had certainly nothing to do with this Bill. If the amendment were in order it would be just as reasonable to introduce an amendment providing for the purchase of a photographic apparatus and the salary of a man to look after it. They had not discussed anything about unclassified civil servants on the second reading last night. The Government gave no intimation that such business would be before the Committee, and if such an amendment as this could be introduced in committee, any other amendment could also be introduced. It simply meant that the discussion on the second reading of the Bill was an absolute waste of time, because they were now asked to deal with an entirely different matter. Nevertheless it was so necessary that these men should be dealt with that he thought it was better to do a little wrong than to do a very great injustice. Under the circumstances—although he was thoroughly in accord with what the hon. member for Herbert had said—as this was a matter which could not be introduced at any other time this session, and as those men who had been working for years should get a chance of promotion, he would vote for the amendment.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Do you not recognise the Speaker's ruling?

Mr. STORY: He recognised that the Speaker's ruling was distinctly wrong.

Mr. BELL: The Secretary for Railways was good enough to get up and give him (Mr. Bell) what he termed "information," but he was bound to say he would not subscribe to the hon. gentleman's observation on this point. The hon. member seemed to subscribe to the principle laid down by the hon. member for Herbert, and then very ingeniously took the trouble to show that they should depart from it because it was a little matter. If the principle was good in one case, it should be good in another, and he was sure that the Minister for Railways realised in his heart of hearts that the contention of the hon. member for Herbert and himself (Mr. Bell) was thoroughly sound on this point.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You never read a line from "May" to enlighten us.

Mr. BELL: He did not, because——

Hon. A. S. COWLEY: We don't quote "May" when our Standing Orders are definite.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I quoted "Bourinot," a high authority.

Mr. BELL: "Bourinot" was not in the same street as "May." He was merely a pedler in colonial practice, while "May" stood at the head of all our parliamentary authorities. Hon. members had to remember that, as a Committee, they were entirely subordinate to the House; that the House considered the general principles of Bills and then referred the measures to the Committee for the consideration of their details. There was no originating power in the Committee—they could only deal with matters which had been referred to them by the House. That was the broad principle laid down for their guidance in committee. He had heard one hon. member to-night say in a conversational way—and that hon. member had a great reputation for intelligence—that he did not see much difference between the House and the Committee. He hoped there were not a great number of hon. members who held that opinion, because if they did it would be a bad lookout for parliamentary practice. He thought that the contention of the hon. member for Herbert and himself was right, and he respectfully submitted that the Chairman's ruling was wrong. But the hon. member for Herbert, in obedience to parliamentary principles, had laid down another very good rule; that was that no hon. member should move that the Chairman's or the Speaker's ruling be disagreed to on the impulse of the moment. The Standing Orders allowed any hon. member to give notice that he would move that the Chairman's or the Speaker's ruling be disagreed to. In the House of Commons that could only be done by giving due notice. He submitted very respectfully that the Chairman's ruling was wrong. He had a great respect for the House of Commons procedure, and for the Chairman and for the Speaker, and as he believed that if the Chairman's ruling was opposed, a motion that it be disagreed to should only be moved after notice given, he would accept the advice of the hon. member for Herbert and ask leave to withdraw his motion. He would do so, with the intimation that he might think it wise at some future time to give notice that he disagreed with the ruling.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the Committee that the motion be withdrawn?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The CHAIRMAN: Withdrawn accordingly.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Burke*) said he objected to the withdrawal of this motion——

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: It has been withdrawn. Too late.

The CHAIRMAN: I did not hear the hon. member address me before I said "Withdrawn accordingly."

Mr. MAXWELL said he was addressing the Chairman before he put the question, but as the question was decided he would let it go. He objected to this sort of fireworks—night after night members getting up and objecting to the Chairman's ruling and then letting the matter drop. Why not force the question to a division?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Force it to a division?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: How are you going to do that?

Mr. MAXWELL: By calling "divide." They should know where they stood in connection with introducing amendments. He himself had a Bill in view, in which he wished to move some amendments, and then the Chairman might rule that they were outside the scope of the Bill. Of course, now that the Chairman had given his ruling, he did not intend to object to it.

The HOME SECRETARY moved the omission of the words "section thirty of." It was necessary to omit those words, because section 30 was also affected by the clause under discussion.

HON. A. S. COWLEY: The amendment, like the clause itself, was sprung upon the Committee, and they should understand where they were. The Home Secretary had not explained in any way what the amendment meant.

The HOME SECRETARY did not think it necessary to explain, because the hon. member had himself dwelt upon the principle of section 26 of the principal Act. It was the one which required all candidates for admission to the public service to pass an examination before they could be admitted. There might be other sections in which a similar reference occurred.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: With which this might be inconsistent.

The HOME SECRETARY: Quite so. The clause should read, "Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in the principal Act," because it was quite clear that it applied to section 26 as well as to section 30.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. BARNES moved the omission of the words "or may hereafter be," in the 3rd line.

Amendment agreed to.

Question—That the new clause as amended (*Mr. Tolmie*) stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 34.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Leahy
,, Bell	,, Lesina
,, Bridges	,, Linnett
,, Callan	,, Lord
,, Cameron	,, McMaster
,, Campbell	,, Mulcahy
,, J. C. Cribb	,, Newell
,, T. B. Cribb	,, O'Connell
,, Dalrymple	,, Petrie
,, Dunsford	,, Plunkett
,, Fogarty	,, Rutledge
,, Fox	,, Ryland
,, Foxton	,, Stephenson
,, W. Hamilton	,, Stodart
,, Hanran	,, Story
,, Hardacre	,, W. Thorn
,, Kent	,, Tolmie

Tellers: Mr. Barnes and Mr. J. C. Cribb.

NOES, 8.

Mr. Airey	Mr. Fitzgerald
,, Boles	,, Jackson
,, Bowman	,, Macartney
,, Cowley	,, Maxwell

Tellers: Mr. Macartney and Mr. Bowman.

Resolved in the affirmative.

The House resumed; the Bill was reported with amendments, and the third [9·30 p.m.] reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

PASTORAL HOLDINGS NEW LEASES BILL.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On clause 3, on which Mr. Curtis had moved the following proviso:—

Provided always that the Minister may, with the consent of the respective former lessees, and on the recommendation of the court, attach such resumed land, or any specified part thereof, to any adjoining holding, the lease whereof has expired, instead of to the holding in which it was originally comprised—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. B. H. O'Connell, *Musgrave*): Since the hon. member had moved this amendment he had looked up the plans, and he thought there was no case in which it was likely to come to work at all. There were one or two cases in the Leichhardt district in which the leases adjoined, but they were not likely to be referred to the court. He could not see any advantage in the amendment, because it only dealt with expired leases, the list of which he had read out on the previous night. It required the consent of the lessees, the Minister, and the court before effect could be given to it, and after going through the plans of the different runs he saw that it was not likely to be effective at all.

Mr. CURTIS (*Rockhampton*): He was sorry that the hon. gentleman could not see his way clear to accept the amendment. Since he had moved the amendment he had been informed by the hon. member for Burnett, Mr. Kent, that it would be applicable to a number of expired leases in his district, and he thought it would be useful.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Mr. Kent does not understand the effect of it. It only affects the expired leases I read out last night.

Mr. CURTIS: It would be an advantage in some cases, both to the original owner and to the adjoining lessee. The amendment proposed that if both lessees were agreeable, and subject to the recommendation of the court, and with the consent of the Minister, the resumption might be added to the adjoining run. In any case it could do no harm, and it might be of considerable benefit in instances of that kind.

Mr. BELL (*Dalby*): Although the amendment was not applicable to clause 3, yet with some modifications it would be applicable to clause 4, and he scarcely anticipated the Minister's opposition, because, as the hon. member said, it could not do any harm, and it probably might do some good.

Mr. W. HAMILTON (*Gregory*) thought the Act provided the machinery by which adjoining lessees could effect exchanges without any provision of this sort. It seemed to him that it had been introduced to meet some specific case. He failed to see how it would be any benefit, because there was nothing to prevent lessees making exchanges of land. The amendment was therefore useless, and would only encumber the Bill.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*) did not think there was much to be said either in favour of or against the amendment. If anything, it might be of some slight use. The object was this: Sometimes there were resumed areas adjoining, and one lessee might want to purchase or obtain a transfer of an adjoining piece of land, because he

could work the country better in conjunction with his own, and it might be useful afterwards for him to be able to include it by name in the boundaries of his own holding. The boundaries were first determined by mountains or rivers, or some other natural features, and there might have been a small portion of a run which was inaccessible and difficult to work, and which could be much more easily worked by the adjoining lessee. If the adjoining lessee desired to get hold of a piece of country, there could be no harm in letting him have it, and it would be an advantage to allow him to include it by name within the boundaries of his holding. It would be much better to have one parchment, and have the whole described by one name. He did not know whether the amendment was applicable to any holding the lease of which had expired. He did not think there could be many such cases, although he knew of one case in which the amendment might be advantageous.

Mr. CAMERON (*Brisbane North*) thought the amendment was only applicable to a few runs, and if it would do good to the lessees he did not see why it should not be carried. If the principle was a good one it should be adopted. He believed the amendment was good, and that it would work well.

Mr. KERR (*Barcoo*) : The Secretary for Lands had stated that the amendment would only apply to a very few cases.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : It can only apply to expired leases.

Mr. KERR thought that the member for Rockhampton would have given them some information as to how many runs the amendment would apply to, and as to the persons who were asking for it. If the hon. member would give them a list of the runs which adjoined one another, and lessees who wished to come to some such arrangement—if the hon. member could convince the Committee that the amendment would be a useful and good one, he did not see why it should not be included. But failing that information he did not see why they should encumber the Bill with the amendment which the hon. gentleman had suggested.

Mr. CURTIS : The amendment was suggested by a pastoral holder who had had great experience, and after hearing what he had to say he felt it would be a good amendment and would not do any harm. He was assured by him that it would be applicable to a good many cases.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : As you put it, it only refers to expired leases.

Mr. CURTIS : If the Minister thought it would be more applicable to clause 4 he could withdraw the amendment in the meantime.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : If the amendment was accepted at this stage its application would be limited to expired leases. If it was put in a subsequent clause it would apply to leases which were still in existence. Even if the amendment was put in later on, another thing which would have to be taken into consideration was, that the leases would have to expire contemporaneously. That would be a further complication.

Mr. CURTIS would withdraw the amendment in the meantime, reserving to himself the right to move it later on.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. HARDACRE : He had an amendment printed to follow line 13. after the word "*Gazette.*" It was as follows :—

> Every such notification should also be published in two newspapers generally circulating in the district in which the holding is situated.

When he had the amendment printed he had the idea that the classification of the land would not be held in open court, and he wanted to be sure that the people of the district would know the classification, not only by having it published in the *Gazette*, but also in two newspapers circulating in the district. However, now that the Minister had promised to make it compulsory that the classification should be decided in open court, he had no great desire to have the amendment adopted, as the residents of the district would have an opportunity of knowing the decision of the court.

Mr. W. HAMILTON : If they were out of town they might not know it.

Mr. HARDACRE : He hardly thought it possible for any people out of town to be unaware of the classification made, if they were interested in the matter. But he did not see any harm in providing that the notification should be published in two local newspapers, and he formally moved the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : If the notification would have any effect, and there was any right of appeal, there might be some reason for publishing the notification in the local newspapers, but as a matter of fact there was no right of appeal, and the only reason for publishing the notification in the *Gazette* was to have an official record of the matter. There was nobody interested except the Crown and the lessee. Within three months after the publication of the notification the lessee would have certain rights under the Bill, but nobody else had any rights in the matter, and it was therefore unnecessary to encumber the Bill with a provision requiring the publication of the notification in two local newspapers, especially as the lessee—who was the only party interested—would get notice of the decision of the court.

Mr. HARDACRE : There were really more people than the Crown and the lessee interested in the matter. The residents of the district would want to know what had happened. It was of great importance to them to know what the classification was, because if a run was classed in Class I. one-half of the land would be available for settlement, while if it was classed in Class IV. only one-third of the land would be available. The expense of advertising would not be very great, but he admitted that the urgency of advertising those notifications in the local papers was not so great now that it was intended that the Land Court should make their classifications in open court.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW (*Maryborough*) noticed from a return with regard to advertising land down south that the Government were spending a large sum of money for that purpose, and he thought they were doing a wise thing ; but he did not think the Secretary for Lands was acting in a judicious way in order to get at the people down south. If they could induce people from the south to come up here, the demand for land would be great, and the Land Court would know where there was a demand for close settlement. He thought he was right in referring to that.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. gentleman is not in order in referring to that matter on the amendment moved by the hon. member for Leichhardt.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW : He thought every publicity should be given to this matter, and would have much pleasure in supporting the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : The hon. member for Maryborough did not understand what the publicity was ; it was the publicity of a dead thing, the whole of the work was complete—and really the object of advertising it in the *Government Gazette* was just to make an official record. It was of no importance to anybody ; nobody could interfere ; there was no right of appeal ; the thing was an accomplished fact. The only person affected was the lessee, who within three months of the publication of this notification could elect to come under the

provisions of the Bill if he chose. The expense of advertising this thing over the whole of the country would not be very great, as it only affected about twelve runs. But why do a thing which was absolutely useless?

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): Did the hon. gentleman mean to contend that, after a certificate had been granted to the lessee under the conditions attached to the classification of his particular holding, the publication of such classification would not be of value to the residents of the district? How many people out West saw the *Government Gazette?* He knew for a fact that prominent citizens who did not subscribe to the *Gazette* had to race round for three or four hours if they wished to see an advertisement in that publication. The classification should be advertised in the local papers so that the settlers in the district might know how long the land was to be locked up and when it was likely to be available. The expense would be very small.

[10 p.m.]

Mr. HARDACRE hoped the Minister would withdraw his objection to the amendment. It was not everybody who would know what the decision of the court had been.

Mr. BELL: It is always given as an item of news in the local paper.

Mr. HARDACRE: A number of holdings would be classified at the same time, and the necessary advertisement would only take up 2 or 3 inches, so that the expense would be very small.

Mr. W. HAMILTON thought the amendment was a very necessary one. It was only right that the people should know what classification the runs were included in, so that they might know whether the land was to be locked up for ten, twenty-one, or twenty-eight years. The local papers could not be depended upon to put in all this information for nothing. In the past there had been great complaints about land being thrown open for selection before it was known in the district that it was to be thrown open.

Mr. KENT (*Burnett*) intended to support the amendment. If the classification was advertised as proposed it would be a record in the district, and would leave no ground for the idea that things were done in an underhand way.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How could things be done in an underhand way when the matter was to be settled in open court? In this matter there would be no possible use in advertising, because the thing would be as dead as Julius Cæsar. If there was a right of appeal it might be of some use. The advertising of land open for selection was a different thing altogether, and in that case it was quite right to give as much publicity as possible. He did not know what the hon. member for Burnett meant by talking about things being done in an underhand way.

Mr. KENT: It was said there was something underhand in dealing with the Baramba lands.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They were not dealt with in open court at all, and this was a different matter altogether.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted (*Mr. Hardacre's amendment*) be so inserted—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 23.

Mr. Airey	Mr. Hardacre
,, Barber	,, Jackson
,, Bartholomew	,, Jenkinson
,, Boles	,, Kent
,, Bowman	,, Kerr
,, Browne	,, Lesina
,, Burrows	,, Maxwell
,, Curtis	,, Mulcahy
,, Dibley	,, Ryland
,, Dunsford	,, Story
,, Fitzgerald	,, Turley
,, W. Hamilton	

Tellers: Mr. W. Hamilton and Mr. Hardacre.

NOES, 24.

Mr. Annear	Mr. J. Hamilton
,, Barnes	,, Hanran
,, Bell	,, Leahy
,, Bridges	,, Linnett
,, Cameron	,, Lord
,, Campbell	,, Macartney
,, Cowley	,, Newell
,, T. B. Cribb	,, O'Connell
,, Dalrymple	,, Petrie
,, Forsyth	,, Rutledge
,, Fox	,, Smith
,, Foxton	,, Tolmie

Tellers: Mr. Bridges and Mr. Forsyth.

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Fogarty. No—Mr. J. C. Cribb.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: Before it was certified that land was unlikely to be required for purposes of settlement, he hoped the Minister would see that the supply was kept up. They were now about to resume one-fourth of the runs in all parts of the colony, and he thought it would be very difficult to keep the supply up to the demand. According to a recently-published return, the Government were spending a large amount on advertising in the southern States. He thought it would be a great assistance to the Lands Department if, instead of advertising what people could take up under our Act, the Minister was to advertise in the southern papers that so many thousand acres would be thrown open in certain districts—showing the area, the class of land (agricultural, dairying, or grazing), the price, the terms of payment, the nearness to railway communication, and so on; and he was certain the Press down south, if properly worked, would put in "locals" drawing attention to those lands being thrown open.

Mr. LESINA: Nobbling the Press!

The CHAIRMAN: I do not see that the remarks of the hon. member for Maryborough are relevant to the latter part of the clause, which is now under consideration.

Clause 3, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 4, as follows:—

(1.) At any time within six months after the passing of this Act, the lessee of any holding held under an existing pastoral lease may give notice to the Minister that he elects to take advantage of the provisions of this Act.

Such notice shall be in the form in the first schedule to this Act or to the like effect, and when received by him shall be irrevocable, and shall bind both the lessee and his successors in interest and the Crown.

Such notice shall be published in the *Gazette*.

(2.) At any time not earlier than seven years nor later than twelve months before the date of the expiration of the lease of the holding with respect to which such notice has been given, the court, upon a reference by the Minister in that behalf, shall classify the holding in one or other of the classes hereinafter mentioned.

(3.) If before making such classification the court certifies to the Minister that the whole or any specified part of any land, which was originally comprised with the holding in any lease from the Crown and which was resumed in pursuance of any Act, but has not been or is not at the date of the certificate reserved, selected, alienated, or otherwise disposed of, is not likely to be required for the purposes of settlement, then the land with respect to which the certificate has been given shall be included with the holding in the classification to be made, and shall for all purposes of this Act be deemed to be comprised in such holding.

(4.) Such holdings shall be classified according to the new lease which may be granted with respect thereto, namely:—

Class I.—A new lease for the term of ten years of one-half of the land comprised in the holding at a rent to be fixed by the court.

Class II.—A new lease for the term of fourteen years of two-thirds or the whole of the land comprised in the holding as the court may determine, at a rent to be fixed by the court and to be reassessed at the expiration of the first seven years of the term.

Class III.—A new lease for the term of twenty-one years of three-fourths of the whole of the land comprised in the holding, as the court may determine, at a rent to be fixed by the court and to be reassessed at the expiration of each period of seven years of the term.

Class IV.—A new lease for the term of twenty-eight years of the whole of the land comprised in the holding, at a rent to be fixed by the court and to be reassessed at the expiration of each period of seven years of the term.

(5.) The court in making its classification shall take into consideration the present or probable future demand for land for purposes of settlement.

(6.) The Court shall report its classification of each holding to the Minister, and shall in each case state whether the holding is to be divided.

Mr. CAMERON moved the omission of paragraph 2, with the view of inserting the following :—

(2.) Upon the receipt of such notice by the Minister, he shall refer the notice to the court, who shall, within three years from the date of reference to the court, classify the holding in respect to which such notice has been given in one or other of the classes hereinafter mentioned.

On a previous occasion he drew attention to the indefinite nature of the paragraph under which the Minister was under no obligation to refer. The hon. gentleman himself admitted at that time that there was a certain amount of indefiniteness about it, and he understood that he was agreeable to make it bear the meaning he (Mr. Cameron) was seeking to put upon it. At all events that was the direction in which it ought to be altered.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What the hon. member for North Brisbane said that he (Mr. O'Connell) had previously said in connection with this matter was quite correct, in so far as he had said that he would see that there was no doubt that the Minister would have to refer—that he would make it clear that he must refer to the court. But the hon. member's amendment was proposing something very different. The scheme of the Bill was relieving, and persons who had leases which had fifteen or twenty years to run could come under this Bill six months after it passed into law. If the amendment were carried it would take away all the safeguards in the Bill. These lands should be classified within a reasonable time. He had no objection to making it imperative for the Minister to refer the matter to the court. That would make it clear that the Minister must make the reference. He thought himself—and his legal adviser was of the same opinion—that that was already clear from the clause as it stood. It would be manifestly unfair that the Minister should not refer, or that the matter should be left to his discretion. That would be an unfair position, but if there was any doubt in the minds of any hon. members he would make the addition, that the Minister shall be bound to make the reference. It would really leave the clause as it stood, but it would make the matter clearer. He could not accept the hon. member's amendment as it stood.

Mr. W. HAMILTON was very glad that the Minister could not see his way to accept the amendment. It might be a very good one in cases where leases had only a short time before they expired—say seven or eight years, or less than that; but, as the Minister had pointed out, there were a number of leases which would be affected by this Bill which would not expire till 1921. The bulk of the leases, especially in sheep country, had from twelve to twenty-one years to run, and if this amendment were carried these leases would have to be classified in three years—that would mean that they would be classified fifteen or sixteen years before the leases expired. No one could say what settlement would be in fifteen or sixteen years. The Bill made it imperative that they shall be classified not later than twelve months or earlier than seven years. That was a fair thing, for the pastoral lessee had a sufficient guarantee under this Bill that his lands would receive some classification; he knew he would not be left out in the cold.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He must come under Class I.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Yes, no matter how the thing went. They could hardly compare a bushranger who stuck up a man on the road to the hon. member who made such a proposal as this. Who could tell what the demand for land would be in these districts in fifteen or sixteen years? Even under the 1884 Act no one dreamed that there would be such a demand—that grazing farm settlement would have gone ahead as it had. He thought the clause was very good as it stood, and hon. members ought to be satisfied with it.

Mr. CAMERON: Did not know how the hon. member for Gregory could compare an innocent, harmless individual like himself to a bushranger, but he would pass that matter over. He was glad to know that the Minister was prepared to make the references obligatory. That was one direction in which he wished the Bill to go, but he differed from the hon. gentleman as to the clearness of the clause as it stood, notwithstanding that he had taken legal advice. He himself had had legal advice to the contrary, and he would be pleased to let the Minister see it. The hon. member for Gregory stated that the majority of the runs did not expire for a very long period, but out of the 800 runs under the 1884 schedule, 425 of the very best runs expired within seven years.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Where are they?

Mr. CAMERON: He would prove what he was saying. The reason why he wished the time three years instead of seven was this: Hon. members knew that a great many unfortunate pastoralists were in a very bad condition to-day, that they were very much in need of financial assistance, and it was of the utmost importance that these people should know exactly what they had to depend upon; so that they could show their creditors that they had security for further loans for restocking, and so on. That was the reason why he wished the period altered to three years, and it was a proposition which ought to commend itself to any reasonable minded member of this House.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member for Gregory supported it on the second reading.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Not that they should be classified fifteen years before the leases expired.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You said it should be done at once.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: No.

Mr. KERR: How many of the leases in the Mitchell district fall in in three years?

Mr. CAMERON: He could not say on the spur of the moment.

Mr. FORSYTH: Sixty-eight.

Mr. CAMERON: He had now a list of the runs in his hand. In the Mitchell district, in 1907, Culloden, Bowen Downs, Stainburn Downs, Tower Hill, Saltern Creek, Corenna, Rockwood, Aramac, Landsborough Downs.

Mr. HARDACRE: You have now mentioned nearly every sheep run in those areas.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: There are a few round Hughenden—that is all.

Mr. CAMERON: He was dealing with the Mitchell district now. Lerida ex-
[10·30 p.m.] pired in 1907; and in 1908, Barenya, Kensington Downs, Rodney Downs, Beaconsfield, Caledonia, Uanda, Darr River Downs, Greenhills, Cameron Downs, Katandra, and Tocal. That was a total of twenty-two runs.

Mr. HARDACRE: Now you have mentioned nearly the whole colony.

Mr. CAMERON: Then in the Warrego district the leases expiring in 1907 were—Nive Junction, Cairns, Alice Downs, and Yarronville; in 1908, Dynevor Downs, Currawinya, Boorara, and Tintinchilla; and in 1901, Nickavilla, Boondoon, and Caiwarroo, giving a total of ten expiring in or before 1908. From what he had shown it would be apparent to the Committee that a very large number of those leases expired—not in fifteen or sixteen years, but in about seven years, and it was of the utmost importance to the lessees that they should know as soon as possible on what footing they would be.

Mr. LESINA: Do 60 per cent. or 50 per cent. of them expire in that time?

Mr. CAMERON: More than that. Out of about 800 there were 425 expiring in seven years.

Mr. HARDACRE: He would not compare the hon. member with a bushranger, but with Bret Harte's heathen Chinee, "whose ways were childlike and bland."

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HARDACRE: And yet he always took the trick. He always had a card up his sleeve or down in his boot. The hon. member had put his proposal before the Committee in such a simple kindly way, as if it was harmless—as if there was nothing objectionable in it, and yet, as the Minister and the hon. member for Gregory said, it was a proposal to classify, in many cases from twelve to twenty-one years ahead, some of the finest sheep holdings in Queensland. Some of the runs that the hon. member had read out were right alongside a railway line, and surrounding some of the best pastoral townships in the colony.

Mr. STORY: They might be put in Class I.

Mr. HARDACRE: Quite so; but if they were classified now they might be put in Class IV., whereas, if they were left for seven years, there might then be a demand for land in their neighbourhood for settlement, and they might only be put in Class I. The hon. member was not content with getting an extension of not less than ten years added to the unexpired term of from twelve to twenty-one years, but he wanted to get a further twenty-one years. The hon. member, as head of the Pastoralists' Association—he did not say it of the hon. member personally—had deliberately misled the public of Queensland with regard to the question. Their statement that the extension was wanted for holdings in the drought-stricken districts was absolutely without foundation, because, with very few exceptions, the sheep holdings had from twelve to twenty-one years to run. The leases that were expiring—with the exception of the few that the hon. member had named—were cattle holdings in the Leichhardt, Darling Downs, Burke, and Cook districts, and a few in the Maranoa district. There were also some cattle stations in the Mitchell district, in the desert country, and there were some round Hughenden. But the sheep holdings—which had been chiefly stricken by drought—because the cattle losses had not been anything like the sheep losses—had all obtained extensions under the 1892 Act, with the exception of the few that the hon. member had mentioned. They first of all got fifteen years under the 1884 Act, then they got six years under the 1886 Act, and then, almost without exception, in the area to which the Act of 1892 was applicable, they got a further extension of seven years on account of the erection of rabbit-proof fencing. The Pastoralists' Association asked that relief should be given to the lessees in the drought-stricken districts because their leases were expiring; but that was not so. The leases which were expiring within seven years were in those portions of the colony which had not been stricken by drought, but which had, on the contrary, benefited from the drought through the enhanced prices they were able to obtain for their cattle, and because they let their holdings for agistment purposes. In the districts where the drought had been most severe, the lessees had from twelve to twenty-one years to run, because they had got extensions under the 1892 Act. None except sheep holdings took advantage of that Act, because it would not pay the lessees of cattle country to fulfil the conditions and erect rabbit-proof fences. The few holdings mentioned by the hon. member for Brisbane North were those to the north of the line to which the Act of 1892 was applicable, and there were only just the handful that the hon. member had referred to. He (Mr. Hardacre) had stated, on the second reading of the Bill, that the sheep-holders always used the cattle-owners for their own ends, and he said so again. The Pastoralists' Association had in this case used the cattle-owners in order to grab up the finest sheep country in the colony to the neglect of the cattle-owners. They had muddled them up and mingled them together in the total number of holdings that were falling in, and were using the total number as an argument why they should give an extension of lease to the sheep-holding country; whereas, as a matter of fact, it was the cattle holdings that were falling in, and which, if that was to be the argument, had a great claim to an extension of lease, and not the sheep holdings, because the latter had a long term of unexpired lease at the present time. Where was the righteousness of the claim for an extension of lease for holdings which had already nineteen years of lease to run? That was a claim which the country would not support for one moment. In addition to that, however, the cattle-owners, having obtained a concession for the sheep-owners, they wanted to obtain for them a classification which would give them from fifteen to nineteen years to run over and above the unexpired terms of their leases. Take the instance of Corona Run—one of the Longreach runs—the lease of that holding did not expire until 1920, and therefore it had nineteen years of unexpired lease to run. Where was the fairplay in giving an extension of lease to that holding? They were getting ten years under this Bill, and now they wanted to make it possible to give them perhaps twenty-eight years. If they could only manage to get a classification made now, the court might take the view that there was no present or probable demand for that country, and it might be classed in Class II. or in Class IV, whereas if the consideration of the matter was left until the present lease expired, it would be only put in Class I. That was the object of the hon. member, and it was most unfair.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member for Leichhardt was rather out in his figures with regard to the number of runs which were likely to fall in in the Mitchell district. The return which he had in his hand gave ten of them falling in in 1913; in 1914, four; and the total number as twenty-eight; and they fell in between the years 1915 and 1921, so that there

were certainly some of them that had a long period to run, but fully fourteen out of the twenty-eight fell in in 1914—that was thirteen years. He did not think the discussion of the amendment was likely to end that evening, and as he did not contemplate sitting later than 11 o'clock, he would now move that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

The House adjourned at forty-five minutes past 10 o'clock.