

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 1905**

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER, 1905.

The SPEAKER (Hon. Sir A. S. Cowley, *Herbert*)  
took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

QUESTIONS.

BRISBANE WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. HAWTHORN (*Enoggera*) asked the  
Secretary for Public Works—

If it is intended to increase the water supply for Brisbane and suburbs, will he endeavour to have the construction of the Upper Enoggera reservoir proceeded with according to the recommendation of the engineer

for water supply, as contained in his report of 28th May, 1890, to the Colonial Treasurer; seeing that the elevation is ample for supplying the highest levels of the city, and that the cost was then estimated at only £57,296, a very small outlay as compared with the anticipated cost of the suggested Stradbroke Island scheme, which has been quoted at very much greater sums?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Oxley*) replied—

The matter is under the consideration of the Brisbane Board of Waterworks, whose decision will depend largely upon the effectiveness and cost of purifying water within the drainage area of the Enoggera reserve.

The surveys now being made on Stradbroke Island are for the purpose of obtaining reliable data only.

When the experiments now being made at Enoggera are completed and the investigations into the Stradbroke Island scheme are further advanced, the general question as to the source of an increased supply will be considered, and the Upper Enoggera reservoir scheme will be reviewed.

#### FEDERAL FINANCES.

Mr. PAGET (*Mackay*) asked the Premier—

Is the Government joining with the New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and West Australia Governments in making a joint representation to the Federal Government regarding a settlement of the financial arrangements between the Commonwealth and the States, on the terms as stated in a paragraph published in the Sydney *Daily Telegraph* of the 16th instant, or on any terms?

The PREMIER (Hon. A. Morgan, *Warwick*) replied—

In reply to the New South Wales Premier's question, "Whether Queensland was in favour of seeking such an amendment of the Commonwealth Constitution as would continue the book-keeping period for another period of five years, and ensure the return to each State, from the Customs revenue, of an adequate fixed amount, on the expiration of the Braddon clause," I have informed Mr. Carruthers that the Queensland Government would support an amendment which would provide for the return to each State of three-fourths of the said revenue on a population basis, but did not approve of the proposal to extend the book-keeping period.

#### THE ORIENT SUBSIDY.

Mr. COWAP (*Fitzroy*), in the absence of Mr. Grant, asked the Chief Secretary—

Whether, in the event of the Federal Government taking over the payment of the Orient subsidy, the Government will consider the advisability of arranging for a line of steamers to the United Kingdom and the East, calling at the principal Queensland ports?

The PREMIER replied—

Recognising how advantageous such a line of steamers, calling at Rockhampton, Townsville, and Cairns, would be to Queensland, the Government is considering the possibility of establishing such a service.

#### PETITIONS.

##### LAND MONOPOLY TAX BILL.

HON. R. PHILP (*Townsville*) presented a petition from the electors of Aubigny against the passing of the Land Monopoly Tax Bill.

Petition received.

HON. R. PHILP moved that the petition be read.

The SPEAKER: A motion for the reading of the petition should have been moved before the petition was received.

Mr. J. LEAHY (*Bulloo*) presented a petition from the electors of Warwick—(laughter)—of similar purport and prayer.

Petition read and received.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*) presented a similar petition from electors and landowners of Dalby, and moved that it be read.

The SPEAKER: I would ask the hon. member if the petition is identical with those which have just been presented? If so, it is not the practice to read it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The petition, I believe, is in terms identical with the others just presented.

Petition received.

Petitions of similar purport and prayer were—amid laughter and interjections on the Government side—presented by Messrs. Paget, Cameron, Somerset, Stodart, Cribb, Keogh, and Petrie, from electors of Fassfern, Brisbane North and suburbs, Stanley, Albert, Cambooya, Lockyer, and Cunningham respectively.

Petitions received.

#### LAND MONOPOLY TAX BILL.

##### THIRD READING.

The TREASURER: In moving the third reading of this Bill I cannot help referring to the somewhat ridiculous proceedings that we have just witnessed. I heard at the beginning of the week that a number of gentlemen in Melbourne had sent up some money. [Mr. MACARTNEY: Who from? Mrs. 'Arris? Someone more substantial than Mrs. 'Arris, and this apparently is the result. The hon. member for Brisbane North stands up there and presents a petition from that constituency with 180 signatures. Why, before to-morrow night I could have a petition in favour of the Bill with 1,000 signatures from North Brisbane and I would not go out of Queen street, and it would not cost the Pastoralists' Association one shilling to get it done. [Government members: Hear, hear!] [Mr. KEOGH: None of those men who signed it would have one acre of land.] [Mr. O'KEEFE: None of the men in the Lockyer had one acre of land.] [Mr. KEOGH: Yes, they had; every one of them.] I do not think that since I first had the honour of a seat in this House have I ever seen any Bill of such importance as this pass through all its stages—second reading and committee—with such overwhelming majorities of the representatives of the people in this House. [Government members: Hear, hear!] And is it to be imagined that the representatives of the people in this House are going to be influenced in the slightest degree by a burlesque of this kind? [Government members: Hear, hear!] [Mr. LESINA: Especially signed by landowners only.] I was not aware that the attempt was going to be made in this Chamber—I was told that the money was being spent for the purpose of influencing another place. I do not know whether it may be any more effective in the other place—[Hon. R. PHILP: What money was being spent?—but I feel fairly certain that it will only be laughed at in this Chamber, as it deserves to be. I do not hesitate at all to say that if the people of Queensland were polled on this subject, it is not a Bill with the great exemptions that are contained in this Bill which would be passed, but a very much more drastic Bill. [Government members: Hear, hear!] And if those who are crying out against this Bill had any sense, they would keep quiet and thank God. [Mr. KERR: For small mercies.] [Mr. J. LEAHY: They thank you instead.] I do not think it is necessary to say any more just now. This Chamber has passed this Bill with overwhelming majorities running from two-thirds to three-fourths of

the House—[Mr. FORSYTH: They would pass any Bill under the same conditions.]—and hon. members who have passed the Bill are directly responsible to the electors of the State at the end of their term. They have passed the Bill knowing their representative capacity. They have passed the Bill because, in their opinion, it was the best expedient for dealing with the finances of the year, not because it was a desirable thing in itself, but because it was necessary in the circumstances in which the State finds itself. [Mr. J. LEAHY: You told us it was to burst up large estates.] They have done that, and to imagine that a burlesque of this kind is going to influence any member of this Chamber, or that it is going to influence members of another place, which I suppose is the motive—

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

The TREASURER: It is to me mere foolishness. I move that the Bill be now read a third time.

Hon. R. PHILP: Before the question is put, I should like to draw attention to the unnecessary heat of the Treasurer, who seems awfully annoyed because some petitions have been presented against the passing of this Bill. I knew of many of the petitions that were to be presented, but it did not cost me a penny piece; it will very likely cost the Premier and the Treasurer much more money than it has cost me. The petition was given to me to present. I presented it, and I was quite justified in doing it, and I will do it again as many times as they give them to me. As to its being a burlesque, it is the only right the people outside in Queensland have, nowadays, to present a petition to this House; and to be treated with the scorn and contempt the Treasurer has treated us this evening is not usual. It is usual for Governments to receive petitions and say nothing about them. This Government, apparently, are highly incensed because anyone has the courage to sign any document against the present Government and their following, and when they have such an overwhelming majority. Of course they have, and a great many of those gentlemen who voted, voted against their own convictions.

The SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. member is distinctly out of order.

Mr. COWAR: Withdraw that!

Hon. R. PHILP: Two members of the House made a mistake in their vote, and said so. In the debates before we pointed out that the Premier and his supporters came into this House on the distinct understanding that no additional taxation—and no land tax—was to be imposed, but what is this but a land tax pure and simple? [The PREMIER: It is a monopoly Bill.] There was an attempt to make the Bill that it would not burst up big estates, but promote closer settlement; and those amendments were rejected with scorn, because the Treasurer said, as he says now, that he wants money. This is nothing else but a land tax; and how anyone in this House can get up and say, "I am going to vote for this Bill, and I do not believe in a land tax," is beyond my comprehension altogether. [The TREASURER: Many things are beyond your comprehension.] A man who does that will say anything. I maintain that these petitions ought to be considered by this House, even at this late stage. This Bill has been rushed through without due thought, without the country having any intimation whatever about the contents of the measure. It was introduced one week and discussed the following week; then taken into committee, and the

whole Bill disposed of in seven or eight days. It is not a usual thing with a Bill of such magnitude as this, because this Bill alters altogether the condition of our land laws. Here it is given out that in the future, as in the past, we are going to try and sell land to build railways; but this will prevent any more land being sold in Queensland. Of course, the majority of the supporters of the Premier want that; they do not want land sold—they want land leased; but I maintain it will be a splendid thing for Queensland if all our lands are sold. If we can get buyers to-morrow to come and take all our lands, we would then populate Queensland, but we shall not do so as long as the Government keep land in their hands as they are doing now. Even if we have fifty Secretaries for Public Lands, they would not be able to look after 400,000,000 acres of land. I believe the present Minister is doing his best, as I have said before, but how can one, or even fifty men, deal with the vast number of acres of land we have in Queensland? If that land was cut up and sold, and put in the hands of 4,000 people, those 4,000 people would turn it to far better advantage than the Crown is doing now. We would get people to come here then; but as long as we have any Minister tied up as he is now by Parliament and parties, unable to throw open land when he wants to do, we will never have true progress in Queensland. All over the Western country—sell the land wherever they can; sell it to anybody, and at a price the land is worth. Here, in Queensland, year after year, we bring in fresh land laws, and what have we done? I remember twenty years ago, when the 1884 Land Act was brought in, we were told that the land millennium had come; that land would be leased and settled by small holders. But there is less stock in Queensland than in 1884, when that Act was brought in. At that time, Sir Samuel Griffith floated a loan of £10,000,000, and they said, "We will get sufficient revenue out of this Land Bill to make the payments of interest." But we get less revenue out of our public land to-day than in 1884. I contend it is impossible for any Government, no matter how strong they are, to do the best with the lands of the State, and until they are in private hands they will never be put to the best advantage. I say it will do this State an injury in taxing the land. The Treasurer may read extracts from the London or Glasgow papers, but how can they know the contents of this Bill in London or Glasgow? They know nothing about it. [Mr. KENNA: They do not know anything about the conditions out here.] Very little. I say it is a most unwise thing to do just now, when people on the land have gone through great hardships, and are going through hardships now—they are threatened with a great drought—and in the midst of all these troubles the Government bring in a Land Tax Bill. I say no Premier would sit in his seat there and bring in a Bill like this, after having declared at the hustings, and all over the electorate, that he would not bring in a land tax. If this is not a land tax, I do not know what is. [The TREASURER: It is a monopoly tax.] It is not a monopoly tax, because the Secretary for Public Lands is the biggest monopolist in the State at the present time—monopolising 400,000,000 acres of land. I could to-morrow go and lease 1,000,000 acres of land from the Crown, and I would not be called a monopolist, whilst a man who owns 2,001 acres is called a monopolist. I maintain people who own land in Queensland are the best class we have got here. They are keeping all the rest of the people going. Everything is derived from the land, and only 4 per cent. of the whole of Queensland at the present time is

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sold; and we are depreciating the value of the other 96 per cent. by bringing this tax in. The Premier need not think he can sell land in Queensland when this Bill is brought in. [Mr. LESINA: He will not!] I hope he will. If he does, he will have to sell it at 25 per cent. less than its real value. Under this Bill, he will only get 7s. 6d. for land which is worth 10s. an acre. If Bills are brought in to this Chamber

[4 p.m.] to deprive any person of the right of holding land, then we might as well close the State altogether,

because instead of having 500,000 people here, we are likely to have not more than 250,000, as people will go elsewhere where they can get land. What is it that has brought people here from England, Ireland, Scotland, and other places? It is because they are tired of occupying leasehold land, and because they can get land in fee-simple in Queensland. I hope that even at this late hour the Premier will remember some of his election promises. So far he has not remembered many of them, and if this Bill passes its third reading Queensland will be stigmatised as a country with a Ministry that has broken every promise, every pledge, that they made when they were before the country.

Mr. O'KEEFFE (*Lockyer*): When I came into the House this afternoon I received the following letter from some of my constituents:—

Gatton, 25th September, 1905.

To M. O'Keeffe, M.L.A.

Dear Sir,—We, the undersigned, desire to inform you that we signed the petition against the land monopoly tax, being led to believe that the tax was a general tax on all the small landowners.

(Government laughter.)

We now find that it is a tax on land monopolies, calculated to promote closer settlement. We further desire to inform you that we heartily endorse your action in supporting the land monopoly tax.

[Government members: Hear, hear!]

(Signed.)

F. KRUSKE, Rockside	W. RYAN, Lower Tent Hill
JOHN DOYLE, Gatton	O. TROTT, Upper Tent Hill
T. RICE, Gatton	J. MAHONEY, Gatton
E. BERENTZEN, Gatton	JAMES BURNES, Gatton
HENRY LEWIS, Gatton	

If time would permit we could send you four-fifths of the electors who signed the petition against the monopoly tax. This is a result of a walk down the street.

Yours respectfully,  
JOHN DOYLE.

I also received a letter a week ago, which I shall read to the House. I shall leave out the names, as I do not wish to injure any party, but will give the name of the writer if necessary. The letter is as follows:—

Gatton, 20th September, 1905.

Mr. Michael O'Keeffe, M.L.A.

Sir,—Certain men in this district are getting some hush money from the pastoral association backed up by the Leahy crowd.—(Government laughter)—to see and get all they can to sign a petition against the land monopoly tax in your electorate, and the way the same men go about it they get many to sign it that did not know what they were doing, and myself amongst the lot.

The SPEAKER: Order! I think the hon. member has lost his opportunity of dealing with the matter. The hon. member had an opportunity of reading those letters and bringing any arguments against the reception of the petitions when the question "That the petition be received" was before the House; but the petitions have now been received, and the hon. member is not in order in pursuing any arguments against the petitions. He must confine his remarks to the third reading of the Bill.

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Mr. O'KEEFFE: I ask the permission of the House to continue reading the letter, and then to offer some observations on the third reading of the Bill. [Government members: Hear, hear!]

You stick to your colours, and vote for the tax, and argue for it as you have been doing.

The SPEAKER: Order! I must again remind the hon. member that he has lost his opportunity for reading those letters. I do not think the hon. member is in order in reading them now.

Mr. O'KEEFFE: Very well. I wish to make a few remarks on the third reading of the Bill. [The TREASURER: You can assure the Speaker that they are asking you to support the third reading of the Bill without referring to the petitions.] I shall not further refer to the letters. I have been among the people in my electorate, and I can say that several persons have told me that the petition was presented to them at a time when they had no opportunity of knowing what they were signing, and large numbers have informed me that my action in this matter meets with their endorsement. I have received both verbal and written encouragement to go on supporting this measure. I have no apology to offer for the votes I have given on this Land Monopoly Tax Bill. I feel that I have taken the proper course, and I am going to continue in that course, for I am confident that the people I represent have come to the conclusion I came to when I resolved to support the Bill. [Mr. LESINA: Are you sorry it does not go further?] I am not sorry it does not go further: I am only sorry that hon. members like the hon. member for Clermont have not tact enough to hold their tongues at certain times. I know that there are men who have no landed property in this State, and they are free to speak if they like. But I am not in that position. Not only do I own land, but I also represent mostly landowners of a certain class. The fight in this matter is to my mind a fight between the pastoralists or large landowners and the small landowners. I was not altogether surprised when I found that petitions were being taken round the country by men who never owned any land at all, as I believe those men acknowledged that they were carrying out a work for which they were paid. If that was so, I say they were earning an honest penny, and I have no objection whatever to those men earning an honest penny if they are in need of it. [Mr. KEOGH: Who paid them?] I asked that same question myself. I said to the farmers, "Do you think these are men who do the work from pure love of it, and that they are doing it for nothing?" They said, "No." I then asked them, "Do you think they are men who can afford to do it for nothing?" They said "No." Then I asked, "Who do you think is finding the money to pay them?" They said, "We do not know, but we have a suspicion." I inquired, "Who are the parties you suspect?" They replied, "The Pastoralists' Association, backed by the Leahy crowd." (Government laughter.) This is the first time in the history of Queensland, if not of Australia, that we have the pastoralists professing to act in the interests of the poor man. I have been a poor man, and I have come in contact with pastoralists, and I know that they have tried to crush the small man out, so that they might hold large tracts of country. It is, therefore, astonishing to me to find the Pastoralists' Association, the owners of large properties, getting so fond of the farmer as to send men out with petitions in the interests of the poor man. I am glad to find that there is such a change of tactics on

their part. I am only assuming that the payment is coming from that source. I know it does not come from the farmers, and that the farmers did not initiate the agitation against this Land Monopoly Tax Bill, and that hundreds of them are ready to sign petitions in its favour, or at any rate to withdraw their signatures from the petitions which have been presented to the House. Though I am only a new member, I believe my word will carry as much weight with my constituents as the word of the men who went round asking them for their signatures to those petitions.

Mr. CAMERON (*Brisbane North*): The hon. member for Lockyer has inferred, if he did not say so, that the money which has been spent in getting up those petitions, if any money was spent for that purpose—I do not know whether any was spent—was provided by the Pastoralists' Association. I wish to give that a most emphatic denial, and to say that not a single penny has been obtained from or spent by the Pastoralists' Association in connection with this matter. I do not know whether any money was spent for this purpose, or, if there was, where it came from—I do not know anything about the matter; but I know that no money came from the Pastoralists' Association. I know that members on the other side give the Pastoralists' Association credit for being the medium for carrying on anything that is evil. Any action taken by the Pastoralists' Association, as a rule, they are able to justify, but on this occasion they have had nothing to do with the petitions which have been presented to the House.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowoong*): I rise to say a few words upon the third reading of this Bill. I intimated on the second reading of the measure, at such opportunity as I had at a very early hour on Wednesday morning, that I should oppose the Bill at every stage. I do not consider it is a proper thing, under anything like ordinary circumstances, to block a Bill in committee, but the third reading is one of those stages when every hon. member has the right to raise his voice in protest against or in opposition to the Bill. At the outset, I should like to express my surprise that the Treasurer should question the right that is vested in the people, even in a minority of the people, to petition the House in the manner in which it was petitioned this afternoon. It is open to anyone in the State to raise their voice by petition, and when petitions are presented to this House they are generally received with the respect and consideration due to them, and it was rather astonishing to hear the Treasurer lecture hon. members in regard to the manner in which those petitions were got up. If we had taken that ground with reference to petitions presented by the hon. gentleman in days gone by, we should have been doing nothing but discussing petitions. I presented a petition from residents in the electorate of the hon. member for Dalby, and if the Secretary for Public Lands had objected to that there might have been some reason in his objection. I was entrusted with the presentation of that petition on behalf of a number of residents in the district, and I undertook the duty, and I do not think the Treasurer has any right to question the performance of the duty by me. Probably some other occasion may crop up when this right of petition can be more formally discussed than it can be on the present occasion. I desire now to place on record my objection to the passing of this Bill. I had no real opportunity on the second reading of going into the matter in a satisfactory manner, inasmuch as the powers that be forced the discussion after the ordinary hours of Parliament—in the early hours of the morning—when full reports were

not taken. Even if an hon. member had been in a position to properly explain his views there would have been no record of them. I do not think it necessary under the circumstances to apologise on the third reading for offering a few remarks on the Bill. I object to the Bill, in the first place, because the tax imposed is a class tax, and unjustly affects a comparatively small number of persons. I do not think there can be any question about that or about the small number of persons upon whom the tax will fall. [The TREASURER: It must necessarily be a class tax if it is to break up monopoly.] [Hon. R. PHILIP: You have not been taxed and you are the biggest monopolist of the lot.] There can be no question about it being a class tax, and you might just as well say that the drapers should pay a special income tax of 25 per cent. on their profits, or specially tax the produce merchants, auctioneers, and representatives of every class of business. I oppose the Bill on the ground that it will operate (1) to extinguish or confiscate the total interest of many owners, (2) to seriously depreciate the value of securities held over lands affected for advances made in good faith, and (3) to cause hardship, injustice, and expense to mortgagees, tenants, and purchasers of small areas of land taxable by reason of the charge created in favour of the Crown. I do not think it necessary to say very much in support of that objection. The Bill applies equally to owners who have mortgaged their land up to anything like its value, and it therefore means that the tax will wipe out those owners altogether. It follows that where the margin of profit in the management of an estate is not sufficient to pay the tax the interest of the owner is also extinguished. I do not think there can be any doubt about that. That it will depreciate the capital value of securities there can be no question whatever. The object of the Bill, as outlined in the discussion which took place on it, is to reduce the capital value of land. Not only will the tax be imposed on the total value of the land, but the capital value will be reduced, and as the capital value will be reduced so will this land tax affect the interest of mortgagees. To people who have taken securities and advanced their money in good faith it will be a very great hardship and injustice and expense. It will most seriously affect the interests of mortgagees, tenants, and purchasers of small areas of land taxable by reason of the tax being a first charge upon the land in favour of the Crown. Where lands are sold subject to contract, this charge will necessarily be a first charge registered against the land, and the tenant or purchaser, as the case may be, will have to take steps to have that charge removed. Then another of my objections is that it will seriously affect and depreciate the capital value and rental value of the Crown lands. I do not think that argument need be extended because the fact is so manifest. It is apparent on the face of it. If the tax reduces the capital value of privately-owned lands it will also depreciate the capital value of contiguous Crown lands. A further objection is that such legislation tends to disturb existing enterprise and prevent the inflow of private capital at a time more particularly when restricted Government expenditure demands it—with consequent loss to the State and the workers of the State. In support of that objection I say the Government have no right to introduce legislation of this sort at a time when the general industries of the State and the financial position of the State and people is so disturbed as they are at the present time. A measure of this sort is bound to create

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further disturbance and want of employment. I take the general objection also that this is the commencement of an all round land tax. It is idle for hon. gentlemen to say that it is only a monopoly tax, or that it is a tax for the purpose of encouraging settlement. It is the commencement of a land tax, and when we turn to the speeches of hon. members like the hon. member for Clermont there can be no question that this is part of the programme of the Labour party. It is as they say, just the thin edge of the wedge, and they will be able to go to the country and say, "We battled for a land tax, but this is the best we could do; we cannot get everything we want. We have to go a step at a time, and we have got this." And the men who have been travelling all over the country denouncing the capitalist and the man of enterprise will be able to say, "See what we have done; we have broken many of them up. We have at least got a portion of what we have been fighting for, and after all this is only the commencement of a land tax." I object to the Bill on the ground that such a tax in any form is unsuitable to the conditions of Queensland, more particularly having regard to the small amount of land alienated, and the power given to local authorities to impose taxation on unimproved values of land. Local authorities have now the power to impose taxation up to a very high maximum limit, and it is clear that if this further tax is imposed it will not only be a great injustice and hardship, but will seriously depreciate the value of landed estates. A further objection is that as a revenue measure it is as unnecessary as its provisions are unjust and cowardly. I think it has been pointed out over and over again that the position of our finances at the time the Financial Statement was delivered did not support the necessity for this Bill. [The TREASURER: Who pointed that out?] It has been pointed out time after time. [The TREASURER: Who did it?] It has been pointed out by members on this side. [The TREASURER: What page of *Hansard*?] The Treasurer's own words were used to show how unnecessary it was, and if the hon. gentleman wishes me to go over that ground again, then I only say that one has only to take up the Financial Statement and go through it to show how unnecessary the Bill is. The Financial Statement was so arranged as to create the necessity for this Bill. It was also shown that the estimated difference between revenue and expenditure could be covered in other ways, and I submit that it would have been just, amongst other ways, to have covered it by a reduction of the number of members. I also object to the Bill on the ground that as a bursting up or anti-monopoly tax so called it is unnecessary, and, if necessary, the exempting of lands most likely to be required for closer settlement have rendered the Bill ineffectual for the purpose. As a taxation measure, it taxes the owner of land not required for closer settlement, while it either wholly or partially benefits owners of land most suitable for close settlement. It has not been shown that there is any demand for land that the State cannot supply. No reason has been given to justify the introduction of the Bill, and I submit that no good and sufficient reason exists. In reference to the latter portion of that objection, when I find that 2,000 acres of land in the closely settled districts are exempt and up to 10,000 acres in other cases, and that this land may possibly be required for closer settlement, then I come to the conclusion that as a Bill to encourage closer settlement it fails in its object. I object to it on the ground that the Bill is not a *bonâ fide* attempt to either raise revenue, prevent monopoly, or to encourage settlement; but is, on the other

[*Mr. Macartney.*

hand, designed for the express purpose of promoting party consolidation and the continuation in office of the present coalition Government; further, that it is a Bill in direct violation of the policy submitted by the Government to the constituencies and of solemn pledges given by the Premier, Ministers generally, and supporters of the Government. There are other reasons which might be urged against the Bill, but I think these are sufficient to convey my objections to it, and as a justification of the promise I made to oppose the imposition of a land tax.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): During the passage of this measure I received numerous letters from my electorate, from miners and others, and in every instance they have expressed their pleasure at the introduction of the measure. In some instances I have been urged strongly to point out that the scope of the measure is too narrow, and that it should be extended. That £30,000,000 worth of land should produce to the Treasurer only a sum of £45,000 is a source of great weakness, and my constituents think that £30,000,000 worth of land values should be asked to return a great deal more than £45,000, and that undue moderation has been shown by the Government. The measure has gone through very rapidly, and I think that is a matter upon which the House should congratulate the Treasurer. Certainly, if anyone should regret it, it is myself, because I had in preparation a petition asking the Government to extend the scope of the Bill so that a very much larger number of persons should be included. If that petition had come along, possibly other petitions might also have been sent in on the same subject. Labour people outside are not fully satisfied with this measure as one of land taxation, but they regard it as a small concession only. They accept it as a very thinly buttered slice of bread, instead of a whole loaf. In time, when we get stronger, we shall have a larger slice, and we shall have farmers' representatives, like the hon. member for the Lockyer, getting up and telling us that the farmers object to a land tax. But the farmer who studies the position intelligently will know that he will be the greatest benefiter by it. [Mr. O'KEEFE: On what grounds do you say that?] I know it, because I understand the principle of land taxation, which is more than the hon. member for the Lockyer does. If he thinks this is a quarrel between the man with the big area and the man with the little area he is mistaken. The quarrel is between the land monopolist, and the unfortunate wretches who are barred off the country entirely. I regret that this measure should be such a small concession, but it is a step in the way we want to go, and for that reason I am prepared to accept it. I will go out into the country with it; I will explain its provisions; I will show the electors what a small concession it is. I will ask them to be thankful for it, and have resolutions carried in favour of continuing this form of taxation until we burst up monopoly of all descriptions, whether it is the monopoly of the small man or the monopoly of the large man.

Mr. J. LEAHY (*Bulloo*): I do not know why hon. members apologise for addressing the Chamber on the third reading of the Bill.

They have as much right to address the Chamber on the third reading as they have on the second reading. I am not going to apologise for speaking. We have our rights here. There has been an interesting discussion raised this evening by the Treasurer. First and foremost, after making some remarks which I should be

inclined to consider were very rude, he challenged the right of the electors outside to present petitions which he called "Bosh." He did not use the word "bosh," but it was something like it. [Mr. FORSYTH: "Bombast."] Yes; "bombast," and a great many other terms which I do not think were parliamentary—at any rate, they were very inelegant when used by a gentleman occupying a seat on the Treasury bench. However, it is difficult to blame the hon. gentleman in a matter of that kind. [Mr. KERR: Fancy you giving anyone advice on such a subject.] I hope the hon. member for Barcoo will cease making such interjections, as he may hear some expressions on the subject that will not be very pleasant to him. However, the hon. gentleman has my sympathy. I always sympathise with the leader of a party who finds his followers deserting him. [Mr. KERR: Do you remember the time you left your leader?] I now come to the Bill. We all know that this is a land tax, no matter what is said about it. Those members who represent agricultural districts are supporting this Bill because they say it is not a land tax, but if it was a land tax they would have to oppose it. Now, by the elegant phraseology of this measure, which either the Treasurer or Premier is responsible for—[Hon. R. PHILP: Premier.] No; I do not think it is the Premier's. [The TREASURER: What is wrong with it?] There is nothing wrong with it from the hon. gentleman's point of view. The hon. gentleman told us that he had the support of the representatives of the farming districts on this occasion, because it was a bursting-up tax. What did the hon. gentleman tell us just now? That the Bill was absolutely necessary for the purpose of bringing in revenue. [The TREASURER: I never said anything else.] I have a very strong recollection that you did say something else about it; but it would be out of order, according to the rules of the House, to refer to another debate, and I do not intend to be driven by the Treasurer to departing from the rules of the House, and compelling you, Sir, very reluctantly, no doubt, to call me to order, as you did the Treasurer just now. It is a very strong reflection on the members of this House, and on the intelligence of the people who sent him here, that the Treasurer is not able to conduct a debate without being seriously called to order. I say this is a land tax, and a land tax in the worst form. The hon. member for Clermont agrees with me in that matter. [Mr. LESINA: No.] The hon. member says "No," but just now he said it was. He said it was a land tax of the worst form because it did not go far enough. If a land tax is justifiable at all, the smaller it is the worse it is from the point of view of men who, like the hon. member, believe in a complete land tax. The hon. member is, therefore, of my way of thinking—that it is the worst form of land tax; but we have different views of looking at it. Now, it is very interesting to owners of land to know that this land tax is going to be supplemented. The Treasurer told us quite recently that the real tax, and one which the Labour party believe in, would have an exemption of £300, and would be coming on directly. [The TREASURER: Who said that?] You did. [The TREASURER: I did not.] Will the hon. gentleman keep in order. He said it in previous debates.

The SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. member is not in order in commenting on expressions used by members in previous debates. [Government members: Hear, hear!]

Mr. J. LEAHY: That is exactly what I was saying, but I did not make myself clear to you. The Treasurer was trying to side

track me by asking me whether he said so, and I was saying that he was out of order to refer to what he had said.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member was commenting on an expression which he said the Treasurer had used in a previous debate.

Mr. J. LEAHY: I was admitting that for the purpose of keeping the Treasurer right. He said it in other places outside this House, and also in all the debates in this Chamber during this session. [The TREASURER: Quite incorrect.] He said it in the newspapers, and also in the lobbies. [The TREASURER: That is quite incorrect.]

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. J. LEAHY: Does the hon. gentleman mean to say that he would use words in this House, under privilege, which he is afraid to use outside? [The TREASURER: The hon. gentleman says that he did not say it outside.]

The SPEAKER: I remind the hon. member for Bulloo that he must accept the Treasurer's denial that he did not make that statement.

Mr. J. LEAHY: Of course I will accept it, but he was getting it out in such a garrulous manner, that I could hardly follow what he said. If he went back to old days, when he was running wild—

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. J. LEAHY: I would point out that the hon. gentleman is not in Rockhampton just now. This is a place where you cannot have packed meetings. If you want to pack a meeting here you will have to pack it through the electors. (Government laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order! I would remind the hon. gentleman that the question is the third reading of the Bill, and he must not discuss matters outside that question.

Mr. J. LEAHY: Very well; but I hope that you will keep the Treasurer in order. If he interjects, I have the right to reply.

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. J. LEAHY: The Treasurer told us today that this was going to be a land tax. The hon. member for Clermont told us, what he has repeatedly said outside the House, and in the Government organ, that it is a land tax. He also told the hon. member for Lockyer that he must make up his mind because we would have it pretty quick and lively very soon. The Treasurer cavilled at the petitions received this afternoon against this Bill, and denied the right of the people to petition. [The PREMIER: No, no!] He said, "Is it likely that these expressions of opinion are going to alter the opinions of the members of this House." That is a question a great many people ask. It is a question the people of Rockhampton ask. It is a question which those who want the "objective" signed are asking. We are here as representatives of the people. We rule for the few days that we are, but we have to go back for fresh instructions from our constituents: and frequently all over the world where responsible government or representative government exists the representatives of the people go around the country and take the views of the electors, and ask for guidance in certain matters. This Government not only did not seek a mandate from the electors for this measure, but they are now trying to force it through the House, although it is a measure which the electors of the country are distinctly against. [The TREASURER: Incorrect.]

*Mr. J. Leahy ]*

The hon. gentleman, when speaking at Rockhampton, said that a great many things were incorrect. He was not half so mild at Rockhampton as he is here. [Mr. TURNER: Out of order.]

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. J. LEAHY: I now come to the speech of the hon. member for Lockyer. That gentleman made a great many wild and irresponsible statements. He is getting into the habit lately of making these wild statements, and he cannot control himself. He told us—or, rather, he read a letter from a man in his district saying that some document had been sent round and was signed by certain persons who really did not know what they were signing. Now, there were 900 of them who signed the document, and the hon. member read the names of five or six who said they signed it not knowing what they did sign. Now, that shows what ignorant men they are, and what ignorant men there are who stand behind the hon. member for Lockyer, and whom he represents in this House. The hon. member made some reference to what he termed the Leahy faction. [Mr. O'KEEFFE: I did not make that reference. I read the letter.] I do not know who wrote the letter. Probably the hon. gentleman wrote it himself. Now, I would like to tell the hon. member, and the other hon. members of this Chamber, that I have no interest whatever in this Bill, even if it does become law. It will not affect me to the extent of one farthing, and I am not likely to give money to fight other people's battles. I express my views about it and give my opinion on it, but some of the hon. members opposite have not got that much, and I can scap my fingers at them. I oppose this Bill on its merits. So far as I am aware I did not see this petition till this afternoon, and I do not know how the money was collected for it. I heard to-day that one of the principal men who found the money was a large landowner in the Premier's district, and another large owner in the Stanley district. [The PREMIER: I question that very much.] I believe it is a fact. At all events, if the gentleman is not in the Warwick district he is just on the boundary of it. This Bill is introduced for the special purpose—so the Treasurer says—of giving land to farmers' sons. Now, we have the voice of 870 men, all landowners more or less, large and small, in the Lockyer district, and they do not view it in this manner. They do not want estates to be burst up for them. They know right enough—because some of them are reasonably large landowners—that at the next turn of the wheel there is going to be a division in the areas they hold at the present time. This is not putting in the thin end of the wedge; this is the big end of the wedge. It is in already, but the hon. member for Clermont says they shall have the whole wedge in, both the big end and the little end. This is what farmers know of. We have it on good authority from some hon. members on the other side of the House, that the Premier met his few supporters and told them distinctly—point blank—if they did not put this measure through he would resign, and have a general election. [Mr. O'KEEFFE: That is not so.] The hon. gentleman might not have been there. (Laughter.) There are a great many reasons, including payment of members, why we should not have an election every second day. As a rule, 30 per cent. do not come back. A great many members on the other side of the House do not want this measure passed into law, and one of them told me that he hoped the Bill would be strangled after it left this Chamber, and if it was not strangled those people wanted punish-

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ment by being abolished altogether. There are a great many people who have that view. I know this Bill has not got a majority in this House which the Treasurer led us to think. He says it was carried by overwhelming majorities at every stage. What did the hon. member for Clermont tell us to-night—and there is no doubt the hon. gentleman is repeating the general sentiments which he feels, and which he probably expressed on other occasions. He told us quite distinctly that it is force—pressure—which is being used to put this thing through. [Mr. LESINA: I did not say that.] I do not think it is a proper thing in a country governed as we are. [Mr. LESINA: We do not want any pressure to put a tax through like that, I can assure you.] The hon. member for Lockyer told us the other night that he was a small man once. I am glad to know that he is a large man now, and does not belong to the small class any longer. [Mr. O'KEEFFE: I did not say anything of the kind.] I will take the hon. gentleman's word; but the impression conveyed to me was that at one time he was a small man, and at that time he could not take the same view that he did just now. I think the fact that he was not a small man now should be the cause why he should take a reasonable view of things. [Mr. O'KEEFFE: Do not prevaricate.] He should advocate the principle that it is the duty of every man in this House to leave the way open to every man who by his ability, industry, and economy is able to push his way forward in the world, and accumulate sufficient to provide for his family and himself. That is a laudable idea, and if the hon. member was a small man it was a credit to him, and needs no apology. I should be glad if every other hon. member was in the same competent position—I hope to get in that position some day—and then we should not have the trouble we have in the Chamber at the present time. I would like to say that one or two members of the Chamber—I have got my eye on them now—were going about a week or two ago and saying they were going to resign and go to their constituents over this measure. I see they have not done it. I suppose the Premier has bludgeoned them into it somehow—

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. J. LEAHY: I want to make a further reference. I do not see many of the Premier's followers backing him up on this occasion. They have been conspicuous by their absence from the debate, and some of them did not vote at all. Nothing can be clearer than that the supporters of the Premier are cold-hearted in this matter, as they are not voting with that willingness which we see on other occasions. It is quite clear what the object of the Bill is. Nothing can be clearer than that in a general way this Bill is a compromise. The Labour party went to the country with a distinct £300 exemption land tax in their platform, and they were returned. They have got more than a majority in this Chamber. There is rarely a division with more than sixty members, and the hon. members are here day and night. I am quite willing to pay a tribute where it is deserved or due, and I pay them a tribute for their regular attendance in this Chamber. I wish they had more intelligence—the necessary intelligence that should accompany an attendance of that kind—

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. J. LEAHY: In the country. (Laughter.) There would be no necessity for discussing this matter, because the hon. members would not be present. It is quite clear that the farmers

of the country are bringing pressure to bear upon the Premier and their representatives in this House, and are telling them, "The day will come when we will have a reckoning with you if you pass this Bill." The writing is on the wall. Hon. members can read or pass on as they wish.

The PREMIER: We have just had an exceedingly discursive speech; I think there is scarcely a matter that has not been touched upon this session which the hon. member has not managed to drag in during this discussion on the third reading of the Bill. [Mr. J. LEAHY: I will give you some more when we come to the title.] He complained in the closing period of his speech that this Bill was a compromise. Can the hon. gentleman point to one statute of this or any other State that is not based on compromise? [Mr. J. LEAHY: Did I say compromise?] I do not think the hon. member recollects what he did say. (Government laughter.) I can quite understand that he would have a very difficult task in endeavouring to recall even the subjects he has touched upon during the last three-quarters of an hour. Of course this is a compromise, as all legislation is compromise. The fact that it is a compromise is nothing to the detriment of the measure itself, or to the discredit of the parties who compromised, or to the Government which introduced the measure. [Government members: Hear, hear!] The hon. member, during his long speech, repeatedly returned to the hon. member for Lockyer; I shall not follow him at any length on that phase of the subject, because hon. members on both sides clearly understand why the hon. member for Bulloo is anxious to discredit the hon. member for Lockyer. [Government members: Hear, hear!] [Mr. J. LEAHY: He referred to me by name distinctly first.] The hon. member for Lockyer read certain letters which he had received from his constituents, whose names were in the petitions presented to the House this afternoon, and who wrote to him to say that they had been induced by misrepresentation to sign those petitions. Now, the misrepresentation that has been practised in the Lockyer has been practised all over the Darling Downs and the other places represented by the petitions. [Mr. BARNES: That is altogether too thin.] As a matter of fact, these petitions, which, by the way, represent only a mere fraction of the communities from which they emanate, have in many cases been the work of men who have misrepresented the facts to the people to whom they were appealing. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Can't they read the petitions?] In my own district people have been going about with this petition appealing to the farmers to sign it, and using arguments in support of their request which were altogether and entirely opposed to the facts of the case. It has been represented—and a busy farmer has not time to go and read long-winded petitions—that this was a petition against a land tax, when, as a matter of fact, they, or the men who employed them to make this statement, knew perfectly well that it was a petition against nothing of the kind. It was a petition against a land monopoly tax—an entirely different thing to a general land tax. The hon. member for Brisbane North presented a petition, in which I observe there are 118 people out of 120,000. [Mr. CAMERON: One hundred and eighty.] I stand corrected. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Landowners he said.] One hundred and eighty out of a population of 120,000. [The HOME SECRETARY: Landowners of the constituency where not one of the men was taxed.] And that from a constituency in which not one rood or acre will pay one fraction under this Bill. [Mr. BARNES: They can see what is coming.] Well, if this House, or

another place, is asked to pay serious attention to these petitions, all I can say is that if there is any evidence of such serious attention being paid to them as voicing the sentiments of the community, then it will not be difficult to get 100 signatures on the other side for every one signature which is attached to these petitions, and I will undertake to say that I would myself get, in my own district, more signatures in one week in favour of this Bill than the hon. gentleman's emissaries have got in a whole fortnight in opposition to it. [Government members: Hear, hear!] [Mr. J. LEAHY: But these are all landowners; that is the point.] The hon. member for Brisbane North assured the House that the Pastoralists' Association had nothing whatever to do with these petitions. That may be true. I accept the hon. mem-

ber's word that the Pastoralists' Association had nothing to do with the movement for getting up these petitions; but I am quite sure that I am equally correct in saying that there is not the smallest evidence of a spontaneous outburst of opposition to this Bill to be found in any one of those petitions. They are the work of interested parties. Now, who are the parties interested in stopping this Bill? Are they the farmers? Obviously not. They are the capitalists. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Why did they sign the petitions?] Because the facts were misrepresented to them, and misrepresented to them by the paid emissaries of the opponents of this Bill. Did the voters of the Darling Downs assemble in meeting to protest against this Bill, and appoint one or more of their number to go round and get signatures to a petition against the Bill? No; they had to be stirred up, as far as they have been stirred up, by men sent up from Brisbane by people who were identical with the people whom we found in years past acting as agents for the National Liberal Political Union, a union which includes such national liberals as the hon. member for Bulloo and the hon. member for Brisbane North, Mr. Cameron. I can only draw reasonable deductions from facts that have been apparent to all of us, and when I see these gentlemen coming to my district and doing their level best to induce farmers to carry round such a petition as this for signatures—offering, as I am told, £3 per week to farmers if they would undertake the work, but offering that in vain—I can only conclude that the work is the work of the same old party as has always been opposed to progressive and liberal legislation and administration—and they call themselves national liberals. I accept, I say, the assurance of the hon. member for Brisbane North that the Pastoralists' Association did not find the money. But if the Pastoralists' Association did not find the money, then that money was certainly found by some big men who have a direct financial interest in blocking this Bill. [Mr. CAMERON: That may be.] Quite so. It not only may be, but it is the fact. That is the history of these petitions. I have one in my hand presented by the hon. member for Bundamba as representing the electors of Cambooya. There are a meagre fifty or sixty signatures to this petition. [Mr. J. LEAHY: There are 460 to it.] They do not cover half the number of sheets sent out to be covered with signatures, and the petition is signed, not simply by electors of Cambooya, but by persons from as far apart as Grandchester on the coast to Millmerran in the West. My own knowledge shows me that only an infinitesimal portion of the people of that electorate have signed the petition, and even those voters who were induced to sign were induced, I am assured, in the great majority of cases by representations such as were made to the men from whom the

*Hon. A. Morgan.]*

hon. member for Lockyer has read a letter here this afternoon. [Mr. J. LEAHY: They were a most ignorant lot, those men.] No. Such men will listen to anybody who appeals for signatures to a document against new taxation. We all know that, and we are all opposed to new taxation—all, except men who are in responsible positions, have to see that provision is made to enable the country to pay its way. That is what we are doing by this Bill. We have brought this Bill down for a double purpose. [Mr. J. LEAHY: The Treasurer said he wanted money.] The hon. member for Bulloo is trying to attribute to the Treasurer statements that he really never made in connection with this Bill. There is no attempt to disguise its purpose. Its purpose is, first, to provide £42,500 of revenue, and, secondly, to induce the breaking up of large estates which are now held against close settlement. Those are the two prime reasons for introducing the Bill. I put the financial reason first, because it is the immediate reason which produced this Bill. The other is the more permanent and lasting object that we have in view. Those are the purposes and objects of this Bill. We have petitions against it representing an infinitesimal section of the community. We have the leader of the Opposition getting up and complaining that the Bill has been rushed through the House, and the hon. member for Toowong echoing that complaint. What are the facts in answer to that? The Treasurer delivered his Budget Speech in this Chamber on the 31st of August, and the Budget Speech concluded with the resolution upon which this Bill is founded. The need for the Bill was set out in the Budget Statement, which concluded, as I have said, with the resolution which is the bones of this Bill. The Budget Speech has formed practically the whole subject of discussion in this House ever since, and yet the hon. member has the temerity to get up and tell hon. members, who know this to be the case, that the measure has been rushed through this Chamber. Why, Sir, the records of the House are the most complete refutation of the hon. member's statement. We have been engaged for nearly a month in discussing this question. [Mr. J. LEAHY: No, not this Bill; we had not the Bill at all when discussing the Financial Statement.] No, but we had a resolution. We have since had the Bill itself; it has passed its second reading and committee stages, and now we are at its third reading stage. We have had the question of a tax on land monopoly and of promoting close settlement occupying our immediate consideration for nearly a month. [Mr. J. LEAHY: You put the Bill through its second reading in a day and a-half.] The hon. member for Toowong said he was denied the right to make his speech on the second reading, and this afternoon he gave us his seventeen or twenty-seven reasons for opposing the Bill. His chiefest reason was very carefully concealed, and that reason was that this is a Government measure, and the hon. member for Toowong is opposed to the Government and opposed to all its works, and the end and aim of his political existence is to turn this Government out of office. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Why, we saved you from being turned out on Thursday night.] (Laughter.) [The TREASURER: Oh, no, you did not save us from being turned out.] That is the real reason of the hon. member's objection to the Bill, and his object in stating some seventeen or twenty-seven objections to it is that they may be made to serve some useful purpose on another occasion. The most serious assertion in the speech made by the hon. member for Bulloo this afternoon was that the House ought to reject this measure because it was not foreshadowed in the manifesto of the Government issued to the electors last year.

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[Mr. P. J. LEAHY: The opposite was foreshadowed.] Let us go back for a moment, not to last year, but to two years ago, when this Government took office, because it is just as well to put on record what then took place in answer to the hon. member for Bulloo. When this Government took office they said it was clearly the opinion of the country that there should be no further taxation until the resources of economy had been pushed to their utmost limits. That was the policy which was enunciated to this House and the country when this Government assumed office. When we went to the country no such pledge as that to which the hon. member alludes was given in the manifesto issued to the electors. The hon. member for Toowong, and half a dozen other hon. members, have misquoted what was said in a speech I delivered at Warwick. [Mr. MACARTNEY: Speak accurately.] The hon. member misquoted from a speech I delivered at Warwick, in which I said there would be no land tax. I said that, I repeat it, I say it here now, I say it here with a copy of this Bill in my hand. [Mr. MACARTNEY: All your saying will not get away from the fact.] [Mr. LESINA: He wishes it was a land tax.] Of course the hon. member does, and the hon. member for Bulloo, who so frequently agrees with the hon. member for Clermont, wishes it was a land tax—not that they love a land tax, but because they would dearly love an opportunity of defeating the Government. [Mr. J. LEAHY: You know I do not believe in a land tax, and you can't get away from what you said in that way.] That is why they regret that this is not what they describe it—a land tax. [Mr. J. LEAHY: We have no such regret.] The statement of the hon. member for Bulloo that this measure was not foreshadowed in the manifesto of the Government is perfectly true. We did not know that the need would arise for it, but when we saw the need for raising further revenue we decided that this was, in all the circumstances, distinctly the best thing in the interest of the country to do, and we proposed the measure to the House. But if the hon. member complains that this measure was not foreshadowed in my manifesto, how does he justify his own action in supporting an income tax, which included a poll tax, after he himself returned from the country as a supporter, if not a member, of a Government which had been to the country, which gave no promise of an income tax, and which did not even foreshadow it, but which did not hesitate to impose it? [Mr. J. LEAHY: We did not say we would not do it like you did. We did not tell a lie about it, anyhow.] The hon. member further complains that this is a class tax, that it will only fall on a comparatively few people. Well, every one of those people is a man of some financial resource and some power. There is much more courage in the action of this Government than in the action of their predecessors, who imposed a poll tax upon men, many of whom had no votes, and who were unable to resist the proposal. There is one other matter which the hon. gentleman referred to which I think it necessary to answer. He asserted, and he appealed to the authority of some private conversation— [Mr. J. LEAHY: I did not say it was private.] The hon. member appealed to the authority of a private conversation in support of his statement— [Mr. J. LEAHY: No; that is wrong.]—that I had bludgeoned my followers into supporting this Bill. [Mr. J. LEAHY: I did not say that.] No; the hon. member did not say it, but he said another hon. member said it. It is not true that I threatened my followers into supporting this Bill. [Government members: Hear, hear!] [Mr. LESINA: They would not stand it.] I should hope they would not. I have never adopted the policy of threatening anybody, and

if my supporters will not support me, believing that the Government have sufficient merit to justify their support, then it is their duty, not only to themselves, but to their country, to turn the Government out of office. [Mr. J. LEAHY: They do not like to take their occupation away.] I do not think that is a remark worthy of the hon. member. I believe hon. members on this side put their country's interests above their individual interests.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY (*Warrego*): I desire to offer a few remarks on this Bill, mainly with regard to what the Premier and hon. member for Lockyer have said. I listened to the Premier with very great interest, and I am bound to say that if a stranger in the gallery had been listening he would have been impressed with the hon. gentleman's apparent sincerity, and would have thought he was in earnest. But we who know the Premier, and all that has led up to the introduction of this measure, can form our own opinion about that. Before I deal with the Bill, I should like to say with regard to what the hon. member for Lockyer and the Premier said, that there is really no connection whatever between any member of this House and anything that took place in the Lockyer. I know no more of what has taken place in the Lockyer than the Premier, and I say insinuations of that kind coming from those hon. gentlemen are unworthy of them. The Premier says that there has been no manifestation of public feeling against this tax. He took good care that there should not be, because he gave no time for its manifestation. He said the resolution was introduced at the end of the month, and the Bill a couple of weeks later; but it is clear that until the Bill was before the House it was not at all likely that any opposition would be manifested. The public naturally waited for its introduction, and then it was rushed through with indecent haste. Very much importance has been attached to the letters read by the hon. member for Lockyer. Now, I understand that there were about 800 landowners in the Lockyer electorate who signed that petition, and it would be very strange indeed if, out of 800 persons, four or five could not be found to declare, voluntarily or otherwise, that they signed the petition not knowing its contents. If the statements made by the hon. member for Lockyer and the Premier are true, is it not a very easy matter for the hon. member for Lockyer to find out whether there was a very much larger number of people who signed the petition in ignorance? The great bulk of the people in the Lockyer and other districts who sign petitions know perfectly well the nature of the petitions they are signing, and it is obvious that it must be so because the great bulk of the farmers are an intelligent class, and I venture to say there is scarcely a farmer who does not take one or more newspapers. On the Darling Downs there are a number who take either the *Chronicle* or *Gazette*, and in the whole of the Moreton district the *Queensland Times* has a very large circulation. It goes right throughout Lockyer, Esk, and other agricultural centres, and all the papers have dealt with this measure. Ever since the 31st August the farmers have been studying this measure. [The PREMIER: They have been reading the *Courier* and *Daily Mail*.] However valuable and influential the *Courier* and *Mail* may be in Brisbane, they have not a large circulation in the farming districts. [The PREMIER: You are quite mistaken.] No, I am not, and I profess to know as much about newspapers as the Premier. The *Courier* and *Mail* have a large circulation, but, speaking broadly, they do not circulate among more than 5 per cent. of the farming class. [Mr.

GRAYSON: Yes, the *Courier* does.] The *Courier* and *Mail* may circulate amongst a limited number of farmers near towns, but there is no questioning the fact that the farmers read the local papers. But assuming that a number of them do read the Brisbane papers, that does not tell against my argument, because as a whole the Brisbane papers have put the matter fairly before the public. The only possible objection the Premier can have to the treatment of the Bill by the Brisbane papers is that some of them have called it by its true name—a Land Tax Bill—[The PREMIER: With the object of misleading]—but in many instances, and in all the parliamentary reports, it has been called the Land Monopoly Tax Bill, and even if a man did see an article headed, “Land Tax Bill,” he would do something more than read the title. [The PREMIER: The member for Brisbane North says he did not.] It is idle for the Premier and member for Lockyer to say that the farmers did not know the provisions of the Bill. Undoubtedly they knew the contents, and when an opportunity arose for signing a petition against it the great bulk of them signed without the slightest hesitation, and were glad of the opportunity. I am quite certain, from my knowledge of Oakey and other places, that the farmers did not require any person to spur them on, and, notwithstanding the eloquence of the Secretary for Lands at Oakey, which, if it had been expended in a better cause, would have had more effect, the farmers at Oakey were against the Bill. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What evidence was there of that?] If the eloquence of the Secretary for Lands could not cause a feeling of that kind I do not know anything that could. I think we are justified in assuming, therefore, that if these men were hostile it was because they knew the Bill was inimical to their interests. The Premier told us that he had not broken his promises, and he took us back, not twelve months ago, but two years ago, when the present Government took office. It is undoubtedly true that the Premier then said there would be no further taxation until all means of reducing expenditure had been tried, but twelve months later, after all means of reducing expenditure had been tried, and after the revenue and expenditure had practically balanced for the year ended June, 1904, we had a general election, and then not only the Premier, but almost everyone of his Ministers, clearly conveyed to the electors that there would be no land tax, and no further taxation whatever. I say that it is misleading the House and the country for the Premier to go back two years when he had the position much more clearly defined twelve months later. I am astonished that hon. members opposite should have the temerity to try to defend statements made at that time. These utterances were recorded in the public Press, and seeing that twelve months ago statements with which we are all conversant affirmed that there would be no further taxation, it is reasonable to ask what necessity for taxation has arisen since. Has our railway revenue fallen during the past twelve months? On the contrary, it has increased very largely. With the exceptions of Commonwealth revenue and the pastoral rents, which I admit have fallen off largely, our revenue has increased. It is perfectly clear, therefore, that so far as financial reasons go there was not the slightest necessity for the introduction of this measure. The Bill was estimated to bring in £45,000, and it will probably bring in much less with the exemptions which have been inserted. It was pointed out on several occasions by members on this side that there were a variety of methods by which this money could be raised without resorting to an obnoxious measure of

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this kind. To find the real reason, therefore, why the measure was introduced we have to go beneath the surface, and the real reason undoubtedly is that the Premier is not permitted by the Labour party to sell land. I read the *Worker* and the Ministerial organ sometimes, and I read the motions that are passed at the Workers' Political [5.30 p.m.] Organisation meetings in various places in the country, and the Labour party gave distinct instructions that on no account whatever were the Government to permit the sale of land for revenue or any other purpose. Previous to the passing of these motions there was not one word about a land tax, or land monopoly tax, or any tax upon land whatever, but when it became clear that the said organisations would not permit the Labour party in Parliament to override their principles—as many of them were going to do—this party had to set up their backs and put pressure on the Government to stop selling land. But even if they did not sell land at all there is no need for this measure, because if the selectors pay up for their freeholds, instead of waiting for the twenty-year period, there is not the slightest doubt but that the Government will get a large amount of revenue—much larger than this Bill will bring in. That is one source of revenue for the Government, and there are a number of other sources which can be indicated. The Premier told us that he had three objects in introducing this Bill. He said the first was to get revenue. I have shown one method by which revenue can be provided. [An honourable member: How?] By the selectors paying up for their selections as provided in the Land Bill. If this was a strong, firm Government, that had some backbone and believed in their own ideas, they would not have refrained from selling land merely because Labour organisations write to the hon. member for Clermont telling him to stop the Government from selling land. [Mr. LESINA: The general public are opposed to it.] The general public are not opposed to it. There are certain persons who organise themselves and make demands in an inverse proportion to their numbers and their intelligence, and these men write to the hon. member for Clermont and other members, and the Government always takes the line of least resistance when they ought to have the courage of their convictions. The Government now refuse to sell land. I have shown that if the Government sell land to one-third the extent that they sold it last year, there will be no necessity for this land tax. That disposes of one contention of the Premier that there would be no necessity for this Bill if it were not for revenue purposes. The next argument the Premier used was that it was introduced to burst up the big estates. Now we all know that the big estates are in process of being burst up for a good number of years past. We also know there is a great deal more land to take up now and fewer purchasers for it. Consequently there is nothing in the second argument of the Premier either. The third reason of the Premier was a ridiculous and an absurd reason. He said that the passing of this Bill would prevent the aggregation of large estates. But many large estates are not being built up at the present time. The only part of Queensland in which large estates are being built up at the present time is in the Western country, where men bought 50,000 and 60,000 acres of grazing land, and a few men near the coast. The tendency all over the State, with the exceptions named, is towards bursting up the estates, and not towards accumulation of large estates. I have shown that the three reasons given by the Premier and Treasurer in support of this Bill

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are all wrong. But, even if all their reasons were right, I would still oppose the land tax. The moral aspect of this question has not received that consideration which I think it should receive from the House. If we want revenue we can get it in a variety of ways. There are men in Queensland—men who are interested in the mines, in sugar plantations, distillers, publicans, and others. [An honourable member: Gympie.] Yes; and the wealthy goldminers. If we want money, why not say to these men: "We want a certain portion of your wealth." [Mr. LESINA: We will tackle that later on.] I have not the slightest doubt the hon. member will tackle it later on if he gets the opportunity. There is no more justification for taxing the number of people who will have to pay the tax under this Bill than there is for going for the wealthy residents of Queensland for their money. In other countries where they have not got a Parliament like ours, but where there is a despot, they stick up men as highwaymen, robbers, or thieves do, and demand what they have got. This measure is just the same, only one is carrying out his intention by force and the other is doing it by means of the law. Any Bill which does not rest on a moral basis ought not to pass its third reading in this House. It is not too late for us to repent. (Government laughter.) Some men repent at the first stage, some at the second, some at the third, and sometimes they do not repent at all. I do not know to which class the hon. member for Clermont belongs. [Mr. J. LEAHY: He never repents.] I know there are men in this House who are willing to listen to the voice of reason, and the time is not too late for them to do so. This is the acceptable time. When I was talking on another occasion I had fifty reasons which I intended to urge against this measure, and if my voice holds out—I am suffering from a bad cold—I intend to give this afternoon portion of the twenty-five reasons which I did not give on the last occasion, and I will try to supplement those reasons by forcible and appropriate arguments. Now, the first objection I have to this Bill is that it is a land tax disguised. I have an objection to hypocrisy of any kind. I think that whether we do it in this Chamber or anywhere else we should always employ words to show exactly what we mean, and we should not either consciously or unconsciously be parties to deception. Am I right in assuming that this is a land tax disguised? There has been a great deal of argument as to whether it is a land tax or not. The hon. member for Lockyer says it is not a land tax, and that he will vote for it even if every man in his electorate is against it. I think that a tax on land must be a land tax. We are only beating air, or splitting hairs, when we say it is not a land tax. It does not impose a tax upon air, or upon water, or upon beer—it imposes a tax upon land. And if it imposes a tax upon land, it must be a land tax and nothing else. It is true enough, as the Premier pointed out, that it is not exactly what the people understood as a land tax. I want to put the case clearly, and that is what distinguishes me from hon. members opposite. The only difference between this and an ordinary land tax is the difference of exemption. In this case there is an exemption of some thousands, but the principle is there all the same. There can be no question about the principle. The exemption is a mere matter of detail. The Government have fixed an exemption, but the electors outside have got more intelligence than hon. members give them credit for. The Premier and the Treasurer must have a poor opinion of the farmers of Queensland if they imagine that they do not understand that this is a land tax. [Mr. O'KEEFE: You

are only smooching to them now.] I am not. I never smooched to anyone. Twelve months ago, when certain members had to smooch—to use the word that the hon. member used—to the electors, I was not one of them. I supported the party I belonged to on that occasion, although I knew I was supporting a losing cause. [Mr. O'KEEFE: I thought you were leaving the Warrego.] I have not the slightest intention of leaving the electorate which has returned me to this House. I may say, though, that three electorates have pressed me very strongly to stand for them. (Government laughter.) If I am induced to do it I am not at all sure that I will not go to Rockhampton. [The TREASURER: You will soon come back.] Yes, I think I will come back wearing that gold appendage which the hon. gentleman has dangling on his watch chain. I am opposed to any land tax whatever. I think if there is any class of people in the community who deserve consideration it is the farming population. It is true that at the present time the pastoral industry is bigger than the agricultural industry, but there is room for all industries, and there can be no question that in a few years to come the agricultural industry, given anything like fair seasons, will be the biggest industry in the State. We want to encourage its development; we have too many people in our towns, and too few in our country. But are we going to encourage its development by putting a tax on the man on the land; the man who develops the wilderness, who has borne the heat and burden of the day, and made "the desert to blossom like the rose"? Are we going to encourage settlement by imposing a land tax? What would Queensland and the Darling Downs be to-day if there were no farming class in it? What is the mining industry compared with farming? The mining industry is mainly remarkable by the fact that it returns certain members to Parliament which the House would be much better without. Speaking broadly, I might say the miners do not bring up families in the same way as the farmers do. Then, again, the mining industry is temporary, but the farmer goes on developing the country all the time. There is no country in the world where there is good soil in which the farming industry is not the mainstay and foundation of the country. And yet we bring in a Bill to tax these men, which will become a proper land tax. I am opposed to a land tax, and therefore very much more opposed to a tax of this kind, because, strongly as I condemn a land tax, it has this to be said in its favour: that it presses fairly evenly upon all the farming community. But this matter before us is confined to a limited number of people—probably from thirty to fifty persons. I do not think there is any State in Australia or any country in the world where such a thing was ever witnessed. The Premier a moment ago said that the late Government brought in an income tax, and they did not tell the electors they intended to do it. That is perfectly true; but they did not tell the electors they were not going to do it—that is an important thing. [Hon. R. PHILP: They did not say there would be no more taxation—quite the reverse.] No party on this side of the House has ever contended—and I do not think any person would seriously contend—that the Government should not bring in anything except what had a place in the manifesto, because circumstances may alter and render it necessary to do so. The reason why we have members of Parliament here is to meet the altered condition of things; if it were not for that, questions could be decided by referendum, and we could have an executive to carry on the business of the country. The late Government suffered from a bad drought, and

lost a lot of money through federation, and it was absolutely necessary to bring in the income tax; but they never promised they would not bring in any more taxation; and, in any case, it was only brought in for two years, and would have died out in the ordinary way. The Premier talked about our imposing a poll tax upon men who could not afford to pay it, but he did not state the fact, which we have on the authority of the hon. member for Clermont—who, in a matter concerning his own electorate, is a good one—the Premier did not tell us that the late Government did not press a single man who had not money to pay it. What did the present Government do in regard to the poll tax? The hon. member for Clermont states that the Treasurer sent his minions, with their pockets full of writs, against these poor people. He drew a harrowing picture of the poor people who had to sell up to pay off these arrears, and yet the Premier and the Government that does this thing condemns the late Government. [The TREASURER: Quite correct.] That late Government introduced a tax without exemption, but they did not enforce the tax against men who had nothing to spare. [The TREASURER: You know perfectly well the Government had nothing to do with that.] I know perfectly well the Treasurer is at the head of the Income Tax Department, and that the Commissioner administers the Act; but if the Government have nothing to do with it, can the Treasurer explain why, under the same Commissioner, these men who were not pressed by the late Government are pressed the moment he comes into office? [The TREASURER: The late Government interfered with the Commissioner.] I think it very improbable that the late Government interfered with the Commissioner; but if there ever was an instance in which the Government was justified in interfering with a public official it was a case of that kind, and nobody would have blamed the Treasurer if he had prevented these men from being pursued for these few paltry shillings. But the inference is that the Commissioner, who is a good man, in the time of the late Government just collected the tax in an ordinary way; but when our heaven-born Treasurer came into office he wanted a surplus, and probably gave instructions that the money was to be got whether the men could pay it or not—which, at any rate, is a more reasonable inference than that which has just been suggested by the Treasurer. After looking over the Treasurer's tables, it appears very much as if the Treasurer manufactured a prospective deficit. I think there is strong reason for believing that we shall get more revenue than the Treasurer expects from many of the heads in the tables. [The TREASURER: Which one?] I think it very probable that we shall get more from the Commonwealth, unless a drought comes on, and the indications are not promising at present. I think it possible he will get more from land revenue. Surely the Treasurer does not wish us to hold the view that because there is the appearance of a drought that straightaway we are to arrange our finances on that assumption! We have strong reason to believe that this prospective deficit was manufactured by the Treasurer in order to give an excuse for bringing in this Bill. I pointed out before that there was a power behind the Government which drove them on, and that is what the country is getting for the confidence they reposed in the coalition Government, and I think it serves some people right. In the present instance a great many people have got the kind of Government they deserve, and I venture to say that if these men had an opportunity of expressing their opinion there would be a complete reversal of the verdict of twelve months ago.

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There is another method by which a proportion of this prospective deficit could be met. We have seventy-two members in this House. Why not bring them down to forty, and pay them £150 a year? By that we should save £9,600, and if we were to reduce the salary of the forty members from £300 to £150 that would be a further saving of £6,000. There are a number of other methods which could be adopted with regard to squaring the finances. It seems to me that the attitude of the Government with regard to the farmers who have petitioned this House against this land tax is in the highest degree reprehensible. It has always been the cherished privilege of any person—landowner or landless man—to appeal to the Sovereign or Parliament if he has a grievance. What treatment do these men receive when they present a petition to this Chamber? They are scouted and flouted. We are told that the petitions do not represent the people who signed them. There is not one tittle of argument which could be produced that these petitions do not reflect and convey the true opinions of the signatories to them. All the facts prove that they do, and if any evidence were wanting of the autocratic tendencies of the present Government it is the manner in which these petitions have been received. When these petitions are presented one hon. member gets up and says most of the signatures are bogus ones; second, that the people are not in earnest; and, thirdly, he can get eight times as many signatures to the contrary. Could any man go to the Lockyer electorate and get a counter petition to the one which 800 landowners have signed against this Bill? [The PREMIER: Eight hundred what?] The information I have got is that they are in the Lockyer and the neighbouring districts. (Government laughter.) Could the Premier go in this district and get 800 signatures in favour of this Bill? [The PREMIER: Yes, if he gave 1s. 6d. each for them.] I do not think he would, whatever he gave. I have a higher opinion of the people as a whole than that 1s. 6d. would buy a signature to a farmers' petition. Boiled down, the interjection of the Premier simply means that the leading politician—I will not say statesman, because there are

[7 p.m.] none—on the other side of the House holds the farmer so cheap that he believes he would sign any document if he gave him 1s. 6d. The hon. gentleman values the intelligence and integrity of the farmer at the price of three drinks. If that is not a libel on the farmers I do not know what it is. The statement is almost incredible. As far as we know, there is no reason to believe that the signatures to those petitions were not *bonâ fide*, or that the signatories did not know what they were doing. [The TREASURER: You don't know anything about it.] The Treasurer may know something about the Bill; but it is perfectly evident that he does not know anything about the strong feeling which exists outside against this Bill. I have made it my business to read some of the country papers the last day or two. [The TREASURER: All the papers you own?] No, I glanced over the papers I did not own, and I found that in the great bulk of instances those papers have for the last week or two been giving copious extracts with regard to this Bill. The *Clifton Despatch*, a fortnight ago, published a leading article in favour of the Bill; but last week all it did was to print a statement giving the opinions of members for and against the measure. The *Queenstown Times* says that the farmers in the district it represents are violently opposed to the Bill. And the Premier knows that there is a very influential and important meeting to be held at Lowood, in the Rosewood district, in connection with this matter. There is some talk

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of running a special train to carry the large number of people who will attend that meeting, and I understand that a gentleman who has been supporting the Government, Mr. Lumley Hill, is to take the chair at the meeting. [The PREMIER: Who is going to pay for the special train?] I do not know, but apparently from that interjection the hon. gentleman will refuse the request for a special train, if it is made to him as Minister for Railways. These things show beyond doubt that the farmers are up in arms against this measure, and that fact emphasises what several members on this side, including myself, said last week, that this Bill was being rushed through so that it might become law before full expression was given to the adverse opinions which exist throughout the length and breadth of the farming districts. [Mr. TURNER: What nonsense you are talking.] This is almost too funny for words. If that interjection came from anybody else who was in the habit of talking anything else but nonsense I might regard it seriously, but coming from the hon. member who uttered it perhaps the best thing I can do is to allow the mantle of charity to fall over it. The Premier stated that many of the signatories to the petitions were induced to sign through misrepresentation. [The PREMIER: There has been abundance of misrepresentation.] What evidence has the hon. gentleman got that hundreds of men signed the petitions through misrepresentation? The hon. gentleman did not show the House this afternoon that there was abundance of misrepresentation. All that he did was to repeat the statement of the hon. member for Lockyer, who had received letters from a few men stating that they had signed the petition without knowing what they were really signing. It is in the very nature of things that a few men should sign without having a full knowledge of the contents of a petition. But it is quite possible that the hon. member for the Lockyer saw those men, and misrepresented the matter to them, and that after they heard his misrepresentation as regards this Land Tax Bill they expressed regret that they had signed the petition. But what does this statement of misrepresentation amount to? That some six or eight men did not know what they were doing. Is that an argument against the *bona fides* of the 6,000 or 8,000 men who signed the petitions? If so, then petitions are worthless. The hon. member for Clermont told us this afternoon that the miners were not opposed to this Bill, and that they expressed pleasure when they heard of its introduction, but thought the measure did not go far enough. The hon. member told us, further, that the party with which he is associated accept this as a small concession—as a slice of bread instead of a loaf. The hon. member is beautifully candid and indiscreet. On several occasions he has blurted out in this House, and in the country, the intentions of his party. But we had no occasion to go to the hon. member for Clermont to find out what were the intentions of his party with regard to this matter, because we know that one of the planks of the party which renders the existence of the present Government possible is a land tax; and we know that the moment they can get into office, or the moment they can bring sufficient pressure to bear on this or any other Government, that land tax will become law. Unfortunately, we have now a weak, plastic Government, who are not guided by any high ideals, and who will probably cling to office, no matter how they may have to sacrifice their principles, and sufficient pressure may be put upon them by their followers to compel them to make this a comprehensive land tax. I shall not give all the reasons I have for voting

against the Bill. [The PREMIER: Oh! go on, it will only take an hour, and it will be taken off at the other end of the evening.] If I wanted to go on I would go on, notwithstanding the threat of the Premier. I do not care whether it is taken off the other end of the evening or not. If it comes to a matter of physical or mental strength, I can probably take my part as well as any other hon. member, and I shall exercise my right to speak whether what I say is liked or not by hon. members opposite. I oppose this Bill because it is a kind of political larceny; it is not petty larceny, but larceny of a much greater description. I oppose it also because there is no need for it. I oppose it because it presses upon a few people. I oppose it because men will have to pay this tax for years before it is possible for them to cut up their holdings. I oppose it because many persons who own land which is not of such a character that it can be cut up and sold will have to pay this tax for an indefinite time—in fact, as long as the tax exists. I oppose it because it will undoubtedly develop into a land tax. I oppose it because it does not carry out the will of the people, and, further, because it is in direct opposition to the will of the people and in direct opposition to the programme on which the Government were elected. I oppose it because it will ruin security and drive away capital, because it will create an injustice, is the result of broken pledges, and because no measure which is an unjust measure can possibly be commended, and cannot rest on a sound foundation. I oppose it for all these reasons, and although it is unusual to speak at length on the third reading of a Bill, I think the occasion amply justifies the position which hon. members on this side have taken up.

Mr. BARTON (*Carnarvon*): I will not detain the House very long. I am sorry to say that hon. members opposite are still in a fog. They appear to be talking about a land tax, but I may tell them they are altogether out of order. (Hear, hear! and laughter.) They are occupying the attention of the House over something which is quite foreign to the subject, which is a Land Monopoly Tax Bill. If hon. members are so anxious to discuss a land tax Bill they may have an opportunity next session of discussing it at length. At present we have a Land Monopoly Tax Bill before us, and I repeat that hon. members opposite are completely in a fog.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Carpentaria*): I think that one member alone is responsible for the debate which has taken place on this Bill in consequence of his display of tactlessness. [The PREMIER: You came here with speeches all ready. Hon. members had their notes.] The speeches made would have been very much shorter but for the want of tact displayed by the Treasurer. It is customary when petitions are presented to the House for them to be received without comment, and I venture to say that half of this debate would not have taken place but for the insinuations thrown out by the Treasurer with regard to the petitions presented. Petitions have been presented containing 3,000 or 4,000 names, and some members have stated that many of those persons did not know what they were signing. Well, I do not think anyone has a right to make a statement like that unless with a full knowledge of the facts. It is quite evident that the farmers must have taken a considerable interest in the Bill, because it has been before the public for some time, and there is no doubt that they have been considering how it will affect them individually. I quite believe that the petitioners in sending their petitions to this House desired to make known their opinions to the House and the country. A great deal has been said with

regard to certain promises made by the Premier and other Ministers. I can quite understand how twelve months ago the Premier said there would be no further taxation, and especially no land tax. The year before that we only had a very small deficit of £12,000, and there was no reason why further taxation should be imposed. Last year we had a small surplus, and consequently, if there was no necessity for taxation the year before, there was less reason for it this year. But the reason for this Bill is that the Government have withdrawn from revenue the result of sales of land by auction. If they carried that principle to its legitimate issue they would not apply any sales of any description of land to revenue, but they are still continuing to do it. I have always believed in the principle of not applying the proceeds of land sales to revenue, but if the Government believe in it, why do they only go half-way? The Treasurer told us that no means had been shown by which this money could be raised except by a land tax, but I think a great many suggestions were made. One was to increase the income tax and another was that they should apply part of the proceeds of auction sales to revenue. I would not object to £40,000 worth of land being sold during the next twelve months, and being applied to revenue for this year. I do not think it would make very much difference, especially as the Government say they are anxious to avoid further taxation. In that case there would be no necessity for this measure. The Premier said that this was purely a compromise. [The PREMIER: I said all legislation was compromise.] Well, it is evidently a compromise between the Labour party and the Government. We know that a land tax pure and simple is part of the policy of the Labour party, and, as a matter of fairness, I think such a measure would have been infinitely preferable to this, though I do not believe in any land taxation at all. The Premier and the Treasurer told us that this tax has a double object—they want to raise certain money, and also to burst up large estates. Now, all the evidence we have goes to show that the owners of these large estates are anxious to cut them up and sell them. Lists of estates have been given which the owners are selling or have sold. I was speaking the other day to one of the owners of one of these estates, who told me that he would be very happy if he could find purchasers for his land. But the demand is not so great after all. Quite recently the Secretary for Lands, in discussing the throwing open of land to settlement, gave a list of thousands of acres in the hands of the Crown which would be thrown open to close settlement, and we must also remember that there is still a large quantity of the land purchased under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act which still remains unsold. On Gowrie alone there is £25,000 worth, and altogether about £80,000 worth under that Act still unselected. Besides that we have large quantities of Crown lands available for settlement. So that it appears to me that the anxiety which has been evinced to push this measure through in order to encourage close settlement is altogether misleading and fallacious. The Treasurer has himself to blame for the position of the House now. However, I have no desire to prolong the debate. I think it has been debated quite long enough.

Mr. SOMERSET: I would like to say that, so far as I am concerned, no undue pressure has been brought to bear on my action [7.30 p.m.] in this matter. [The PREMIER: Certainly not by me.] Certainly not by the Premier. I have acted conscientiously in what I have done. With regard to the presentation of the petition, I was aware

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that a petition was being circulated in my district among the landowners, and I believe the signatures to the petition which I presented to-day are genuine. [Opposition members: Hear, hear!] The petition was handed to me, as the member for the district, for presentation, and I only did what I considered was my duty in presenting it. I question very much whether the Treasurer could obtain a like number of signatures from the landowners of the district to the contrary—that is, from those who are likely to be affected by this land taxation. I am quite in favour of cutting up large estates where they are really required for close settlement, but I prefer it being done under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act. I object to wresting property by compulsion from persons who have acquired it in a lawful manner. I consider this Bill will affect the small landowners and reduce the value of their property. If they wish to sell, they will have to sell at a loss, and if they wish to borrow, they will get less advanced on their security. A land tax will depreciate the security. In my opinion, it is merely a question of expediency as to when the reduction of the area will come into force, and probably it will not be before next election. I have already expressed my views, and I will only say further that, to my thinking, the justice which it is desired to establish amongst us “for all generations” is not very apparent in this Bill. On that account I shall again vote against it.

Question—That the Bill be read a third time—put; and the House divided:—

## AYES, 40.

Mr. Airey	Mr. Kerr
„ Barber	„ Kidston
„ Barton	„ Land
„ Bell	„ Lesina
„ Blair	„ Mann
„ Bouchard	„ Maughan
„ Bowman	„ Mitchell
„ Bridges	„ Morgan
„ Cowap	„ Mulcahy
„ Denham	„ Murphy
„ Dibley	„ Nielson
„ Fudge	„ O'Brien
„ Grayson	„ O'Keefe
„ Hamilton	„ Payne
„ Hardacre	„ Reinhold
„ Hargreaves	„ Ryland
„ Hawthorn	„ Smart
„ Herbertson	„ Tolmie
„ Jackson	„ Turner
„ Kenna	„ Woods

Tellers: Mr. Woods and Mr. Fudge.

## NOES, 17.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. J. Leahy
„ Cameron	„ P. J. Leahy
„ Cribb	„ Macartney
„ Forrest	„ Paget
„ Forsyth	„ Petric
„ Fox	„ Philp
„ Hanran	„ Somerset
„ Jenkinson	„ Stodart
„ Keogh	

Tellers: Mr. Fox and Mr. Forsyth.

Resolved in the affirmative.

The TREASURER moved that the title of the Bill be “A Bill to Impose a Tax on Land Monopoly and Promote Closer Settlement.”

HON. R. PHILP: I think this is the time to amend the title of the Bill. [Mr. LESINA: Are you going to vote about it?] No; it is a Land Tax Bill, and you should call it so. It was first called a Land Tax Bill, and now you call it a Land Monopoly Tax Bill. A man who owns 2,001 acres is no more a monopolist than the Premier is a monopolist. He is a monopolist; he has a monopoly of a room in this House. The Treasurer has a monopoly of the whole of the State pretty well, and the Minister for Lands

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owns about 400,000,000 acres of land. It is a cruel shame to call any man a monopolist because he owns 2,001 acres of land; but, with the large following the Treasurer has got, there is not the slightest use of moving an amendment. I do not think I should have spoken at all this afternoon but for the remarks of the Treasurer. As to the Premier saying all the members on this side came with notes, I can only give that a flat denial. There is no man who speaks more from notes than the Premier himself. I had not a single note when I made my speech, and I do not think any man in this House—

The SPEAKER: Order! I must remind the hon. member that he is not debating the question before the House. He must confine his remarks to the title of the Bill.

HON. R. PHILP: I detest the title. If you tax a man, you brand him as well—you put it across a man's back, and all the little boys of the State would point to this man as a monopolist. (Government laughter.) I have not got any lands to tax, so it will not affect me; but I know some of the best men in this State, who have helped to make the country, will be branded under this Bill—men whose boots the Premier or the Treasurer are not fit to untie—

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

HON. R. PHILP: I am only borrowing an expression of the Treasurer now. All the expressions I have used are from the Treasurer. (Laughter.) They have lived their lives here, and their fathers before them, and because they happen to accumulate a little more land than their neighbours—are more thrifty, sober, and work harder, while others have dissipated their means—they are taxed. It is one of the most cruel Bills ever brought before any Legislative Assembly, notwithstanding the telegrams that come from Glasgow and London. What do they know about it? Nothing whatever. Hon. members may own over 2,000 acres some day, and if they think that, by voting for this tax they will get out of a land tax, they never made a bigger mistake in their life.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the TREASURER, the Bill was ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council by message in the usual form.

Question put and passed.

## LAND ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

## RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

(From page 474.)

Mr. TOLMIE (*Drayton and Toowoomba*): Before clause 9 was put, he would move the following new clause to follow clause 8:—

In subsection four of section one hundred and thirty-two, subsection four of section one hundred and thirty-seven, subsection five of section one hundred and forty-nine, subsection six of section one hundred and fifty-six, and subsection four of section one hundred and fifty-nine of the principal Act, the words “if the rent is paid within thirty days five per centum is to be added, if the rent is paid within sixty days seven and a-half per centum is to be added, and if the rent is paid after sixty days ten per centum is to be added” are repealed; and the words “if the rent is paid within thirty days interest thereon at the rate of five per centum per annum is to be added, if the rent is paid within sixty days interest thereon at the rate of seven and a-half per centum per annum is to be added, and if the rent is paid after sixty days interest thereon at the rate of ten per centum per annum is to be added” are respectively inserted in lieu thereof.

This clause would obviate appeals on behalf of selectors who were in the unfortunate position

of not being able to pay their rent, and had been penalised to an extent that no other State in Australia penalised its selectors. It was to the credit of the present Minister, and those who preceded him, that when appeals of this nature were made to them they invariably remitted the penalty, and he thought it would be better if the Act were amended so that members need not go to the Minister on this unpleasant errand. It was exceedingly hard that a selector who happened to fall behind one week in his rent should be penalised at the rate of 60 per cent. per annum. Under the land legislation of the other States, he found the highest penalty was that a penalty of 5 per cent. should be imposed. He had not reduced the penalty to that rate, but asked that it should be 10 per cent. per annum and  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. He might point out that it would save the Minister and his officials a considerable amount of trouble in not having members to interview them.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS:** The hon. member and himself were together to the extent of both heartily desiring the welfare of the settlers on the land, and if they differed it was merely as to the best course in which to achieve that end. The first query he would make was why the hon. member omitted any reference to pastoral leases and occupations, as he could not see why if the principle was good for one it was not good for the other? The solid test of an amendment of this kind was not the character of the reception it would meet with from the selectors concerned. If that was to be the gauge of the advisability of any proposal for amending this or any other Land Bill, they had only got to make amendments as liberal as possible, and of course they would be correspondingly popular, but they had to remember that the receipts from the land were a material part of the revenue essential for carrying on the government of the country, and any action which diminished the flow of revenue simply meant that expenses had to be cut down or money had to be got elsewhere. It might be said, in reply to that, that the chief thing was to get settlement on the land. The answer to that was that there was no other country, so far as he knew, that had such liberal land laws as Queensland. The hon. member was proposing that they should mitigate the statutory penalties attaching to those who failed to carry out even the extremely lenient terms under which they

[8 p.m.] could take up land. He laid some emphasis upon the expression "statutory" penalties, because, as a matter of fact, he supposed that in not one instance in a hundred since he had been in office had the statutory penalty been imposed; and he did not think there was a single member of the Chamber who had approached him either personally or by writing and made out a case for a reduction of penalties on overdue rents who had not received a substantial concession. But, valuable as selectors were, and desirable as it was to have them on the land, they had to remember that, after all, they were only mortal, and it was a fact that the more concessions they gave to mortals the more they were disposed to ask. He had no hesitation in saying, from his experience at the Lands Office, that if the amendment were carried it would simply increase the difficulties of getting in rent, which were sufficiently great already. Although it might be news to some hon. members, still it was an absolute fact that there were selectors who could pay their rents but who did not do so as long as it was possible to avoid it. The hon. member suggested that if the rent was paid within thirty days only 5 per cent. interest should be charged, and if within sixty days  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest. An agricultural

farmer who took up land had twenty years in which to pay for it without interest, provided he paid the annual instalments regularly. Such terms he would never receive from a private vendor. Considering the method of payment, a man who obtained land proclaimed at £1 an acre really got it for 10s. per acre. Yet the hon. member proposed that if the selector was behind with his annual instalments for sixty days he should only pay interest at the rate of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. per annum. In addition to that being a temptation to the selector, it would also throw more clerical work on the already overtaxed officers of the Lands Department. To show what was done in many cases, he would read a memorandum he had received from a most capable officer, Mr. D. Brennan—

While in Warwick collecting the last March rents, it frequently happened that when the selectors on Agricultural Lands Purchase Estates called to ascertain the amounts charged against them for the current year's rents, I was informed that it was not their intention to pay till the end of the year. When informed by me that a penalty of 10 per cent. would be incurred for such delay, or the possibility of the selections being forfeited, they did not treat the matter seriously, but all felt assured that they would have no trouble in getting extension of time granted on payment of interest at 5 per cent. per annum, which they looked upon as the usual practice of the Lands Department.

Extension of time with 5 per cent. interest was considered far better accommodation than that which could be obtained from the banks, and I am sure that the practice was being considerably abused.

That applied to lands on repurchased estates. What he wished to point out was how essential it was, if they offered liberal terms to men to take up land, to take care that those terms and conditions were not abused, and that there must be some penalty attaching to the man who failed to observe them. We had triennial Parliaments, and Parliament sat for half the year, and if the Minister was harsh in the imposition of penalties any hon. member could get up in the House and point to the monster they had at the head of the Lands Department. [Mr. TOLMIE: What result follows?] He hoped a just result—whatever result Parliament desired. Penalties were a weapon in the hands of the Minister which was only used in the very kindest way, and hardly ever to its fullest extent. If the amendment was adopted it would simply mean that instead of rents being paid in March, as they were supposed to be under statute, payment would be off for two or three months, and his advice to the hon. member was to think twice before he pressed the amendment.

**MR. GRAYSON:** He had had occasion to interview the Minister or the Under Secretary with regard to a remission of penalties, and his representations had always received the greatest consideration from the department, but he thought members should not have to go to the department about matters of this kind. The penalty at present charged was excessive, and he supported the amendment, but would like to see it made applicable to pastoral holdings as well as to agricultural selectors.

**MR. FORSYTH** did not think the adoption of the amendment would result in selectors delaying payment of their rents unnecessarily, otherwise he would vote against it. He would support it, but he would ask the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba to include in it subsection (6) of section 64 of the Act of 1897, which would bring in lessees of pastoral runs as well as selectors of agricultural farms, homesteads, and unconditional selections. According to the amendment, a selector would have to pay 10 per cent. interest on rent overdue for more than sixty days, and he could get financial accommodation at a lower rate than that. He thought that was quite enough incentive to make

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a man pay his rent. His own belief was that those who had the money would pay, and it did not matter what the penalty was if a man had not got the money and could not raise it. He believed in assisting as far as possible those who were in temporary difficulties. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If a good case is made out, the penalty is not imposed.] He believed that was so, but personally he thought that 10 per cent. was quite enough. He hoped the amendment would be accepted.

HON. R. PHILP: The amendment only carried out the general practice. Invariably, if a selector was in arrears, and could get hold of his member to interview the Lands Department, the penalty was remitted. If he could not do that he had to pay the penalty. He did not believe more than one in six paid the full penalty. Was it not far better to enact the penalty, so that no rebate would be made? Let it be given out that certain penalties would be enforced, and the rents would be paid. He thought the penalties imposed were much too high. No private individual would impose them, and why should the Government? He would object to the amendment if it only applied to agricultural farms. Let everyone be treated alike. He was satisfied that if a man had the money he would pay his rent when due, and more than nine-tenths of the rents were paid when due. It was only the man who had met with misfortune who did not pay his rent promptly.

MR. O'KEEFE was in favour of the amendment. He had been of opinion since 1895 that the penalties were too high. At that time men were taken off the streets, given tools and rations, and if they could not pay their rent no penalty was imposed, while people who by their own energy and perseverance went on the land were unjustly treated if they got into arrears. The penalties were not so high now as they were then, but even yet they were too high. If a man was thirty days in arrears he paid 60 per cent. per annum. The Minister said that if a man made out a good case the penalty would be remitted or reduced, but it was not every man who could get hold of his member to go to the Lands Office on his behalf. In many cases it was much cheaper to pay the penalty than for the selector to seek the member for the district, or go to the Minister himself. Besides, he did not see why they should go cap in hand to the Minister. He quite agreed that there should be a penalty, but it should be reasonable. It must be remembered, too, that if the rent remained unpaid for ninety days the selection could be absolutely forfeited by the Minister, and there were very few selectors who would incur such a penalty as that. They must take a reasonable view, and provide a penalty which would meet the case.

MR. TOLMIE did not for one moment desire that there should be discrimination between one Crown tenant and another. The relief granted to one should be granted to all. He thought he had provided for that, but found he had not. It would be therefore necessary to move three small amendments in his amendment, and he would like first to move in the first line, after the word "in," the insertion of the words "sub-section 6 of section 64."

MR. J. LEAHY understood that the hon. gentleman only provided for certain classes of tenants. [MR. TOLMIE: My amendment now includes pastoral lessees.] He was not so sure that it did. If they gave relief it should be given all round. He did not think anyone would submit to a fine if he could conveniently pay his rent, and the feeling of the House was that it would not penalise a man simply because

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he was poor. When he supported the Government in 1897 he fought them on that particular clause. He told them at the time they were wrong, and events had proved it. He agreed to some extent with the Minister. They must not offer a premium for the non-payment of rent, though they should not make a man pay 20 per cent. for one day, which was 3,000 per cent. per annum. After all, the Minister was a political officer, and it should not be left to him to say how much penalty should be remitted and how much imposed, though he did not object to him having the power of remission. In cases which he had represented to the department there had been a compromise with which he was satisfied, though he thought even then the penalty was excessive. Even half penalty meant 100 per cent. for the year. Everyone would admit that that was ridiculous. The House should not convert itself into a body of usurers. He thought the penalty proposed by the hon. member for Toowoomba was too low, because a man could not borrow the money for 5 per cent. He would charge 8 per cent. for the first period, and a tenant would not then be gaining anything by postponing payment. He would not go above 10 per cent.

[8.30 p.m.] in any case. He thought no man would pay 10 per cent. if he could possibly avoid it. He would suggest that the provision should read: "Notwithstanding anything contained in the principal Act by which a penalty is provided for non-payment of rent, the following should be substituted in lieu thereof," and say the rate should be 8, 9, or 10 per cent., or whatever was agreed upon.

MR. TOLMIE: If the Minister was prepared to make an amendment at a later stage in the manner suggested by the hon. member for Bulloo, he should be only too glad to fall in with it. What he desired was that the man, whether pastoralist or selector, who was unable, from sheer force of circumstances, to pay his rent should not be penalised. The reason he fixed it at 5 per cent. was to make it easier for the Minister and the officers of his department. It could be easily computed, as it worked out at 1d. per £1 per month. If a man owed £20 for one month he would have to pay a penalty of 1s. 8d.; for two months it would be 2s. 6d.; and for three months, 3s. 4d. If they made the penalty at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum, in all probability the persons in arrear would not pay up except at the end of three months, whereas if it were 5 per cent. they would pay up probably before one month elapsed. If a selector owed £100 under the present Act, and he was three months behind, he would have to pay a penalty of £10, and with the prospect of such a season as they now had before them he was afraid that a number of selectors would be in an unfortunate position, and have to ask for the clemency of the State. With regard to the report read by the Minister from an officer of the department, he might be a zealous officer, but from his experience public officers sometimes erred on the side of what they conceived to be their duty. He believed that selectors were human, and were not imbued with the idea of cheating the revenue so long as they possibly could. They would pay up when they had the opportunity.

MR. P. J. LEAHY: There was the strongest necessity for amending the existing law, because the Minister was breaking the Act if he granted any concession. He had to go to the Lands Office very often in the interests of selectors and other people, and he must say that the Minister and his officers had always been as fair as they could. The penalties in the existing law were too severe; but a penalty of 5 per cent. per annum

within thirty days was rather low. He thought if 7 or 8 per cent. were provided for the first period and another 1 per cent. for the second period, with a maximum of 10 per cent. per annum, a man not able to pay his rent at the right time would not be dealt with harshly. He hoped the Minister would accept the amendment suggested.

Mr. RYLAND thought the better plan was to adopt the system followed by insurance companies and banking institutions, and put on a certain percentage per annum. At present anyone behind thirty days paid 60 per cent. per annum; sixty days, 45 per cent. per annum; and over sixty days 20 per cent. per annum. He thought 10 per cent. per annum was a fair thing.

Mr. HAWTHORN thought the penalties in the present law were excessive, and the Minister might accept the suggestion of the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba to reduce them in some way. It would take the necessity out of the Minister's hands of having to give these concessions, and it would remove the necessity for politicians having to go and worry the Minister. It would also have the effect of assisting the selector who was only too ready to pay on a due date. He thought they might fix 8, 9, and 10 per cent. between different periods.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS wished that he had a little of the optimism of the hon. member for Enoggera, who had just pictured all the delightful things that would happen. He (Mr. Bell) had not the slightest expectation of any of the things he had pictured coming about. He would not see one member the less; he would not receive one letter the less from selectors; and he had no doubt that he should have to go on making the same concessions, on a lower scale, in the same way that he had been doing. It was an extraordinary thing, but he noticed in the last two years what a liberalising tendency the members of the Opposition evinced. [Mr. FORSYTH: This came from your own side.] To hear the hon. member for Bulloo and the hon. member for Carpentaria talk of the cruelty of the system of penalties in force in our Land Act, one would imagine that they were brand-new reformers fresh from some selectors' constituencies, animated with the one desire to help them at the first opportunity. They were a pair of old parliamentary hands, who had been watching the passage of Land Bill after Land Bill, and it was not until they got into Opposition that they showed the slightest desire to reduce the penalties. The hon. member for Bulloo talked about the cruel system of penalties; and when he was a member of the Administration, in 1902, when a big Land Bill was going through, the hon. member never opened his mouth in protest. [Mr. J. LEAHY: There was no penalty included in that.] There was an opportunity of getting rid of them. It was just as well to notice this new form of zeal. He thought there was some microbe on the Opposition benches which produced an unexpected development of that kind. He suggested to the hon. senior member for Drayton and Toowoomba that he should make it 10 per cent. all round. If the hon. member would agree to that, and withdraw the amendment, he would have a clause drafted on that basis. [Mr. P. J. LEAHY: Make it apply to all classes of farms.] He had never had any appeal for a lower rate from pastoral lessees, certainly not from occupation licensees.

Mr. PLUNKETT was pleased to hear that the Minister would accept the amendment, and he thought 10 per cent. would be a very fair penalty. Up to 1884 it was 25 per cent., after

1884 it was reduced to 10, 15, and 25 per cent., and ever since that we had been more liberal. He thought 10 per cent. would be a very fair thing for the Crown and for the people on the land. He was glad the Minister had retained selectors in this, because it would be very unfair to give concessions to small men if not to others. The hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba was to be congratulated on introducing the amendment, and the Minister for accepting it.

Mr. J. LEAHY: When the 1897 Act was going through he fought the Bill very hard because it was not liberal enough, and it was not a fair thing to charge him with not having proposed any amendment in regard to the penalties. He rose for the purpose of protesting against the statement of the Minister that he had been opposed to this amendment when the Act of 1902 was going through. He thought the compromise of the Minister was a very fair one. It was sufficiently high to make the selector pay up at the proper date if he could do it, and if he could not do it we should not take more from him than was necessary.

Mr. SPENCER was pleased that the Minister had agreed to this concession. He knew that the tenants had always felt that the penalties imposed were too excessive altogether. This would make it much easier. He did not think the occupants of the land had any desire to get out of payment of their rent, and if they had money they were always willing to pay. He did not think they should be penalised to the extent of 40, 45, or 60 per cent. Cases of rebate had been brought under his notice and the notice of the Minister, who, they ought to own, had been very liberal in these matters. The fine was demanded off certain men when they came to the Lands Office to pay the rent, and rather than go to the member for the district they would pay the fine, while the man who was fond of going to the member got the concession that the other man did not.

Mr. TOLMIE: With the permission of the House, he desired to withdraw his amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. BARTON moved the insertion of the following new clause before clause 9:—

[131F.] (1) The holder of a pastoral lease under this Act or any other Act shall not be entitled to apply for or acquire any selection upon any land comprised within the resumed part of his holding, unless such selection is situated more than one hundred miles from a railway, or unless the land has remained open for selection for at least two months without being applied for.

(2) No person who is the owner in fee-simple of thirty thousand acres of land or upwards in a district shall be entitled to apply for or acquire any selection within the same district.

This provision was similar to one in force in the New Zealand Act. It would have a tendency to impede monopoly, which was very important, and prevent land being locked up. Monopoly or dummying had been an obstacle in the Darling Downs for the last twenty years. He did not think the amendment could be called particularly stringent, and it would work for the benefit of the State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member wished to see as many people on the land as possible, and he proposed to put restrictions upon lessees taking up selections on their resumptions. That seemed at first sight a very desirable thing, but he thought the hon. member would agree with him that the less restrictions we had in our land legislation the better. We did not want to fill up our Land Acts with any more provisions than we could avoid, and his experience had shown that there was no undue disposition on the part of a

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pastoral lessee to take up land on his resumption. The general tendency should be to do all we could to encourage people to settle on the land, and that applied especially to people in the West. They must do all they could to get people to go on the land and occupy it, as hon. members would no doubt admit when they realised the vast area of country that was without stock, and was not held under any tenure from the Lands Department. He hoped the hon. member would not press his amendment, which was intended to guard against a danger that experience had showed scarcely existed.

Mr. GRAYSON thought the hon. member for Carnarvon did not intend that his amendment should apply to land in the West, but only to land in the settled districts. While

[9 p.m.] he agreed that the less restrictions they placed upon the taking up of land the better it would be for the country, still some precaution should be taken to insure that lands in settled districts which were likely to be required for close settlement should be devoted to that purpose; and that was really the object of the amendment. Very often intending selectors did not see the advertisements of the resumptions, and in the meantime the land was taken up by the lessee, or, if he was disqualified, it was grabbed by friends or relatives. Any lessee who owned 50,000 acres of land in a settled district had quite sufficient. Some lands would be resumed in the electorate of Carnarvon in a few years, and he hoped the Minister would have those lands parcelled out in such a way that the small man would have a chance of getting a selection.

Mr. J. LEAHY failed to understand why, because a man happened to have a son or three sons, those sons should be debarred from taking up selections on land which had been leased by their father. They had an absurd rule in the Education Department to the effect that if two persons from one family were teaching in that department a third, whatever his qualifications might be, should not get an appointment; and the proposed new clause was almost as absurd. They wanted the best men in the State to settle on the land, and if a man had proved himself a good citizen in a particular district, he would be much more likely to continue to be a good citizen if he took up land in that district where his parents lived, and where he would still be under their restraining influence. With regard to cutting up land in large areas on the Darling Downs, he should say that no Minister having a proper regard for the interests of the department and of the country would divide them in large areas, but would cut them up into small areas suitable for selectors. But he could never subscribe to the doctrine that, because a man happened to have a son, that son should not be allowed to take up a selection on land which had been leased to his father. [Mr. LESINA: The amendment does not propose to prevent that.] If the amendment did not propose that, a distinct charge was made by the hon. member for Cunningham that lessees took up resumptions by means of their families or relatives to the exclusion of the small selector. Whilst we had any amount of land here, and would welcome settlers from all parts of the world to come into the country and make homes for themselves, improve their position, and help to build up an empire, yet our first obligation was to our own people, and if there was anything good here they should get preference.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He was going to deal with a clause which would do away with the necessity for passing the amendment. The hon. member for Carnarvon

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desired to prevent the pastoral lessee from coming in and taking up perhaps the pick of a resumption. The Committee would admit that a pastoral lessee was a man who would want to reside on his own leasehold, and in the past we had a provision forbidding a pastoral lessee to take up land on his resumption, but we had not got the other provisions that we now had in the Land Acts under which a *bonâ fide* selector who came forward and undertook to reside on the land, whether a grazing farm or an agricultural farm, was given priority over the applicant who did not give that undertaking. The result of that provision was that a *bonâ fide* selector at once got to windward of a pastoral lessee who was unable to give that undertaking. When the hon. member for Carnarvon was reminded of that provision he would see that his very laudable object would not be furthered by the amendment which he suggested he should withdraw.

Mr. BARTON was very pleased with the remarks of the Minister. No doubt there was a large amount of truth in what he said, but it seemed there were many hon. members who did not believe that the State was troubled with monopoly. It was a very serious injury to the State when people accumulated large areas of land. In fact, monopolists of all sorts were a great impediment to any country. If the Minister considered the amendment would not be an improvement he would give way and withdraw it, but at the same time he considered that what he suggested was not at all unreasonable.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 9—"Amendment of section 133"—put and passed.

On clause 10—"Amendment of section 134 and repeal of section 135"—

Mr. KERR: This clause made provision for the selector, after holding the selection for five years, paying up the full amount that was due, less discount, and acquiring the freehold of the land. The object, he took it, was that money might be got into the Treasury, but he could see a decided objection to the clause. If a selector took up an agricultural farm he must now reside on it continuously for five years, but under the clause as proposed he would not have to reside, and in his opinion that would lead to dummymg. They had passed a measure to block land monopoly, but the clause would introduce a method of acquiring large freeholds. It would be of no assistance to the small man, but was all in favour of the man who had capital. [Mr. TOLME: He can acquire the freehold now.] Not until after five years' residence. He must reside continuously for five years, but this clause would do away with the five years' continuous residence. As the clause stood the original selector could dispose of the selection, and another person could come along, purchase it, and not reside upon it. He looked upon the clause with a great deal of suspicion. It would enable the purchase money for the selection to be paid into the Treasury in a lump sum, and would reduce the amount which the department would receive year after year. He was certainly against the clause, and hoped the Minister would withdraw it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He was entirely in the hands of the Committee. The provision seemed a very desirable one to make. It was not for the convenience of the department, but with a view of offering reasonable facilities to people to settle on the land. [An honourable member: It opens the door to dummymg.] The hon. member might be right, but he could not see it. The Committee would bear in mind that an agricultural farm had to be

held for five years after the lease was issued, and the original selector, having resided for five years, could pay up the balance of the purchase money. Hitherto the provision was that if he sold, the incoming man could not make the selection freehold unless he also resided for five years. It seemed to him that if they made residence on a selection the touchstone of the desirability of turning it into freehold, it did not very much matter who resided upon it so long as it had been resided upon in a *bonâ fide* manner. Without feeling in any way warm on the subject, he could not see the force of the remarks of the hon. member for Barcoo.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY thought the hon. member for Barcoo was under a misapprehension as regarded doing away with the five-year period. It was true enough that the words in section 134 were to be repealed; but if the hon. member turned to the schedule to the clause he would find that the first payment could only be made in the sixth year. Thus it was perfectly obvious that the man must have resided for five years before being entitled to make it freehold. He did not care very much whether the clause became law or not, but there was something to be said in favour of it. A selector had twenty years in which to pay up, but many men who were anxious to get the freehold of their farms before twenty years could not get it.

Mr. TOLMIE thought the hon. member for Barcoo would be wise to let the clause go through. If a man had resided on [9.30 p.m.] his selection for five years and he wanted to purchase it, then under the Bill he would go to the Lands Office and they would ask him to pay 5s. per year for every year of the unexpired term, in order that the State might not be a loser by the transaction. The tables had been so worked out that a selector knew exactly the amount he had to pay if he desired to make his selection freehold. This would facilitate the administration of the department without increasing the evils of dummying which had been referred to. The clause did not do away with the necessity for residence for five years. The selector had to reside continuously on the selection for five years, as in the principal Act.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : It appeared to him that there was likely to be some confusion in discussing this clause. The first paragraph related to the turning of agricultural farms into freehold, and the second part was the question of rebate. He suggested keeping the two matters separate. He would remind the hon. member for Barcoo, with regard to the first paragraph, that an agricultural farmer could not sell to anyone he liked. It would be dummying if a man who resided there five years sold to a pastoral lessee or some other man who already had an agricultural farm of 1,280 acres and was not eligible to take up another farm. He could only sell to a man who was qualified to be an agricultural farmer, and when that man came into possession the five or six years' residence, which was the one essential preliminary condition of its conversion into freehold, had been performed. Then paragraph No. 2 came in.

Mr. J. LEAHY : The suggestion of the hon. member for Barcoo opened up an important question. The House had been recently dealing with freeholds, and what their future was likely to be, and the whole question was whether they would make it easier or harder to acquire freehold than at present. Say a man took up a farm of 1,200 acres at 8d. per acre. If he kept a man

on it, it would cost him £50 a year, and there was a distinct advantage in his wishing to get the freehold sooner. So far as he was concerned, he did not care two pins what was done, but he thought the Government were doing the right thing.

Mr. HARDACRE did not know if the Minister knew the far-reaching effect of the amendment. It was not going to help the selector except in the smallest possible degree, and it was going to play wholesale into the hands of the dummyer, the financial institutions, and the mortgagees. Instead of promoting settlement it would block it. As the law stood at present, if an agricultural farm selector wished to acquire freehold he had to perform five years' residence first. If he did not want to become a *bonâ fide* selector himself, but wished to transfer his interest to another selector, the selector who went in had also to perform five years' residence conditions. To some extent that would secure *bonâ fide* selection; but, under the present proposal, after a man had performed four years' residence conditions, if he wanted to transfer the land to someone else, the new selector would acquire the freehold by performing only one year's residence. A man could perform one year's conditions under that, send out dummies each year, each man performing one year's conditions, until the five years were performed. Again, suppose a man took up an agricultural farm selection and lived on it for four years, it might be mortgaged to some financial institution, and that institution could force him to make it freehold and pass it over to the institution to which it was mortgaged. It was opening the door very wide to dummying of that kind. The maximum area of an agricultural farm was 1,200 acres, say at £1 an acre. At the end of fifteen years the selector would have to pay £62 in every £100 to make it freehold. That would be £720 out of £1,200. What ordinary selector could take advantage of that provision to make it into freehold for himself? He would have to borrow the money from a financial institution and place himself in their hands instead of in the hands of the State. So far as selectors were concerned, it would be going "out of the frying-pan into the fire." He would lose the easy terms of the Government and have to submit to the terms of the financial institution, and he would have to pay interest on the money he borrowed in addition. This had been one of the biggest evils in New South Wales, as it had been one of the principal forms of dummying. So great was the evil, that in 1895 a new Act was passed, not reducing but increasing the term of residence from five to ten years, and in some cases to fifteen years, and the bulk of land under the Act was subject to perpetual residence conditions. Coghlan, in his work on the progress of New South Wales, laid down very fully the evil effects of the conditional purchase system under the old Act of New South Wales, and said that whatever had been the merits of conditional purchase, it conspicuously failed to promote settlement, and, under the amending Act of 1894, settlement was still very slow. He also pointed out that from 1885 to 1894 there were more conditional selections transferred into the hands of owners of large estates than by any other form of selection—about 11,000,000 acres more than were taken by small selectors. It was time we realised how difficult it was to get land in Queensland at the present time for agricultural selection. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : I mentioned a good many that are now open.] The Jondowarie and Jinghi Jinghi lands were 20 miles from a railway, and so were the Mondure lands. They had the Minister—and he complimented him for it—travelling about and proposing railways at the public

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expense in order to make land accessible for settlement. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Is not that a good thing?] It was an extremely good policy, but it either showed the difficulty of getting land, or that it was a waste of money to build new railways to get to Crown lands when we had land available near existing railway lines. In the Pittsworth district the other day the Minister found selectors over 20 miles from a railway, and struggling very hard on that account. [Hon. R. PHILP: Very successful farmers, too.] One man said it took three bags of wheat out of every four they grew to get to the railway line. We ought to be careful to let no more land go out of the hands of the Crown except in the case of *bonâ fide* occupiers. This was one of the worst proposals of the Bill, and it would have his strongest objection.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: All the clause did was to make it a little easier for a man to acquire the freehold. There was no comparison between the dummied which had taken place in New South Wales and the land system here, and if any dummied had taken place in Queensland it had been in connection with grazing farms and not agricultural farms. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have never heard of a single instance in which an agricultural farm has been dummied.] He agreed with the Minister, and this little alteration was not going to bring about a thing which had never happened yet. If it were a question of whether it was desirable to give the freehold or not, he could understand the arguments of hon. members opposite, but they could already get the freehold of agricultural farms, and they should not place obstacles in the way of the men who wished to go on the soil.

Mr. SPENCER: He felt a certain amount of responsibility with regard to this amendment, because he suggested a similar amendment to the Minister last year, at the request of a number of agricultural farmers in his own district. The agricultural farmers thought it a reasonable thing that if they elected to make their farms freehold they should get discount by paying up in advance. These agricultural farms, especially in the West, were looked upon as of no security, and no financial institution or private individual would make an advance upon them, because if lenders foreclosed they had to comply with the conditions of residence, and sell them within twelve months after foreclosure. Any person would have to hold the selection for five years to take advantage of this. [Mr. J. LEAHY: No, five in conjunction with his predecessors.] The Bill said payment could not be made until the selection was held for five years. He did not think there had been an instance in Queensland of an agricultural farm being dummied. The man who took up an agricultural farm took it up for his own benefit. Furthermore, it was necessary for him sometimes to make his land freehold if he wished to negotiate a loan to carry out improvements. Agricultural farmers would hail the amendment with pleasure, and he would support it.

Mr. LINDLEY: The dummied spoken of might be possible under the 1876 Act, where thousands of acres might be taken up, but the possibility was not now so great under this Bill. With regard to what had been said about financial institutions forcing men to make these farms freehold, it scarcely seemed possible that  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. discount was going to pay 8 per cent. on a loan of money. That was practically what it meant. Taking it all round, [10 p.m.] the department was not too liberal in fixing the purchasing price of agricultural farms. The complaint of selectors,

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especially in the district he represented, was that the price was too high; and he did not think there need be any fear of financial institutions rushing selectors into making freeholds of their selections. The Committee would do no harm in allowing the clause to go, and they would confer a distinct benefit upon the selector.

Mr. SPENCER said there were a large number of agricultural farms under the Act of 1884, and he should like to know whether they would be able to take advantage of this provision.

Mr. LESINA: The purpose of the clause appeared to be to enable selectors to convert their agricultural farms into freeholds. Any provision which facilitated the acquisition of freehold in Queensland he should strongly oppose, as if the acquirement of freehold was facilitated, then the transference of freeholds would be facilitated, and that meant that rich persons and financial corporations would be encouraged to aggregate large estates, and so to build up monopolies. If the leader of the Labour party called for a division on the clause he should vote against it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS did not care a brass farthing whether the clause was passed or not. It was no convenience to the Lands Department, but he thought it would be some convenience to the men on the land, and if the representatives of the men on the land did not want the provision he should not insist upon it. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Will the 1884 selectors come under this provision?] They could come under the Act of 1897.

Mr. KERR: What he had heard in favour of the clause had not changed his view of the matter. Notwithstanding what the hon. member for Wide Bay had said about the high price of agricultural farms, he was satisfied that if those selections were placed on the market as freeholds they would realise more than the price that was put upon them when thrown open as agricultural farms. If this clause were passed the result would be that it would facilitate dummied. The only reason that dummied had not taken place in the past was that selectors had to reside on their land for five years continuously. He very much objected to the rebate principle as set forth in the table in the clause. He did not believe that the Treasurer should get all the money that was realised from the land by converting it into freehold, but held that it was very much better to have money coming in regularly every year from the land. If the provision under discussion were adopted, it was possible that a large amount of money might be received from the land within two or three years through selectors converting their holdings into freeholds, and that after that there would be a very small amount of land revenue received, and that was another reason why he objected to the clause. If a division were called for he would vote against the clause.

Mr. O'KEEFE hoped that the Committee would not do anything that would make it difficult for a man to make his homestead a freehold. In older countries they had found that in order to make a man contented it was necessary to enable him to convert his homestead—that was as much land as a man with his family might make a comfortable living on—into a freehold. He would never be a party to any measure that would make it difficult, or would prevent a man from acquiring the freehold of his homestead. From his experience he knew that farmers in thickly settled districts improved their homesteads to a greater extent than men who had only leaseholds, and simply got all they could out of the soil. While it might be possible to

dummy grazing land in districts far away from cities and from thickly settled population, he held that it was impossible to do so in closely settled districts, as where there were a number of men competing for land, those who were defeated would take good care that no dummying took place. Ever since the early days there had been no dummying in the West Moreton district. The whole of the Lockyer district was closely settled by men who held from 80 to 160 acres, and he had no fear that dummying would take place anywhere under this clause.

Mr. HARDACRE: As to there being no dummying in the West Moreton district, he might say that he had in his hand an auctioneer's list published in Brisbane, and the first item on that list was "2,600 acres, 1 mile from a railway station, 3 miles frontage to Brisbane River, 600 acres of flat well adapted for lucerne, originally surveyed by the Government in about twenty farms."

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

The House adjourned at eighteen minutes past 10 o'clock.

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