

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 1915

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER, 1915.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

QUESTIONS.

ALLOWANCES TO RABBIT INSPECTORS.

Mr. LAND (*Balonne*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Has he any supervision over the forage or travelling allowances for either rabbit inspectors or Crown lands rangers?"

"2. If so, can he state what amount either of those officers in the Cunnamulla district have been paid for forage allowances for the last twelve months?"

"3. If not, is he aware that officers in the Cunnamulla district have been keeping their horses on different selections for the last twelve months free of cost?"

"4. Will he request those officers to produce accounts (if any) for forage during the last twelve months?"

"5. Do those officers draw forage allowance during their stay in town?"

"6. Is he aware that those officers spend a great portion of their time in town playing lawn tennis, and attending to picnics and race club meetings?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. M. Hunter, *Maranoa*) replied—

"1 and 2. No. The rabbit inspector and land ranger in the Cunnamulla district are paid allowances of £175 and £120 per annum, respectively, out of which they provide necessary equipment (horses, buggies, etc.), and pay for upkeep and forage.

"3. Inspectors and rangers make their own arrangements for agisting their horses.

"4 and 5. See answer to No. 2.

"6. No; but I will inquire."

SUPPLY OF MEAT TO IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT.

HON. J. TOLMIE (*Toowoomba*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands, as Acting Chief Secretary—

"Will he lay on the table of the House all papers and correspondence between the Agent-General and the Chief Secretary of Queensland in relation to the supply of meat to the Imperial Government, from the 6th August, 1914, to 31st January, 1915?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS replied—

"The correspondence in question cannot be tabled, as it is of a confidential nature."

HOURS OF NURSES IN MENTAL HOSPITALS.

Mr. BAYLEY (*Pittsworth*), on behalf of Mr. Bebbington, asked the Home Secretary—

"1. Will he make known to the House the hours worked by nurses in mental

hospitals per week, and leave allowed during year on full pay?"

"2. Hours worked by nurses in public hospitals to which the Government pay £2 for £1 subscribed?"

"3. Will he, by statute law or otherwise, make it compulsory that every nurse engaged in such hospitals shall have at least one half day's holiday out of seven days, or, where practicable, one full day out of seven?"

"4. Will he endeavour to provide such hospitals with extra funds to engage extra labour to meet the above."

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. D. Bowman, *Fortitude Valley*) replied—

"1 and 2. The information will be supplied at a later date.

"3 and 4. Will receive consideration."

PATIENTS SUFFERING FROM DELIRIUM TREMENS.

Mr. BAYLEY, on behalf of Mr. Bebbington, asked the Home Secretary—

"Is he enforcing the orders issued by the late Home Secretary, that persons suffering from the effects of drink, in delirium tremens, must be taken to the asylum, and not to public hospitals?"

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

"I am not aware that the late Home Secretary issued such an order."

AGRICULTURAL SETTLERS' RELIEF BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Coyne, Warrego, in the chair.*)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to afford relief to certain agricultural settlers who have suffered losses owing to bad seasons."

As he stated yesterday, this Bill was meant to give relief to a number of selectors on the Jimbour Estate, who for the past three or four years had suffered very great hardships. The late Government appointed a commission to inquire into the condition of these men, and the report of that commission had been received. Acting largely on the suggestion of the commission, this Bill was now introduced. The position of the selectors on Jimbour was well known to nearly every member of the Chamber, and the need for relief was generally admitted. In the first place, the land was bought at very much too high a price, and on that account their chance of succeeding—even in good seasons—was not very rosy. Owing to the continuance of the drought they had not had a crop from their land or been able to keep their stock on their selections, and they were in great distress. A number of those men, who were men of considerable means, were to-day almost penniless, and their stock was away on agistment elsewhere. The Bill provided for the suspension of payment of any rent or interest for three years. He thought it was unnecessary for him to say anything further, as the case was well known to hon. members, and he would only

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be delaying business unduly were he to take up more of the time of the Committee. He had already tabled the report of the commission, and that contained all the information that was required.

Mr. STEVENS (*Rosewood*) said he was very pleased to note that relief was to be afforded to the settlers on the Jimbour Estate, but rather regretted that the Bill applied only to selectors on Jimbour, as there were settlers in other districts who were placed in similar circumstances and who needed relief. From what the Minister had said one would gather that the high price paid for the land was the chief reason why the settlers on Jimbour were in their present position, but according to the report of the commission the settlers were perfectly satisfied with the quality of the land and said it was of the best quality, and that it was because of the bad seasons from which they had suffered that they were in their present distressed condition.

Mr. GRAYSON (*Cunningham*) was in favour of the proposed measure to afford relief to the settlers on the Jimbour Estate, but, as a member who represented a district in which there were more repurchased estates than in any other district in the State, he should like to see selectors on other estates included in the Bill. At the same time he must admit that selectors on repurchased estates who had been unfortunate enough to suffer from bad seasons, and who had applied to the late Government and the present Government for an extension of time in which to pay their rents, had always had their applications favourably received. The relief the Government intended to give to the settlers on the Jimbour Estate was well deserved, and he had no doubt that the measure would be passed, but there was another estate on the Darling Downs on which the settlers had been having a very bad time. He referred to the Gowrie Estate. The member representing that district had put in a strong claim for consideration being given to those selectors, who during the past three or four years had experienced bad seasons and a failure of crops, and he hoped that the Minister would see that those people received similar consideration to that given to the Jimbour settlers.

Mr. HODGE (*Namango*) was very pleased indeed to see that the Minister for Lands had recognised the necessity for assisting the selectors on Jimbour, as there was not the slightest doubt that those men had had a bad time. Of course, there were repurchased estates in other electorates, but there was no part of Queensland which stood out more prominently as a district deserving special consideration than the Dalby district. For the last two years there had been practically no stock in that district. The Minister said that possibly too much had been paid for the land, and there was not the slightest doubt from the results which had accrued that the people had paid too much for it, and they were entitled to every consideration that could be given to them. They had had five years' continuous bad seasons, but it did not follow that they were not settled upon one of the best estates in Queensland. He thought that the position taken up at the present time was the right one. It was surprising that these people

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were living there to-day, seeing the conditions under which they had had to live. They practically had no crop, and they had been living on their capital. There could be only one end to that—a man could not always live on his capital—and he supposed they had got to the end of their tether. The Minister, by the introduction of the Bill, showed that he desired to give relief not only to Jimbour, but, he hoped, to the other estates as well, but there were none of the repurchased estates which stood out so much in this direction as the Jimbour Estate. People went there with capital, and settlement had taken place, but they had had absolutely no return for the money they had expended there. He understood from the remarks of the Minister that when this Bill went forward it was the intention to give the same measure of relief to the people on other repurchased estates who deserved it.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): Seeing that Jimbour was in the electorate which he represented, he wished to briefly say something about this measure. The order was for the consideration in Committee of introducing a Bill to afford relief, owing to bad seasons. Once they agreed to that, it did not give them the opportunity of even suggesting an amendment for any alteration in the tenure of the land, even on revaluation. (Hear, hear!) Under the Agricultural Settlement Act, under which the men had selected, it was on a certain basis for a certain term of years. The Government could not afford relief except in regard to the terms of repayment, which he thought could be given without this legislation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It cannot be done without a Bill.

Mr. VOWLES: He remembered it was under the Closer Settlement Act, and the Minister was correct. Everybody knew that the price paid was too high. When the Government wanted to repurchase this estate they did not get it at their own price; they had to pay an advance of 50 per cent. more than they had been prepared to pay, and, consequently, that had been passed on to the selectors.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: That was owing to the land sharks.

Mr. VOWLES: It did not matter who did it. The feeling of the House was that it would be a reasonable thing to hand it over to closer settlement at a certain price, but that price had been piled on to the unfortunate settler. The value of land, or anything else, from a commercial point of view, was what you could make out of it, and if you had been five years on it and could make nothing out of it, it was practically valueless.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is a bad advertisement for your district.

Mr. VOWLES: That was the result of bad seasons. Men on that estate had brought thousands of pounds, which had been spent in improvements and stock, and those men were there and must be looked after. They had attempted as hard as anyone in this world to make a success of it, and everything had been against them. They were in the unfortunate position that they had paid a deposit of 10 per cent., and interest on the unpaid balance was being charged up against them, and they had to pay their

rates. In almost every instance now they had their stock in relief country, and in some cases they had had it away for years.

Mr. BOOKER: What they have left.

Mr. VOWLES: What they had left, and they were sacrificing portion of their dairy herds to keep their herds alive. The Bill did not go far enough. They would require further legislation in three years, as far as Jimbour was concerned, if this was all they were going to give. They were only putting off the evil day. What was wanted there was revaluation and reclassification of the land.

Mr. CARTER: You call it confiscation if there is a reclassification somewhere else.

Mr. VOWLES: The Chairman knew the Jimbour Estate as well as he (Mr. Vowles) did. The land was classed as agricultural land, but any person of experience knew that it was only pastoral land, and the proclaimed portion went up to £4 an acre. He admitted that the Kumkillenbar portion was particularly good land—as good as any there was, provided they could get good seasons—but they had been circumstanced in such a way that, although they got a good rainfall for the year, it was not distributed like it was in other districts. They got 32 inches in one year, but they got 12 inches in two days. No doubt, it moistened the subsoil, but it created more damage than enough; it shifted the whole of the cultivation paddock. That land had never been proved to be agricultural land. He knew the history of agricultural land in that district; he had been there sixteen years, and he knew ten years of the history of agriculture there, and the seasons had been adverse. Would it not be better, when introducing a measure, not to consider simply the matter of giving temporary relief, but to give them permanent relief, and reduce the purchasing price and put them in a position which would give them some opportunity of making a success of their farms. What was the use of a man working for a dead horse all his life? It had been suggested that some of the men were going away. Several had gone away, and dozens were only waiting to see what relief the Government were going to give them. During the last election the candidates told the selectors that if this Government got into power a new clause of tenure was going to be created—perpetual leases.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You denied that tenure on this side of the House last session.

Mr. VOWLES: Some of the settlers did not want it then, but now they were prepared to accept anything at all, and they were ready to try it. If that was one of the planks of the hon. gentleman's party's platform, why did he not give them an opportunity of taking this land under perpetual lease?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am glad to hear you advocating it.

Mr. VOWLES: He did not advocate it, but if the hon. gentleman believed in it and there were selectors who desired to have it, he should give them an opportunity.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You move an amendment in that direction.

Mr. VOWLES: He simply said, give them the opportunity. (Government laughter.) If he were to move it, the Chairman would rule him out of order, because the Bill as introduced was simply to afford relief, and not to create a new tenure. He believed that the Minister himself spoke during the last election campaign on the subject of the Jimbour selectors; he knew he was there. It was suggested then that some of the settlers would welcome perpetual leases in preference to ruination, that they would like an opportunity to carry on. If that was the state of affairs, why did not the Minister give them a chance? He (Mr. Vowles) did not advocate it, but some of them did. Mr. Allen, at one time a member of this House, was one of those who supported perpetual leases. Why not give them an opportunity of that tenure, if they believed in it? The commission certainly went round to the various individuals and asked them whether, if they had good seasons, they thought the land would be a paying proposition. The selectors replied that, if they had constant good seasons, they might have made a living out of it. But the history of that locality was that they did not get good seasons. They had to average the good with the bad, and that was the only basis on which a man from a business point of view could work out what the value of the land was to him—what he was going to get out of it for an average number of years. Things had been absolutely bad, and that state of things could not continue. What was the good of putting off the evil day? They all agreed that this thing should be done once for all. Judging from the utterances of members on the Treasury benches, as reported in "Hansard" on the introduction of the Closer Settlement Act, they stated that the trouble was that they had paid too much for the land. If that was good enough to say twelve months or two years ago, why not act up to that now?

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Who sold it to them?

Mr. VOWLES: The Kidston Government.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Under the control of the Labour party.

Mr. VOWLES: Certainly. He did not want to make capital out of the matter. All he wanted to do was to see that these men got an opportunity of carrying on. Practically every one of them had sunk all they had in the land. They had an accumulation of interest, and what was the good of postponing the payment of instalments with no interest in the meantime for three years? It would be far better for a man to go away, leave his improvements, and make a fresh start. If relief in regard to the purchasing price was afforded, it would be doing something for them, but it was like the old story of asking for a loaf and getting a brick or a stone to give them the temporary relief granted under the Bill. They wanted something more. He knew one man who put in 1,750 acres of wheat this year, which cost him £1,250, and there were other expenses in regard to ploughing. The average cost worked out at about 15s. an acre, and on his year's transaction he was £2,500 to the bad. A man up at Warra had 1,100 acres, out of 1,700 acres, the biggest area of wheat in the State, and

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he had an absolute loss. He had not a grain of wheat, and he was putting cattle on agistment at any price.

Mr. PETERSON: There are other settlers under the same conditions.

Mr. VOWLES: He was not saying there were not. There were dozens of other farms from 300 to 500 acres in area in the same position. Everybody had failed. This was not a local matter; it was a national matter. The Crown induced settlers to come from other States to take land up on the understanding that the land would produce certain results. The land had been a failure owing to the seasons. The Government was the landlord, and the Government could do something for these settlers. The whole crux of the business was the price of the land, coupled with the bad seasons, and these settlers should be relieved. The purchasing price should be reduced as was intended by the Government which purchased the land. Of course, there would be a loss shown, but that loss could be wiped off. It was a national matter. They should keep these men on the land in order that they would make it reproductive.

Mr. H. J. RYAN: What is the use of keeping them on the land if it is no good. It is like a benevolent asylum.

Mr. VOWLES: The land was good if they got good seasons. There was very little stock in the district, as it had to be sent away on agistment. The butter factory had to close down for want of cream.

Mr. MURPHY: What price was paid for the land?

Mr. VOWLES: £7 per acre down to £4.

The bell indicated that portion of the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. VOWLES: It was a big sheep district, yet, owing to the drought, 60,000 sheep had been sent across to the Burnett district. There were properties which had their cattle in one place, horses in another, and sheep in another, on agistment. The place was denuded of stock, and had been for many months. If they did not get rain soon, it would be worse. Jimbour Plains was as bare as the floor of the Chamber, and all they could see was the bones of the dead stock. He wished some members of the Ministry had gone up to see the land, instead of sending the Commission. It was all very well for men used to sitting in offices and adjudicating in courts giving valuation of the land, but if the Commission had been composed of practical men, they would have given a different report. They would not have asked the questions that the Commission asked, such as, "If you had good seasons, would you make money out of it?" The selectors were honest, and said that they would be all right if they had good seasons. But they had not got the good seasons, and were not likely to get them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then the whole thing might as well go by the board—if they are never going to get good seasons.

Mr. VOWLES: They were never likely to have a series of good seasons, and the Minister knew that as well as he did. He had heard the Minister for Lands say in the train that it was marvellous that the

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Jimbour Plains were in a dry area. He (Mr. Vowles) was the representative of these men, and he was glad to get what relief the Government chose to give, but he did not consider that what was proposed was sufficient, and it was not of a permanent character.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Don't open your mouth too wide, or you might get nothing.

Mr. VOWLES: If that was a threat, then the selectors would know how to treat the Minister and his Government. The majority of the selectors were supporters of the Government, but he (Mr. Vowles) was there to look after their interests. He was not going to take any threats from the Minister, and he told that the Bill would be withdrawn if he opened his mouth too wide. The Minister had not the power to withdraw the Bill. He hoped the Minister would listen to what he said. He put the views of the selectors before the Chamber, and if the Government would not do anything, the Government were to blame. No one could blame him for not advocating the interests of the selectors for all they were worth.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): The way the motion was worded gave the Minister the opportunity of cutting from under the feet of members any chance of affording any permanent relief to Jimbour settlers. The Bill merely proposed to defer the payments for three years. The Minister knew that the land was over-capitalised and over-valued, yet he did not attempt to come forward with any permanent relief. The property would have to be revalued and reduced in price at some time and they might as well do it now. These people should get such relief as would enable them to settle on the land and carry on with some profit to themselves. It was better to give relief and have done with it, rather than have the settlers struggling on in debt and having to come to the Government continually for assistance. If the payments were deferred for three years, that would bring it up to the time of the next election, and the result would be that it would be made a burning question at the next election, the same as it had at the last election. Each political candidate would promise what would be done for the selectors in return for his election. It affected the Liberal, Labour, and Country party's candidates the same. That was why they should definitely settle the matter now. It would have been better if the Minister had been a practical man, and he would know that deferring the payments for three years would not enable them to carry on successfully.

Mr. L. H. HARTLEY: Why don't they throw it up and go in for land elsewhere?

Mr. MORGAN: The Government made a mistake in purchasing the land in the first place, as it was not agricultural land at all. There was another mistake made in going to court over it. All this cost was added to the value of the land and the selectors had to pay it. He moved that the motion be amended by inserting after the word "relief" the words "by reducing the purchasing price of their holdings." That would be something definite to place before the selectors. If the Government did not do something now, they would find that eventually the selectors would

give up the land, and it would revert to the Government again. The Government were acting in a pig-headed way by holding back the balance of the Jimbour Estate. They put a high price on the land, with the result that people went by it and would not take it up, and the Government were only getting a few pounds for the use of it for grazing.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Why didn't your Government do something?

Mr. MORGAN: The late Government should have done a lot of things in connection with land settlement that they did not do, and if they had done it they would have been in power to-day. That was no reason why the present Government should not do something to help those who were settled on the land. It took time for things to mature, but they did mature, and the inquiry was held and a recommendation made. Perhaps the commission saw they had no power to alter an Act of Parliament and reduce the price, but the Government could do it in five minutes by introducing a Bill to that effect.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Give me your magic wand and it will be all right.

Mr. MORGAN: The Premier with a magic wand introduced and carried a Bill in five minutes, rewarding the strikers for breaking the law, but when it was a matter of helping poor struggling settlers who were in destitute circumstances, that was a different matter. The Government were not prepared to help decent and honest settlers at all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I was talking about the magic wand so far as money is concerned.

Mr. MORGAN: When it was a matter of increasing wages of a certain class to the extent of £150,000, there was plenty of money, but there was no money to help poor struggling settlers. There were thousands of pounds for the unionists, and there was no complaint made about that; but when they were asked to make merely a book-keeping entry, by reducing the price of Jimbour lands from £10 to £5 per acre, it could not be done. That was so, because they had not got £10 from the settlers and would never get that amount from them whilst they maintained the high price of the land. It was a matter which should be definitely settled during this session. They had no right to allow something to go on hanging over the heads of the settlers, preventing them from making a fair living for themselves, their wives and families. They had no right to make them work for a pittance. They should give them a chance to live and progress; and the proposal in the Bill gave them neither one thing nor the other. He hoped that the Minister would accept his amendment.

Mr. VOWLES desired to second the amendment. He did not wish to delay the House over it, but the crux of the question was the price of the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have been reading your speech; the crux was something else last year.

Mr. VOWLES: He had always said that the price was too high.

Mr. GILLIES: Did you take up that attitude when it was being purchased?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: He was not in here then, and had nothing to do with the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He was mayor then, and was pushing the sale for all he was worth. (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: He could have been in it then, but he was not. The proposal of the Minister would afford only temporary relief, but if they reduced the price it would give them a chance of living, not for the next few years only but for thirty-five or forty years. The rents, coupled with rates and freight and other outgoing payments, did not give them sufficient to live on at all. They were always on the wrong side of the ledger. Under ordinary conditions they had as much as they could do to make both ends meet. They were in most cases mortgaged to the Agricultural Bank, and they were in arrears with their instalments and had to face not only those arrears but also future arrears and interest on them.

Mr. A. J. JONES: That is an argument in favour of perpetual lease.

Mr. VOWLES: That was exactly what he said. Some of them—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Will you get a petition signed by those wanting perpetual lease?

Mr. VOWLES: Was there any occasion for him to do that? (Government laughter.) The Minister was only trying to get him off the track. The hon. gentleman had in his department information gathered in reply to questions which were sent to each selector. Everyone gave the history of his selection and also answered the question whether he would be prepared to take on perpetual lease or not. If the Minister was genuine in his theory of perpetual lease, here was an opportunity to prove the futility or goodness of it. He knew that it was a very difficult thing to adjust. The reason the Minister was avoiding it was because it was almost impossible to adjust the whole of the selections purely on a tenant basis. Some were under twenty years and some under thirty-five or forty years' terms. Others had paid up all their engagements, some had not. Some owed one year and some more, and some had had their rents capitalised for one and some for two or three years. But that did not matter; if the remedy of perpetual lease was there, as they said, let them try the experiment and give those who were prepared to take it on that basis an opportunity of proving the system. But the principal question was the reduction of price. If hon. members cared to study "Hansard," they would find that the gentleman in charge of the Bill, the Treasurer, the Premier—and, in fact, everyone on the front bench—said that the whole trouble so far as these selections were concerned was that the selectors paid too much money for the land. It was on record in the Lands Office that at the first deputation which he introduced to the Secretary for Public Lands from the selectors in the district—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: When was this?

Mr. VOWLES: About four years ago.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And four years afterwards the Labour Government responds to your plea?

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Mr. VOWLES: The Minister had anticipated the wrong thing. Those gentlemen who represented the various selectors were asked by the present leader of the Opposition, "Are you satisfied with the price of the land?" And, to the astonishment of the Minister, they said, "We are." After a trial of four years they had found—like many another man who had come from the South—that conditions were different from what they expected. Everything was good except the seasons. If they had had the same class of land in Victoria, they told him, it would be worth £40 an acre.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: They were strangers and ye took them in? (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: They took themselves in. They went there with the best of intentions. They thought they were experts in the value of land. They were nearly all strangers, from New Zealand, from New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia, and some of them all the way from Scotland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Would you prefer us to withdraw this motion?

Mr. VOWLES: Did the Minister think that he was going to get him to put his foot in a hole like that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are going the right way about it.

Mr. VOWLES: They were wrong in offering assistance of only a temporary nature, and if the Government wanted to do the correct thing, they must start at bedrock, and reduce the purchasing price. Every member on the front Treasury bench knew it. The intention of the Government was to purchase the land at £2 2s. 6d. an acre, but it was purchased compulsorily, and after all the law proceedings, they had to take it at £3 10s. Then the price, with all the costs, was put up to £3 19s. an acre.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Is that lawyers' costs?

Mr. VOWLES: A portion of it was, and portion of it was costs in connection with administration, but the selectors had to carry the burden. Why not do a fair thing? They claimed that the price should be reduced 33 per cent. to 50 per cent., and the land should be reclassified, because there was some that could stand a reduction of less than that. Some was classified as agricultural land, which was purely pastoral. The correct solution of the problem was to reduce the price, and also offer temporary relief by postponing payment of their rents, and if any of them wanted to come under the system which the Government were fathering, let them do so.

Mr. BERTRAM (*Maree*) rose to a point of order. His point was that the amendment would entail additional charge on the people, and therefore, in accordance with Standing Order 315, it was out of order. It was not covered, he submitted, by the message from the Governor.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He did not know that there was anything specifically stated in the message from the Governor. The message stated that there were to be certain charges in connection with the measure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Certain charges which had been estimated.

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HON. J. TOLMIE: He thought that Standing Orders 157 and 161 covered the matter. Under those Standing Orders a Committee of the Whole House had certain matters remitted to them, and the Committee could consider such matters only as were referred. The House, in this instance, had referred the matter of whether legislation of a relieving character should be introduced.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: With the message.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Members were anxious that further action should be taken by the reduction of the price of the land. He was certainly in favour of the proposed amendment as the only way in which relief could be given, but he would be out of order to pursue that question now.

The CHAIRMAN: At another stage of the proceedings in connection with this Bill, the point raised by the hon. member for Maree would be a good one, but at the present time I, as Chairman of the Committee, do not know what relief is going to be accorded by the Bill, as I have not a copy of it in my hands, and I therefore do not know whether the relief which is proposed to be accorded by it is going to be more or less than that covered by the amendment of the hon. member for Murilla. Therefore I shall have to allow it to stand.

Mr. CORSER: He must thank the Chairman very heartily for his fairness in dealing with these matters as they came forward, when the Government were trying to choke off amendments of this nature. He was in accord with the amendment and the remarks of hon. members who had spoken. They found that the selectors were asking for relief amounting to a reduction of from one-third to two-thirds of the price of their land, but instead of that, the Lands Department came along with a suggestion to postpone the interest, which would only be adding trouble, as was the case with the 1913 Act. The whole of these repurchased settlements were covered by many Acts, and the Bill was introduced for the purpose of making it possible for those who did not come under the 1913 Act to come under it now. That Act was a very hard measure for the settlers to come under, and every settler who had come under it had regretted it ever since. It merely deferred his troubles.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Who passed it?

Mr. CORSER: It was passed by a Liberal Administration, and the present Government were adopting the principles of the legislation with good intentions, but it had proved to be hard on the [4.30 p.m.] settlers. It was hard for them to pay twenty-five years' interest without being taxed for forty. He knew of one instance where a selector had paid £265 11s. 2d., which was all interest with the exception of £33 9s. If interest accumulated in that way, was it not better to make it possible for the settlers to pay up as soon as they were able to do so, rather than to defer their payments for forty years? Under the Closer Settlement Amendment Act of 1913 the lease was extended to forty years, or in the case of selection brought under the Act for a term of years which, with the expired portion of the

original term, would make forty years, dating from the commencement of the original term. If the selector had paid the fifth year's rent or more, due credit was given for the higher payment made, and the rent for the balance of the lease was reduced accordingly. If the payments by the Jimbour settlers were suspended, they would be eased for the present; but when they were again asked for money the same trouble would arise. Possibly there might be an election at that time, and the new Government might further extend the term to sixty years. Why not make it a perpetual lease at the present time? Because it was not good enough for the Government. They did not mind seizing any land and proclaiming it open under the perpetual lease system as long as they came out on the right side, but where they might be losers in proclaiming land under the perpetual lease system they were loth to adopt the perpetual lease. He had heard from many settlers that they wished for a perpetual lease, because it was impossible for them to pay the high price they were charged for the land. When the Government dealt with the Queensland National Bank for the repurchase of the Jimbour Estate, people applauded the bank for securing from the Government a higher price than the late Hon. J. T. Bell wished to pay for the land. Now the settlers on Jimbour asked the Government to reduce the price of the land, but instead of that, the Government repudiated their promise to assist the settlers and only granted a suspension of payment. If a selector had paid rent for the sixth year, and was in arrears for two years, he would come under the Closer Settlement Act Amendment Act of 1913 as having paid his eighth year's rent, and the annual rent for thirty-two years would be at the rate of £5 16s. per cent. on the original purchasing price, and in 1919 he would commence to pay off his arrears in ten annual instalments at the rate of £12 19s. per cent. on the total amount of arrears and interest at 5 per cent. till 1918. The proposal of the Ministry was only to defer payments which were now due, and it really offered no genuine assistance to the settlers. They did not want the deferred payments; they wanted to be relieved from the payments.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: They will have three years' free use of the land.

Mr. CORSER: And they would have to pay interest and compound interest on the first four years' payments, and 5 per cent. interest during the thirty-five years of the balance of their term. At the end of forty years they would have paid for their selections over and over again in interest. The Jimbour Estate consisted of beautiful agricultural land, which any practical or theoretical farmer would at once secure as an agricultural farm. Farmers from New Zealand, from Victoria, and from the old country took up that land, and so would anyone else who had any idea of what really good land was. It was the bad distribution of the rainfall during the first four or five years of their settlement that had made things so difficult for the Jimbour settlers. The same lack of rain had never been experienced during the time that the hundreds of acres under cultivation were used by the owners of Jimbour Station. The present settlers had had no crops to harvest for five years, and this year they had lost 75 per cent. of their draught horses and 60 per

cent. of their sheep, and the wheat on 400 acres which they had cultivated was coming into ear when it was 2 or 3 inches high. That had happened after the late Government had made it possible for them to cultivate their land by providing them with seed wheat. And now the present Government would not assist those settlers; they would only defer their annual payments, which the settlers could not pay without the Bill, instead of reducing the purchasing price of the land, which would be a real assistance.

Mr. LARCOMBE (*Keppel*): It was most ungenerous to suggest that the Labour Government were not inclined to assist these settlers. As a matter of fact they were rendering assistance based upon a report of the Land Court. That court was appointed by the late Administration to make inquiries into the distress of the Jimbour settlers and the best means of affording them relief, and he had a copy of their report in his hand. The report dealt with the suggestions contained in the amendment, and strongly opposed any reduction in the price of the land. The members of the court said—

“It was made abundantly clear to the court that the present need of the settlers is breathing time; that merely reducing the price of the land, even were that course in itself unobjectionable, would not adequately meet the very distressing and very exceptional circumstances in which we found so many of the Jimbour settlers.”

The court had themselves come to the conclusion that a reduction in the price of the land was not the relief for which those settlers were seeking.

Mr. CORSER: They distinctly asked for a reduction of from one-third to two-thirds of the purchasing price.

Mr. LARCOMBE: But the opinion of the court was that that was not what was required. After hearing the whole of the evidence, the court came to the conclusion that it was not desirable to make a reduction in the price of the land, but to grant exemption from payment for a certain period.

Mr. MORGAN: They were dealing with it from the State point of view only.

Mr. LARCOMBE: No; they dealt with it from the State point of view, and from the point of view of the settlers desiring relief. Did the hon. member suggest that the Land Court were unsympathetic? If they were dealing with the matter wholly from the standpoint of the State, they would not suggest any relief at all.

Mr. VOWLES: Their intentions were good, but they did not understand values.

Mr. LARCOMBE: They had on the Land Court Dr. Kidston, an ex-Premier, and other members who had had a life-long experience in land matters. They heard the evidence placed before them by practical settlers.

Mr. VOWLES: No, not on values.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The report showed that they took the fullest evidence. It said—

“But apart from any question of principle, the proposal to reduce the price is unsuited to the present circumstances of the case. The price of the land has practically nothing to do with the want of success of the Jimbour settlers.”

Mr. VOWLES: That shows how much they know.

Mr. Larcombe.]

Mr. LARCOMBE: Hon. members opposite squealed when these things were pointed out to them. In order to obtain some petty advantage they try to discredit the members of the Land Court, and they misrepresented the objections and aims of members on the Government side of the Chamber. The report of the Land Court was diametrically opposed to the proposal in the amendment. If they were going to legislate on this matter, they should legislate on the lines laid down by competent experts. Members opposite had contradicted one another as to the best method of affording relief to these settlers, and, under those circumstances, it was apparent that the wisest course was to adopt the suggestion made by a competent tribunal which had inquired into and reported upon the position of the Jimbour settlers. But, instead of doing that, hon. members opposite were trying by a party amendment to deprive those settlers of the relief which would be afforded them by the Bill the Government desired to introduce. He felt sure that the settlers of Jimbour, and of the State generally, would not be deceived by the side-tracking amendment which had been moved. The Bill proposed a very generous measure of relief, because there were thousands of settlers who were at the present time suffering greatly and no relief had been afforded them up to the present. There was no relief at present afforded them, but here was a special enactment to give relief to these settlers, and if they got the relief that had been suggested by a competent tribunal, surely they would be satisfied, and they would be satisfied also to allow the settlers in some of the other parts of the State to obtain similar relief. He intended to oppose the amendment, and he felt sure it would be rejected.

* Mr. ARMSTRONG (*Lockyer*) deprecated party feeling being introduced into the House in this matter of giving relief to a very deserving class of settlers. Whether the Government purchased Jimbour at too high a figure or not was not the question they had to deal with; they had to take the position as they found it, and do something to alleviate the distress of those who had petitioned the Government for relief. Other Governments had made mistakes in the repurchase of estates. They might just as well blame the Denham, the Morgan, the Kidston, or the Nelson Government, or any other Government which had repurchased estates. But what was the use of doing that? They would not get any further in discussing the matter from that point of view. The hon. member who had just spoken said the report of the commission was not based upon the wants particularly of the settlers, but more from a State point of view. He did not wish to cast aspersions upon any body of men in the high and honourable position of members of the Land Court, but he took their report as it was, and the men as he found them, and he knew that none of them had any knowledge of the work of practical farming. On the other hand, he admitted that they were highly capable of sifting evidence. If they could sift the evidence from the State point of view, surely hon. members, as practical men, could sift the evidence from the point of view of those whom they represented. He congratulated the hon. member for Dalby on the manner in which he stated his case this afternoon. The report laid it down distinctly that the

bulk of the evidence was in favour of a reduction of the purchasing price of the land. Who was better able to say what was the best for themselves than those men who were holding the land and trying to make a success of it? They must have more information than hon. members who had not a practical knowledge of the subject. The State was very largely interested in Jimbour. It must be mentioned that Jimbour was compulsorily acquired. In one part there was a very large area which was unselected. If they brought that area under some form of occupancy and made it useful, whilst they would be relieving those who were already settled there, it would, at the same time, help to bring about the settlement of the unoccupied land. If they did not do this they simply drove men off the land and increased the area which would be left on the hands of the Government. If this had been a bad bargain at the commencement, let them recognise it, and give the people help. Did they want prosperous men settled upon these lands, or did they want to keep the settlers as paupers continuously? Unless they gave them the help they were asking for, it would mean that these men would be stranded there. There were forty-three sittings of the Land Court and forty-six witnesses were examined. All these men agreed, except in one instance, that what they wanted was good seasons, and that the Government could not give them good seasons. They knew that, if there was a succession of five or six good seasons, the whole of the land would be paid for, but that there was no certainty as to what the seasons were going to be. Further, the Land Court objected to reducing the price of the land, because it would be creating a dangerous precedent, but in extreme cases like Jimbour Estate they must take the responsibility of doing something which the officer of the department might consider a dangerous precedent. The danger of the precedent was a matter which the House would review again, if there was a necessity for it being adopted at some future time in other instances. The House would have the opportunity of dealing with these circumstances as they arose. The hon. member for Keppel, Mr. Larcombe, was perfectly fair when he said that it was pointed out that, even if the lands were reduced in price, it would not give the fullest amount of relief to the settlers. That was problematical. It was said in the report that, under the present circumstances, even if the lands were reduced in value, the settlers would no more be able to pay the reduced price than the higher one. But you would give the men increased confidence to go on in the hope of the seasons improving. If they did not do that, there would be a large increase of unoccupied Crown land. It was not because the men did not wish to cultivate their land to the highest extent that the failure had occurred. He could mention one case where a man went on with £15,000 cash, and there had been lesser men, some of whom would be glad to sell for 10s. in the £1 on the capital invested, and give the land up. They were faced with a very difficult position. Were they to keep those men there by giving them the relief which they themselves suggested was the best thing, in the hope that the seasons might improve and that they might be able to establish themselves on their holdings? No one knew better than he did the difficulty of the posi-

[*Mr. Larcombe.*]

tion, but they would never arrive at any solution of the matter if they allowed party politics to sway them. The only reason given by the Land Court against reducing the price of the land was that it would be creating a dangerous precedent, but in a case like this, where the position was so critical, it would be better to accept the responsibility, even though it established what might be thought a dangerous precedent.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Murrumba*): No doubt from the very start a huge bungle was made by the Government of the day in the repurchase of Jimbour, and that Government was supported by the Labour party under Mr. Kidston. It would be remembered that the Minister for Lands at that time valued the land at £2 2s. 6d. an acre, and yet the Government paid £3 10s. an acre when the evidence showed that the land would be worth the money. The Secretary for Lands himself, when he was a private member, stated that one of the great troubles in connection with the matter was that the land was too dear, and that statement had been made by hon. members on this side this afternoon, and some alteration should be made. They must also bear in mind that the Government were losing a lot of interest in connection with the land which was unselected. There was £135,000 worth of land unselected, and on which the Government were paying interest. The Minister for Lands was of opinion in 1913, when the Closer Settlement Act was being passed, that the secret of the whole thing was that the land was too dear. He said—

“The first price of the land was too high, and the people went on to the land without sufficient capital to carry out their work. That is the common experience in Queensland.”

If the land was too dear then, it must be infinitely too dear now, seeing that from that time there had not been any good seasons. The Land Court proposed to relieve these settlers from paying any instalments for the next two and a-half years, but the interest had been accumulating, and all that would still have to be paid in 1917. As far as Jimbour was concerned, it appeared that they could not reasonably expect generally good seasons. If they could get good seasons it would be all right, but evidently they could not expect them. The same thing applied to other parts of Queensland. He knew people who had got land at Jondaryan.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Would they be prepared to sell out at a reduced value?

Mr. FORSYTH: He knew one company which had a considerable acreage at Jondaryan, and he thought he was correct when he said that they were prepared to sell out at from 25 per cent to 30 per cent. less than they paid for it, in spite of all the losses they had made during the last few years. If the hon. member wanted a good “deal,” he would put him on the spot and tell him where to get good land.

Mr. MURPHY: I have heard of a couple of good deals like that myself. (Laughter.)

Mr. FORSYTH: The man had told him that he was prepared to clear out and drop £10,000 of the money he had spent. He had bought traction engines and employed men to put in large areas of wheat, but the operation had been an absolute failure. He

must have lost £20,000 in the place in one way and another. The land looked all right, but what on earth was the use of good land if you could not get the rain? If the Minister for Lands was under the idea in 1913 when the Closer Settlement Act was passed that the land was too dear why not help them now by reducing the price of the land? They might only have one good year in the next two and a-half years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What did you think in 1913?

Mr. FORSYTH: The drought was just coming on then, and they have had two years of drought since then. If they did not have good seasons in that particular spot in the next two years, then something would have to be done by the Government. The Minister had just accepted the Land Court's proposals.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No.

Mr. FORSYTH: That was what he understood.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then you understand wrong.

Mr. FORSYTH: If the Minister was going to meet them in a more liberal way than recommended by the commissioner, then he was glad to hear it. The land was too dear altogether. It should [5 p.m.] never have been bought at the price which was paid for it, because the settlers only had to pay the increased price, and if the Minister was going to do something better than was recommended in the report, he was glad to hear it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Most sensible people wait until they see the Bill.

Mr. FORSYTH: This was the first time that the Minister had said it would not be the same as the report of the Land Court. The hon. member for Keppel had put forward a scheme which he said would suit the Government and suit the selector also. It might be good for the Government, but it was certainly not good for the selector. Seeing that these settlers had exceptional circumstances to contend with, the Government should provide an exceptional remedy for them. They should get some relief. Even if the Government gave them any relief they would have their old liabilities with interest added up till the 30th June last. Seeing they had that big load to carry they should get something more than an exemption for two and a-half years.

Mr. SMITH: Three years they are getting.

Mr. FORSYTH: He was glad to hear that they were getting three years' exemption, although the Minister did not say so. It only mentioned two and a-half years in the report of the commission. He hoped the Minister would make the conditions as favourable as he possibly could.

Mr. MORGAN pointed out that the hon. member for Keppel only drew a red herring across the trail to put up a case for the Government and to draw the argument into quite another direction. The hon. member said that the Government were meeting the selectors very fairly, as a commission was appointed and had reported on the matter. The commission only recommended temporary relief.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Your Government did nothing.

Mr. Morgan.]

Mr. MORGAN: The late Government appointed the commission. He noticed the following paragraph in the report of the commission—

“The suggestions of the settlers for relieving the position cover a wide field, but most of them involve the proposition that the price of the land should be reduced, the amount of the suggested reduction varying from one-third to two-thirds of the present price.”

That was what the settlers said, and, surely nobody knew better than the selectors knew what price they should pay for the land! The settlers wanted a reduction in the purchasing price. He had nothing to say against the members of the Land Court, but they were not men of practical experience, and they never had to earn their bread and butter by working on the land. They were officials and had always been officials. The Government did not send up any competent valuers to value the land and get other evidence besides that of the settlers. The land was originally valued at £2 2s. per acre on the average, but it turned out ultimately that the average price was £3 19s. per acre. The relief proposed by the Government was only temporary relief. Of course, that was better than nothing, but if the settlers thought they were not going to get anything else, they would continue to fight until they got something better. The Government should put these settlers on a sound and solid foundation. If they did not do it now, it would mean that the land would revert to the Crown, and they would have to throw it open for settlement again. In order to get the land taken up, the Government would have to offer it at about half the price they valued it at at present, and the incoming tenant would get the advantage of that reduced price. Why not give the present settlers that advantage? The Minister for Lands himself admitted that the land was over capitalised and over valued when he was an ordinary member in opposition; and, if he was sincere in his statements then, he now had the chance as Minister for Lands of doing something on the lines he had himself suggested. Now was the time for the Minister to carry out his convictions.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Who will carry the burden of the loss?

Mr. MORGAN: Why should not the State carry the burden of the loss? The hon. member who interjected advocated the brotherhood of man and—

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: I do not know that I ever used those words.

Mr. MORGAN: Well, did the hon. member believe in the principle of the strong helping the weak.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Yes.

Mr. MORGAN: Then the strong State of Queensland should help the struggling weak settlers on Jimbour.

The bell indicated that portion of the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. MORGAN: The theoretical ideas of the Minister were very good, but he now had a chance to put them into practice. He hoped members opposite would assist the weak settlers, and not merely keep their assistance for the men who were getting sweated wages. They should help these set-

[*Mr. Morgan.*

tlers to get a reduction in the purchasing price.

Mr. STOPFORD: That is a fine argument in favour of perpetual leases and no purchasing price.

Mr. MORGAN: If they had plenty of settlement on the land it would mean cheaper food. That was why they should do all they could to keep all the settlers possible on the land. He hoped the Minister would practice what he had formerly preached.

Mr. MURPHY: Did you ever know a Minister to do that?

Mr. MORGAN: There were a few who did it, but the present Minister for Lands would not do it. The present Minister had advocated something on the lines of the amendment moved that afternoon, and they were now asking him to prove his sincerity.

Mr. MURPHY: In dealing with this question they had to look at it from a practical standpoint and not from a sentimental point of view. If the amendment was carried, then there would be a big loss to the State, and they would have settlers in various other parts of Queensland asking for the same concessions. The State was a landlord, the same as a private landlord, and collected the rents regularly. The State generally conducted its business on the cash system. The man behind the counter in a State department always wanted cash down. So far as the Jimbour Estate was concerned, the settlers were having a very bad time indeed. The commission pointed out that the settlers were in an unfortunate condition, but in their report they stated—

“To reduce the price of land repurchased by the State, and now held under selection tenure, would be a highly dangerous precedent, and certainly could not in fairness be done until the present tenants had surrendered all claim and title except their legal right to be paid the fair value of their improvements as determined by the Land Court after the land had been reselected.”

That was one of the points which had been placed before them by the Land Court. It had been said that the present Secretary for Public Lands declared that the price of Jimbour was too high, and that when he sat on the Opposition benches he proposed that there should be a big reduction, but that gentleman was now in a responsible position. They knew that under the party system Opposition members generally criticised the actions of the Government. When the Secretary for Public Lands sat on the Opposition benches he followed the usual custom of Oppositions and criticised the work which was presented for their consideration by the then Government. Now, being a Minister of the Crown, he had, first of all, to take into consideration the welfare of the State as a whole. He apparently felt that he must not agree to make big reductions in the price of Jimbour, because any reduction of that kind would have to be borne by the general taxpayer.

Mr. MORGAN: I desire him to be consistent.

Mr. MURPHY: He just wanted to say in passing that under the system of party politics it had been shown over and over again that consistency was impossible.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That hon. member will not be consistent in his vote to-night, because he has voted the other way.

Mr. MURPHY: He would like to see something done to assist the settlers on Jimbour. The report said that many of them had spent a considerable amount of money on improvements. Unfortunately, the seasons had been bad and they had been unable to make a do on their farms. But most certainly this discussion must militate against land settlement. They were always telling people to go on the land, and here they had heard that in various parts of Queensland men who had gone on the land, who had worked from early morning until late at night and undergone considerable privations, now had to come to the State and ask that the price of their land be reduced. Looking at the price of Jimbour—he supposed it averaged about £5 an acre—if it averaged £5—comparing it with the prices which had been paid in other parts of Queensland and Australia, that did not seem to be excessive. Compare the position of those who had taken up land on the Inkerman Estate. He knew men who took up sugar land there and paid a higher price, he thought, than the Jimbour settlers. They had suffered from the effects of a drought equally as bad as that from which the Jimbour settlers were suffering, and he had received a letter from an Inkerman association asking him whether he would be prepared to join with other members in asking the Government to come to their relief. He thought it was the duty of the Government to assist men who were on the land as well as all sections of the community who were in distress. But to a large extent they had to leave it to the wisdom of the Government to say in what direction that relief would be afforded. The reduction of the price might be the only solution of the difficulty so far as Jimbour was concerned, and if that was the only solution, it would, perhaps, be better for the Secretary for Public Lands, who was well acquainted with the condition of affairs there, to come boldly down to the Chamber and say that it was the intention of the Government, notwithstanding the loss which would be entailed on the general taxpayer, to reduce the price. If, when he introduced the Bill, it was seen that he had found some other solution, then it was the duty of the Committee to support the Government in that respect, and as he (Mr. Murphy) had not seen the Bill, he would not be in a position to support the amendment, preferring to reserve his criticisms until he knew exactly what the proposals were.

* HON. J. TOLMIE: He would not have spoken had not the Secretary for Public Lands made an interjection to the effect that the action of the late Government was taken to influence an election. He thought it was a very improper statement to make, and he would like to know at what time prior to a general election did any administrative act of the Government become a sop for electioneering purposes. Was it the first act of the Government, or at what stage? These proceedings were instituted just about that time last year. He visited the district and spent three days there, and saw the conditions under which the settlers lived.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What time of the year?

* HON. J. TOLMIE: He would not have two or three weeks, but just about that time last year. Later on he visited them again, and he met the people at two or three centres

and discussed with them the position in which they found themselves. They were very anxious that an independent inquiry should be made, and they were perfectly satisfied at all the centres where he met them that a member of the District Court should do so. Ultimately the full Land Court decided to investigate the matter at the request of the Government. The case of Jimbour was entirely different from the cases of all the other repurchased estates in Queensland, although twenty-eight or twenty-nine had been so repurchased.

Mr. SMITH: The Seaforth Estate was a bad bargain.

HON. J. TOLMIE: And the hon. member who was representing it there was a bad bargain. He had no sympathy with or consideration for the people who were suffering in any other part of Queensland.

Mr. SMITH: I do not shed crocodile tears, as you do.

HON. J. TOLMIE: They were not very much concerned with the vapourings of the hon. member for Mackay.

Mr. SMITH: I am not very concerned with your opinion, good or bad.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. J. TOLMIE: The Jimbour Estate was the only one which had been acquired by compulsory purchase. Jimbour, in the days when they knew it, was one of the finest fattening properties in Queensland. It belonged to a company which took the greatest care of the estate, allowed no noxious weeds to grow, and did not overstock. The consequence was that it was considered one of the best properties on the Darling Downs, and it became a sort of Naboth's vineyard to a very considerable number of persons who were anxious to get possession of a very fine estate. Applications were made to various Governments, and ultimately the Land Court reported that the value of Jimbour for agricultural purposes, —all round purposes—was about £2 2s. 6d. per acre, and the Government sought to obtain it at that figure. The proprietors asked something considerably more—a price that was equivalent to the earning capacity from their standpoint, but it was so much greater than the State was prepared to give that the matter lay in abeyance until finally a Government came into power which thought it was an excellent thing to acquire land by compulsory purchase, and an Act was passed for that specific purpose. But instead of £2 2s. 6d. per acre, they had to pay about £3 16s. per acre. Hon. members would remember that there was a great lawsuit, and it would have paid Queensland very well indeed to submit to costs of something between £8,000 and £10,000 instead of lifting the award. But under the Act, the person who lifted the award had to abide by the award, and there was no disposition on the part of the vendors to do so. The Crown took it up, and had to pay something like £3 16s. The property was well known throughout the whole of Australia, and a very considerable number of persons from the South came for the purpose of purchasing. They thought that the price charged by the Government, on the average 10 per cent. more than was paid for the estate, was fair enough in comparison with the price paid for land in

Hon. J. Tolmie. }

other States, and a great deal of the property was taken up by persons who had considerable money. The hon. member for Lockyer knew one man who went there with £15,000 in ready cash, and he knew of many who went there with money running into several thousand pounds. Unfortunately, seasons had been bad ever since, and they had lost all they had and something more, and the position became so bad that they appealed for a reconsideration of their case. Personally, he believed that the land was worth no more than the Crown thought it was worth, or perhaps £2 10s. At that time his advice was as it was now—that to allow them off the rental charges for a year or two years was not going to satisfy the conditions of the settlers. It was merely a palliative, and the only way they could be fairly dealt with was by a reduction in the price.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why did you not bring it down in your Bill?

HON. J. TOLMIE: He advised that the Government would ultimately have to resume a very considerable amount of the land. The capital value would have to be reduced by at least £1 per acre, and it would mean a loss of over £100,000, in order that the people might go upon it, because, if they were driven off Jimbour, no other persons could pay the same price they were being asked to pay. And the Crown would lose ultimately more than they would have done if they had boldly faced the matter and determined to reduce the price. The hon. gentleman asked why he did not do it. He could not do it without having a proper investigation made, and without being able to come to the Chamber, just as the hon. gentleman had done, with a report and recommendation as the result of that investigation. If the Government brought in a measure of relief on their own initiative, all sorts of charges would be made against them. But the late Government took all the preliminary steps, and appointed a commission to inquire into and report upon the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Four years after representation was made to you.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. gentleman's memory was very defective, for he (Mr. Tolmie) was not Minister for Lands four years ago.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You were a member of the Government.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The Government took all the initiatory steps on which the present Administration was acting, and he thought they would be wise if they followed the course which had been suggested.

[5.30 p.m.] It was the practice of the Department of Lands that where a person was dissatisfied with the price paid for the land to give him an opportunity of throwing up his land and protecting him as regarded his improvements. When the land was thrown up, a revaluation was made, and the incoming tenant was required to pay for them in cash within twenty-one days. Allowing the rent to stand over for three years was merely a palliative, because the seasons might be good or they might be bad; if the seasons continued bad the selector would be in no better position at the end of three years than he was to-day. It would therefore be better to adopt the other alternative and

revalue the estate and allow the settler an opportunity of securing his land again under other terms. If some other person got the land, then he would have to pay for the improvements at their face value—the value to the incoming tenant—which was always fixed by proclamation. If the Government were going to do any good for Queensland and any good for the Jimbour settlers, they would deal with the matter in some such way as he had suggested. When the Jimbour Estate was purchased the Government valued the land at £2 2s. 6d. per acre, and they ultimately purchased it at £3 16s. per acre—a very big difference. The Crown knew when it purchased the land that it was paying a price greater than its officers said was the value of the land, and they then threw the land open to selectors at a 10 per cent. increase, knowing that the price was more than the Crown itself actually believed the land to be worth. That being so, it would be a fair thing on the part of the Crown to have the land revalued and, if necessary, to reduce the price to the selectors.

Mr. BAYLEY (*Pittsworth*): Members were to a great extent talking in the dark, as they had not yet seen the Bill, and they could not say with any certainty on what lines it was framed, notwithstanding the fact that it had been explained to some extent. There was no question but that the settlers on the Jimbour Estate had had a particularly bad time during the last four or five years, but, as he mentioned the previous day, there were other places besides the Jimbour Estate which had not been favoured with good seasons. There were other places where settlers had suffered from bad seasons for years past. Many private estates had been cut up, and much higher prices had been paid for the land than had been paid for the Jimbour land, and the purchasers of such land deserved just as much consideration as the settlers on the Jimbour Estate. The Government were, generally speaking, prepared to give every assistance in their power to all selectors of Government land or repurchased estates who were deserving of consideration, but that could not be said of very many of the vendors of private estates. In many cases men had been harshly treated; they had paid their deposits, their instalments, and interest for years, and then when they were passing through bad seasons and there was a stringency in the money market they were forced to leave their land and the improvements they had effected. Those men required protection to a greater extent than the settlers on the Jimbour Estate, and the Government should a least protect them to the extent of the value of their improvements and the money they had paid in deposits and instalments. At the same time, it must be recognised that the Jimbour settlers had had a very trying experience and were deserving of every consideration. It was well known that other sections of the community had received help at the hands of the Government. If the working man, on account of the high prices of food and other commodities, could not keep himself and his family in comfort, his wages were increased, and if he could not then manage to live properly, the produce of the farmer was reduced in price to assist him. As the Government saw fit to give assistance to other sections of the community, it was only reasonable and right that they should show some consideration to the Jimbour settlers and the other settlers he had mentioned as

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requiring assistance. He thought it was a pity to judge the Government too harshly before members saw the Bill which it was proposed to introduce, as it might be more liberal than they anticipated. Some members on the Opposition side of the House had stated that a suspension of payments would be no assistance whatever to the settlers. He could not believe that; it would be a temporary assistance, and temporary assistance was often valuable assistance. These settlers were to be given the benefit of three years free of interest, and perhaps at the end of that time the seasons would be normal again. Still, it must be admitted that the price paid for the land by the majority of the Jimbour settlers was too high, and he agreed that the land should be re-valued in order to overcome that difficulty. In his opinion, it was high time that the Government brought forward a comprehensive scheme to assist, not only the Jimbour settlers, but the settlers throughout Queensland, and he hoped that they would take steps in this direction.

Mr. BARNES (*Warwick*) thought the Government were to be commended for having responded in this matter as quickly as they had done by the introduction of the measure which the motion foreshadowed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And I think you are to be severely condemned for the way in which you have received it.

Mr. BARNES: But he was not quite sure if the recommendation in the report of the Land Court was going to be responded to, that was, if the remedy was simply going to be a suspension of payments for two and a-half or three years. They had here an extraordinary case, and it could only be met by some extraordinary means. He really hesitated to speak on a suggestion which must mean an enormous loss to the State at some time or another. Unfortunately, the State had to deal with this case at a time when it was not convenient. The reduction of the price of the land by even £1 per acre would be altogether inadequate to meet the case of the people on the Jimbour Estate, where they had suffered greatly from climatic conditions. The only way, however distasteful it might be, to meet a case of this kind was to reduce the capital cost of the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you know what that would involve?

Mr. BARNES: He was sorry to say that he did know what it would involve, and it was an inconvenient time to have to consider the making of such a stupendous loss. The Secretary for Public Lands was a competent business man, judging from the way in which he had handled various matters. What would he do in like circumstances? If he had a property on his books to-day he would at once face the matter and write down the value of that property. He would not hold it in order that he might realise a big value for it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That would depend upon how my bank account stood.

Mr. BARNES: Not altogether.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I mean my overdraft.

Mr. BARNES: The hon. member would come to a conclusion that perhaps the wisest

thing to do would be to make the best of a bad loss. It was being done over and over again. But in this case here was a property that stood to cost £423,000, which for the next three years was going to earn nothing, according to the proposals put before them. He maintained that it was very much better to have £323,000 earning money, than £423,000 earning nothing, and in addition to that they would have the very great advantage of having people settled upon the land who were producing something. He complimented the hon. members for Dalby and Murilla on their earnestness in presenting their case, but they were not a bit more earnest than the urgency of the case required. Unfortunately, one had a knowledge which was first hand. Several well-to-do farmers from the Warwick district, on account of the general appearance of Jimbour, when the opportunity offered for taking up large areas of land had left the district in which they had been doing well and taken up land at Jimbour, and in more than one instance men were in extreme difficulties arising from that fact. On that score one had some sympathy. It was exceedingly difficult to realise the conditions there. When passing through Jimbour he had seen the place in such a condition that you could not see the fences for grass, and you could put a mowing machine on and work it all day long and make hay, but he had lately seen Jimbour when there was not a blade of grass on it. But no matter what the Government might do in this case—and no doubt some help would be better than no help—they had to remember that even starting out to-day with three years' grace, the men were still not as well off as they were when they took up the land four or five years ago. Certainly they had paid their deposit, but they had now become bereft of all they possessed; and whereas they started out a few years ago with something to the good, to-day they started out with a great deal to the bad and had something round their necks which might—he hoped not—bring them to the ground altogether.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If they had given them the land for nothing during the last three years, they could have done nothing with it.

Mr. BARNES: Probably not. The Minister agreed with the Committee in this respect, and every member in the House was aware that too much money was paid for Jimbour. On one occasion he had said to the leader of the Opposition, who was then Minister for Lands, "You will remember there is only one way of meeting this case. You had better face the music and wipe off one-third of the value and give the people a chance."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What did he do?

Mr. BARNES: They set about to do things. What result would have followed the evidence taken by the commission was another matter. Comparing the amounts paid for other estates, namely—Maryvale, £3; Goomburra, £3 2s. 3d.; North Toolburra, £2; Headington Hill, £2 4s.; Mount Russell, £2 4s.; Glengallan No. 1, £2 15s.; Glengallan No. 2, £3 13s. 7d.; and Glengallan No. 3, £4; making an average of £3 10s. for Glengallan, anyone would at once see that an extreme figure was paid for the

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Jimbour Estate. The recommendations of the Land Court were not at all in keeping with their report. They summarised the conditions which existed, alluded to the condition of the farmers, referred to the bad seasons, and re-stated what the farmer demanded. They could naturally understand that a responsible body would scarcely come down and say the only right and just thing was to meet those men and give them what they wanted. They could not go that far, but they left the Government to infer what was a right and might thing to do. They were not going to get out of this difficulty by merely temporising with the matter and giving them a rest of three years in their payment. It would come up again and it was infinitely better to deal with the case to-day on the lines indicated by the leader of the Opposition. Each case should stand on its merits. He could understand the difficulty the Minister felt in creating a precedent, but unless a precedent was created in this matter they were not going to get out of the difficulty. It was much better to face it now and have a contented people settled on Jimbour than to have the thing constantly coming up in the Lands Department with renewed trouble. He hoped the Minister would indicate that something more liberal was going to be done for these people than he had indicated in his opening remarks.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS did not propose to reply to hon. members who had discussed this matter for some two and a-half hours. It almost made one wonder whether they should persevere with the relief that was offered to these settlers when they found hon. members opposite, professing to represent the farmers, and standing up and stonewalling—

Mr. MORGAN: Not at all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Stonewalling relief measures for the people who were sorely in need of help, and to whom they had refused help for four long years of drought. While a drought was pressing upon us, and there were financial difficulties arising out of the war, they stood up and said that this Government should do what they themselves refused to do four years ago.

Mr. VOWLES: They were not asked to do it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: When the Bill introduced by the present leader of the Opposition was before the Chamber, what were his words? He would read them—

"I might point out to the House that the Jimbour settlers were anxious to have legislation of this kind introduced, and through their member, the member for Dalby, interviewed me in connection with this matter. Mr. Vowles was very assiduous in trying to secure the good of his constituents, and I may say that every one of them who waited upon me declared that he was well satisfied with the quality of the land and the price he was paying for it. They raised no objection to the price, nor at any time since have they raised any objection to the price. All that they asked was for additional time in which to

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pay for the land, and they get this additional time in the extension they ask for to forty years."

What did the hon. member for Dalby say? We will take the words of the hon. member.

Mr. VOWLES: I have got your own here.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He knew what he said, and he did not go back on it. Two years ago the position of this country was quite a different matter. It would have been quite a different thing for the then Government to have financed the necessity of these people if they considered it necessary, but to-day it was utterly impossible to give that financial assistance, because to reduce the price of this land would be to restore to the trust accounts a certain sum of money that the people could not bear the strain of.

Mr. MORGAN: How will those people bear it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That was the position to-day, and if hon. members did not know it, they ought to know it. The measure of relief proposed to be offered in the Bill was such an offer as the Government in the prosperous days of this State turned a deaf ear to and refused to give. The hon. member for Dalby, at that time, said—

"I can say that that increased term from twenty-five to forty years is one which will be very readily accepted by all the selectors, and I am sure that all those who understand this Bill will take advantage of it if it is made law. I know that that is one of the things for which they have been asking. The greatest agitators there were men in touch with the New South Wales legislation, where they had thirty-six years in which to pay. We are going a little better, and getting forty years. Another subject we are very much concerned about is that of the arrears. They are to be funded and extended according to the term of years they are in arrear, and I am sure, so far as my people are concerned, that that will meet with their wishes."

Then he said that there were none of them who were advocates of perpetual leases. Then he proceeded further—

"Some advocate that the rate of interest should be less than it is—I am not going to advocate that now."

He would not even go so far as to harass his own Government by asking them to reduce the rate of interest. Here is a proposal to lift the interest rate altogether—to relieve these settlers of the pressure of interest, and the hon. member was opposing it. He would not even ask the Government that they would forego the interest for the time being two years ago, at a time when neither war nor drought effected the country or the Government for the time being.

Mr. MORGAN: You are an elusive pimpernel.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This was not the place that debate should have taken place on the Bill, and it would probably have been wiser not to have given hon. members the information he had. But he thought that hon. members would have

endeavoured to pass the measure without loss of time, but, instead of that, they found them stonewalling and refusing to give the relief that the Government was offering to these people.

Mr. VOWLES: The selectors won't swallow that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The selectors could judge for themselves. The hon. member, in 1913, refused even to ask the Government to reduce the rate of interest from 10 per cent. to 5 per cent., and to-day he refused to allow this measure of relief, which proposed to take away the interest charge altogether, and to relieve them for three years of their payments.

Mr. VOWLES: You are misrepresenting me. There is no mention of 10 per cent. at all; that is interest and redemption.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He had no intention of considering the amendment.

* HON. J. TOLMIE: He would not like the hon. gentleman's statement to go forth uncontradicted that during four years they saw these people suffering all the time and would not come to their relief. The Minister himself, a few sentences after he commenced to speak, mentioned the prosperous times which existed in 1913 as compared with what existed now.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In the State, not in that particular part of it.

HON. J. TOLMIE: As far as he was aware, the selectors on Jimbour were quite satisfied with the price paid. He was astonished when they told him they had no objection to the price, when they [7 p.m.] saw him. As soon as they saw that the circumstances were up against the people on Jimbour, they took immediate action in 1914 following on the legislation they passed then. They made inquiry into their case, and it was on the recommendations the late Government made that the Minister had introduced his Bill. The Minister could certainly not controvert the fact that, unless they had taken the action they did, he would not be in a position to-day to introduce this Bill. It was the late Government that showed an interest in the Jimbour selectors.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are proving it up to the hilt to-night.

HON. J. TOLMIE: All the foundations for the appointment of the commission were laid by the late Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: All electioneering fireworks.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The initiatory steps were taken eight or nine months prior to the general election. When he was Minister for Lands a deputation waited on him, and asked for some relief. He pointed out to them that for agricultural purposes the Jimbour lands were not worth the money that was paid for them; but, seeing that the members of the deputation were satisfied with the quality of the land, and satisfied with the price they paid, he told them he was willing to introduce legislation to give them the extended terms they asked for.

The settlers said that, if they got an extended term, they would be able to do very much better. The terms were extended.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: With interest added.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The method adopted was the fairest and most just that could be employed, and it removed from the administration of the department all responsibility in regard to the relief that might be afforded to the settlers.

The bell indicated that portion of the hon. member's time had expired.

HON. J. TOLMIE: In the last few remaining months the late Government were in office, they did their utmost to expedite the work, in order that the matter might be thoroughly investigated. They appointed three members of the Land Court to make the investigation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And now you refuse to carry out their recommendations.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He did not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You have been fighting against it all the afternoon.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The report showed that the settlers at Jimbour wanted the price reduced. He had stated in the past that that could only be done by the settlers surrendering their holdings. That was done almost every day, as the Minister for Lands knew. If a selector was not satisfied with the price he was paying, he would surrender his land. It often happened that a selector would have effected considerable improvements on his land, and when he desired relief by having his land surrendered, it would be reopened again, and the cost of the improvements would be added. The cost of the improvements would be mentioned in the proclamation in reference to the reselection, and the incoming selector would have to pay the value of those improvements within twenty-one days after the land was selected. That could be done exactly the same in the case of Jimbour, and the improvements of the selectors there could be protected by proclamation. The land could be revalued, and those who wished to obtain their selections back again would have an opportunity of doing so. If the Minister was wise, he would accept the amendment, and give the selectors a chance of securing their land at the highest price that they were able to pay.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): He had been listening to the stonewall that had been going on in reference to the little corner of Queensland known as the Jimbour Estate. When he was in Parliament some years ago he used to hear the hon. member for Dalby constantly talking about the Jimbour Estate. The Government were now proposing to give relief to the selectors in an electorate of one of the bitterest opponents of the present Government. The hon. member for Murilla told them that the Jimbour Estate was not fit for agriculture, and then the hon. member for Dalby said that there had been a drought there for the last five years. That was a bad advertisement for Queensland.

Mr. MORGAN: What about the Inkerman Estate?

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Mr. COLLINS: He would deal with the Inkerman Estate later on, if he were permitted. Then the hon. member for Lockyer said he knew of men who had lost thousands of pounds on the Jimbour Estate.

Mr. MORGAN: Quite true.

Mr. COLLINS: He was sorry to hear it. Another member on the Opposition side pointed out that a wheat farmer on Jimbour had under cultivation 1,100 or 1,700 acres. That was a very large farm indeed.

Mr. STEVENS: He got no return from it.

Mr. COLLINS: Then the hon. member for Burnett had a lot to say. Jeremiah in his lamentations was no equal to the hon. member for Burnett. He was Jeremiah II. (Laughter.) The hon. member for Burnett had decried Queensland as a State.

Mr. CORSER: No, I did just the opposite.

Mr. COLLINS: Here the Government were proposing to give relief to the Jimbour settlers. If he (Mr. Collins) were the Minister in charge of the Bill he would withdraw the Bill seeing that the members who claimed to represent the farmers in this House did not want the relief offered by the Bill. Members opposite were now crying out that the price of the land should be reduced. Members on the Government side had said over and over again that the land ought to be free, as free as the air we breathe. The Government were proposing to give three years' exemption to the Jimbour settlers, six months more than the commission recommended. That was an expensive commission, as its members received a £1,000 a year each.

Mr. HODGE: They received it whether they go to Jimbour or not.

Mr. COLLINS: The Government need not waste time passing a measure for the benefit of one of the bitterest opponents of the Government. The settlers on the Inkerman Estate in the Bowen electorate would be quite satisfied with this proposal.

Mr. MORGAN: How are they doing?

Mr. COLLINS: Very badly indeed, but they were not crying out, and neither was the hon. member for Bowen crying out that the country was no good. They could grow anything on the Inkerman Estate if they could only get an up-to-date system of irrigation there. He had received the following letter from the secretary of the Inkerman Farmers and Graziers' Association:—

"Dear sir,—Owing to the complete failure of our cane crop this season, and the inability through drought to prepare land and plant for next season's crop, we, the selectors of the Inkerman Estate, cannot possibly meet the payments for our land, the first of which for the first subdivision of the estate falls due on March next, and we earnestly request that you will support a provision to enable the said payments to stand over for a further three years.

"Thanking you in anticipation for your support."

Mr. CORSER: We will help them in this Bill.

Mr. COLLINS: The Inkerman farmers would welcome such a Bill as this. When

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the hon. member for Dalby was sitting behind the Government with a big majority last year, why did he not get that Government to do something for the Jimbour farmers? The hon. member for Dalby, who was now an aspirant for the deputy leadership of the Opposition, said that there had been a drought at Jimbour for five years, and yet he did not ask the Government to do anything. He suggested to the Minister to withdraw the Bill and give notice of a similar Bill for the benefit of the Inkerman farmers.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: He could not help replying to the hon. member for Bowen, who made reference to his remarks. He thought it was clear to most hon. members who were in the House at the time that he never decried his district and that it was not his intention to decry the Jimbour settlers, although he admitted, as he admitted then, that those settlers were due for assistance because suitable rains had not fallen during the last few years. Whilst he was not in the House, the hon. member started to make a remark that he had tried to decry the State of Queensland. Every member from that side of the House who had spoken guarded himself against that. They wanted to make it clear that they were not decrying Queensland, but at the same time it was their duty to point out that certain settlers needed relief. The hon. member further remarked that the commission, the individuals of which were receiving £1,000 a year apiece, based their report on the evidence of the settlers on Jimbour. If they had done that, hon. members would raise no objection, but they did not. They stated in their report that the evidence they received from the selectors was a request that from one-third to two-thirds reduction should be made in the price of their land.

Mr. STOPFORD: The evidence could not have supported that or your commission were not honest.

Mr. CORSER: The evidence asked for that, according to the report.

Mr. PETERSON: What was the verdict?

Mr. CORSER: The verdict was that they merely suspended their trouble for three years—two and a-half recommended by the commission and three years provided for by the Government—because of the difficulty in dealing with fractions. The Government were not giving anything to the settlers by the measure. So much interest and principal was owing that they considered that the Bill should have provided for a reduction in the cost of the land or taking off what had become due during the time of drought, when it was impossible to pay what was owing.

Mr. A. J. JONES: A general reduction all round?

Mr. CORSER: A general reduction to meet the exceptional circumstances and the trials these people have had to endure.

The bell indicated that portion of the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. CORSER: He claimed it would be easily possible for the Government to do something to assist them.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: They are released from their contract for three years. What more do you want?

Mr. CORSER: They were not released from the contract, as they would have to pay that same principal and the same amount of interest. The Government were not losing any principal or interest, because for the next three years they could not have secured anything from these people. They had not got it to pay. The measure was introduced just as a means of preventing them from showing their hand and driving the farmers off their farms.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Would you not like exemption for three years from your liabilities?

Mr. CORSER: No. His selection, unfortunately, was a Crown selection under the agricultural farm conditions, and if he wanted an extension probably he could get it. But those who had settled on the repurchased estates wanted assistance, and should be able to get it when their time came round. Hon. members on the other side, because the Inkerman Estate was valued at £20, took exception to land on Jimbour valued at £7 being brought under lenient legislation. That £20 an acre land was sugar land, and they were not considering sugar land or its conditions. They were considering grazing land for sheep, general agricultural land, and land generally used at the Jimbour Estate. They were not going to say that land valued at £20 an acre for growing cane might not be a lot cheaper than land valued at from £3 to £7 for general farming, and it was impossible to do anything owing to the dry conditions.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He was pleased to support the amendment, because he knew something about this country and other country of the same class. He regretted that there was not a single person in the Ministry who had the least sympathy with the man on the land. (Government dissent.) The Bill showed it.

Mr. COLLINS: Have you seen the Bill.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, but the intentions of the Government had been made known as far as they wanted in that respect. When the late Government gave an extra term of an extension from twenty-five to forty years, it was opposed by many members on the other side as being useless and as only delaying the evil day. He had been over the land himself, and he said now, as he said the first session he came into the House, that law costs had been put on to it together with other expenses in connection with the railway which should never have been put on the land. These men were practically charged the value of the line going through their land and the guarantee afterwards.

Mr. CARTER: They were robbed by a Liberal Government.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He did not know that, but hon. members opposite wanted to rob them further. For a long time they had wanted to get hold of a man who had sympathy with the men on the land, but now they had got on the front benches nothing but Brisbane people and storekeepers who took their produce from them at any price they could get it, and God help the man on the land. (Laughter.) He was up on the estate some few months ago, and he told the men himself that if anything came up in

the House he would certainly advocate writing off £1 an acre on the whole estate. They had men who were supposed to be business men in the Cabinet, and if a business was going wrong and was beyond recovery, what was done? Did they not write off a certain amount? Would not the Secretary for Public Lands write off a bad debt? He considered that they had been badly treated.

Mr. CARTER: By a Liberal Government.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Never mind who by. The last Government did all they could by extending their time to forty years; more than the party opposite then intended by a very long way. Did not the Minister go up to Gowrie and tell the settlers there how he would relieve them of their payments and everything else? What a difference before and after the election! What good was the three years' delay to a man who had 1,700 acres of wheat and was not going to get an ear off it? That man would not pay the principal or the interest during the next three years because he would have nothing to pay them with and the Government could not turn them off the land for fear of the opinion of the public, so that they were not giving the men anything under the Bill. It was only brought in as an excuse for some of the promises they made before the election. It was not worth the paper it was written on. It was all window-dressing, making the people believe that they were doing this thing and the other thing, making them believe that they were giving them a cheap loaf and then raising the price. It was the same sort of thing that they had had all along. Here they had the Premier of a great State like Queensland saying "I could not rest. Every hour of my life I was thinking and planning what I could do to get over the buttermen"—poor drought-stricken farmers. That was a very fine state of things. He was going to vote for the amendment because the Bill was absolutely no good as it stood.

Mr. A. J. JONES (*Maryborough*): It appeared that the members of the Opposition were asking the Government to do something which was not in accordance with the report of the Land Court. The commission said—

"Many of the settlers expressed the view that with a continuance of seasons as good as that in which they selected there would have been no doubt of their success, and no complaints now regarding their bargain with the State."

Their bargain with the State was the price at which they selected and members opposite were asking the Government to reduce it.

Mr. CORSER: Quote the second sentence, on page 2.

Mr. A. J. JONES: He could quote—

"The price of the land has practically nothing to do with the want of success of the Jimbour settlers."

That was on page 2. The hon. member could quote his own portion. The best argument in favour of perpetual lease that he had heard had been advanced by members opposite during the course of this debate.

It was stated that many of the [7.30 p.m.] settlers on this repurchased estate were asking that their present tenure should be converted into a perpetual lease, and, personally, he thought

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that would remedy the evil. The Jimbour people were not the only people in Queensland who were suffering from the effect of the present very serious drought, and therefore they were not the only people entitled to consideration. In his opinion, where the price of the land was too high that was due to bad classification of the land, and nobody knew that better than the hon. member for Burnett. Valuable scrub land worth from £10 to £20 per acre on a freehold basis was very often selected at £1 to £1 10s. per acre; and it was selected by people from overseas, while our own people were struggling on land of a very inferior quality worth from £1 10s. to £2 per acre. Members of the Opposition were giving this State one of the worst advertisements they could possibly give it by saying that it was a drought-stricken country. If they wanted people to come here and to encourage settlement on the land, it was a very serious thing for them to tell people in the Southern States that Queensland was a drought-stricken country, and that it was not possible for people to fulfil their obligations after they had selected land. He had every sympathy with the selectors on Jimbour, or any other place, who were suffering from the drought, and he thought the Government were doing as much as they could in giving the Jimbour settlers that which they requested—a remission of rent for three years. That would help them to meet their obligations at some future date. There was only one other remedy, and that was to convert the whole settlement into leasehold tenure and allow the present holders of the land for what they had paid under the agricultural farm selection provisions. The whole trouble in this case had been caused by Liberalism in the past—by selling this land at 2s. 6d. per acre, probably, and then buying it back at £4 and £5 per acre. How on earth could a selector expect to get land at a reasonable price when the Government had to repurchase it at £3, £4, and £5 per acre?

Mr. GRAYSON (*Cunningham*): It was really amazing to note the want of knowledge displayed by members on the Government side of the House regarding the conditions of selectors in Queensland. The hon. member for Bowen had got a repurchased estate in his electorate, and he wished to get relief for the selectors settled on that estate. The purchase of that particular estate was one of the best the Government could have made, and the conditions under which the land was selected were not the same as those under which people took up the land on the Jimbour Estate. The first Agricultural Repurchase Act was passed in 1894 by the late Sir Hugh Nelson, and it was one of the best Acts ever passed by the Queensland Parliament, except that it did not give sufficiently liberal terms to the selectors. From 1894 up till a few years ago the Government had purchased several very large estates on the Darling Downs, and he thought that no member who had travelled over those estates would deny the fact that that Act was one of the best that had ever been placed on the statute-book of Queensland. It had encouraged a large number of settlers to select land on large estates which were formerly used only for feeding sheep and cattle, and the general result of the operation of the Act had been good. At the time that Act was passed, he thought the term of twenty years was too

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short a period to allow for payment for the land, and when he stood for a seat in the Assembly in 1904, he told the electors that if he was returned one of the first moves he would make in the Assembly would be to have the term extended from twenty to twenty-five years. In 1906, two years after his election, the Morgan-Kidston Government was in power, and the late Hon. J. T. Bell was Minister for Lands. When Mr. Bell introduced his 1906 Land Bill, he prevailed upon the hon. gentleman to allow him to insert section 37 in that Bill to extend the term from twenty to twenty-five years.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: You were associated with the Labour party then, weren't you?

Mr. GRAYSON: Yes. That provision was inserted in the Bill, and instead of a selector having to pay rent after the second year he was allowed four years' rest, with the result that each of the persons selecting land was able to meet his engagements when the four years expired. A selector who took up land on a repurchased estate required to be a capitalist as on taking up his land he was compelled to pay a deposit of 10 per cent. on the price, together with the survey fee. Then he must have capital to buy horses, implements, and machinery with which to carry on his farm.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: A second reading speech.

Mr. GRAYSON: No; he was simply explaining the position of a selector on a repurchased estate. If the Minister for Lands wished to assist the Jimbour selectors, he (Mr. Grayson) was prepared to assist him in every way, but in his opinion the proposed measure did not go far enough. The commission recommended that the term allowed for payment for the land should be extended to two and a-half years. That was far too short a period, and he would suggest that the time should be extended for five years. If that were done the taxpayers of Queensland would not lose one farthing, because the selectors would be compelled to pay 5 per cent. on the deferred payments. He firmly believed that the Minister was in sympathy with the Jimbour selectors, because in private conversations he had had with the hon. gentleman prior to his occupying a seat on the front Treasury bench the hon. gentleman had always expressed a desire that those selectors should get liberal treatment. The hon. gentleman had now the opportunity of his lifetime to carry out those views, and if he did so he would find that members of the Opposition would assist him in every way possible to extend the most liberal terms to the selectors on Jimbour.

Mr. A. J. JONES: What about other selectors?

Mr. GRAYSON: If the scope of the Bill could be widened to include other selectors on repurchased estates who were in financial difficulties, he would certainly support a proposal to that effect. The selectors on the Gowrie Estate had been suffering from adverse seasons for some time, and had had almost no crop for the last three or four years. The hon. member for Maryborough had accused members of the Opposition of running down Queensland—crying stinking fish. But the truth should be told. He regretted very much that the farmers on the Darling Downs were at the present time suffering severely from one of the greatest

droughts we had ever passed through in Queensland, and the hon. member for Maryborough should know that as well as he did. Any liberal measure that might be introduced with the view of relieving settlers placed in a similar unfortunate position to that of the Jimbour settlers would receive the support of every member of the Opposition. At the present time there was before the Victorian Parliament a measure to grant relief to dairy farmers who had lost all their dairy cattle during the drought. The Victorian Government were voting large sums of money to assist dairy farmers to buy fresh dairy cattle. He knew of cases in Queensland where settlers on repurchased estates had lost a great proportion of their dairy cattle. He knew many farmers on the repurchased estates on the Darling Downs who had lost a great number of dairy cattle. He knew some who had kept their dairy stock alive, and had been paying from £10 to £14 per ton for having to feed them, and probably the same thing prevailed on Jimbour. He was speaking recently to a selector on Jimbour, who was formerly a member of this House, and judging from his remarks the selectors on Jimbour were in a very bad way. He appealed to the Minister to extend the time from three to five years and to widen the scope of the Bill, if possible, so as to include selectors on other estates who were suffering like those on Jimbour. This was a matter which affected the farming community. Hon. members opposite, who did not represent farming districts, had a right to look at this matter in a sympathetic way. The Minister for Railways had increased the pay of railway employees considerably, and there was no member on this side who had any objection to that, but they wanted the same treatment meted out to the farmers who were suffering so severely from the present disastrous drought. He believed the Minister, who represented a farming constituency, had sympathy with the farmers. In reading a report in the "Western Star," he noticed that the farmers there were suffering severely from drought conditions.

At 7.47 p.m.,

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Mr. Chairman,—I move that you do now leave the chair.

Question put and passed.

ELECTIONS BILL.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On clause 11—"Disqualifications"—

HON. J. HUXHAM moved the omission on page 6 of "or" on line 17 and subclause (b) and (c) on lines 18 to 28.

* HON. J. TOLMIE did not know the special reasons which had actuated the hon. gentleman in moving the omission of these very important subclauses. All they knew was that the Bill must have received very serious consideration from the members of the Cabinet before it was printed and submitted to the House, and especially this particular clause. Surely they were justified in asking the Minister as to what reasons had actuated him in asking for the deletion of these very important subclauses. For the information

of the Committee, he would read the subclauses proposed to be withdrawn. They read—

"(b) During one year immediately preceding the making of his claim or the holding of the election, has been convicted of drunkenness twelve times, or within that time had been convicted of having committed an aggravated assault upon his wife or of being an idle and disorderly person or an incorrigible rogue or a rogue and vagabond; or

"(c) Has against him an unsatisfied order of any court for the maintenance of his wife or children (whether legitimate or illegitimate)."

Those words were found in the old law, under which it was held that a person, or persons, of this character had not the rights of citizenship, because they did not discharge their duties as citizens. Instead of being worthy citizens they were injurious to the common weal, and for that reason it was thought that they should not be entitled to the exercise of full citizenship. It was now proposed to put aside the disqualification in connection with a man who had been convicted of drunkenness twelve times. If he had been so convicted, he had been a burden on the State, and it had cost the State something to look after him on account of those twelve convictions. A man might commit an aggravated assault on his wife, and would not work but stand up in the street all day long wearing holes in the back of his coat by polishing posts, and was a burden on the State his whole time, yet hon. members opposite said he was worthy of being ranked as a first-class citizen! How the Minister could justify the retention of this clause he did not know. Surely, there could be no sympathy for an incorrigible rogue or vagabond.

HON. J. HUXHAM: Do you mean the rogue who has been found out or the rogue who has not been found out?

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. gentleman need not lose his temper in connection with this matter. The Minister himself was, perhaps, of an exceptionally high moral calibre, and he (Mr. Tolmie) had not the slightest doubt that if they could have a true analysis of the position and understand the whole surrounding of this matter, they might find the hon. gentleman as strong in his denunciation of this amendment as he (Mr. Tolmie) was. Surely they were not going in for a policy of retrogression? Had it not been the boast of hon. members opposite that they wanted to raise the standard of men and women in the State in every direction, and how could they raise the standard by putting a premium on persons of this character—persons who were reprobated in other States where the citizens believed in the maintenance of honour and of a high moral standard? There ought to be no sympathy between hon. members opposite and idle and disorderly persons. Why should such persons be qualified to exercise the franchise? Was not the franchise the greatest right of citizenship? It was a stamp of good citizenship; it was a gift for being a good citizen. Here they were taking away the premium that was placed on it, and dragging it in the dust. Then look at subclause (c), which said—

"Has against him an unsatisfied order of any court for the maintenance of his wife or children (whether legitimate or illegitimate)."

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Here was a person ordered by the court to discharge his paternal duties—a person who had probably allowed his children to be the recipients of charity for their food and clothing—and yet it was proposed to raise him to the high standard of good citizenship and say he was a good fellow and deserving of a vote. And even a worse individual, who, perhaps, had ruined some good citizen of the State and who would not bear the responsibility of his own sin; notwithstanding that, the House was going to say that he should have the mark of a good citizen and be entitled to a vote. Could hon. members opposite justify such a position? How could they go out in the community amongst good citizens—pure men and women—and say they stood for these things, that they stood for the lowest dregs of society, and were going to put them up on a pinnacle of honour? Surely, if they had not lost all sense of decency, they were not going to vote for a proposition of this kind? He could not support an amendment of that sort himself.

Mr. STEVENS was surprised to see the Assistant Home Secretary and the Home Secretary himself sitting silent while such a proposition as this was before the Chamber. He could easily understand how the Home Secretary and the Assistant Home Secretary must feel the stigma that was placed upon them by being compelled, through outside

[8 p.m.] influence, to have such a proposition as the amendment forced upon them. Hon. members opposite had been forced into a pitiable position during the last two sittings of the House. Last night, hon. members opposite showed that their heroics of last year were absolutely hollow and false. They pretended they were the champions of those who had gone to the front, in order to obtain a few votes, but last night hon. members opposite were compelled to support a Bill which contained a provision excluding those members of the community from the full rights of citizenship. To-night they had the humiliating spectacle of hon. gentlemen opposite being forced into the position that they had to withdraw the disqualifying clause from the Bill. He could understand how humiliated the Home Secretary would feel.

The HOME SECRETARY: Don't apologise for me; apologise for yourself.

Mr. STEVENS: He knew the Home Secretary and his colleagues were ashamed of the position into which they had been forced, and he knew they would rather almost forfeit their office than occupy such a position.

Mr. BARNES asked what caused the extraordinary change in the opinions of the Minister in charge of the Bill and his Government? The Committee were entitled to an explanation as to why this safeguarding clause should be omitted from the Bill. It was an extraordinary thing that they should live to see the day when a premium was going to be put upon voters described in the lines they now proposed to omit. The Committee were going to affirm the principle that a man convicted of drunkenness twelve times, a wife beater, a disorderly person, and an incorrigible rogue and vagabond were entitled to a vote. These men were going to be allowed to stand side by side with other citizens of the community. Surely they were dragging the citizenship of respectable people down

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to the dust. The Bill was introduced after due consideration, and now some strange influence was at work to compel the withdrawal of these words. What had happened to cause hon. members to alter the opinion they held when clause 11 was framed? What had caused them to agree to omit those words? The Minister in charge of the Bill should give an explanation, because the people outside would require to know what it meant.

Mr. BAYLEY: He could quite understand the surprise felt by hon. members who had spoken. The Government had prepared the Bill after mature consideration and deliberation, yet, before the Bill had been placed before them for their consideration, they had amendments of such a far-reaching character brought forward. What was the reason for the change of opinion? Was it due to outside pressure?

Hon. J. HUXHAM: I assure you there was no outside pressure.

Mr. BAYLEY: It must be that the Government thought they were going to lose a good many votes by including that provision in the Act.

Mr. COOPER: What about Christ and the woman? "Go thou, woman, and sin no more." Where is your christian charity?

Mr. BAYLEY: The withdrawal of the subclause was due to outside pressure.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: I tell you it is not; you must take my word for it.

Mr. BAYLEY: He was quite prepared to take the Minister's word. There would be a lot of decent men and women absolutely disappointed and disgusted with the action taken by the Government. The idea of members of Parliament should be to raise the standard of citizenship and of voters generally. But if the amendment were accepted, no matter how degenerate a man might be—no matter what kind of a sot he was, or what kind of an undesirable person he was—he would be entitled to the franchise on equal terms with a man who was an ideal citizen and who was respectable in every sense of the word.

Mr. FOLEY: And yet you would be glad to get him to work for you at low wages.

Mr. BAYLEY: He believed in paying good wages and treating men fairly, and before he came into Parliament he employed nearly fifty men, and he believed he got nearly all their votes.

The HOME SECRETARY: They were not Labour men.

Mr. STEVENS: They were decent men. They would not father such a thing as this amendment.

Mr. BAYLEY: Seeing that the Government had gone so far it was a wonder they did not go further. He noticed that the Minister had left in the words "no person who is of unsound mind, and no person attainted of treason, should be qualified to be enrolled." Why was that allowed to stand? I am quite certain that the Government would receive solid support from this class of citizen.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We have to make room for some of your supporters. (Laughter.)

Mr. BAYLEY: If a man was convicted of drunkenness twelve times in a year, he must be drunk pretty well the whole of his

time, and yet under the amendment he would be entitled to have a vote. There were many men who took a drink, and yet who were good citizens. Many men occasionally took too much and became intoxicated and still they might be good citizens, but to give a man who was convicted of drunkenness twelve times in a year the right to vote, was an absurdity.

Mr. POLLOCK: He is only unlucky, that is all.

Mr. BAYLEY: They were foolish. A great deal of the poverty that existed to-day that was put down to low wages and bad luck were due to a man's own foolishness. The Government should take steps to improve the standard of living, but they should not increase drunkenness and vagabondism by granting the right of the franchise to such men. There was a tendency in Labour circles to make men like so many pegs in a basket regardless of what their position was or of their desires or their characters. They saw men who were indifferent, lazy workmen placed on the same footing as men who did their work well and were worth three times as much to their employer. He had in his memory a case which happened just a little time ago. A contractor had a large job in hand, and amongst the men he had a bricklayer, a good workman, who was, however, addicted to drunkenness. He would come within the category of men who were convicted twelve times in one year, and he frequently turned up at work drunk and absented himself from work for days and, perhaps, a week at a time. On one occasion he turned up drunk and was told that his conduct would have to cease. Two or three days afterwards he appeared again rolling drunk and his walking ticket was given to him. The whole of the men, who were unionists, left the job, and the contractor had to face the problem of getting fresh labour.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: Are you prepared to give chapter and verse for that?

Mr. BAYLEY: He was prepared to give the man's name. He was telling them what was absolutely true. What the unionists were doing outside, the Government were attempting to do in Parliament. They were attempting to place drunkards and profligates—not only men who would ruin a helpless girl, but would also refuse to obey the dictates of the law—on equal terms with a man who was a good citizen. (Government dissent.)

Mr. STEVENS: That is true.

Mr. BERTRAM: It is an absolute lie.

Mr. BAYLEY: The party opposite claimed that they had stood for purity of rolls and politics. Why should the Government change their opinion so soon as they changed from one side to the other? He knew that the Minister in charge of the Bill was not in favour of this amendment.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: I am, or I would not have introduced it.

Mr. BAYLEY: He knew more than one Minister and quite a large number of private members opposite who must perforce be opposed to the amendment. He knew them too well to think that they would favour such a course, and he was sorry that they had been forced into such a position. He was surprised that so many men in the

Labour party who were good living fellows, men who had continually stood for what was good and right and the fair thing, should support such a proposal as this.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: It is levelling up.

Mr. BAYLEY: They believed in lifting them up, but they believed in setting a good example and giving a good reward. The franchise was the reward, the right of every man who was a good citizen and not a drunkard, wifebeater, and incorrigible rogue.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: You want to condemn the drunkard to outer darkness.

Mr. BAYLEY: No; they wanted to lift him up just as they wanted to lift up every man who wanted help, but they wanted to hold up a good example to the drunkard, the profligate, and the waster, so that he might be incited to live a better life and be worthy of the trust which was reposed in him.

Mr. CARTER: Like the Pharisee, thanking God that you are not as other men are.

Mr. BAYLEY: There were men who did not pose as saints or bigots who were just as earnest as he was in that matter. There were men on both sides who were far from being pharisaical who felt as he did, and it was not necessary for a man to be a bigot or a Pharisee to be in favour of what he was saying at the present time. It was only necessary for a man to be a man.

Mr. VOWLES: When the Bill was introduced these disqualifications were in existence, and it seemed to be an afterthought that they were to be deleted. The leader of the Opposition moved an amendment that the habitual drunkard should be included in the disqualifications. Then, suddenly, the whole principle of the Government supporters seemed to change. They seemed to realise suddenly that there was one section of their supporters on whom they would probably cast a slur if they did not withdraw them from the disqualification section by excluding every man other than a criminal. A person who had been convicted of drunkenness twelve times or had been found to be an habitual drunkard had been excluded from the present Act.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: What about the fellow who gets drunk and is not convicted?

Mr. VOWLES: It was a question of conviction. Why should the Government desire to alter it in the last twenty-four hours as it were? When they came together and framed the Bill, they were perfectly satisfied to have it as it had been from time immemorial. He did not know what an habitual drunkard was—it was a question in the discretion of the magistrate—and he did not think that twelve times in one year would not be a very fair thing, because they knew that the Police Force did not bring drunkards before the court unless it was absolutely necessary. They let them go in hundreds of cases. He had lived in the country and he had seen them leading the labouring men home, and he had heard magistrates tell the police that it was their duty to do it, and not lock them up unless it was absolutely necessary. Now they were going further. The man who committed not an ordinary assault on his wife but who had committed an aggravated assault—who had done something desperate and whose wife

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had found it necessary to come into court to convict him of a criminal or quasi-criminal charge—was going to escape. He had not only lost his rights and his citizenship—or rather he would have done so under the Bill as they wished it—but he had lost all sense of decency, because he turned round and beat his wife and children. They had always thought that if he wanted the rights of citizenship he should behave himself. Then there was the idle and disorderly person under the Vagrancy Act, and the incorrigible rogue. Somebody suggested that it was an accident or a misfortune that a man became an incorrigible rogue. But the very word “incorrigible” meant a man who was robbing the public by trickery, a man who was taking down the public by petty thefts and miserable little subterfuges, and he it was who could be charged under the Vagrancy Act as an incorrigible rogue.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Will it apply to business men?

Mr. VOWLES: He knew one business man who came under it.

Mr. COLLINS: It could even apply to lawyers.

Mr. VOWLES: It could apply to lawyers and it could even apply to members of Parliament.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: Did they put him in gaol?

Mr. VOWLES: He got the benefit of the Code. The Chief Justice said that he was astonished to think that it had been done. He thought the Minister knew of the case. At any rate, he was challenged at the last election on the ground that he had been convicted as a rogue and a vagabond and he lost his vote. That principle was being disturbed. Then they had the man who would not support his wife or his children, whether they were legitimate or otherwise, and had orders against him by the court. He was convicted as being a man who had lost his respect as a father and a husband, and yet they were going to encourage him. They believed in trying to uplift him by saying, “If you are going to become an individual of this class you are going to become a marked man. If you do not do as your neighbour does and the general public are supposed to do, then you are going to be deprived of the one thing we understand we are always rowing about from one side of the House to the other—your electoral rights or your citizenship.” Here they were discussing a particular clause in an Elections Bill, and why did every party bring before Parliament an Elections Bill? It was all because of that right of citizenship, or, in other words, that right of creating Governments. It was all very well to say that they were trying to stamp a man down—jump on him.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: That is what you are doing.

Mr. VOWLES: Why did the Minister become inspired during the last few hours—suddenly realise that he had made a mistake? Was it because of the fact that an amendment was moved, or that there was a caucus that afternoon?

Hon. J. HUXHAM: They came in simultaneously.

Mr. VOWLES: They knew that there was a caucus, and probably they got their instructions. He could not for the life of him

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see how anybody could take umbrage at the retention of these two subclauses. They had always been in their law and never had been taken exception to by anybody. When the Bill was discussed before, the provision went through without discussion. Certainly, it was not in the Commonwealth laws, because it was impossible—they had to take all the States into consideration. But if they took their Labour election laws in other States they would find that these disqualifications existed. They were told that they were going to be ahead of the times. To his mind, they were getting a little bit too far ahead of the times. So far as they could see, they had had instances in which they were encouraging what was described in the House as lawlessness. They were not discouraging certain individuals who had been penalised in a respect that many men would feel much more than if it affected their pockets—their rights of citizenship and their right to return persons of their way of thinking to Parliament. They wanted the provisions as a deterrent in some cases, probably; and at any rate, if they were not that, they did no harm. He would like to know what the inspiration was which had so recently caused the Minister to change his mind. How could he justify the alteration in his opinion since the Bill was printed, and how could he explain why it came along simultaneously with the amendment by the leader of the Opposition amplifying the clause in a certain direction? As he said before, the hon. gentleman seemed to have got the cue from someone or somewhere.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: I did not know what the leader of the Opposition was bringing in.

Mr. VOWLES: Well, he took the hon. gentleman's word on that point. The hon. gentleman had not attempted to justify the deletion of these subclauses.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: I am going to do it.

Mr. VOWLES: He should be interested to hear what the explanation was and why the inspiration had come about so recently.

HON. J. HUXHAM: Hon. members opposite were very much concerned about the deletion of these two subclauses. He contended that subclause (a) covered the whole case as far as persons who had [8.30 p.m.] been convicted were concerned.

Members could not mention any of the persons specified in subclauses (b) and (c) who should not be in gaol, and there was not one of those whom he would not rather see in gaol than outside exercising the franchise. It was vile hypocrisy on the part of members on the other side of the House to argue that only those who were hailed before a court should be treated in the way proposed in this clause. He had known men occupying prominent positions in the community who had done all these things, and yet they were let loose on the community; nothing was done to them simply because they seemed to have around them a halo of sanctity or protection.

Mr. MORGAN: A very lame excuse.

HON. J. HUXHAM: If those persons were found out and punished, they would come under the disabilities imposed by the clause, but they had all the protection of society around them and were let loose on the community. He contended that subclause (a)

amply covered the whole field. He was surprised at some members on the other side setting themselves up as being something beyond the common. He remembered on one occasion going to a prominent official and pleading for a man to be reinstated in employment. He had a very tough job, but he succeeded. The official said to him, "You know the proverb in the old doggerel—

"There is much that is good in the worst of us,

There is much that is bad in the best of us,
And it little becomes the best of us,
To find fault with the rest of us."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. HUXHAM: He did not know any time when that came home to them so strongly as it did on this particular occasion, and he was not going to condemn people because they had fallen. He would do all he could not to "quench the smoking flax" nor "break the bruised reed." He should like members opposite to remember the teachings of their early days—that they should not condemn the man who sinned once, twice, or three times, but should rather turn his attention away from the punishment and assist him to start afresh. (Hear, hear!) Members opposite could not justify any other position if they had a high sense of their responsibility to the community and desired to assist those who had fallen by the wayside more than once. He knew his own weaknesses, and because he had a full sense of them he would be tender to those who had fallen by the wayside and had been punished. He would give them all the help he possibly could, and would be no party to denying them the franchise after they had served a sentence. It had been said that in proposing this amendment he had been moved by some outside influence. Nothing of the sort. One or two hon. members on his own side of the House spoke to him on the subject and one said he was going to bring it forward. He said, "No, I will take the matter in hand myself and move the omission of those subclauses." The amendment emanated from inside the party, and he was not ashamed to say that he believed he did the right thing in moving it. All the cases mention in subclauses (b) and (c) were covered by subclause (a).

HON. J. TOLMIE: Do I understand you to say that you moved the amendment on your own initiative, without the sanction of the Cabinet?

HON. J. HUXHAM: He had already told the Committee that members of the party spoke to him about the matter and he shouldered the whole responsibility for the amendment. There had been no outside influence in the matter.

MR. BARNES: You do not know who moved them.

HON. J. HUXHAM: He did.

HON. J. TOLMIE: You do not know whether the Cabinet approved of it?

HON. J. HUXHAM: Every member of the Cabinet approved of it, and the whole party shared the responsibility, and were behind the amendment. He sincerely hoped that members opposite would drop the clap-net that they were moved by outside influences.

MR. MORGAN: The Minister had treated them to a most illogical speech. First of all he told them that he did not believe in the provisions contained in subclauses (b) and (c), and then straightaway said that subclause (a) covered all the persons who would be deprived of the franchise under subclauses (b) and (c). What did the hon. gentleman mean? He did not think the hon. gentleman knew himself. Certainly, all that the Committee knew was that there had been some undercurrent at work, or that the amendment was the result of some after thought, as when the Bill was approved by the Cabinet it contained those two subclauses, and when it came before the caucus it still contained those provisions, and they were agreed to. But after the Bill was made public, some members of the party said that subclauses (b) and (c) would have to be deleted. What was the reason for this change of opinion?

MR. CORSER was sorry the Minister was deleting these two subsections. The hon. gentleman wanted them to swallow the idea that he was omitting them because he wished to do justice to people who were down and whom members of the Opposition were trying to keep down. At the same time, he claimed that all the persons mentioned in subclauses (b) and (c) were covered by subclause (a), so that there was no necessity for the two latter provisions. Subclause (a) applied to persons "under sentence or subject to be sentenced." He could not understand the Minister's explanation, but he certainly thought that the omission of the two subclauses was in the interests of "Bill Sykes."

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What does "Mr. Fegan" say about it?

MR. CORSER: Anybody who committed an aggravated assault upon his wife should not be encouraged in his conduct by allowing him the same franchise and freedom as an ordinary citizen. It was not from a desire to keep those people down that members of the Opposition opposed the omission of those two subclauses.

MR. H. L. HARTLEY: Who puts them down? The wine and spirit merchants.

MR. CORSER: As hon. members would see, they applied only to persons permitting the offences mentioned twelve months previous to an election. Members on his side did not ask that a man who took a nip sometimes should be excluded from the franchise, and that clause did not provide that such a person should be excluded. It provided that if a man was convicted of drunkenness twelve times during one year immediately preceding an election, he should not be allowed to exercise the franchise. If the loss of the franchise was going to assist in any way such a man to keep off the drink, why not give him that assistance? Apparently the Government would rather fill the gaols with those people. In many cases it was quite sufficient to take away the vote from these men, but, instead of taking their vote away, as they did by putting them in gaol, they took their vote away and put them in gaol as well. Was it not better to give them just one punishment, as they would probably find that these people would not then be convicted? They surely were not here to advocate that anybody who might take a nip too often should be excluded, but what they did say was that

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an incorrigible rogue and vagabond should not have the same franchise as good citizens. A man who neglected to maintain his wife and children should be shown that the electors of Queensland were expecting something better from him and that, when he could step into a line as a decent citizen, he could get his vote. The withdrawal of the punishment, as proposed by the Minister on one side, although he claimed on the other side that he was not doing so, made it easier for a "Bill Sykes" to exist.

Mr. BEBBINGTON was very much surprised that two Ministers like those in charge of the Home Office did not withdraw this clause. He believed they had very high ideas of home life. What had more influence in building up character than home life? They had hon. members talking here and claiming the support of wine and spirit merchants. Did not the party opposite make a bargain with the liquor trade before the election?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: No, no! Absolutely no.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That they would not hurt the trade if it would help them. (Government dissent.)

Mr. GILLIES: Your party did.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask hon. members on my right to cease interjecting, and permit the hon. member to proceed with his speech.

Mr. GILLIES rose to a point of order. Was the hon. member justified in saying that this party made a compact with the liquor trade prior to the last election?

The CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Travellers in Asia told them that in that country it was no sin to steal, but that the sin was in being found out. They had not got very far beyond that here. By striking out these subclauses the Ministers were simply giving encouragement to wife-beaters and men who deserted their wives and homes. They were practically saying, in the name of the Government, that they approved of that action, because they simply said, "We will not give you any punishment, as we do not think you deserve any." He should vote against the amendment.

Mr. MURPHY congratulated the Minister upon his good sense in withdrawing these words.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MURPHY: It seemed to him a most ridiculous stand to take up that because a man had been convicted twelve times of drunkenness he should be deprived of his vote. It was only the man who had been convicted who was going to be deprived of his vote. The rich man who had a motor-car, and could come out of his club and stagger into the car, could go down to the polling-booth and vote, but the poor unfortunate who had been convicted—a man whose only fault was probably that he took a drop too much and was unfortunate enough for a policeman to have a set on him—every time that man staggered a little, a huge policeman grabbed him and ran him into the lockup, and next morning the magistrate added to the number of his convictions. Anyone who lived in the back country knew that some men who came into

town were convicted three or four times before they went out. It was a fundamental principle of British justice that a man should not be punished twice for one offence.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: That is the point.

Mr. MURPHY: He always gave them the point. (Laughter.)

Mr. GILDAY: Do you ever give them a pint? (Laughter.)

Mr. MURPHY had often given them a pint when they came out; he believed in doing a good turn. Did they think for a moment that if a man in his (Mr. Murphy's) electorate had been locked up on a hot night and been convicted next morning of drunkenness, and told by the police magistrate to "go and sin no more," he (Mr. Murphy) would offer him a water bag when he came out of the lockup? He would say, "Come along and have a pint, it will do you good." (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MURPHY: He would not be like the hon. member for Drayton, who drank hot milk.

Mr. GILLIES: He would give you butter-milk.

Mr. MURPHY: Buttermilk was no good, and did not last for any length of time in a hot place like Croydon. (Laughter.) The Home Secretary included these two subclauses in the Bill when it was framed, but discovering after going into matters that he would be doing an injustice, was now withdrawing them. A man who had served his punishment for an offence, came out in the community as a free man once more, and was entitled to all the rights and privileges bestowed on free citizens. That was the point hon. members were getting away from, but it was one which the Home Secretary had seen.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That point is worth all the quibbles on the other side.

Mr. MURPHY: It was a good one.

Hon. J. TOLEME: How does that point apply to subclause (c)?

Mr. MURPHY: He was dealing now with subclause (b). He believed in taking one step at a time. Subclause (c) said—

"Has against him an unsatisfied order of any court for the maintenance of his wife or children (whether legitimate or illegitimate)."

Hon. J. HUXHAM: They should be in gaol under any circumstances.

Mr. MURPHY: The law already provided certain punishment for people of this description, and it was the duty of the authorities to see that the law was put into operation. If the law did not compel these people to satisfy the judgment against them that was the fault of the law. Why not punish the man for the misdemeanour with which he was charged, and not say to him, "Because the law has not compelled you to satisfy the judgment which has been given against you, we are going to debar you from going to the polling-booth and exercising your right of citizenship." There might be some good citizens who might be unable through force of circumstances to meet debts which they owed. He had often been placed in that unfortunate position himself—

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(laughter)—but he had never been placed in the unfortunate position enumerated in subclause (c). (Laughter.) No one had had a judgment against him for the maintenance of a wife. Although members might accuse him of quite a number of crimes—in fact, of all the crimes which came within the Decalogue—there was one they could not accuse him of, and that was of having tried to murder his mother-in-law. (Renewed laughter.) He thought it had been pretty well shown that, so far as these particular subclauses were concerned, there was no necessity to have them in the Bill. If a man got drunk, the law punished him; if he failed to satisfy a judgment of the court, the law could step in and either imprison him, if he had no goods and chattels, or let him go; but the law had no right to inflict two sentences upon a man for the one misdemeanour. Hon. members on this side who were claiming that the subclauses should be retained in the Bill were urging that the man should be sentenced twice for one offence.

Mr. MORGAN: The Minister says they come under subclause (a).

Mr. MURPHY: What he said was that the people who had been convicted would have no opportunity of recording their vote; once a man was convicted and put in gaol, he lost the rights of citizenship. The Home Secretary was not proposing to establish polling-booths at Boggo road or St. Helena, or the various other penal establishments in the State, although it would be much handier to establish a polling-booth in such places than it would be to establish one on the Gallipoli peninsula or in Egypt. He was very glad that the Minister had withdrawn the two subclauses. The mere fact of a man being convicted twelve times for drunkenness might be an accident. (Laughter.) A man might have accidentally run up against the same policeman twelve times, or the policeman by accident might have run against him. (Laughter.) Most policemen, if they saw a man staggering about, realised that if they did not do their duty and take him to a place of safety, there were quite a number of people in Parliament and out of Parliament who would condemn his action in letting the man go. He had had a very long experience on the country Press and had reported police court cases for many years, and what he was saying was perfectly correct. In Rosewood, Drayton, or some of those districts, there might be no opportunity of these things happening.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They are "vowwers" there.

Mr. MURPHY: He knew that in many outside places the policeman, realising that it was in the interests of the bushman to lock him up as speedily as possible when he came into town, in order that he might save his money, ran him in, and the result was that it was very easy, if a man visited town once a month, to have twelve convictions against him during the year; and, because of that, some hon. members wanted to deprive him of a vote; whereas a man who got drunk every night in the week and got home easily was to be allowed to record his vote. The law provided opportunities for men to get drunk, and before they deprived a man of his vote for convictions for drunkenness they should take away the opportunity for

that man to get drunk. Even in Parliament they had hon. members getting up and advocating the abolition of the parliamentary refreshment bar to do away with the possibilities of members getting drunk. He congratulated the Home Secretary on the excellent judgment which he had displayed in connection with the amendment.

Mr. GUNN: The Minister had said that subclause (a) practically covered all the other offences underneath. If that were so, they should let the whole clause stand. They did not punish offenders just for the pleasure of punishing them, but more to act as a warning and to prevent them from doing wrong again, and as it was a punishment to some men to take away their vote from them, he did not see why they should not use that punishment and so prevent a man from getting drunk or from beating his wife. It often happened that if a man was imprisoned for drunkenness, his wife would have to go out washing to earn enough money to pay his fine, but, if a man was afraid of losing his vote, he would probably refrain from getting drunk. The same applied to a man who beat his wife; if he were punished by having his vote taken away from him, he would not offend in that way again.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: There are regular blackguards who beat their wives when they are not drunk, and they should be in gaol all the time.

Mr. GUNN: He quite agreed with the Minister. He did not see that the rich should be exempt any more than the poor. He did not advocate class legislation. He did not wish to impute any motives, nor did he suggest that the amendment came from any quarter. He admitted that the Minister was humanely administering the different Acts. He looked through the Trades Hall bible and he could not see anything there relating to the amendment. (Laughter.) He hoped the Minister would leave the clause as it stood.

Mr. PETRIE knew that the Minister desired to do the correct thing and was sincere in wishing to delete this particular part of clause 11. He thought, though, that it was a mistake to omit that part of the clause, because it might be a deterrent to people from committing offences. If these men thought they would lose their votes they would be more careful. He noticed that there was no provision to give a vote to the aboriginal natives of Australia.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. PETRIE: He thought that if they were going to give a vote to a man who had been convicted twelve times of drunkenness, then an intelligent aboriginal should have a vote. When Sir Arthur Morgan was Premier, and he (Mr. Petrie) was sitting in Opposition with sixteen others, they tried to bring in an amendment to give the aboriginals a vote but they did not succeed.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman will not proceed on those lines. We are not dealing with aboriginals at present.

Mr. PETRIE: The clause appeared in all Elections Acts, and the Government were making a mistake in leaving it out of this Bill.

Mr. Petrie.]

HON. J. TOLMIE: The Minister had not given any reason why he should omit the sub-clause, especially as it existed in other Acts in the other States.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is not in the Commonwealth Act.

HON. J. TOLMIE: In the Elections Act passed in New South Wales three years ago the following persons were disqualified from having a vote:—

“Every person who—

(a) Is of unsound mind;

(b) Is in the receipt of aid from any public charitable institution, except as a patient under treatment for accident or disease at a hospital;

(c) Is in prison under any conviction;

(d) Has been convicted of any crime or offence for which he might have been lawfully sentenced to death or penal servitude and has not received a free pardon therefor, or served the sentence passed on him;

(e) During six months preceding the holding of any election has been imprisoned without the option of a fine for an aggregate period of three months;

(f) Within one year prior to the holding of any election has been convicted of bribery, intimidation, impersonation, or any other similar offence at an election;

(g) During one year prior to the holding of any election has been convicted of being an habitual drunkard, an idle and disorderly person, or incorrigible rogue, or a rogue and vagabond;

(h) Has against him an unsatisfied order of any court for the maintenance of his wife or children whether legitimate or illegitimate;

(i) Has been convicted of having committed an aggravated assault upon his wife within one year.”

The Minister said that all the offences were covered by subclause (a), but he (Mr. Tolmie) could not see it. By accepting the amendment, the Chamber would not earn the commendation of those persons outside whose good opinion was valued by members of the House. It was not a party matter. They, as representatives of the people, should pass legislation that would be for the good and wellbeing of the people, and anything that tended to deteriorate the moral fibre of the people should not find a place in the legislation of the State. The amendment was encouraging the degradation of the people instead of raising the standard of morality in the community. That was the way in which honest men and women and clean-minded men and women outside the Chamber would look at it. If a man stole a horse, they would take away from him his right of citizenship, but they allowed a man who did worse things than stealing a horse to have a vote. That was the weakness of the whole thing. Members would be failing in their trust and in their duty if they excised the subclauses as proposed by the Minister. (Hear, hear!)

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Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Huxham's amendment on clause 11*) stand part of the question—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 16.

Mr. Armstrong	Mr. Hodge
„ Barnes	„ Moore
„ Bayley	„ Morgan
„ Bebbington	„ Petrie
„ Bell	„ Stevens
„ Corser	„ Stodart
„ Grayson	„ Tolmie
„ Gunn	„ Vowles

Tellers: Mr. Petrie and Mr. Stevens.

NOES, 29.

Mr. Bertram	Mr. Larcombe
„ Bowman	„ Lennon
„ Carter	„ McLachlan
„ Collins	„ Murphy
„ Cooper	„ O'ullivan
„ Dunstan	„ Payne
„ Fihelly	„ Peterson
„ Foley	„ Pollock
„ Gilday	„ Ryan, D.
„ Gillies	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Hartley, H. L.	„ Smith
„ Hunter	„ Stoford
„ Huxham	„ Wellington
„ Jones, A. J.	„ Winstanley
„ Land	

Tellers: Mr. Collins and Mr. Cooper.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Lieut.-Colonel Rankin, Mr. Macartney, Mr. Swayne, Mr. Booker, Mr. Appel, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Somerset, Mr. Walker, and Mr. Bridges.

Noes—Mr. T. J. Ryan, Mr. McPhail, Mr. Theodore, Mr. W. Hartley, Mr. Adamson, Mr. Gledson, Mr. T. L. Jones, Mr. Free, and Mr. Barber.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 12 to 18, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 19—“Persons entitled to have their names on roll”—

Mr. BARNES moved an amendment to line 53, page 8, to omit the word “live,” with a view to the insertion in lieu thereof of the words “or were enrolled.” He thought that the amendment would be in accord with the idea of the Minister and the framers of the Bill, which evidently was that a person in a charitable institution should record his vote for the place in which he lived, and it was in order to make the purpose of the framers of the Bill clearer in that direction that the amendment was proposed. The whole purpose of the clause was that the voter should record his vote for the place where he had put in the whole of his lifetime. He could concede that the proposed amendment would not apply to old inmates of institutions, because they would not have been under the compulsory enrolment provisions, but seeing that they were legislating for the future, it would be apparent at once that the voters should vote in the district in which they lived. They knew, however, that many persons on their way to institutions might spend some short time in the various cities or towns. People congregated from distant parts in the larger towns, and from there wended their way to the various institutions. Under the clause as it stood those persons would be held to have lived immediately prior to their entry into the institution in those larger cities. They knew that memory with many persons as they became aged was a departing thing, and they imagined that, because they

lived in the city or town for some few weeks, that that was the place where their names should be recorded as voters.

Mr. BERTRAM: Would not your amendment prevent a person who had not been enrolled from ever becoming enrolled?

Mr. BARNES: Not by any means. The idea was that a person, say, from his own electorate, who transferred to Dunwich, should enjoy a vote for Warwick. He had been on the Warwick roll.

Mr. CARTER: Supposing he had not been on any roll?

Mr. BARNES: They were under new laws, and there was compulsory enrolment and voting, and the idea was to affirm the very principle that the framers of the Bill had recognised in the clause, which read—

“Inmates of charitable institutions shall be deemed, for the purposes of this Act, to live in the electoral districts in which they respectively lived immediately prior to their becoming such inmates.”

The amendment would substitute for “lived” the words “were enrolled.”

Hon. J. HUXHAM: What of the person who had not been enrolled?

Mr. BARNES: The very fact of clause 19 appearing indicated that the framers of the Bill had the idea that the people lived somewhere prior to entering the asylum, and the idea was to put the whole position beyond a doubt.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: The words had been put in designedly, as many old people would not know the place where they had been enrolled. They would apply from all over the State—Burketown or Charters Towers, for instance, and it was known very well that they had lived there, because their applications to go into the institutions would identify them. It simplified the whole matter, and he did not think that the member need emphasise it, because it was not a matter of importance.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: In some electorates it is.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: In some cases it might be, but not in most cases.

Mr. VOWLES: Why do you say “immediately prior”?

Hon. J. HUXHAM: Where he last came from. The hon. member must know that many persons did not know the date of their birth, and yet they would have a vote. There was such an amount of information in one way or another required in connection with enrolment that he thought the hon. member might withdraw his amendment, because he was sure that he did not desire to deprive them of a vote now that they had made provision that it was not to be a block vote.

* Hon. J. TOLMIE thought that the hon. member was quite right in bringing forward this amendment, because he could see that in some instances institutions might be loaded with a number of persons who were passing through to Dunwich who had no connection with that particular constituency for any time, and who really knew nothing at all about it. And if their memory was so defective that they could not say where they were enrolled or lived, then he was sure

they could not exercise very wise discretion in an election. He would give a case in point. In Toowoomba, Rockhampton, and Charters Towers, there were benevolent institutions where the accommodation was limited. It was a common practice, for instance, for persons on their way to Dunwich to drop in at the Brodribb Home in Toowoomba and stay six weeks while their admission was being arranged. That qualified them for enrolment in the Toowoomba electorate. They had no connection with it; they were merely sojourners, just passing through, and they had passed all their lives somewhere else.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: “Passing through” does not mean “live.”

Hon. J. TOLMIE: If they had been there for a month, they were qualified for a vote.

If twenty or thirty passed [9.30 p.m.] through Rockhampton or Toowoomba or Charters Towers in a year, those twenty or thirty were to be permanently put on the roll for those districts, although they knew nothing about their interests. The hon. gentleman could easily alter the phraseology.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: Will you accept the insertion of the words “or enrolled”?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Yes, if the hon. gentleman would insert after the word “lived” the words “or were enrolled.”

Hon. J. HUXHAM: I will accept that if the hon. member moves it.

Mr. BARNES: With the permission of the Committee, he would withdraw his amendment with the view of proposing the one suggested by the Minister.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn

Mr. BARNES moved that after the word “lived” on line 53 the words “or were enrolled” be inserted.

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 20—“Addition of new names”—put and passed.

On clause 21—“Claims for enrolment”—

Hon. J. HUXHAM moved that the words “an elector of the same district,” on lines 13 and 14 be omitted, with the view of inserting the words “any elector.”

Hon. J. TOLMIE: The substitution of the words “any elector” for the words “an elector of the same district” would remove a safeguard over the purity of the roll. How would an electoral registrar know, when he received a claim, that it was properly witnessed, if it could be witnessed by “any elector”? If the claim was witnessed by an elector of the same electoral district, the registrar would know from his own roll whether the person witnessing the claim was an elector or not. But he would not have that knowledge if the claim could be witnessed by “any elector.” The result of passing the amendment would be that a conscientious electoral registrar might disfranchise hundreds of persons, because their claims were not witnessed by persons whom he could identify. He might say, “I have not got all the rolls of the State at my command; this name does not appear on any roll that I have; and I do not know whether

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he is an elector or not, so I will reject the claim." On the other hand, a less conscientious man might accept any claim, even though it was not properly witnessed. He did not see that anything was to be gained by removing the safeguard which the clause contained. There had been some alterations of a most astounding character made in the measure that afternoon, and the amendments had not been printed and circulated. Possibly they might have been discussed by the caucus.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: No.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Then he gathered that hon. members opposite were also ignorant of the intention to propose this amendment, and that it came as a thunderclap to them.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: It was casually mentioned by hon. members that they would like to have the amendment made, in order to bring our law in accordance with the Commonwealth law, and I see no objection to it.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He saw a very strong objection to it, and he submitted that amendments should not be accepted because they had been "casually mentioned." Their full import should be considered before they were submitted to the Committee.

Mr. VOWLES was very sorry the amendment had been moved, because it would give an opening for corruption. As the Bill was presented to the Committee, it proposed to continue a system under which the electoral registrar would be in a position to identify a person who witnessed a claim. The registrar kept the claims of all individuals on the roll for his electorate, and if he had any doubt as to the *bonâ fides* of a person witnessing a claim, all he had to do was to turn up that person's claim form and compare the signature on it with the signature of the witness on the new claim. But if the amendment proposed were adopted, the registrar would not have that means of identification, and he would not even know whether the person witnessing a claim was on any roll in the State. A person in Brisbane might have applied for enrolment, and his application might have reached a certain stage, but his name might not have yet appeared on the roll.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: If he is not on the roll, he will not be an elector.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman knew that under this measure, immediately preceding an election, when it was not possible to print a roll, a type-written roll containing additions to a roll might be used, and that it was just before an election took place that these malpractices usually occurred. He knew of cases where claims had been sent out signed by a justice of the peace in blank. They should not leave any opening for malpractices if it could be avoided. The clause as it stood contained a safeguard with regard to the witnessing of electoral claims, but, if it was amended in the way proposed, it would open the door to fraud. He had here a cutting taken from a Bundaberg paper, which read—

"In the cases that were contested the police magistrate several times remarked that the applicants for enrolment appeared to have no idea of the seriousness attached to the business they had

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in hand. To his mind the proceedings showed that those responsible for putting in the claims were too careless altogether. In one instance Mr. Hamilton produced a letter from William Henry Mendy, a labourer, of Fairmead, in reply to the objection lodged against the acceptance of his application for enrolment, saying that those men had induced him to sign the claim, although he had told them he had not been two months in the electorate."

Did they want anything further as far as justices were concerned? He was pleased they had knocked out justices. Under this clause that principle was knocked out altogether, and if they left the clause as it originally stood, it was the best thing they could have, because there were means of identification; but if they changed it to "any elector," there were no means of identifying him. There was a range of mountains between his electorate and the coast electorates. If a man signed the claim of an elector at the Burnett, was it possible that the registrar, when he dealt with that claim, would know that that individual was in existence? He might not be entitled to be enrolled or vote as an elector. What chance had the registrar of doing his duty? Why put them in a false position, and leave a loophole for fraud when you could possibly help it?

Mr. H. J. RYAN: There would be no necessity for fraud under this Bill; everybody would be on the roll. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. VOWLES: They would be on the roll and on several rolls, and that was one of the things which they wanted to block. If there was any political fraud, it should be the object of the framers of the Bill to make every possible safeguard against it, and not create loopholes.

Mr. STEVENS regretted that the amendment had been moved by the Minister without any notice having been given, and the least the Minister could do was to give the Committee some reason as to why it was moved.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: It is self-evident.

Mr. STEVENS: The arguments brought forward on this side showed clearly that if the amendment was adopted in its present form it would be open to great abuse. It was too vague to permit "any elector" to witness the claim; he might be an elector of Tasmania, New Zealand, or the United Kingdom. (Government dissent.)

Hon. J. A. FIBELLY: Read the definition of "elector."

Mr. STEVENS: The electoral registrars would have no means of finding out whether a witness was qualified or not, unless the words in the Bill as brought down were allowed to remain, so that the witness must be an elector of the same district as the registrar was engaged in. He gave hon. members opposite credit for wishing to have a pure roll, but unless the words were retained in the Bill, the registrar would have no means of finding out whether a claim was genuinely witnessed and made.

Mr. CORSER said that the Minister had been courteous enough to notify the amendment to this part of the Chamber this afternoon. For reasons of safety he was sorry

that the Government sought to make provision for any elector to witness a claim. It would make it possible for political roll-stuffing to take place on the part of any party. He could give an instance in his own electorate of an outsider coming in and going round securing claim forms. To enrol one elector he brought a claim form signed by an individual in the district, and asked the elector to witness the claim form as he would know the signature on the claim, but that elector did not sign the form, as he could neither read nor write. That elector had now been put on the roll. Surely the Government desired to have clean rolls? The Opposition only asked that the Bill as introduced should stand good. This was a serious matter. They knew the troubles in connection with the Commonwealth roll, which did not provide for a clean roll; there was no machinery for it.

At 9.55 p.m.,

Mr. BERTRAM relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. LARCOMBE said that the fears of hon. members opposite were entirely unsubstantiated by fact or history. Under the Federal Act it was not necessary to be an elector to witness a claim. The Federal representatives of hon. members opposite had control of the Federal Treasury benches for eighteen months, and went for a policy of electoral purification, with the result that the Federal Government went back stronger than ever. That showed conclusively that the charges levelled against the Fisher Administration were unfounded. The Cook Administration never dreamed of abolishing any provision which enabled any person who was likely to become an elector witnessing a claim. The provision proposed to be inserted by the amendment was somewhat more Conservative than that which obtained in the Federal Act, and the object which hon. members sought to achieve by their opposition would be really defeated if the amendment was negatived. There was only a street separating the electorates of Normanby and Keppel, but under the present Act an elector of Normanby could not witness a claim by an applicant living across the road, while he could witness the claim of an elector living hundreds of miles away up at St. Lawrence. The absurdity of the thing was evident. Hon. members opposite talked about malpractices, but were there not penalties provided for violation of any clause in the Act when it became law?

Mr. MOORE: How will you catch them?

Mr. LARCOMBE: The same as any other offender was caught. The amendment was a good one, and no danger would result from its acceptance.

Mr. GUNN saw the idea of the amendment. It meant that the organiser, whether he was Liberal or Labour, would not have to look for witnesses, as he could witness every claim himself. The organiser could go from one end of Queensland to the other witnessing claims. That was the object of the amendment. It was not advisable for the organiser to witness claims. It should be some independent person.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. member for Keppel talked about an elector living on one side of the street in his electorate not being able to witness the claim of an elector

on the other side of the street; but in the Rockhampton electorate, an elector hundreds of miles away, at St. Lawrence, could witness it. They could get over that by certifying that the person making the claim was justified in getting on the electoral roll. They knew of hundreds of roll-stuffing cases at Bundaberg, where an ex-member of Parliament said he did not sign the certificate that he knew the person applying was entitled to be on the roll. When the Federal Electoral Commission sat in Brisbane, Henry Barker Dent, clerk, gave evidence that in the Oxley Federal electorate there were 350 names on two rolls in the same division. He also said that it contained from sixty to 100 names which were on the same roll twice. In one case, a husband had his name three times and his wife's name was on twice. He also said—

“Many male electors were on the roll under different names. He had prepared a marked roll, which had taken six or seven weeks' continuous work, showing the irregularities. There were also the names of electors who had left the Commonwealth for years.”

They were now proposing to introduce a system which would bring about results the same as the Commonwealth. They should not be afraid of having a pure roll. Surely members opposite did not expect to hold their seats in the Chamber by means of an impure roll! After the evidence given by Mr. Dent, they knew that it was possible for the roll not to be a pure one.

The bell indicated that portion of the hon. member's time had expired.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He had consulted the draftsman with the object of getting amendments drafted, but he found he could not do so without altering the whole frame of the Bill, so that the Bill lent itself to corruption.

Mr. BARNES pointed out that the alteration of the system would mean that it would lend itself to a great deal of abuse. It opened the door to the party organiser to put names on the roll wholesale. There could be no possible hardship in allowing the clause to remain as printed. At any rate, it would make for purity of the rolls as against a great deal of corruption by allowing an individual who may be unknown in the district to witness claims. He might make it the business of his life to have names inserted on the roll. The arguments adduced by the leader of the Opposition were unanswerable. The abuses had been great, and if the Government wanted to open the door to still greater abuses, then amend the clause as suggested by the Minister, while the clause as it stood would safeguard the rights of the individual.

Mr. MORGAN: It was apparent that the Minister intended to insert in this very drastic Bill amendments which would make it more drastic still. The amendment had not been justified by any speaker on the Government side. The only reason given by the member for Keppel for the amendment was that, under the clause, a person living next door could witness a claim, while a relative on the opposite side of the street, if he happened to be in another electorate, could not witness a claim. The Minister was adopting a very foolish attitude if he desired to get the Bill through

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the Chamber. When amendments such as had been moved were proposed, it was only right that good reasons should be given why such drastic alterations should be made, and those reasons had not been furnished by the Minister or by any member on the other side. Something had happened in the caucus to-day, and now the Committee were asked to alter the Bill as originally drafted so as to allow party organisers to put names on the roll. There might be a special organiser appointed for the Southern part of Queensland—either in the Liberal or Labour interests—and he might go through the whole of the electorates and work for twelve months doing nothing else but seeing that people got on the rolls, and that would do away with the object of having somebody who could be identified. It would be very difficult to find an elector who would be prepared to sign the claim of somebody who did not exist, while organisers—as was proved by court evidence—were prepared to sign anything. It had been proved in court that some organisers were prepared to witness the signatures of persons who could neither read nor write, and it had been distinctly proved that roll-stuffing existed to a very great extent in the Commonwealth. The leader of the Opposition had given some very strong evidence furnished to the Commonwealth Commissioner that showed that roll-stuffing existed to a very great extent, and yet they were told to look at the Commonwealth—look how liberal they were.

Mr. MCLACHLAN: Do you contend that a person who cannot read nor write should not get on the roll?

Mr. MORGAN: There was no objection if it was done in the right way. All they were asking was that he would be placed on the roll in the way the Act provided. The clause as originally drafted was fair and reasonable and would not prevent any person from getting on the roll. If it could be shown that if the amendment were not included in the Bill that one single person in Queensland who was eligible to get on the roll could not get on the roll, then he would support it. The amendment would give very great opportunities for roll-stuffing.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: I think the hon. member's fears are groundless. You seem to think every individual is dishonest.

Mr. MORGAN: Look at what was done by an ex-member of Parliament! If they had been told certain things would happen in connection with that gentleman with regard to roll-stuffing, members on the Government side would have got up and said the fears were quite groundless—that they could trust the individual in every case; and yet the court distinctly proved that things which were not right had been done in that connection.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: If I find anyone guilty of roll-stuffing, I will prosecute.

Mr. STOPFORD: He was not guilty of roll-stuffing.

Mr. MORGAN: He could imagine the Minister prosecuting an agitator or organiser of the Workers' Political Organisation for putting names on the roll. If he did, he would be brought up before his own Workers' Political Organisation or union and

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be excommunicated for daring to prosecute a fellow unionist for doing something to help the party.

The HOME SECRETARY: You know nothing about it.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. gentleman who interjected knew a great deal less. He knew a great deal about it.

The HOME SECRETARY: Have you been at the game yourself?

Mr. MORGAN: He had not been at the game, but he had been checking those who had been at the game. They had been all over his electorate and had put on the roll ninety names of persons who were not eligible. They were on the roll for other electorates, but it was endeavoured to get them on the Murilla roll because it was thought they could win the seat there, and the votes were not wanted in the Dalby. Something of that kind was done.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: If the hon. member will show me that anything of that occurred at the last elections, I will prosecute immediately, notwithstanding what may be said by anybody else.

Mr. MORGAN: It was no use for the Minister to tell them that he would do this or that. Unfortunately, or perhaps, fortunately, he might not be in his present position for any length of time. He might be Premier. A few months ago they did not think that he would be acting as Home Secretary, but now he was carrying out the duties of that exalted position, no doubt with satisfaction to himself and to his party. He hoped that the Minister, even at this late hour, would agree to drop the amendment, and allow the clause to go through.

Mr. CARTER (*Port Curtis*): It seemed to him that members opposite associated with very extraordinary people, or they had very strange minds. They had the idea that every person was of an evil disposition. Under the present Elections Act provision was made to compel people to get on the roll, and they had to compel them to go to the polls and record their votes. People were liable to a fine of £2 for not getting on a roll, and still there were people who were being fined for not doing so. And yet members opposite had the audacity, or the evil disposition, to suggest that every person in the community was so wicked that he desired to have his name on the roll five or six times. His experience, as an organiser of many years' standing, was that it was very difficult to get people to go on the roll. They said, "What is the good? It is too much bother. It is too much trouble," and all that sort of thing. The arguments in favour of the safeguard of having only an elector in the same electoral district signing a claim for that district was so much silly stuff. In his own electorate there were three electoral subdivisions—Rockhampton, Gladstone, and Bundaberg. An elector in the electoral subdivision of Rockhampton could at the present time witness a claim of a person in the electoral subdivision of Bundaberg, and yet they had no signature of the elector in the electoral subdivision of Rockhampton in the electoral subdivision of Bundaberg. It was just as sensible to allow an elector in the electoral district of Normanby, Rockhampton, or Fitzroy to witness

a claim for Port Curtis. In the one case they were in different subdivisions and in the other different divisions.

Mr. CORSER: They all go to the same place.

Mr. CARTER: They did not. The electoral claims in the subdivision of Bundaberg went to the electoral registrar at Bundaberg, who had not the signature of the witness.

Mr. CORSER: He knows where to get it.

Mr. CARTER: He knew where to get it in any electorate. An elector in the Rockhampton subdivision of the electoral district of Port Curtis could not witness a claim form for Keppel, Normanby, or Fitzroy, though they had his signature there, but they had not the signature of an elector from the subdivisions of Rockhampton or Gladstone in Bundaberg, so that hon. members would see the stupidity of the contention that it was necessary to have a witness in the same electoral district, when they compared the position with an electorate in which there were three or four subdivisions.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CARTER: His experience—and he had knocked about the world a good bit—was that people were sufficiently honest not to get on the roll more than once, and where they did get on more than once, not to vote more than once. People had had their names on the Logan roll and for his electorate also at the same time. They had been on the two rolls for years; they had been on the Logan roll for seven years, and on the Port Curtis roll for five years. They were Christina Willett, and Christian Willett and Carl Willett, and with all the safeguards under the old Act they were on two rolls. He did not think they got on the two rolls for an illegal purpose. He thought that they naturally thought that when they got on the second roll they were left off the old roll. He did not believe that they voted more than once at the same election, although he was perfectly satisfied that they voted against him. He thought that people were much more honest than members on the opposite side seemed to think, and that fewer safeguards were necessary. If people signed their claims without witnesses, they would have no roll-stuffing or anything evil in that direction. Even with compulsory voting they only got 90 per cent. of votes right through Queensland, and he was quite satisfied that it was absolutely unnecessary to talk about all these safeguards. During the three months before Christmas he was through his electorate, organising it, and although he was well known in Queensland, and was an elector, he could not witness a claim form.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Quite right.

Mr. CARTER: That was not right. He could witness a Commonwealth claim form in any part of Australia, and yet here—because it was desired to keep people off the roll—all kinds of difficulties had been put in the way, and he was quite certain that it was necessary for this sort of measure to go through in order to enable people to get on the roll. They were not afraid of facing the people.

Mr. GRAYSON: He had listened patiently to the speeches delivered by the Minister and his supporters, and he failed to see

what object the Minister could have in moving it. He thought they ought to retain the safeguard that was in the old Act. Personally, he knew of several instances where organisers—and he did not refer only to Labour organisers—had made themselves very active, and he did not think that they should place the power of witnessing claims for any electorate in the hands of those organisers. He knew one corner of his electorate where an ex-member of Parliament about six months before the election collected about 150 names and had them placed on the roll. He had no objection whatever to that. If the organiser had been able to witness all those claims, [10.30 p.m.] it was possible that he would have got 300 names on the roll. Supposing the hon. member for Port Curtis, who had been an organiser for many years, and who had been a fairly successful organiser, went into the Wide Bay district and met several persons whose names were not on the roll, and they asked him to witness their signatures to claims, would he witness their signatures without knowing whether they were in the electorate for one month or three months?

Mr. CARTER: No, I would not.

Mr. GRAYSON: No person claiming a vote should be allowed to have his name placed on the roll unless his claim was witnessed by an elector of the district who knew that he possessed the necessary qualification. This provision was one of the greatest safeguards we had to ensure a clean roll, and he hoped the amendment would be withdrawn. There were four subdivisions in the Cunningham electorate—Clifton, Allora, Killarney, and Warwick—and the police in those districts visited every house twice a year and placed the name of every resident on the roll; and there was not a cleaner roll in the State than the Cunningham roll. The police did not ask a person what were his or her politics, but took the claims of every male and female who was entitled to be enrolled.

Mr. H. J. RYAN: Are there any persons there whose names are not on the roll?

Mr. GRAYSON: There were just about as few persons off the roll in the Cunningham electorate as there were in the Paddington electorate. He hoped that, even at this late stage, the Minister in charge of the Bill would listen to the arguments of the Opposition and withdraw the amendment.

At 10.35 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. BEBBINGTON thought there was one side of this question which had escaped notice. Not only were persons who witnessed claims supposed to know that the claimants had been in the electorate the requisite length of time, but they were also supposed to know that the claimants were the persons mentioned in the claims. Sometimes one name on the roll represented as many as three persons, and in such cases the police often had trouble in distinguishing them. When an election took place all those three persons desired to vote under the one name. Such a case had occurred in his own electorate. One lady, when she went to get her name enrolled, was told that her name was already on the roll, and a second lady was told the same thing, and when the

Mr. Bebbington.]

election took place all three—one in Chin-chilla, one in Toowoomba, and one in Brisbane—claimed to vote under the same name. This showed the necessity for the witness to a claim being personally acquainted with the claimant.

Mr. BELL (*Fassifern*) hoped the Minister would not press the amendment, as it was placing temptation in the way of many organisers who went round different districts collecting names for enrolment. The desire of members of the Opposition was that we should have clean rolls, and he was sure that the Minister in charge of the Bill was just as anxious as the Opposition were that clean rolls should be provided. If it was thought proper to insert the words "an elector in the same district" in the clause as it was printed, why change that provision now? No argument had been advanced to justify the change. The hon. member for Port Curtis said that members on this side must have strange minds, but they had not strange minds. They had had strange experiences which made them object to the amendment. The hon. member gave no reason why the proposed change should be made, and he hoped the amendment would be withdrawn.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Huxham's amendment*) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 13.

Mr. Armstrong	Mr. Moore
" Barnes	" Morgan
" Bell	" Petrie
" Corser	" Stevens
" Grayson	" Tolmie
" Gunn	" Vowles
" Hodge	

Tellers: Mr. Bell and Mr. Stevens.

NOES, 27.

Mr. Bertram	Mr. Lennon
" Carter	" Lloyd
" Collins	" McLachlan
" Cooper	" O'Sullivan
" Dunstan	" Payne
" Fihelly	" Peterson
" Foley	" Pollock
" Gilday	" Ryan, D.
" Gillies	" Ryan, H. J.
" Hartley, H. L.	" Smith
" Hunter	" Stopford
" Huxham	" Wellington
" Land	" Winstanley
" Lacombe	

Tellers: Mr. O'Sullivan and Mr. Payne.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Lieut.-Colonel Rankin, Mr. Macartney, Mr. Swayne, Mr. Booker, Mr. Appel, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Somerset, Mr. Walker, and Mr. Bridges.

Noes—Mr. T. J. Ryan, Mr. McPhail, Mr. Theodore, Mr. W. Hartley, Mr. Adamson, Mr. Gledson, Mr. T. L. Jones, Mr. Free, and Mr. Barber.

Resolved in the negative.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put and passed.

Mr. CORSER moved the insertion on line 14, after "elector" of the words "who shall record his electorate after his name." The subclause would then read—

"A claim shall be in the prescribed form, and shall be signed by the claimant and witnessed by any elector, who shall record his electorate after his name."

This amendment was necessary for the identification of the individual.

[*Mr. Bebbington.*]

HON. J. HUXHAM: He would accept the amendment. (Hear, hear!)

Amendment agreed to.

HON. J. TOLMIE moved the omission of subclause (3), namely—

"The validity of the enrolment shall not in any case be questioned on the ground that the person enrolled has not in fact lived in the district or division for one month."

He was surprised at the Minister asking them to accept a proposition like that. An elector might get his name on the roll, and, notwithstanding the fact that he might have only been in the district for three days, they could not question the validity of his enrolment. There ought to be some safeguard to meet that contingency. He thought the subclause was an improper provision to have in the Bill, and it would not destroy the context of the remainder of the clause if it was taken out. If a man was improperly on the roll, let him be challenged.

Mr. VOWLES asked for the Minister's reasons for inserting this subclause. It was monstrous that such a clause should exist in any Act. If a person had not been a month in the electorate and he sent in a claim for enrolment there was no provision by which anybody could challenge the validity of the enrolment. Although a man made a false declaration, no one could challenge his enrolment, which would mean his registration.

HON. J. HUXHAM: You don't suppose that a man is going to render himself liable to a fine by doing what is improper?

Mr. VOWLES: It was done in different electorates at present, and unless they had the means of stopping it by objecting, it would continue to be done. Unless the claim could be objected to straightaway, it was too late to object to it later on. The registrar was the only person who could prosecute, and if he refused to prosecute, no one else could interfere.

HON. J. HUXHAM: If the registrar refuses to prosecute, he will get the sack quick and lively.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member might not be Minister when a case occurred, and the registrar might be a partisan and refuse to prosecute. Why have such a loophole? The law said, "Take the risk. Nobody can object to you except the registrar." The registrar might not put the law into motion. Private individuals could put the law into motion under the old Act but not under this Bill.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted from clause 21 (*Mr. Tolmie's amendment*) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 26.

Mr. Bertram	Mr. Lennon
" Carter	" Lloyd
" Collins	" McLachlan
" Cooper	" O'Sullivan
" Dunstan	" Payne
" Fihelly	" Peterson
" Foley	" Pollock
" Gilday	" Ryan, D.
" Hartley, H. L.	" Ryan, H. J.
" Hunter	" Smith
" Huxham	" Stopford
" Land	" Wellington
" Lacombe	" Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. H. J. Ryan and Mr. Smith.

NOES, 12.

Mr. Armstrong	Mr. Hodge
„ Barnes	„ Moore
„ Bell	„ Morgan
„ Corser	„ Petrie
„ Grayson	„ Tolmie
„ Gunn	„ Vowles

Tellers: Mr. Moore and Mr. Vowles.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. T. J. Ryan, Mr. McPhail, Mr. Theodore, Mr. W. Hartley, Mr. Adamson, Mr. Gledson, Mr. T. L. Jones, Mr. Free, Mr. Barber, Mr. Gillies, and Mr. May.

Noes—Lieut.-Colonel Rankin, Mr. Macartney, Mr. Swayne, Mr. Booker, Mr. Appel, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Somerset, Mr. Walker, Mr. Bridges, Mr. Forsyth, and Mr. Stodart.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 21, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 22—“Registration of claims”—put and passed.

On clause 23—“Right to transfer”—

HON. J. HUXHAM moved the omission on lines 33 and 34, of the words “an elector of the district in which the claimant lives,” with the view of inserting the words “any elector.” That was in keeping with the amendment already passed.

HON. J. TOLMIE said the same objection applied to this amendment that applied to the previous one, and it was equally as strong. There was absolutely no safeguard as to whether the person signing

[11 p.m.] a claim was an elector or not.

A man wishing to get his name transferred from one electorate to another could get his name on the roll for the new electorate by having his claim witnessed by any elector in the State of Queensland, and it did not matter whether that man was an elector of the electorate to which he was going or not. How was it possible, under those circumstances, to have a true reflex of public opinion? Surely, if he transferred his name from the electorate in which he was now into one in which he was going to reside, there must be some person in that new electorate who knew that he had been resident for the month that was specified; but the Minister proposed to take away that safeguard, and any body of men—no matter whosoever they might be—could be transferred, if necessary, from one electorate to another in order that they might be enabled to exercise their votes in the new electorate against a particular individual, and there was nothing to prevent them recording their votes in the electorate in which they lived. All they had to do, if the amendment were passed, was to be two or three days in the electorate, and apply to have their names on the roll; the registrar knew nothing at all about them, or the registrar might be friendly disposed to them, and the roll might be stuffed straight away, and under the clause that had been passed there was no possibility of raising any objection to them. Their names were on the roll, and that was *prima facie* evidence that they were qualified to get there, and they were going to stay there. If a roll like that were allowed, there would be very great opportunities for dishonest practices. They had seen an ex-Labour member of the House going about stuffing the rolls.

Mr. CARTER: You know that is not true.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He had quoted the evidence which was given in Bundaberg, and when that man was put in the witness box he pleaded ignorance of the electoral laws. Did anyone for one moment believe that that man was ignorant of the electoral laws? That man had been in the Assembly year after year dealing with electoral matters. He was an expert in getting names on the roll, and he spent all his spare time cycling through one electorate after another endeavouring to get names on the roll. He was a paid canvasser by the Labour party, and he went through the electorates on the Darling Downs, as well as other districts, putting names on the roll.

Mr. LAND: And he did good work, too.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He did dishonest work, and when he was put in the witness box in Bundaberg he said he was not aware of the certificate being on the bottom of the form. (Government dissent.)

Mr. CARTER: It is a lie. There is no certificate on the form.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: The then Home Secretary denied any knowledge of it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. J. TOLMIE: That man knew what the condition of the law was as well as anybody. There was a deliberate endeavour to stuff the Musgrave roll on that occasion, and see what the result had been. Under the law they were asked to pass the same result would obtain. Hon. members on the other side ought to be ashamed to sit in their seats and see legislation of that kind going through.

Mr. CORSER: As the Minister had accepted his last amendment, he was going to follow his luck and see if it was not possible to induce the Minister to leave the clause as it was printed in the Bill. There had been too much alteration in the various Bills that had come before them. After they had passed the second reading, they had put up, at the last moment, various alterations which interfered with the measures brought before them. He would ask the Minister to be reasonable and see the advisability of having claim forms signed by persons who were known to the electoral registrars. Why should they allow political organisers to go through the various districts, who were unknown to the electoral registrars, interfering with the transfer of names from one division of his electorate to another? Any other machinery would have been more acceptable than allowing someone from outside to come along and interfere with that elector and point out to him that he was outside the division—point out that, although he was not disqualified by being outside the division, it was more desirable that he should appear on the subdivision for which he was entitled to vote. A little while ago, a claim form was presented to an elector of his by a person spurred on by a political organisation for roll-stuffing—a claim form signed by a claimant, and that particular elector was asked to witness the claim. He said, “You know this elector's signature; will you witness the claim?” The elector said that he did not know the signature, as the individual could not read or write. Still he secured enrolment and was on the Burnett roll to-day. They should guard against that sort of thing and make it possible for the electoral registrars to trace claimants by the signatures already in their possession. If claims could be witnessed by

Mr. Corser.]

any person travelling through the electorate, that would not be possible. It would be far better to require no witness at all to a claim. The amendment would open the door to roll-stuffing. If the Government were sincere in their desire to have clean rolls, they would provide the machinery by which that object could be secured, and not have thousands of electors having their names on two or three rolls, as was the case in connection with the Federal rolls. The Opposition intended to fight for the retention of the clause as it stood in the Bill, in the interests of fair play and of the principle of one man one vote. The Government might be able to bring "Kaiserism" into the Chamber and apply the iron hand, but the Opposition would fight in defence of fair dealing. Evidently the amendment was introduced to enable the Government to retain possession of the front Treasury bench. They would be able to see the intention of the Government far more clearly if claims for enrolment did not require to be witnessed at all. He asked the Minister to be reasonable and not open the door to possibilities of roll-stuffing.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Were you reasonable at the last election?

Mr. CORSER: They were reasonable, and they passed an Act which made it possible for the other side to secure the Treasury benches for themselves; and now the Government were taking measures to see that they retained those benches by depriving the Opposition of the opportunity of securing fair rolls. The electors generally would revolt against the clause as it was proposed to amend it. The Government were proposing to steal from the electors their right to one man one vote. As a matter of fact, the Government were actually making it possible for electors of a certain class—supporters of their own—to have two votes, and probably three. The Opposition objected to that "Bill Sykes" business.

Mr. CARTER: Why keep repeating your family history all the time?

Other GOVERNMENT MEMBERS interjecting,

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask hon. members to cease these interjections. They do no good, and prevent the hon. member from addressing the Chair, as he should do. I would also say to the hon. member for Burnett that, as this amendment is almost on all-foots with the one discussed on clause 21, I intend to prevent tedious repetition of the arguments used in connection with that amendment.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: He would try to keep his remarks closely directed to the question before the Committee, though the amendment now under discussion was even more important to the Opposition than the one previously opposed. When the Bill was first introduced, he believed that there was no other object in view than to secure the reasonable witnessing of reasonable claims; but something had evidently transpired in the meantime which had led to the springing on hon. members of amendments which were not printed and circulated, and which they had no time to digest. The Government appeared to be trying to force upon them amendments which interfered with the long-established principle of one man one vote, and the Opposition did not want to make it possible for electors to secure the franchise in more than one electorate. He did not

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think that any man in the Assembly—no matter what side of politics he belonged to—could object to their putting up a fight on that.

Mr. COOPER (*Bremer*): He would like to point out that members on that side of the House had lived long enough to know that any party which attempted any juggling with electoral laws, or did anything to the detriment of the people, got their reward sooner or later, and it was not likely that the party at present in power would do anything to the detriment of the people. One would think that all the bad work in connection with electoral rolls could only come from roll-stuffing. He would like to tell what happened not very far from Brisbane in two adjoining electorates. A gentleman from one went into the other and witnessed a large number of claim forms as an elector of the district in which the claimants resided. When these claims went to the registrar, every one was rejected.

Mr. MORGAN: It was the law.

Mr. COOPER: Yes, but he did it purposely. The electors put absolute confidence and trust in him; their claims went to the Revision Court, and they were rejected, and they had to wait two months before they could be enrolled. If the law had been as it was proposed now, those claims would have been in order. The object of the amendment was to stop unscrupulous people of that description defrauding people into signing their claims improperly. Those were the people whom they wanted to baulk, and the amendment would stop that sort of thing effectively. If the signature of any elector was good enough for the Commonwealth, surely it was good enough for them.

Mr. CORSER: It is not good enough for the Commonwealth.

Mr. COOPER: It was, and it had been approved time and again by the people, and the people of Queensland would approve of it when the time came.

Mr. VOWLES: The reasons given by the hon. member were very flimsy. How many gullible Labour supporters were there of that sort? The boot was nearly always on the other foot. He had always found that there were certain individuals in country districts who laid themselves out to get claims and then put them in the wastepaper basket if the politics did not suit them.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Liberals.

Mr. VOWLES: No; Labourites. But those individual cases did not prove anything. The whole question was that the proposed amendment left a loophole to illegal practices. It was a smellful sort of amendment, and was open to very grave suspicion, and they could point to where very great injustice might be done. Transfer from one electorate to another was a very serious matter, and if a person had lived in the electorate a month, he should be able to get somebody to witness his claim for transfer. His position was very different from that of a man claiming enrolment in the first instance, and where could the injustice lie in requiring him to get the signature of a neighbour when the month had expired? Why should he have to go out of his electorate to get it witnessed, and when they could point out the desirability of being able to trace the witness and the convenience of having a witness who was living near, then they should have no hesitation in retaining the present enactment.

Mr. CARTER: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member is telling us the same story as he told us some few minutes ago.

Mr. VOWLES: He did not know whether Mr. Coyne was Chairman or the hon. member.

Mr. CARTER: It is the same statement, anyhow.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. VOWLES: If he was guilty of tedious repetition, the Chairman would pull him up. The object of the proposed amendment seemed to him to be to give an opportunity to a man who had not been in an electorate a month to get somebody else to witness his signature so that there would be no chance of tracing the fact whether he had been a resident for one month or not.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Evil be to him who evil thinks.

Mr. VOWLES: Why should the amendment be brought in at this late hour? The Minister had told them that it was his following who had induced him to do it, and if any evil lay on anybody, it was on that following. The indignation on the other side that the Opposition should stand up against such an amendment indicated that they had probably some ulterior motive not known to the Minister. If the thing was not loaded, why this nasty crossfiring that was going on? It only pointed to the fact that they knew more about the workings of the clause than the Minister. They had been on the track as electoral agents.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: You seem to know the game as well as they do.

Mr. VOWLES: It was his business to know the game. They had been paid as political organisers for the purpose of making themselves expert in connection with the electoral laws to get claims in one direction and keep them off in another. The object in criticising the amendment was that they should place fair legislation on the statute-book which could not be taken advantage of by anybody. He admitted that what they could do the Opposition could do, but it was the travelling public—the nomad, the casual person, the man whom you could not trust—who would take advantage of the clause. If this amendment was made in the clause, they [11.30 p.m.] might have a number of individuals making claims for enrolment in a particular electorate and saying they had been a month in that electorate, and getting their claims witnessed by some other unknown person, and the electoral registrar would have to accept all those claims. No individual would have an opportunity to object to those claims.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: We are not "gagging" you; we are giving you a fair run for your money.

Mr. VOWLES: The Government would "gag" them if they could.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: No; we have the numbers if we wished to do it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We are not concerned about "gagging."

Mr. VOWLES: No; and he refused to be "gagged" by the Minister. He intended to vote against the amendment, and he asked the Minister to seriously consider the criticism offered by members of the Opposition,

and not place on the statute-book a provision which was likely to result in a great deal of harm.

Mr. BARNES: What surprised him was that there should be so many innocent men on the other side of the House. The contention of the Opposition was that the amendment was manifestly unfair, that it would open the door to corruption, that it would make for roll-stuffing, and that if it were not for that special purpose hon. members opposite would not insist that it should be made. The result of such a provision would be to protect men who went from place to place and did the shady thing—got names on the roll twice over. Members opposite had in the past persistently argued against plural voting, and now that they were in possession of the Treasury benches they were insisting, not only that a man should enjoy one or two votes, but that he should have many votes.

Mr. CARTER: That is not true.

Mr. BARNES: If it was not true, why did they not have these claims witnessed by a person who was well known, and not by a stranger? The amendment would clearly make for plural voting.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: "Evil be to him who evil thinks."

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: You know all about that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask hon. members to cease these interjections. There has been a stream of interjections coming from certain hon. members on my right which has rendered it impossible for me to follow the debate.

Mr. BARNES: Members sitting on the Treasury bench were endeavouring, by hook or by crook—by right means or wrong means—to keep their seats, and one of the means to enable them to keep their seats was roll-stuffing.

Hon. J. HUXHAM asked if the hon. member was in order in saying that the Government were guilty of roll-stuffing in proposing this amendment? The hon. member should be very careful in his language.

Mr. BARNES: The want of care in language was in what the hon. gentleman wanted to include in the clause. Members of the Opposition stood for the purity of the rolls, and had no desire that a man should possess more than one vote.

Mr. CARTER: You know all about it; you are a pure person.

Mr. BARNES: He would not thank the hon. member for his estimate of purity. It was patent to any man who could read that there was but one object in the minds of hon. members on the Government side of the House, and that that object was not seized by the Minister when preparing the Bill. He trusted that the Minister would see his way to hearken to the arguments advanced by members on the Opposition side of the House, and, for the sake of clean government, acquiesce in what they desired.

Mr. MORGAN: The amendment made in clause 21 dealt with the witnessing of claims for enrolment. The amendment now before the Committee dealt with an application for a transfer of a name from one roll to another. To show how it would act, he will take the electorates of Murilla and Dalby. Some of the boundaries were very indefinite, and the elector did not know whether he should

Mr. Morgan.]

be on the roll for Murilla or for Dalby, and it was really left to him to say which roll he would go upon. At the time of the election it might happen that there might not be a contest in one of the electorates, and it would be very objectionable if men were transferred to the adjoining electorate in which there was a contest, which could be done a month or six weeks before the election. They could get transferred without the electoral registrar of, say, the Murilla electorate, knowing who had signed the transfer forms. If some respectable person had to sign the form, he could be traced, but under the amendment a number of forms might come in signed by an imaginary John Brown or James Smith. There were similar dangers existing in the suburban electorates, where the people were only separated by a few feet. Under the sub-clause which it was sought to have deleted, political parties with funds at their disposal could send organisers to electorates to get men transferred on to a roll they were not entitled to be on, without any difficulty, and without the registrar being able to question one of the application forms. The electoral registrar would cease to be anything more than a mere recording agent. All he had to do was to look over the form and see that it was signed.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member will vary his argument. He has repeated the latter part of it four or five times in the course of his speech, and I would ask him to vary it. (Hear, hear, and laughter.)

Mr. MORGAN proposed now to show the possibilities in the direction of roll-stuffing.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Are you an expert.

Mr. MORGAN: He was, perhaps, an expert in discovering roll-stuffers, but not in roll-stuffing. They were dealing with expert roll-stuffers on the opposite side.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY rose to a point of order. Was the hon. member in order in saying that he was dealing with roll-stuffers on this side?

The CHAIRMAN: That is not where the hon. member for Murilla has been disorderly. He has been disorderly for having repeated the same thing so many times. The statements which the hon. member is making cannot be regarded as disorderly in a general way, although he has been near the edge of disorder right through his speech. I ask the hon. member to confine himself to the amendment before the Committee.

Mr. MORGAN: The amendment proposed to delete the subclause in the Bill as printed, which provided that an elector of the district must witness the claim, and he objected to the amendment, as it would open the way to corruption. He hoped the Minister would withdraw the amendment, so that they could get on with business.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY supported the amendment, and hoped the Minister would not take notice of the unjust statements levelled at members of the Labour party. If an elector was qualified to witness a claim in one electorate, it was only reasonable that he should be able to witness a claim in another electorate. It was ridiculous to say that an electoral registrar would be able to identify any witness. There was no registrar who could identify twenty witnesses in any one electoral district. The

[Mr. Morgan.]

arguments adduced by the other side showed that they were not concerned in having a pure roll, but a roll of a certain colour. The Labour party had always stood for a universal franchise and every facility for people getting on the roll, and it was not easy to sit quiet and hear innuendoes of dishonest and corrupt practices and charges of roll-stuffing levelled at members on the Government side. The charges were totally unfounded, because no prosecutions against any Labour supporters for dishonest practice had taken place in Queensland for years. In quoting the matter of boundaries joining, the member for Murilla had supplied the very best reason why the amendment should be defeated. His electorate conjoined with two other electorates, and the amendment would have the effect of permitting any elector to witness claims for enrolment. It would also prevent an elector from willingly and knowingly making a claim informal by signing it as a witness when he knew it would have the effect of having the claim thrown out.

Mr. STEVENS pointed out that there was no reason at all for the amendment. It was deplorable to see Bills introduced by the Government and then altered in Committee. It showed undue haste and want of knowledge and capacity on the part of the Government.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member will give some reasons why he objects to the amendment. I am not going to allow the business of the Committee to be turned into a farce. The business before the Committee at the present time is to omit certain words with the view of inserting others. I shall insist on hon. members confining their remarks strictly to the amendment, and give reasons for or against the omission of the words.

Mr. STEVENS objected to the amendment, as no safeguard would be provided, and there would be no proof as to whether the claims were genuine or not. The amendment was of a very serious nature, and if accepted, there would be no safeguard against roll-stuffing and against improper practices.

HON. J. TOLMIE urged upon the Committee the necessity of retaining the clause as originally drafted. One of the highest privileges that a person possessed was the right to vote, and it was a right [12 p.m.] that was regarded as almost sacred by some individuals. As times changed, men's ideas changed also, and there seemed to be a spirit abroad to make light of that privilege. The Opposition did not believe in giving that privilege to everybody, and they had made strenuous efforts to keep it from rogues, vagabonds, wife-beaters, and seducers. The clause as drafted was a reasonable one, and the words of the amendment had a great deal of force and a great deal of meaning. The clause, to some extent, did make for a pure roll, and the maintenance of a pure roll meant the maintenance of the franchise. It was their rights as citizens which were at stake under the loose conditions which it was endeavoured to put into that legislation by members of the Government, who had more than once broken down the barriers that afforded protection at the present time. A change was taking place in public opinion, and that change of thought spelt destruction to the party opposite. They

were doing an injury to society in allowing a loose Elections Bill to pass without proper consideration.

HON. J. HUXHAM said all the flap-doodle that came from the Opposition side of the House was rather annoying. All the safeguards contained in the original clause would be retained if the amendment were accepted, and he could not see what hon. members on the other side were making such a fuss about. He appealed to hon. members not to obstruct the passage of the Bill; but he might tell them that the clause was going through with the amendment in it, and the Bill would be put through before they rose, if it took forty-eight hours to put it through. There was no intention on the part of the Government to do anything but what was right. The Government had been accused of roll-stuffing, but he said most emphatically that both sides would be protected by the registrars.

Mr. BARNES said that the clause, as it was proposed to amend it, would perpetuate all the abuses experienced in connection with the manipulation of the old postal vote by justices of the peace, but to a much greater degree. They would have organisers going from place to place fulfilling the mission entrusted to them by the unions or by the Government of the day. He had been told by a man who had been working at a sugar-mill in the Bundaberg district that an organiser would come to a man and tell him that he should get his name on the roll. If the man told him that he was already on another roll, the organiser would reply, "Well, your name was Joe Brown, but now it will be John Brown." That was the kind of thing that would be done in future, and, as legislators, they had no right to lend themselves to anything of the sort. The clause under discussion would open the door to very grave corruption.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Huxham's amendment*) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided:—

	AYES, 11.
Mr. Barnes	Mr. Moore
" Bell	" Morgan
" Corser	" Stevens
" Grayson	" Tolmie
" Gunn	" Vowles
" Hodge	
Tellers: Mr. Gunn and Mr. Hodge.	

	NOES, 26.
Mr. Bertram	Mr. Lennon
" Carter	" Lloyd
" Collins	" McLachlan
" Cooper	" O'Sullivan
" Dunstan	" Payne
" Fihelly	" Peterson
" Foley	" Pollock
" Gilday	" Ryan, D.
" Hartley, H. L.	" Ryan, H. J.
" Hunter	" Smith
" Huxham	" Stopford
" Land	" Wellington
" Lacombe	" Winstanley
Tellers: Mr. Lacombe and Mr. Peterson.	

PAIRS.

Ayes—Lieut.-Colonel Rankin, Mr. Macartney, Mr. Swayne, Mr. Booker, Mr. Appel, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Somerset, Mr. Walker, Mr. Bridges, Mr. Forsyth, Mr. Stodart, Mr. Armstrong, and Mr. Petrie.

Noes—Mr. T. J. Ryan, Mr. McPhail, Mr. Theodore, Mr. W. Hartley, Mr. Adamson, Mr. Gledson, Mr. T. L. Jones, Mr. Free, Mr. Barber, Mr. Gillies, Mr. May, Mr. Kirwan, and Mr. Armfield.

Resolved in the negative.
Amendment agreed to.

Mr. CORSER moved an amendment to add on line 33, after the word "elector," the words "who shall record his electorate after his name." This was a consequential amendment.

HON. J. HUXHAM: I accept it.

Question put and passed.

HON. J. TOLMIE said that it was necessary to amend subclause (3). Nobody seemed to be in a position to have any real knowledge on the question of who was entitled to be on the roll, and there was no means of ascertaining whether the witness was a proper person or not, and it appeared that there was danger to the registrar in having to receive the names. The subclause read—

"The electoral registrar shall note on such application the date of its receipt by him—"

They had no objection to that. But it also was provided—

"and shall, if it appears that the applicant is entitled to the transfer, register it."

He moved the omission of the words from "if" to "transfer." Why should the onus be placed on the registrar of saying whether the man was entitled to be placed on the roll? He was placed in an invidious position, because he had nothing to guide him other than the claim signed by an applicant and a witness, of both of whom he knew nothing. Why should he have the responsibility thrust upon his shoulders? He thought it an improper thing.

Mr. VOWLES supported the amendment. It was improper to thrust such duties on the registrar, particularly when he was a public servant. Clause 94 also placed the registrar or principal electoral officer in a most invidious position. It provided—

"The Principal Electoral Officer and every electoral registrar who is guilty of any wilful misfeasance—"

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member may refer to, but not quote, the clause.

Mr. VOWLES: That was all he was going to do. He was not going to quote altogether. It also provided that if he were guilty of even any negligent act of commission or omission he was liable to a penalty not exceeding £50. The registrar was put into a position to exercise judgment which it was impossible for any man to exercise.

At 12.30 a.m.,

Mr. LARCOMBE relieved the Chairman in the chair

Mr. VOWLES congratulated Mr. Lacombe upon his accession to the chair for the first time. He pointed out that the registrar had to take the whole burden of deciding whether the claim was right or wrong, and penal clauses were provided to see that he did it correctly.

HON. J. HUXHAM pointed out that the man who witnessed the claim would be traced, and the registrar would find out that a man was a month in the electorate before he transferred his name to the new electorate.

Mr. CORSER was glad to hear the Minister say that the man witnessing the form would be traced, but they wanted to see it stated in the Act.

HON. J. HUXHAM: It will be done by regulations.

Mr. Corser.]

Mr. CORSER: But under clause 21 it was provided that the validity of the enrolment should not be questioned on the ground that the person enrolled did not live in the district one month.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: The registrar would use his common sense and he would see that the applicant was there one month before his vote was transferred.

Mr. CORSER pointed out that the registrar was called upon under penalties to do his duty, and he could not do it in face of clause 21.

Mr. MORGAN also offered his congratulations to Mr. Larcombe on his occupancy of the chair. He asked the Minister to give an undertaking that he would introduce a clause to do what he had promised would be done in connection with the comparison of signatures on original claims with those on transfer claims.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: I will tell you what I will do. I will have the regulations tabled very shortly after the Bill is through.

Mr. MORGAN: For the consideration of the House?

Hon. J. HUXHAM: Yes.

Mr. MORGAN: And that the regulations will contain the safeguard that the original claim will be compared with the form of transfer?

Hon. J. HUXHAM: Yes, certainly. It will be this session.

Mr. MORGAN: That would remove a good deal of his objection to the clause.

Hon. J. TOLMIE understood the Minister to say that when a man applied for transfer from Dalby to Brisbane his claim would be forwarded to Dalby, and on the receipt of the identification certificate from the Dalby electoral registrar, then he would be enrolled here in Brisbane. But there was no transfer of such a certificate. All that was done was that he was enrolled here, and his name sent to Dalby and removed from that roll.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: He is not actually enrolled here until he is identified at the other end.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Tolmie's amendment on clause 23*) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided:—

Ayes, 25.

Mr. Bertram	Mr. Lloyd
" Carter	" McLachlan
" Collins	" O'Sullivan
" Cooper	" Payne
" Dunstan	" Peterson
" Fihelly	" Pollock
" Foley	" Ryan, D.
" Gilday	" Ryan, H. J.
" Hartley, H. L.	" Smith
" Hunter	" Stopford
" Huxham	" Wellington
" Land	" Winstanley
" Lennon	

Tellers: Mr. Peterson and Mr. Stopford.

[*Mr. Corser.*

NOES 11.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Moore
" Bell	" Morgan
" Corser	" Stevens
" Grayson	" Tolmie
" Gunn	" Vowles
" Hodge	

Tellers: Mr. Morgan and Mr. Vowles.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. T. J. Ryan, Mr. McPhail, Mr. Theodore, Mr. W. Hartley, Mr. Adamson, Mr. Gledson, Mr. T. L. Jones, Mr. Free, Mr. Barber, Mr. Gillies, Mr. May, Mr. Kirwan, and Mr. Armfield.

Noes—Lieut.-Colonel Rankin, Mr. Macartney, Mr. Swayne, Mr. Booker, Mr. Appel, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Somerset, Mr. Walker, Mr. Bridges, Mr. Forsyth, Mr. Stodart, Mr. Armstrong, and Mr. Petrie.

Resolved in the affirmative, and amendment negatived.

Question—That clause 23, as amended, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

Ayes, 25.

Noes, 11.

The voting was exactly similar to that in the last division.

On clause 24—"Change to another divisional roll"—

HON. J. TOLMIE moved the omission of subclauses (2) and (3), with a view to the insertion of others to take their place, as he did not consider that they were an efficient means of transfer.

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

Ayes, 25.

Noes, 11.

The voting was exactly similar to that in the last division.

HON. J. HUXHAM moved an amendment to omit words in subclauses (2) and (3), lines 50 and 51:—

"and witnessed by an elector of the district or any prescribed person."

This was a divisional transfer.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot propose an alteration to that portion of the clause now. The question was: "That the words stand part of the clause," and it was carried.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: Then I shall have to recommit the Bill.

Mr. MORGAN suggested that, as the Minister was already so sleepy, they should adjourn.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: I have been "slipped up," and that will keep me awake. (Laughter.)

Question—That clause 24 stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

Ayes, 25.

Noes, 11.

The voting was again exactly similar to that in the last division.

Mr. CORSER moved a new clause, to follow clause 24, as follows:—

“The person witnessing any claim or application as aforesaid shall satisfy himself by inquiry from the claimant or applicant that the particulars stated in the claim are true, and shall sign at the foot of the claim or application a certificate to that effect in the prescribed form.”

He moved the provision to prevent malpractice, because without it they would find it impossible to sheet home charges to organisers on whatever side they might be. Was it asking too much that the witness should satisfy himself of the truth of the particulars to the best of his ability?

Mr. VOWLES said that the Minister should accept the amendment, which was not a dangerous one, but merely a safeguard against fraud.

At 1.44 a.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. VOWLES said that under the Bill as it stood all that the witness would have to do was to sign as having seen the claimant sign, and if they could not connect him in some way with the body of the claim or make him guarantee to some extent the bona fides of the claimant, they were going on the wrong lines. The witness should give the registrar some assistance, considering the penalties to which that officer was liable. The Minister, however, was playing the part of the oyster, and refused to give any explanation or show where their arguments were faulty.

Mr. MORGAN: This was one of the most important amendments that had been moved, but the Minister had not even the courtesy to reply. They were prepared to stay there till Sunday, if necessary, in the execution of their duty, and if they did that, then it would show members in another place that, although they were overwhelmed by numbers, they had made the best fight they could, and that might be an inducement to them to do their part. Nobody had made complaints that there was roll-stuffing at the last election, which was conducted under the fresh Act. Nobody could say that that election was not fought on one of the cleanest and most liberal rolls.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The question before the Committee is the witnessing of claims, not of the rolls at all.

Mr. MORGAN: He was endeavouring to show how the amendment would provide clean rolls.

Mr. BARNES feared that it was almost useless for him to endeavour to convince the Minister when the eloquent speeches of other hon. members had failed; his words would be like water on a duck's back. It was essential that the person who witnessed the claims should be beyond doubt, and they also desired that the claimant and the witness should be protected. He noticed that the Minister had on his considering cap, and had hoped that he was coming to a final decision.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: I have. I am not going to accept it.

Mr. BELL urged that it was a reasonable thing that a person witnessing a claim

should satisfy himself that the statements made in the claim were true, and that the Minister should either accept the amendment or give a satisfactory reason for his refusal to insert the provision in the Bill.

HON. J. TOLMIE contended that the amendment was necessary to insure the purity of the rolls. As it had been made lawful for “any elector” on any State roll to witness a claim for enrolment, and there were no means of identifying such witness, it was important that he should feel that the obligation was cast upon him to ascertain the truth of the statements contained in a claim before attesting it by his signature. The amendment should meet with the approval of every right-minded person in the State, since it would help the Government to secure clean rolls.

Mr. MOORE supported the amendment because it was a reasonable safeguard, and would act as a check on persons who were disposed to stuff the electoral rolls at election times on the ground that everything was fair in love and war.

Mr. CORSER complained that the Minister had not attempted to answer the arguments of the Opposition or to give any reason for refusing to accept the amendment, and claimed that the real objection to the amendment on the part of the Government was that it would prevent hundreds of unqualified persons being enrolled.

Mr. VOWLES said the Government had taken up an attitude of defiance towards the Opposition and had not given this proposal the serious consideration it deserved. He maintained that it was absolutely necessary that they should have some guarantee that a person attesting an electoral claim had made a reasonable attempt to ascertain that the contents of the application were true.

Mr. STEVENS supported the new clause and expressed surprise that such a provision had been omitted from the measure, because it was an unfair thing to impose upon electoral registrars the duty of deciding whether a claim was correct or not, unless the person making and the person attesting a claim were required to furnish him with some evidence which might guide him to a conclusion.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Minister, now that he had heard the arguments of the Opposition, to get up in his place and give the Committee the reason why he would not accept the proposed new clause.

Mr. STEVENS expressed regret that the Minister did not respond to the request to explain the reason for his refusal to accept such a fair and necessary provision as that proposed in the new clause, especially as the measure contained absolutely no safeguards against improper enrolment and malpractices of various kinds.

Question—That the proposed new clause (*Mr. Corser's*) stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, II.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Moore
„ Bell	„ Morgan
„ Corser	„ Stevens
„ Grayson	„ Tolmie
„ Gunn	„ Vowles
„ Hodge	

Tellers: Mr. Grayson and Mr. Stevens.

Mr. Stevens.]

NOES, 26

Mr. Bertram	Mr. Lennon
" Carter	" Lloyd
" Collins	" McLachlan
" Cooper	" O'Sullivan
" Dunstan	" Payne
" Fihelly	" Peterson
" Foley	" Pollock
" Gilday	" Ryan, D.
" Hartley, H. L.	" Ryan, H. J.
" Hunter	" Smith
" Huxham	" Stopford
" Land	" Wellington
" Larcombe	" Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Carter and Mr. H. L. Hartley.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Lieut.-Colonel Rankin, Mr. Macartney, Mr. Swayne, Mr. Booker, Mr. Appel, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Somerset, Mr. Walker, Mr. Bridges, Mr. Forsyth, Mr. Stodart, Mr. Armstrong, and Mr. Petrie.

Noes—Mr. T. J. Ryan, Mr. McPhail, Mr. Theodore, Mr. W. Hartley, Mr. Adamson, Mr. Gledson, Mr. T. L. Jones, Mr. Free, Mr. Barber, Mr. Gillies, Mr. May, Mr. Kirwan, and Mr. Armfield.

Resolved in the negative.

On clause 25—"Compulsory enrolment and transfer."

Mr. GUNN moved that after the words "ceased to," on line 8, the word "live" be omitted, with the view of inserting the word "reside." The object of the amendment was to make the clause intelligible.

Mr. MORGAN protested against the Minister treating the amendment with contempt.

Question—That the word proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Gunn's amendment*) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 26.

Mr. Bertram	Mr. Lennon
" Carter	" Lloyd
" Collins	" McLachlan
" Cooper	" O'Sullivan
" Dunstan	" Payne
" Fihelly	" Peterson
" Foley	" Pollock
" Gilday	" Ryan, D.
" Hartley, H. L.	" Ryan, H. J.
" Hunter	" Smith
" Huxham	" Stopford
" Land	" Wellington
" Larcombe	" Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Pollock and Mr. Winstanley.

NOES 11.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Moore
" Bell	" Morgan
" Corser	" Stevens
" Grayson	" Tolmie
" Gunn	" Vowles
" Hodge	

Tellers: Mr. Gunn and Mr. Morgan.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. T. J. Ryan, Mr. McPhail, Mr. Theodore, Mr. W. Hartley, Mr. Adamson, Mr. Gledson, Mr. T. L. Jones, Mr. Free, Mr. Barber, Mr. Gillies, Mr. May, Mr. Kirwan, and Mr. Armfield.

Noes—Lieut.-Colonel Rankin, Mr. Macartney, Mr. Swayne, Mr. Booker, Mr. Appel, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Somerset, Mr. Walker, Mr. Bridges, Mr. Forsyth, Mr. Stodart, Mr. Armstrong, and Mr. Petrie.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 26—"Regulations as to compulsory enrolment"—

Mr. CORSER said it was desirable that the Minister should give the Committee some [*Mr. Gunn.*]

explanation of the proposal of the Government to continue the principle of compulsory enrolment, which they had fought most strongly when in Opposition.

At 3.30 a.m.,

Mr. FOLEY relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. VOWLES suggested that the Minister should give the Committee an outline of the nature of the proposed regulations regarding compulsory enrolment.

Mr. MORGAN pointed out that this clause was taken from the Commonwealth Act, and asked the Minister to explain why he preferred that provision to the one contained in the State law?

Mr. CORSER expressed disappointment at the silence of the Minister and the absence of any information in regard to the operation of such an important provision in the Bill.

Question—That clause 26 stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 25.

Mr. Bertram	Mr. Lloyd
" Carter	" McLachlan
" Collins	" O'Sullivan
" Cooper	" Payne
" Dunstan	" Peterson
" Fihelly	" Pollock
" Gilday	" Ryan, D.
" Hartley, H. L.	" Ryan, H. J.
" Hunter	" Smith
" Huxham	" Stopford
" Land	" Wellington
" Larcombe	" Winstanley
" Lennon	

Tellers: Mr. Bertram and Mr. Smith.

NOES 11.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Moore
" Bell	" Morgan
" Corser	" Stevens
" Grayson	" Tolmie
" Gunn	" Vowles
" Hodge	

Tellers: Mr. Bell and Mr. Corser.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. T. J. Ryan, Mr. McPhail, Mr. Theodore, Mr. W. Hartley, Mr. Adamson, Mr. Gledson, Mr. T. L. Jones, Mr. Free, Mr. Barber, Mr. Gillies, Mr. May, Mr. Kirwan, and Mr. Armfield.

Noes—Lieut.-Colonel Rankin, Mr. Macartney, Mr. Swayne, Mr. Booker, Mr. Appel, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Somerset, Mr. Walker, Mr. Bridges, Mr. Forsyth, Mr. Stodart, Mr. Armstrong, and Mr. Petrie.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clauses 27 to 30, both inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 31—"Names on roll may be objected to"—

Mr. VOWLES pointed out that there was no time stated in the clause within which the registrar had to perform the duty involved, and he proposed that, after the word "registrar," there should be inserted the words "before the seventh day of each month." Every roll should be cleansed from time to time, so as to be ready for any election that might occur. They would then be sure of candidates being elected on their merits. This was one of the most important clauses dealt with up to the present, and there was no attempt in the Bill

[4 a.m.] to block the possibilities of malpractices. Legislation contrary to all practices under the existing law was

being introduced, and the duties of the registrar were not defined, but they should be defined, so that the public would know where they stood.

Mr. CORSER contended that the amendment was most reasonable, and would settle the registrar's duty in one particular point. The duties of such officer might include police court work, the duties of clerk of petty sessions, and so on, and if the amendment was not accepted, his duties would not be clearly defined. If the Government had dealt reasonably with the Opposition a clause would have been passed previously which would have greatly improved the Bill.

At 4.30 a.m.,

Mr. GUNN called attention to the state of the Committee.

Quorum formed.

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. CORSER hoped the Minister would state whether he would or would not accept the amendment.

Mr. MORGAN: The amendment was intended to bind the registrar down to a definite period in which to lodge objections against names which he thought should not be included in the roll. The moment he discovered that a man was not entitled to be on the roll he should put it down on a list, and he should lodge objections once every month and so prevent an accumulation of work. At any moment a by-election might take place, but there was no machinery to deal with it unless the amendment was accepted.

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

AYES, 11.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Moore
„ Bell	„ Morgan
„ Corser	„ Stevens
„ Grayson	„ Tolmie
„ Gunn	„ Vowles
„ Hodge	

Tellers: Mr. Corser and Mr. Bell.

NOES, 26.

Mr. Bertram	Mr. Larcombe
„ Carter	„ Lennon
„ Collins	„ Lloyd
„ Cooper	„ McLachlan
„ Dunstan	„ O'Sullivan
„ Fihelly	„ Payne
„ Foley	„ Peterson
„ Gilday	„ Pollock
„ Gledson	„ Ryan, D.
„ Hartley, H. L.	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Hunter	„ Stopford
„ Huxham	„ Wellington
„ Land	„ Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Bertram and Mr. H. J. Ryan.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Lieut.-Colonel Rankin, Mr. Macartney, Mr. Swayne, Mr. Booker, Mr. Appel, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Somersset, Mr. Walker, Mr. Bridges, Mr. Forsyth, Mr. Stodart, Mr. Armstrong, and Mr. Petrie.

Noes—Mr. T. J. Ryan, Mr. McPhail, Mr. Theodore, Mr. W. Hartley, Mr. Adamson, Mr. Gledson, Mr. T. L. Jones, Mr. Free, Mr. Barber, Mr. Gillies, Mr. May, Mr. Kirwan, and Mr. Armfield.

Resolved in the negative.

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Mr. VOWLES moved the insertion after “roll,” on line 12, of the words—

“and any failure on his part so to do shall be deemed to be a negligent act of omission within the meaning of section ninety-four of this Act, and punishable accordingly.”

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY said what the hon. member moved was obvious in the Bill generally.

Mr. VOWLES said the Parliamentary Draftsman said the amendment was necessary to compel the Electoral Registrar to carry out his duty.

HON. J. A. FIEHELLY: Won't you admit that your amendment is covered by clause 94?

Mr. VOWLES: The amendment would amplify clause 94.

The CHAIRMAN: As the amendment introduces matter in clause 94, I have had to refer to that clause to see whether it will not duplicate something already in the measure, and I find that it is provided that the electoral registrar who is guilty of negligence or breach of duty shall be subject to a certain penalty. The amendment is therefore out of order, seeing that it is only duplicating what is already in the Bill.

Mr. VOWLES moved that the Chairman's ruling be disagreed to.

Mr. MORGAN would support the motion that the ruling be disagreed with.

Mr. CORSER supported the motion.

HON. J. TOLMIE did not think the Chairman was correct in going ahead to clause 94.

Question—That the Chairman's ruling be disagreed to—put and negatived.

Clause 31 put and passed.

On clause 32—“Notice of objection”—

HON. J. HUXHAM moved the omission in lines 32 and 33 of “and has not so lived for at least one month,” and the insertion of “and does not live in Queensland.”

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 33 and 34 put and passed.

On clause 35—“Roll when to be conclusive roll”—

HON. J. HUXHAM moved the omission, in lines 58 and 59, of “a period of one month has elapsed from such change,” [5 a.m.] and the insertion of “his name must be on the roll for some other district.”

Mr. MORGAN: Did he understand that the amendment would enable a voter who was on the roll at the present time, and who went away from the district and was not on another roll—although he might have been out of the electorate for twelve months—to

Mr. Morgan.]

vote for the electorate on the roll for which his name first appeared when he might not have transferred his name?

Hon. J. HUXHAM: Yes, although he may be liable to a penalty for not transferring. The man retained his citizen rights.

Mr. MORGAN: He would retain his rights in an electorate that he had no interest in. People should not be allowed to evade the law by not making an application to get on another roll.

Mr. VOWLES did not see how the principle involved in the amendment would work in regard to previous clauses which they had passed. They could not compel a registrar to take a man off the roll, although there was a penalty for not doing so.

Hon. J. HUXHAM promised that he would look into this matter, and, if necessary, recommit the clause.

Mr. VOWLES urged the Minister to deal with the matter now, as not only this clause but other clauses were probably concerned. It might mean the withdrawal of the clause altogether for the purpose of recasting it.

Mr. MORGAN asked if the Minister would agree to recommit the clause if there was an error?

Hon. J. HUXHAM: Yes, I will.

Mr. CORSER asked the Minister to defer the consideration of the clause.

Amendment (*Hon. J. Huxham's*) agreed to.

Hon. J. HUXHAM moved the omission of part of subclause (d), on page 14, namely—

“And in any case where the issue of a writ for an election has prevented an elector who has so changed his place of living from applying to transfer his name from a roll to another roll, his right to vote for the district on the roll of which his name appears shall hold good until after such election.”

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 36 to 49, both inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 50—“Returning officer to provide presiding officers”—

Hon. J. HUXHAM moved the insertion after “officer,” on line 18, of “and each candidate.”

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 51 to 58, both inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 59—“Ballot-papers to be given to electors”—

Mr. STEVENS pointed out a contradiction in the wording of the clause.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: To remedy the wording of the clause which the hon. member pointed out, he moved the omission, on line 35, of “then, and.” He thought that would meet the wishes of the hon. member.

Mr. STEVENS: Yes.

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

[*Mr. Morgan.*

Clauses 60 to 62, both inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 63—“Compulsory voting”—

Mr. MOORE moved the omission of “but,” on line 16, with the view of inserting “and,” and subsequently moving the omission of further words. This clause made primary voting compulsory, and [5.30 a.m.] it was only reasonable that contingent voting should also be made compulsory. At the present time it was optional, and a large number of people did not use it.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: He could not accept the amendment. It should be left optional to voters to use the contingent vote.

Mr. MORGAN urged the acceptance of the amendment, and pointed out that in New South Wales there was practically compulsory contingent voting.

Hon. J. HUXHAM: A second ballot.

Mr. MORGAN: The contingent vote was less expensive than a second ballot, and he thought it enabled the true opinion of the people to be expressed.

Mr. CORSER supported the amendment, because it was a fair thing to secure the election of members who had the confidence of a majority of the people.

At 5.55 a.m.,

Mr. LARCOMBE relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Amendment (*Mr. Moore's*) negatived, and clause put and passed.

Clauses 64 to 70, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 71—“Postal voting in case of sickness”—

Mr. MORGAN moved the insertion after “vote” on page 25, line 49, of—

“or who resides at least five miles by railway or by the nearest practicable road from the nearest polling-place appointed for the district for which he is enrolled.”

He hoped the Minister would accept this amendment, so that those who lived a great distance away from the polling-booth, and who did not come under the sickness provision, might vote by post. In some cases a man and his wife might not both be able to leave their home to go to the poll, on account of the distance and the bad state of the roads, and also owing to the fact that there might be an aged relative staying with them whom they could not leave alone.

Mr. VOWLES supported the amendment. The provision in the present Act to allow a postal vote for an elector living 5 miles from a polling-place should be retained.

Mr. CORSER urged the acceptance of the amendment. Aged and infirm people should be allowed to vote by post if they lived 5 miles from a polling-place. Voting was compulsory and these old people might have to come out on a wet day to record their votes. He hoped the Minister would accept portion of the amendment if he could not agree with the whole of it. There were no

motor-cars and other conveniences in the country electorates to bring voters to the poll like they had in the cities, and some consideration should be given to country residents.

HON. J. TOLMIE thought the amendment was a reasonable one. All members were acquainted with bush conditions, and how was it possible for the mother to leave her family to go and record her vote?

Mr. BELL thought the postal vote was necessary for those who had to travel any distance to the polling-booths in the country.

HON. J. HUXHAM admitted he knew nothing of country life, but he was told old people in the country had travelled 40 miles to record their votes. Absent voting provisions had been provided for and he could not accept the amendment.

Mr. MOORE considered that as the Federal Act was followed in other things, they should follow the Commonwealth electoral law in this clause and provide for the State also that the compulsory voting provisions would not apply to people living over 5 miles from a polling-booth.

Mr. HODGE thought a 5-mile radius was a fair thing, and the Minister should accept that radius in the interest of country residents.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Minister to grant the postal vote, or let the country people know the reason for not granting it.

Messrs. CARTER, H. L. HARTLEY, and other GOVERNMENT MEMBERS interjected that the postal vote had been abused and used unscrupulously in the past.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN asked members to assist him in preserving order.

Mr. MORGAN contended that there was no abuse of the postal vote in the country electorates. He hoped the Minister would protect him from the disorderly interjections from the Government side.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is inviting interjections from members by his interrogatory form of speech. I hope the hon. member will keep to the question or resume his seat.

Mr. MORGAN argued further in favour of a postal vote for country electorates.

Mr. POLLOCK rose to a point of order, and asked if the hon. member was in order in tediously repeating his arguments.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is quite in order.

Mr. VOWLES regretted that members opposite would not realise the seriousness of the sweeping changes brought about in the electoral law. More polling-places would not make up for the lack of postal voting facilities. The roads on black-soil plains were absolutely impassable in wet weather, and it would be difficult for electors to get to the poll.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We carefully and deliberately considered the clause before we agreed to it.

Amendment (*Mr. Morgan's*) put and negatived.

Clauses 71 to 78, both inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 79—"Publication of results and return of writs of election"—

Mr. COLLINS pointed out that considerable gerrymandering had gone on in the Bowen electorate at the last election. There should have been a polling-place for Bowen at Townsville, but, in order to try to defeat him, it was not provided. The clause dealt with the counting of group votes where not more than fifty votes were polled in several polling-places, and it was necessary. At the Bowen election there was a single polling-booth at Sereto, where only five votes were polled, four of which were for the Liberal candidate and one informal.

At 6.50 a.m.,

Mr. BERTRAM relieved Mr. Larcombe in the Chair.

Mr. COLLINS dealt further with the counting of big group votes in the Bowen electorate.

Mr. CORSER said the same condition of affairs existed in the Burnett. The group of Gayndah was over 1,200 votes, and there were similar instances in other electorates.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to deal with the clause, and I also ask hon. members on my right to cease from interjecting. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. CORSER: He was dealing with statements made by the present member for Bowen against the conduct of some who were the servants of a Government supported by the ex-member for that electorate.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Is the hon. member in order?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: No, and if he does not confine his remarks to the clause, I shall be reluctantly compelled to ask him to resume his seat.

Clauses 79 to 90, both inclusive, put and passed.

HON. J. HUXHAM moved the insertion of the following new clause:—

"(1.) On and after the date of issue and before the return of any writ for any election, every article, report, letter, or other matter commenting upon any candidate, or political party, or the issues being submitted to the electors, printed and published in any newspaper, circular, pamphlet, or 'dodger' shall be signed by the author and authors, giving his or their true name and address or names and addresses at the end of the said article, report, letter, or other matter. Any person who contravenes this provision shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds.

"(2.) Any newspaper editor or proprietor who permits, in any newspaper which he edits or owns, the publication of any unsigned article, report, letter, or other matter commenting upon any candidate, or political party, or the issues being submitted to the electors after the issue and before the return of any writ for any election shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds."

He was sure hon. members opposite would agree to this.

Mr. CORSER: That will satisfy us. It is a fair thing.

New clause put and passed.

Clauses 91 to 98, both inclusive, put and passed.

Mr. Corser.]

On clause 99—"Regulations"—

HON. J. HUXHAM said, in order to make sure that the soldiers would get a vote, he would move that after the word "Act" on line 20 the following words be inserted:—

"including provision for all matters enabling electors absent from Queensland to exercise the right to vote, either personally or by persons nominated by them for that purpose."

Mr. MORGAN thanked the Minister for including the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said there was no need for thanks. Clause 10 made all the necessary provision to give the soldiers a vote, but to put the matter beyond doubt the amendment was brought forward.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 99, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 100 to 135, both inclusive, put and passed.

At 7.15 a.m.,

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I shall resume the chair at 10 o'clock.

The Committee resumed at the hour named, whereupon,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Clauses 136 and 137 put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments, and the third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at four minutes past 10 o'clock a.m.