

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 1919

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 6 NOVEMBER, 1919.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Lennon, *Herbert*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock p.m.

PAPERS.

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

Report of the Department of Public Works for the year ended 30th June, 1919.

Report of the Director of Labour and Chief Inspector of Factories and Shops for the year ended 30th June, 1919.

Annual report of the Department of Agriculture and Stock for the year 1918-1919.

Nineteenth annual report of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Return to an Order relative to prisoners released in Queensland since 1st July, 1914, made by the House, on motion of Mr. Petrie, on 7th August last.

QUESTIONS.

PURCHASE OF "LYDWIN," TOOWOOMBA, BY WAR SERVICE HOMES COMMISSIONER.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*) asked Mr. T. R. Roberts (*East Toowoomba*)—

"1. Has the Commissioner for War Service Homes (Federal authority) purchased the land adjoining the Royal Agricultural Society's land at Toowoomba known as 'Lydwin' and belonging to the Robinson Estate?"

"2. If the report in the 'Toowoomba Chronicle' of 27th October, 1919, is correct, will he inform the House—(a) what price was paid for the land, (b) who was the commission agent who introduced the land to you, (c) if £750 per acre for 10 acres was the price for which this land was on the market, could not land as suitable for soldiers' homes have been bought for a third of this price within 400 yards of 'Lydwin' and thereby save the soldiers from being imposed upon out of their repatriation money?"

"3. How long was 'Lydwin' on the market before sale?"

"4. Was it passed in at public auction, and at what price?"

Mr. ROBERTS replied—

"1. I desire to inform the hon. member for Toowoomba that I am not in the confidence of the Commissioner for War Service Homes. If the hon. member is truly desirous of assisting the soldiers, I would suggest he seeks information of the Commissioner, War Service Homes.

"2, 3, and 4. See answer to No. 1"

PRIZE ESSAY COMPETITION IN STATE SCHOOLS.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"1. Is it a fact that a request to hold a prize essay competition in the Queensland State schools on loyalty to King and

Empire, prizes for which would not cost the Government anything, was turned down by him?

"2. If so, for what reason was permission refused where other competitions are allowed?

"3. Is it the policy of the Government to promote loyalty to King and Empire in the rising generation of the State schools?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrego*), in the absence of Mr. Huxham, replied—

"1 and 2. As a matter of principle the Department of Public Instruction does not recognise the necessity for special prize essay competitions in connection with general school subjects.

"3. The hon. member is referred to the departmental publication, 'The Syllabus or Course of Instruction in Primary Schools with Notes for the Guidance of Teachers,' pages 110 to 115 inclusive."

CASE OF CONSTABLE O. KREUTZMANN.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*) in the absence of Mr. Warren, asked the Home Secretary—

"1. Is it a fact that Constable O. Kreutzmann, No. 1160, was charged with an offence, that he denied his guilt, that he was refused a trial or inquiry, and that he subsequently was transferred from plain clothes duty at Roma Street Police Station to uniform duty at Blackall?

"2. Does the police award provide that no member of the plain clothes force shall be transferred to the uniform police except in case of inefficiency or misconduct?

"3. What was the reason of Constable Kreutzmann's transfer?

"4. Will the Minister table all reports which make reference to the transfer and to the charge made against the constable?"

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*) replied—

"1. Certain action became necessary with regard to Constable Kreutzmann for which ample reason existed. It is suggested that the hon. member should call at the office of the Commissioner of Police, where the papers will be made available for his perusal.

"2. No.

"3. See answer to No. 1.

"4. See answer to No. 1."

PAY OF RETURNED SOLDIER RAILWAY EMPLOYEES.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. Did a deputation of returned soldier railway employees wait upon him recently with reference to the matter of pay?

"2. If so, what was the exact nature of the request?

"3. What reply has he given or decided to give?

"4. What is the practice in other States in this connection?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. A. Pihelly, *Paddington*) replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. That where the military emoluments were less than the civil emoluments the department should make up the difference.

"3. That, in the Minister's opinion, all soldiers should have received at least £1 per diem, and as the whole of the 50,000 Queensland soldiers who enlisted, no matter by whom employed, would be entitled to similar treatment, the matter was obviously one for the Commonwealth Government, who should have paid the soldiers an adequate wage.

"4. The Premiers' Conference resolved that the States could not make up the difference. I understand that the New South Wales Government, although a party to the decision of the Premiers' Conference, does not abide by such decision."

PROBABLE DATE OF TABLING OF RETURNS ORDERED BY HOUSE.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*) asked the Premier—

"When will the returns ordered to be laid on the table of the House—(a) released prisoners, (b) fees paid to barristers and solicitors, (c) employees of the Government outside of the Public Service—be made available for the members of the House?"

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*) replied—

"The return referred to in (a) is being tabled this afternoon; the return referred to in (b) will be tabled as soon as complete information is available; the return referred to in (c) was tabled on the 22nd October, 1919."

SCARCITY OF SULPHURIC ACID.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*), without notice, asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"1. Is the Minister aware that during the past few weeks sulphuric acid for milk and cream testing has been unobtainable in Queensland?

"2. Will the Minister make immediate inquiries as to present stocks of sulphuric acid in the Southern States that could be drawn from to meet these shortages?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*) replied—

"1 and 2. In reply to the hon. gentleman, I desire to say that that matter has not come under my notice, but I will have immediate inquiries made with a view to taking any action that may be necessary to meet the position."

DISCHARGED SOLDIERS' SETTLEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS. I beg to move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirability of introducing a Bill to further amend the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act of 1917 in certain particulars."

Hon. J. H. Coyne.]

There are two chief objects in this measure. One is to enlarge the scope of the 1917 and 1918 Acts to make advances to soldiers for other forms of tenure than that provided, and also to include all nurses amongst those to whom advances can be made for land. It will apply to all forms of tenure.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*): Having regard to the fact that it may be a long time before the House will have an opportunity of dealing with this legislation again—perhaps it will be twelve months—and the fact that the soldiers are now returning in such numbers that we may expect the arrival of all the men within a very short period, I ask the Minister if it would not be desirable to eliminate those words “in certain particulars,” in order that if, during the discussion, any suggestions are made which would be of assistance to the soldiers, they can be given effect to.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This has been fully considered, and it is thought that this is the proper way to do it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: We find that when Bills are limited to “certain particulars,” and discussion comes up in Committee, we are held up. Having regard to the circumstances of the present time, and the needs of the soldiers and the obligation all parties are under to them, I think it is a fair thing that the Minister should leave the Bill open to any amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will be prepared to consider any suggestion you may make.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It may very well be that when the contents of this measure are made public, the soldiers or those who are interested in them may see a need for some extension or amendment which might be given effect to if those words were omitted. The hon. gentleman surely realises that no advantage will be taken of the opening for putting forward any unreasonable amendment. Surely he is not afraid of anything in that direction!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I cannot consent to anything which will delay the passage of this Bill.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not know whether the hon. gentleman intends to deal with this measure during this portion of the session. I understood from the leader of the Government it may not be possible to deal with all the business which is on the paper, and business which is not completed will go over to the remainder of the session to commence in January.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We have all next week yet.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman says so, but it is not in accordance with the statement of his chief, who introduced a Bill yesterday and pushed it through the House on the ground that it was desirable that the House should rise to-morrow.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am not saying that what he said was wrong, but I say we have all next week.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Of course, we have. We have all next year, for the matter of that. But I do not think it is an unreasonable thing to ask that those few words, which practically block the passage of any suggestion that may be made in the interests of the soldiers, should be removed under the particular circumstances of the case. I

realise that, in ordinary matters, the words are put in as words of limitation, and probably they are necessary to prevent undue obstruction. But in any matter affecting the soldiers there is not likely to be any undue obstruction. I take it from the few words the hon. gentleman has uttered in connection with the contents of this Bill that the law is going to be largely widened so as to give the soldiers the right to freehold.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, the right to acquire it, but not from the State.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That is a decided blot. Nothing that the hon. gentleman can say or do can prevent the soldier acquiring freehold from anybody.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, he could; but if he did not have the money we would give it to him.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman knows that the soldier acquires freehold by purchase from anybody, even if the State were not prepared to issue a deed of grant for freehold.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What about the farm which is already prepared?

Mr. MACARTNEY: Freehold farms already prepared?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Of course, they can do that now.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He could if he had cash.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I want to know what the hon. gentleman means. I really thought from the announcement made by the hon. gentleman that the Act was going to be so enlarged that the soldier could, if he so desired, get from the State either freehold or perpetual lease.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What I said was that we would make advances either on freehold or perpetual lease.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I take it that the Bill is only going to enlarge the powers of advance?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I think that the few words “in certain particulars,” which stand in the way of a reasonable amendment of the Act might very well be withdrawn.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dulby*): It appears to me that there is something hidden as far as this matter is concerned.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why are you so suspicious?

Mr. VOWLES: I would like to know whether this Bill originated in the mind of the Minister, or whether it is an injunction from the Federal Government that the moneys which are being advanced by the State for the purpose of assisting returned soldiers must be applicable to all classes of tenure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No such thing.

Mr. VOWLES: The position we are in now is that instead of limiting the advance to certain specified tenures, every class of tenure will be able to be financed when this Bill becomes law. That is very desirable. It strikes me as a very strange thing that when the Government are making these advances on grazing farm tenures, a freeholder should not be entitled to the same

privilege as is given to the perpetual lease holder. It appears to me that this is an afterthought, and there seems to be some reason for the Government at the end of the session practically deciding to amend the Act.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We have been thinking over it for some considerable time past.

Mr. VOWLES: Then another thing. If a man has sufficient security to give to the Minister under the existing Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act for the purpose of acquiring the freehold, he must then have other security which any financial institution would require him to have if they were going to finance him.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is a percentage advance on the security.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not know what the percentage will be. Are you going to make it 25 per cent. of the security? When we are dealing with grazing farms, the farm itself is not so much taken into consideration by financial institutions as the capacity of the individual to make a "do" of the business and his knowledge of the stock, and the things he has to put on it to create the earning power. The security there is only a circumstance—the main thing is the man's capacity and ability to work.

Mr. BRENNAN: What about an hotel? The principle is just the same.

Mr. VOWLES: I understand that this Bill does not deal with hotels. It seems to me that the Government is now recognising what we have already advocated, and which has been advocated in another place—that provision should be made whereby the returned soldier should get the same privilege in respect of grazing selection as he gets with regard to perpetual lease selection. If a man can purchase a grazing farm now it will be competent for the Minister under this Bill to find the money. If that is so, he must be one of those happy individuals who can put down 25 per cent., or a reasonable proportion, of the cost of purchase, and we are told that that is not the class of business the Government want to do. If you can advance to anyone who is in a position to purchase, I want to know why another soldier who has a desire in that direction and who has the necessary education and experience to carry on such a venture, should not be financed straight out for the selection in the first instance for the improvement and the stocking of it up. I cannot see where there is any distinction between the two cases, and if we are going to extend this privilege—and I am in favour of it—I would like to see the principle extended, so that the legislation which has passed the other House giving the soldier the right to priority of selection of grazing farms, the same as perpetual lease, may be brought into existence.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): The question of perpetual lease has often been discussed in this House, and I think the hon. member for Dalby has sufficient experience of the Jimbour selections to enable him to judge as to the propriety of the Minister's conduct in converting freehold tenure into perpetual lease tenure in that case. That is a sufficient answer to the hon. member. We had a glaring case in regard to freehold given by the hon. member for East Toowoomba, in connection with a piece of land of an area of 10 acres which has been sold for

soldiers' homes. According to a report in the "Toowoomba Chronicle" of 27th October, the transaction has been brought before the Deputy Commissioner for War Service Homes. I am glad that the hon. member for East Toowoomba refutes the statement made, and that he is not identified with the transaction. If the soldiers can be imposed upon, and the repatriation funds can be exploited by those people who are out to make commission and unearned increment on their properties, the repatriation money will not go far. The other side of the House is standing for profiteering and unearned increment.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must keep to the motion.

Mr. BRENNAN: I am certain that when this Bill is introduced, it will leave freehold out.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, it is not left out.

Mr. BRENNAN: I hope it will be leasehold all the way through.

Mr. VOWLES: The Minister said freehold was included.

Mr. SIZER (*Vundah*): I rather regret that we intend to amend the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act of 1917 in certain particulars. I think from the explanation given by the Minister that he is not going so far as he could or should go in this instance. I move the deletion of the words "in certain particulars," with the object of widening the scope of the Bill in order that we may get a full discussion.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It won't make any difference.

Mr. SIZER: I don't agree with the hon. gentleman. I know that if we allowed the motion to go in its present form and attempted to amend the scope of the Bill in Committee, we should be told that we were outside the order of leave, and I do not intend to be placed in that position. The Bill, as far as I can gather, is to make provision for war nurses—an excellent provision which I quite agree with—and I think the Minister is quite right in making such provision. What is somewhat puzzling to me is that, while he is making provision for war nurses, he is not making any provision for war workers, who are men who left this country with the same idea as the soldiers, to perform whatever task they could in order to achieve victory. The majority of these men were incapacitated for military service, and were accepted by the Imperial Government as war workers. They have performed excellent service overseas, and now they have returned they are anxious, many of them, to take up land. I fail to see where you can draw the line in regard to a man who had the self-same ambition as the soldier to get into the front line of trenches, but was prevented by medical reasons from doing so, but he did the next best thing and went overseas to the scene of action, and performed equally good service in the workshops and factories. I fail to see any difference between the services rendered by the two men.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You might go further and say the man who stayed at home and tilled the farm.

Mr. SIZER: I fail to see any difference, but, when these war workers return, there is a distinct difference in their treatment

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as far as land settlement is concerned. Our fundamental desire in Queensland is to increase land settlement, and much as we would like to think otherwise, we are convinced that men will not take up land so readily to-day as they would in years gone by. They will not do the hard work the old pioneers did, and we have to make the conditions attractive. Why not extend the benefits of the measure to the munition workers who want to go on the land the same as the soldiers? We would then have a larger number of men taking up land. That is the view taken by the Commonwealth Government, which has expressed its desire to advance money to the State Government to assist munition workers to go on the land, on the same basis as returned soldiers. A little while ago I asked a question in the House as to whether the Government were considering the question of extending their land settlement policy, in so far as it related to returned soldiers, to the munition workers, and I received a reply that that matter was under consideration. Information came to me from the Federal Parliament that a similar question was asked there by the hon. member for Lilley, Mr. Mackay, and the reply given on behalf of the Federal Government was that they were quite prepared to advance the money, the same as they had advanced it to soldiers, but the Queensland Government had refused to accept it—they had refused to extend the same advantages to the munition workers. Is it because they think there would not be sufficient kudos in extending it to munition workers—is there not a sufficient number of votes to be got out of it? That is the only conclusion I can come to, because there is very little difference between a munition worker and a soldier, so far as their spirit is concerned, and there will be no difference when both of them are settled on the land. It is quite likely that the munition worker would be just as good a land settler as the soldier. When we need so many men on the land, why should we close the door to these particular men? That is one of the reasons why I have moved to widen the scope of the Bill, so as to include munition workers. I think the Government can very well afford, not to be generous, but to act in the best interests of the State in accepting the view I have put forward.

Another reason why I wish to extend the scope of the Bill is so that the much-vexed question of preference to soldiers in respect of grazing selection may be discussed again. I know very well that the Minister for Public Lands—and I give him credit for it—is sympathetic, as far as he can see his way clear, but he is labouring under a delusion that the returned soldiers, if given an opportunity, would become dummies for the pastoralists or financial institutions.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is only a small phase of it.

MR. BRENNAN: There is no foundation for it.

MR. SIZER: The hon. member says so, but if the hon. member has the opinion that soldiers are not as honest as other men, I am sorry.

MR. BRENNAN: It is not a question of honesty at all.

MR. SIZER: The New South Wales Government have realised that grazing selection is a profitable sort of land settlement,

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and one which affords an opportunity to make money quickly, and it is an

[4 p.m.] occupation which is not so laborious as some other occupations on the land. Many men will come back from the war who will not be physically able to do hard agricultural labour, but many thousands will be physically competent to carry out the duties appertaining to grazing selection. This request has been made by the soldiers' organisations on many occasions, and they have been reasonable, because they say it would not be fair to exclude entirely all other settlers so as to make it a monopoly for the soldiers. I am prepared to accept that view, but I do say that when grazing selections are thrown open for a certain number, there should be preference to soldiers. That is a very reasonable request. The Minister usually raises the argument that he would not be in a position to finance them, and he will further say that if he could finance some he would not be able to finance all, and because he could not give to all he should not give to any. That is a very weak argument. If we carry that to its logical conclusion, we will never progress one inch, because we will never find one man in exactly the same position as another. I do not see what objection can be raised to giving preference in connection with 50 per cent. of the areas, or on a basis of six to four. The hon. gentleman says that he is unable to finance them. If that is so, and I must accept his argument—if that is so, why not allow preference to the men who are prepared to finance themselves? Then, again, take the case of a man who has a certain amount of capital, and who is able to take up a selection, and who can be financed, not by the Government, but in the ordinary way like other selectors. Is there anything dishonest or objectionable in that? Every man in this world who has risen from the ranks and obtained a superior position financially has been compelled to resort to financial assistance during his life. If a man has never borrowed money he will have very little money. That is part of our system, and one which has played a big part in building up Queensland; and why should we have this limitation? Why should we say to the soldiers, "You cannot follow the usual procedure in connection with grazing selections; you cannot get assistance from the financial institutions, because there is some mythical objection in that you may be the dummy of some big capitalist." I have heard it said that it takes a pretty good man to be a dummy. Probably it does; but if that is so, and they did become dummies, if the selectors are going to benefit, and if the country is going to benefit by it, is there any harm done? Is there anything dishonest in it? Of course not.

MR. WINSTANLEY: It is certainly dishonest to be a dummy.

MR. SIZER: Is there anything dishonest in a man entering into a legitimate business and making money legitimately? Nothing dishonest at all. The dishonesty would be when they resorted to malpractices, and, in my opinion, the soldiers are less liable to resort to malpractices than others. On those grounds I fail to see why the soldiers should be deprived of the opportunity of launching out into this form of land settlement. It would mean the settling of some hundreds and probably thousands, of returned men on the land, and the Government are neglecting their duty, not only to the soldiers, but to

the State in general if they, in their legislation, hamper the placing of thousands of men on the land. It is useless for us to get on the stump and talk about increased production—go on the land, it is from the land we must meet our taxation, and meet our liabilities—what is the use of our talking those platitudes if, when we have the opportunity of dealing with the matter, we deprive one section of the community of an opportunity of going on the land? Unless the Government are prepared to extend the Bill in this direction, they will lay themselves open to the charge of uttering mere platitudes when they talk about increased production and increased land settlement. I have not yet heard of anything objectionable arising from this system in New South Wales. I know perfectly well that when grazing selections are thrown open in New South Wales there is a big rush of returned men for them, and in many cases they have had to resort to the ballot when there have been a limited number of blocks available. That proves that in New South Wales the returned men are anxious to go on the land, and the agitation which is continually coming from the soldiers' organisations in favour of preference proves that the same desire exists in Queensland for preference in connection with a portion of these grazing selections. It is a reasonable request, and one that need not be laboured. Why do we give preference in every other form of land settlement, and not in this case? I know very well that in the Springsure district there are many group settlements of a few thousand acres, and I know the men on those group settlements are now supporting large families, and they are becoming prosperous. When preference was given to those men under the group system, I fail to see why we cannot give the same preference to returned soldiers in the case of resumptions which will take place in the near future. When big resumptions take place, would it be unreasonable to set aside a portion of the resumption for soldiers' group settlement? Under that system the men would live close together and be neighbourly, and would assist one another, and the Government, if they liked, could have some sort of supervision, and could impose strict regulations to prevent this dummying that they complain of. Surely, the Government is competent to frame regulations to prevent dummying! If the Government could not draw up regulations to prevent dummying, it shows lack of capacity on their part, and it shows also that their ability is not exactly what they represent it to be. I am quite certain that such regulations could be drawn up, if not by the Ministers themselves, then by the officers of the department.

I would like to see the Bill extended in order to give the option of freehold. I am not going into the argument of freehold as against leasehold, but I say, whether leasehold or freehold is the better, a large proportion of the returned men in this State will not go on to the land unless they can get freehold.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are only delaying the passage of the Bill.

MR. SIZER: The hon. gentleman knows that I am not going to delay the passage of this Bill, and he knows it is a reasonable amendment in order to make the Bill far more comprehensive than it is, and if it does mean delaying the Bill, and it is made more comprehensive, then we shall have achieved

something. Freehold is desired by a large number of men, and they will not go on the land unless they can get the freehold.

MR. O'SULLIVAN: You are advocating that they should go on grazing farms, and they would not get freehold under that form of settlement.

MR. SIZER: There is a large number—I say the majority—who desire freehold, and, that being the case, it seems to me a very shortsighted, cheeseparing policy if we are going to say in one breath, "We want you to go on the land," and in the next breath to say, "We know that the conditions on which you go on the land are such as are not acceptable to you." When there is a desire on the part of a number of men to go on the land it is our duty as a Parliament, and it is the duty of the Government to satisfy that desire in order to get men on the land, because, after all, the greatest consideration is not freehold or leasehold, it is the getting of men on the land, and when you have got them there to have them contented in order that they may become excellent settlers and excellent producers, and thereby increase the wealth of this State. We are hampering land settlement, so far as this Bill is concerned, in not granting freehold where it is desired. I am not advocating that it should be all freehold. I am advocating that where there is a desire, and the man is in a position to take the responsibility, that he should be allowed to have the freehold which he desires. I fail to see why the returned soldier should be deprived of the opportunity of getting a freehold, because we know as a fact that gentlemen who sit on the front Treasury bench have taken up land, and have taken up land very near to soldier settlements under the freehold system.

THE SPEAKER: Order! Order!

MR. SIZER: I am only stating a fact.

THE SPEAKER: Order! That has no connection with this Bill.

MR. SIZER: I would like the Minister to give us his argument on the matter, and say why he took freehold as against leasehold. It would clear the air considerably if we could get that information.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order.

MR. SIZER: One of the reasons why I move this amendment is in order to widen the scope of the Bill—to make it optional whether a man takes up leasehold or freehold. I am stating, as an argument in favour of my contention, that a Minister took up freehold in preference to leasehold. That is a fact which cannot be denied.

THE SPEAKER: Order! That has nothing to do with the motion before the House.

MR. SIZER: If that is your ruling, Mr. Speaker, I will not disobey, but I am asking the Minister to give his reasons and why he prefers freehold as against leasehold.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

MR. SIZER: I have indicated three directions in which this Bill should be widened. The first is that provision should be made for the war workers. It would be to the benefit of the war workers to be included. The war workers who have been to Britain have written to me asking why they are not included in the provisions of this Act. Then I consider the returned soldiers should be given preference in grazing selections; and

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thirdly, they should be given the option of freehold if they so desire. If the Bill were amended in those directions, we would be able to say that our Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act was an Act of which we could be proud, and it would result in a large number of additional men going on the land.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): In rising to second the amendment, I may say that I believe that the Minister for Public Lands is in sympathy with the soldiers' movement. I have been associated with the Minister, probably not so much as other members, but when I have come in contact with him he has always been courteous and willing to meet us. I know that the Minister is bound, not by his own opinions, but by those who keep him on the Government benches.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are entirely wrong there.

Mr. FRY: We have to take into consideration, in dealing with questions before the House, that the policy of the Government is going to be carried, no matter what argument can be put forward in favour of freehold. They say that it is the policy of the Government, and that seems to be the Alpha and Omega of their argument. They stick hard and fast to what is their policy. There is no good reason for withholding discussion on this Bill. Matters are changing now very rapidly, and all the men will be home within a short time, and we can legislate for them as a body. If the Minister would allow the widening of the scope of the Bill by accepting the amendment, it would do an infinite amount of good. If leasehold is such an excellent proposition, then what is the objection to putting in the Bill that a soldier can have the preference of freehold or leasehold? The Minister knows that a man would take what is best for himself, so why object to putting it in the Bill? If a soldier is allowed the option of choosing, then the Government should be sympathetic enough to allow him to take up land under the conditions which he likes best. I hope the Bill will be extended to enable the Minister to grant priority to returned soldiers for grazing selections. There are men from the West and North who were reared on grazing selections before they went to the front, and their only desire is to continue on the same lines on their return to civil life. These men will be far happier with the conditions which exist on grazing selections than they would be on smaller agricultural farms. Many of them would not be happy at all on agricultural farms, and they would not be contented. If you put a man where he is not contented, then you would not get the best out of the man or out of the land. Put a man in his proper element and he is all right. If the hon. member for Toowoomba were put to work as a navy, he would not make such a good fist of it as he does with the law. If we put fruitgrowers in a Chinese garden, they would not do so well, because their hearts would not be in the work.

Mr. WHITFORD: Nonsense! Why don't you talk sense?

Mr. FRY: These are comparisons which are proved by fact. The men from the North and West, who are brought up on grazing farms, should be given a chance to take up grazing farms. What I advocate principally is that the returned soldiers get

priority, and if there are a number of soldiers after the same block, they should be allowed to ballot amongst themselves. The Commonwealth Government advances £625, and the State up to £575, making a total of £1,200 altogether, which, with a man's own private capital, will give him a fairly good start. You are doing no one an injustice by allowing the soldiers to have preference, but you are helping the man whom you promised to help when he returned. The hon. member for Albert related the case of a retired policeman who settled in the vicinity of Hughenden about six years ago. He started with a maximum capital of £500 on a 12,000-acre block, and to-day he is worth thousands of pounds.

Mr. BRENNAN: Not on a freehold.

Mr. FRY: If that is good in the case of one man, it can be good in the case of another. I know the Minister would be reasonable if the powers behind permitted him to be. We should throw open this Bill to a full discussion, and then would probably arrive at a Bill which would be acceptable to all parties in the House and acceptable to the men outside who will be the producers of the future.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): There seems to be a difference of opinion as to what the Minister means by introducing this Bill. I understood the Minister to say that it was to make provision for advances on freeholds. The hon. member for Toowoomba says that such a thing should not be at all, but we have to take the Minister's word.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member for Toowoomba did not say that.

Mr. BRENNAN: I am in favour of the leasehold every time. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I thought I understood the hon. gentleman very clearly. The hon. member for Toowoomba complained about a certain resumption of freehold for soldier settlement in Toowoomba. The hon. member should remember that there is just as much gambling in leaseholds as there is in freeholds. The advances that are made increase the value of leasehold, just as they increase the value of freehold. The hon. member for Toowoomba knows quite well that if you take the lease of an hotel it is not the lease nor the freehold, but the business and the site which creates the value.

Mr. BRENNAN: Exactly. That is the point.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The same thing comes in in connection with land, whether it is leasehold or freehold. It is a matter of the position of the land. The land in Campbell street, Toowoomba, is a splendid site, whether it is leasehold or freehold, and the hon. gentleman should know that. He should also know that it is a very desirable place for soldier settlement.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: The price is too high.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Private people are willing to come in and give that amount for it. It does not matter whether the land is used for soldier settlement or by private citizens. If a soldier can afford to pay an extra price for a piece of land he should be allowed to do so.

Mr. BRENNAN: He cannot afford to pay it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: How do you know what money he has got? You are judging him by yourself.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to address the Chair.

[*Mr. Sizer.*]

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member for Toowoomba talks about the soldiers, and he is judging them by his own measure. I do not know what money the hon. member for Toowoomba has got, but I know plenty of soldiers who have got money and who want a good home. They do not want to be shoved into the back street.

Mr. WHITFORD: Some of them have no money.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They do not want to be put in a back street, at any rate. The hon. member for Toowoomba is complaining because the committee, at Toowoomba, bought the premier building sites of Toowoomba for the soldiers. He wants them to go into the back streets. If the soldiers want to go into a good street let them do it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member for Toowoomba never said that.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member for Toowoomba opposes the buying of this land.

Mr. BRENNAN: At the price.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If the soldiers like to pay a good price let them do it. The hon. member would put them in the back streets somewhere. The hon. member has not the kindest of feelings towards the soldiers.

Mr. BRENNAN: I have got more feeling for State children than you have. I never robbed State children, anyway.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What do you mean? What do you mean?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Mr. Speaker, I ask you to compel the hon. member for Toowoomba to withdraw anything he said in reference to me and State children.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member encouraged interjections by replying to them, and not obeying my call to order when I asked him to address the Chair.

Mr. SWAYNE: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Toowoomba in order in accusing the hon. member for Drayton of robbing the State children? That is what I heard.

Mr. WHITFORD: He said he never robbed any State children.

The SPEAKER: I did not hear the hon. member for Toowoomba make such a remark.

Mr. BRENNAN: I never said "robbed," I said "bled."

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I will let him off this time. (Laughter.) The two State boys I had working for me are soldiers, [4.30 p.m.] and will come under this Bill.

They went to the front to fight when the hon. member for Toowoomba stayed at home. They can share my home at any time like any member of my family. They fought for men like the hon. member for Toowoomba, who stayed at home.

Mr. BRENNAN interjected.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member knows very little about freehold or leasehold. I think the ideal settlement is grazing farms.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why didn't you go in for it?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Because I don't think I had the sense. I invested a lot of money in freehold; perhaps if I had gone into the West I would have done better.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The question of freehold which the Minister is bringing forward goes this way: If you have a small amount of land and a large amount of improvements, then you will want freehold, but if you have a large amount of land and small improvements, you are then quite satisfied with leasehold tenure. The best form of soldier settlement is to have the leasehold of a fairly big grazing farm, something a man can make a living on. If you put him on a small piece of ground he has a lot of hard work to do—work which some returned soldiers are not equal to. I would like to see the soldiers having the preference in grazing farms.

Mr. GRAYSON (*Cunningham*): I think it is a great mistake on the part of either the Federal or State Government to compel soldiers to select fruit farms or small areas, in many cases against their will, such as the Beechburum or Pikedale settlements. No member of this House knows better than the Minister the requirements of a large number of young men in the Western districts who went to the front—I am referring to the stockmen, overseers, shearers, and rouseabouts. There are hundreds of men from the West who voluntarily offered their services at the time they were required for the defence of the country, and it is the duty of the Government particularly to give to those men the class of settlement that would be suitable to them. I know the Minister for Lands is sympathetic with the class of people to whom I am referring, and it is his duty when resumptions are taking place to see that a certain area be reserved for returned soldiers. At the hotel where I am staying there are three returned soldiers who have applied for several blocks in the West of Queensland, and have been balloted out on each occasion. This is only three, but I know of many more cases. I think I would be correct in saying that there are hundreds of similar cases. In a country like Queensland it is a crying shame that those young soldiers, who are used to grazing pursuits, and are thoroughly qualified to conduct grazing selections, should not have an opportunity of securing the selections when they apply for them. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it is the man who did not go to the front who is successful in securing these blocks of land. One hon. member said this afternoon that it did not matter whether the soldier took up land for dummying purposes or otherwise. I have no hesitation in saying that I have no sympathy for any man—whether he be a soldier or not—who takes up land for dummying purposes. (Hear, hear!) I have always been, and always will be, opposed to dummying, because no greater injustice could be done to the genuine selector than the dummying which was allowed to exist in Queensland many years ago. The soldier who takes up a grazing selection has to hold it and make a living on it for five years before he gets the title to it. I may tell you that some large squatters would not trust the soldier, or any other person, to hold a selection and finance him during those five years. A few months ago there were about a dozen small grazing selections thrown open near Warwick for soldiers only. There were several soldier applicants, a ballot was taken, and the successful soldiers in that instance, in my opinion, will become successful selectors. They have now started dairying, they have borrowed money up to about £600 from the Repatriation Department, and are purchasing cattle and fencing their land.

Mr. Grayson.]

Those selections vary in area from 900 acres to 1,280 acres. I say that areas of from 5,000 to 10,000 acres should be thrown open to soldiers on the group system. I have observed that there is a certain amount of sympathy existing amongst the soldiers, and I am sure that if the land were thrown open in that way they would assist one another. They would be able to form a community, shear their own sheep, fence their own land, and assist each other as has been done previously by groups. There is a splendid opportunity for the Minister to do this in the western part of Queensland, and satisfy the demands of the soldiers who came from that part of Queensland. In New South Wales the Government are resuming large grazing areas, and have thrown them open for soldiers only. About a month ago I travelled down with two young men whom I knew in Queensland about three years ago, and who had enlisted in New South Wales. They applied for grazing selections and secured them. One of the selections was 7,000 acres, and the other 9,000 acres. The New South Wales Government have reserved those grazing selections solely for returned soldiers. I contend that in Queensland where we have such large areas of splendid grazing country going to waste with prickly-pear and other noxious weeds, and where we have a number of splendid, healthy young men willing to go upon the land, it is the duty of the Government to encourage that class of settlement. In the case of a man who secures 10,000 acres and who is financed up to £650, there is no fear regarding his success, and in many cases he would, in shearing time, make money from neighbouring stations. In many cases the squatters give the neighbouring selectors—who were their employees—from 1,000 to 2,000 cwes for two or three years, if they give the pastoralist half of the wool from the sheep. I know dozens of men who are wealthy to-day who started in the way I have mentioned. I trust the present Government will not compel the soldiers to go on to 10-acre fruit farms, such as are at Beerburum and Pikedale, which is a most useless class of settlement. I trust the Minister will take notice of the debate which has taken place this afternoon.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am sure the returned soldiers will take notice of it also.

Mr. GRAYSON: I am not opposing the Bill. If anything can be done to encourage the soldier, I am here to assist the Minister or any party that wants to do it.

Mr. SWAYNE: I desire to support the amendment moved by the hon. member for Nundah. I have no desire to delay the passing of this Bill, and if the Minister would assure us that it would contain provisions for giving preference to soldiers in the matter of grazing selection, and also munition workers in the way of dwellings, etc., I think we should be satisfied. On this side we desire that the soldier shall also have the opportunity of acquiring freehold from the Crown, but we realise that that would be contrary to the policy of the party in power, and it is useless for us to ask them to alter their policy in that regard. The only way in which it can be altered is by the electors, and, no doubt, the time will come when that will be one of the points on which the electors will turn the Government out of office. In the meantime we shall have to put up with it. With regard to the other points which have been made,

[*Mr. Grayson.*]

as to munition workers, and preference to soldiers in the matter of grazing selections, we would not be true to our trust if we did not urge upon the Government, on every possible occasion, the need of legislating in that direction. With regard to the need for granting preference in the matter of grazing selection to returned soldiers, I have been engaged both in agricultural and pastoral work all my life, and I quite understand there are many young fellows to whom agriculture does not appeal. There are men who are first-class hands amongst stock, and whose ambition is to be with sheep and cattle, but they do not like the plough, and if they have served their country they should have preference over the man who has not. If there are Crown lands available they should have the first chance of them. During the session I asked the Minister for Public Lands some questions with regard to this matter, and from his replies I find over 38,000,000 acres of the best grazing land in Queensland have been alienated under grazing selection tenure, not 1 acre of which has been set aside for a soldier. I say that is unjust, and it is a disgrace to the Government, but they have now an opportunity to correct that injustice, and, before it is too late, to give the soldier an opportunity in this regard. In reply to my question addressed to the Minister as to why this was the case, he referred me to something he had said in a previous session. When I looked the matter up, I found that the sole reason he advanced was the inability of the soldier to handle a large area of 50,000 or 60,000 acres.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You know that what you are saying now is absolutely untrue.

Mr. SWAYNE: No. If there has been any misunderstanding, it is owing to the Minister declining to give a straightforward answer. I asked him a straightforward question, and that is what I understood his answer to be. If that is not so, this is an opportunity of explaining to the House what he really did say, and quoting the statement he referred to. That is the way I read it. If that is the objection, it is not a good one. Many of these young fellows who went to the war are well-to-do. I know several who are now taking part in the ballots, and, in one case, a returned man has been balloting for three months. It is a disgrace that he should not have a better opportunity of acquiring the land that he desires than the man who did not go to the war. Those who went to the war and fought for their country should have preference over those who did not. All we want by means of this amendment is to be sure that in future those returned men shall have preference.

In regard to the munition worker, I certainly think that he is also entitled to preference in acquiring a home, and so on, because, after all, we know that this war could not have been won without the shells and the various munitions. We know how long the war hung in the balance for want of munitions, and it was when the unskilled workers became skilled workers and supplied munitions to the soldier, that the tide began to turn in our favour. These men deserve and are entitled to some special privilege. Many of them were skilled tradesmen who could have earned far higher wages in Australia than they earned in making shells and other munitions on the other side of the world. They sacrificed their own personal advantage, and often went through a lot

of privation and sacrifice as munition workers, and they are entitled to some concession. Speaking for myself, I should be perfectly satisfied if when this Bill is passed it concedes preference to returned men in regard to grazing homesteads and selections, and also concessions to munition workers. I understand that there is a fear on the part of the Government that the soldier will dummy. I fail to see that a soldier is more likely to dummy than a man who is not a soldier. That seems to be a slur upon a soldier. Another thing, most of the selections are under the homestead tenure, under which there must be personal residence, and that does away with any apprehension in that regard. I hope that the Minister will take notice of what has been said, and that, if the Bill does not make provision for these two matters, he will move for an amendment of the Bill in that direction.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not wish to take up the time of the House in replying to what has been said, because it really does not require any reply, but I will just briefly refer to a couple of matters which have been referred to by hon. members. I regret exceedingly that nearly an hour and a-half of the time of the House has been taken up in practically stonewalling this Bill, with a view to getting in "Hansard" what I regard as electioneering speeches. The first question raised was that the scope of this Bill should be enlarged, so as to admit of munition workers getting the benefits of the measure. The reason given is that these men contributed towards the winning of the war for the Empire and its Allies. If that is a good and sufficient reason for giving preference to munition workers, it is also a good reason for giving preference to those who organised the war loans—those who contributed to the war loans, to the comforts funds people, to the Red Cross people, and to everybody else who assisted in winning the war. You can see the ridiculousness of such an argument as that.

Mr. SWAYNE: War workers left their homes and went abroad—they made a big sacrifice.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The war workers did not go into the battle line. They were a safe distance away from it. Some of them went to improve their position, because in many instances they got better wages there than they were getting here. The hon. member for Nundah referred to preference to soldiers in regard to grazing farms. From the way he rambled over the subject, one could see that he had not much idea of what he was talking about. He talked about dummyming, and from the way he spoke you could not fail to see it was purely an electioneering speech—something he might quote to the groundlings when he goes out to some of the places in his electorate. I have no intention of extending the provisions of the Bill to grazing farmers, and I am backed up in that opinion by men who are independent of politics—men of lifelong experience, and who have as much love for the welfare of the soldier as any member in this Chamber or anyone else, and I have also the approval of the Government of Queensland in refusing to grant preference to returned soldiers in respect to grazing farms. I may say that dummyming is not the only objection, although it is a serious objection,

with regard to a returned soldier or anybody else if production is going to be the watchword of hon. members opposite, as it should be, because it is of this Government. The hon. member for Nundah asked if there was anything wrong in a soldier becoming a dummy if he could make money out of it. Does that increase production? No. Dummyming, at all times, is one of the worst offences against production, and should be avoided as far as possible. The hon. member said, "Why don't you make regulations to prevent it?"

Mr. SWAYNE: Is a soldier more likely to dummy than anybody else?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He has got the same opportunity as anybody else to go on a grazing farm. Hon. members opposite would like to get it into "Hansard" that we are preventing the returned soldiers from getting on grazing farms, but we are not.

Mr. SWAYNE: You won't give him preference?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; we want to give equal treatment to the men who went to the other side of the world to fight our battles; but if we give one man a grazing farm, and the other only a poultry farm, then we are not giving them equal treatment.

Mr. GUNN: Why do you give them preference on agricultural farms?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Because we can provide the money wherewith to enable them to make a living on an agricultural farm, but not in the case of a grazing farm.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If they have the money to go in for a grazing farm, there are ample opportunities for them. Why confine it to a grazing farm? Why not extend to a pastoral area?

Mr. GUNN: Why not to a pastoral area?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We should then have at the outside from twelve to twenty preferential pastoral areas in Queensland. Suppose we had twenty men—big squatters—on pastoral areas, while 20,000 returned soldiers had not an inch of land. Where would the equity of treatment come in? It would not come in at all. The hon. member for Nundah said, "Let them take up a grazing farm, and even if they do dummy, what is wrong with that, as long as they make money out of it?" That is the hon. member's idea of the propriety of dummyming. He also said, "Why not allow the men to borrow money?" A man has an equal right with anybody else to go in for grazing farm selection if he can borrow money. He also said, "If you can borrow money, you will always have plenty of money." (Laughter.) I wish I could fall into line with that idea.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The explanation is that you have borrowed very heavily as a Government, and you have none left.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member for Nundah is entirely wrong in his ideas, according to the hon. member for Bulimba. With regard to the option of freehold, I had a deputation at which the hon. member for Nundah was present, which asked that they [5 p.m.] should be allowed to convert the holdings which they now held under leasehold tenure to freehold. I asked

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them to give some reason why it would be more advantageous to the soldiers to have a freehold than a leasehold, and they got round the question very adroitly. I know exactly the only answer they could give me, but they dodged it, and finally gave no answer at all. There is only one reason in the world why freehold is preferable to leasehold in this connection, and that is to enable their friends, the land profiteers, to come in and buy out the soldier and get it all back again. With a leasehold they cannot do that, because the Crown has some control over it still; but once it parts from the hands of the Crown and becomes a freehold the landjobber and the land shark come in and get their own. We are not going to allow them to do that. The hon. member for Cunningham referred to a case where three returned soldiers put in applications for some grazing farms and were all defeated at the ballot, and the cry has been raised by hon. members opposite, "Why not allow those returned soldiers preference?" "Why don't you allow the men in a district who have been accustomed to pastoral work—why don't you allow them to get grazing farms?" We are not preventing them from getting grazing farms in the usual way. Does the hon. member realise that every grazing farm thrown open to selection in Queensland with preference to returned soldiers would be open to every returned soldier in Australia? Would not the odds be greater under those circumstances than they are at present?

Mr. SIZER: They are open to all the people in Australia at the present time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If you allowed something up to 60,000 acres to be thrown open to returned soldiers, which does not obtain in any other State in Australia, you will have a rush of men from the other States.

Mr. GUNN: You can confine it to Queensland soldiers only.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I could not confine it to Queensland soldiers, because if I did I would be doing an injustice to the Queensland soldiers, because the Queensland soldier has a right to go to any other State in Australia and acquire land on the same terms as anyone else, and I do not want to deprive him of that right, which I would do if I adopted the advice of hon. members opposite.

Mr. GRAYSON: Don't you want the people of the other States to come here?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are heartily welcome to come here. The one who would ultimately get preference is the squatter.

Mr. SIZER: That is not fair.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is quite fair. Does the hon. member not know that there are a number of men who have been getting sustenance from the Repatriation Department for the last fifty weeks or more in Brisbane?

Mr. SIZER: That may be so.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If these men who have not got a "bob" go on to grazing farms, how are they going to fence, stock, and improve their holdings?

Mr. SIZER: Are there not any others?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Those men will have an equal chance at the

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ballot with the men who have money, and you are simply asking for something that will make the scheme a failure before it is started. It is condemned to failure before it is started.

Mr. SIZER: Do you mean to say that is a serious objection?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is a most serious objection, because it would play right into the hands of the squatter who could afford to offer the soldier a big wage to sit down for five years until he could obtain his lease and then hand it over to the squatter.

Mr. GRAYSON: That is not what you are concerned about.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The principal thing I am concerned about is this: That I want to deal as far as it is humanly possible equally with every returned soldier in the matter of land settlement.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: How many men had £1,200 to start with?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There are a number of men who did not have £1,200 to start with, but the land that was made available for grazing selection was in more favourable districts than any we can get to-day. The hon. member for Cunningham also referred to the fact that we were compelling the soldiers—and this is what I object to getting into "Hansard"—that we were compelling men to take up land that they did not want. Could anything be more erroneous or more misleading to the people than a statement of that kind? We are not compelling anybody to take up land. They come and ask us what land we have got available, and we tell them what land we have available. We have land up to 2,560 acres available in certain districts.

Mr. GRAYSON: Where can they get that area?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: On Mount Hutton.

Mr. GRAYSON: Oh! Mount Hutton.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Mount Hutton is in one of the best grazing districts in Queensland.

Mr. GUNN: It is only cattle country.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: 2,560 acres is the largest area we can let to anyone on a perpetual lease.

Mr. GRAYSON: Why not settle them in the Charleville district?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I could put them on a smaller area than 2,560 acres in the Charleville district with a greater hope of their making a success of it.

Mr. VOWLES: Could they run sheep on it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Not sheep necessarily, nor cattle. There are other things they could do besides running sheep or cattle. They need not run sheep or cattle as a business, but they could run sheep and cattle as a subsidiary industry to fruitgrowing, vegetable-growing, and a score of other things.

Mr. VOWLES: That is the place to put them instead of on Mount Hutton.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I think there are good prospects ahead on Mount Hutton. We are not compelling soldiers to go on land at all; they are going on the land of their own free will,

and I am happy to be able to say that with very few exceptions, if any at all, they are all going to be prosperous. I do not for a moment anticipate that they would be prosperous if they had a Government constituted of hon. members opposite to rule their destinies, because they would not give them the sympathetic treatment that this Government has given them. This Government never fails at any time to give sympathetic treatment to the men on the land or to the soldiers in the matter of providing them with homes, or anything else, and we did it before we got one solitary farthing by way of loan from the Commonwealth.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put; and the Speaker decided it in the affirmative.

Mr. GUNN: Mr. Speaker—

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Too late; too late.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Mr. Speaker.—The hon. member for Carnarvon was on his feet before you decided the question. Probably you did not notice him.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member did not call me by name, and I cannot keep my eyes everywhere.

Mr. SIZER: I distinctly saw that the hon. member was standing on his feet when you turned your face towards the Government side.

The SPEAKER: Under those circumstances, I will allow the hon. member to speak. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. GUNN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not intend to keep the House very long and I did not intend to speak at all, because I am in favour of the Bill, as I understand the object of the Bill is to enable the Government to advance money to enable soldiers to acquire freehold farms, but when the Minister got up and accused the squatters and graziers generally of doing things they are not going to do, and also made misstatements, in my opinion, it is up to me to say a few words in rebuttal.

The SPEAKER: Order! If I allowed the hon. member to do that the debate would go on indefinitely. I granted the hon. member great indulgence in allowing him to speak at all, relying on the assertion by several members of the Opposition that he was on his feet before I decided the question.

Mr. GUNN: I only want to say a few words in rebuttal. The Minister, when I asked him to give preference in connection with grazing farms to soldiers belonging to Queensland, said that it could not be done. I want to point out that on Glen Lyon, which is in my district, the owner of that station, Mr. Walker, gave the improvements on those selections on the condition that the lands were restricted to men who went away from that district. The Secretary for Public Lands rightly accepted that offer and that land was thrown open only to men who went away from that district and the men from that district got the land. Not one of them was a dummy, and not one was connected with the owner of the station; and if the Minister has power to grant preference to local men, surely he has power to grant the same preference for the whole of Queensland!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have not. The conditions are entirely different.

Mr. GUNN: It would be a good thing if he could give preference to returned soldiers. The other day several small blocks were thrown open and there were three or four simultaneous applications from two or three returned soldiers and other men living in the district who did not think it worth their while to go and fight for their country, and in every case the returned soldiers were outvoted, and the returned soldiers had just as much money as those who got the land.

Mr. COLLINS: Outvoted or outballoted?

Mr. GUNN: Outballoted. If there are two rich men, and one stayed at home and the other went to the war, we ought to give preference to the one who went to the war. It does not take such a great area of land to enable a returned soldier to make a living on a grazing farm. He can take stock on aigistment. Many men in my district, who are better off than I am, started with far less than £640, and they made their money not by dummyming for a squatter. As far as the squatter is concerned he is not behind us in asking for preference to returned soldiers. It is the returned soldiers themselves. In nearly every case the returned soldiers are outballoted when they put in an application for a grazing farm, and they have to go in for some other occupation.

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

AYES, 25.

Mr. Barber	Mr. McCormack
„ Bertram	„ Mullan
„ Brennan	„ O'Sullivan
„ Collins	„ Payne
„ Cooper, W.	„ Riordan
„ Coyne	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Fihelly	„ Stopford
„ Foley	„ Theodore
„ Gilday	„ Wellington
„ Gillies	„ Whitford
„ Gledson	„ Wilson
„ Larcombe	„ Winstanley
„ Lloyd	

Tellers: Mr. Brennan and Mr. Whitford.

NOES, 17.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Gunn
„ Barnes, G. P.	„ Hodge
„ Barnes, W. H.	„ Macartney
„ Bayley	„ Petrie
„ Bebbington	„ Sizer
„ Bell	„ Swayne
„ Elphinstone	„ Taylor
„ Fry	„ Vowles
„ Grayson	

Tellers: Mr. Bebbington and Mr. Bell.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Original question put.

Mr. SIZER (rising): Mr. Speaker, before you put that motion I would like to say—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Nundah moved an amendment on my motion, and he cannot speak again. I would like your ruling on the question.

The SPEAKER: The point of order is upheld.

Original question put and passed.

Hon. J. H. Coyne.]

PUBLIC SERVICE ACTS AMENDMENT
BILL.

INITIATION.

The PREMIER, in moving—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Public Service Acts by providing for the appointment of a Commissioner to exercise and perform the powers, authorities, and duties conferred or imposed on the Public Service Board, and to provide for appeals in certain cases, and otherwise to amend the said Acts in certain particulars,”

said: The motion itself fairly describes the Bill. The idea is to dissolve the Public Service Board and appoint a Public Service Commissioner, and also to provide for a system of appeal.

Mr. MACARTNEY: How many will constitute the board?

The PREMIER: One Commissioner, but there will be an appeal board, which will have authority to review appeals against classification and matters affecting the public servants. Where there is any grievance, or where a public servant wishes to appeal against the decision of the Commissioner, an appeal may be made to the appeal board.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I think, in view of the speech that the Minister made the other night in moving the second reading of the Officials in Parliament Act, whereby a ninth Minister—and a full-salaried Minister—should be appointed, this Bill comes somewhat as a surprise. The Minister, on that occasion, laid down as one of the principal reasons for the appointment of a ninth Minister that the Government were undertaking the duties of a Public Service Board. Surely, when the Minister was making that statement he knew of the proposed introduction of this Bill! It seems to me that this Bill comes into operation as soon as the other, therefore, there is no necessity for the ninth Minister. I do not know if the Minister will give any explanation of that matter.

The PREMIER: That is a matter of detail that I can do more justice to on the second reading of the Bill. (Opposition laughter.)

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Rather dangerous.

Mr. MACARTNEY: This is one of those Bills that is going to be amended in certain particulars, and we do not know what is coming.

Mr. WHITFORD: You will know later on.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Perhaps the hon. gentleman will tell us how the appeal board is constituted.

The PREMIER: I do not know that I can say much more than I have already said. I know the hon. gentleman is particularly interested in the matter of the appeal board. The appeal board will have to deal with certain matters which are described, such as the grievances of public servants. The board will be constituted of three members. The chairman will be a District Court judge, or a police magistrate, there will be a representative of the Commissioner, and a representative of the Public Service Association. In that regard, it follows the precedent of the Railway Appeal Board.

Mr. VOWLES: There is one matter that I would like to bring before the Minister.

[Hon. E. G. Theodore.

This deals with the constitution of the board. I would like to know whether any provision has been made to put the unclassified officers on a reasonable footing as compared with the other public servants. I know cases myself where men whose services are taken advantage of by the department are placed in a very unsatisfactory position so far as increases of salaries are concerned, as compared with the other public servants. Under the Public Service Act the increases come quickly, but not to the officers I refer to. In the Savings Bank there are a number of men whose services are of very great advantage to the Commissioner, and they are in the position that they cannot get more than £10 per annum increase, and when they get to a certain salary they cannot get any further. It does not matter whether a man is outside the Public Service Act or not, if he is doing the same work as a man who is under the Act, he should get the same remuneration as the man who is under the Act. I would like to know if anything has been done to put them on a reasonable footing?

The PREMIER: I cannot speak again. I will give more information to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

MINING ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(Mr. Bertram, Maree, in the chair.)

The PREMIER, in moving—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the laws relating to mining in certain particulars,”

said: I explained the objects of the Bill when I introduced it yesterday. It is a Bill to amend certain mining laws in several unimportant particulars. The only important matter, the only thing of outstanding importance referred to in the Bill is that dealing with prospecting for oil. It provides that additional encouragement should be given to enable persons to engage in the work of prospecting for oil. A number of clauses are included in the Bill to provide for that taking place.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the resolution to the House, and it was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The Bill was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

MAIN ROADS BILL.

COMMITTEE.

(Mr. Bertram, Maree, in the chair.)

Clause 1 put and passed.

On clause 2—“*Interpretation*”—

Mr. MACARTNEY: In clause 2 we find that “maintenance” not only includes—

“All works of every description which are in the opinion of the board calculated to keep the main road and any drain draining such road in the same state of utility as they were in at the time when such road was proclaimed a main road, or in the same state of utility as they were in as the result of

any permanent improvements which have been effected to them: the term also includes—

“(a) The destruction and eradication by the board of noxious weeds and plants upon a main road;”

but it also includes—

“(b) The amount of any judgment and costs recovered by any person in any action against the board in respect of any loss or injury sustained by any person by reason of any accident upon or while using any main road.”

I am not quite clear whether the maintenance of the main roads is provided for in the Bill, unless it is provided for in some of the sections of the Local Authorities Act

which are quoted in clause 20. [5.30 p.m.] Under this Bill, the cost of the construction—and I suppose also the cost of the maintenance, although it is not quite clear—would be divided between the board and the local authority. It might help the Committee very much in dealing with this matter—because, after all, the construction and maintenance are the two principal things—if the Minister could outline just what the scheme of the Bill is, so far as this clause is concerned, and as to how the expenses are to be allocated.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Clause 23 outlines that.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That clause deals with the general allocation of the fund. The matter is somewhat involved. It may be owing to these local authority provisions that are quoted in section 20—there is some little difficulty in following it. From the statement made by the Minister on the second reading, I understand that the cost would be shared between the local authorities and the board. It occurs to me that this passing on to the local authorities of half the cost of actions which may be brought against the board is somewhat unfair.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That won't be so. Clause 23 provides for the payment of expenses.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It has to be paid out of the fund, and there is another clause which allocates the cost of the construction of roadway as between the local authorities and the board, although the provision in regard to maintenance, the definition of which we are discussing just now, is not quite clear. I have not been able to get any direct reference to that particular subject. Perhaps the Minister would supply the Committee with some indication of just what the position will be, particularly in regard to the local authority.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If you will refer to clause 23 you will find that paragraph (b) says—

“Towards the payment of any sum due under an agreement lawfully made for the purposes of this Act, or any sum recovered against the board by process of law—”

So that the local authority will not be liable for any action which may be taken against the board. The expenses will be paid out of a fund which, as the clause indicates, shall be made up in different ways—money voted by Parliament, and from other sources. There is no danger of the local authority being brought into a lawsuit against the board.

Clause 2 put and passed.

On clause 3—“Governor in Council may appoint Board?”—

Mr. SWAYNE: I have an amendment to move on page 2, clause 3, line 56, that—

“After ‘making’ insert ‘and one of such members shall be a person nominated in the manner prescribed by the local authorities of the State.’”

I think the Minister will remember that on the second reading I asked if he was aware of the co-interests of the local authorities, and of how the main roads will run into the local authority area, how the cross roads will lead out on to the main roads, and more particularly in consideration of clause 27, which provides that an amount of the revenue towards those main roads shall be provided by the local authorities, and on the principle that where there is taxation there should be representation, I pointed out the desirableness of an amendment being made, and at the time I thought the Minister seemed open to accept such a suggestion. However, I trust he will accept my amendment, which, I think, is only a fair thing. The local authorities will have to provide a considerable portion of the revenue, and in many other ways also their interests are in a manner coincident with the interests of the board, and I feel sure that they will be able to appoint a most useful member to that board from the local authorities in Queensland. It is only fair that one of the three members constituting that board should be a local authorities' representative, and I want to see a proviso inserted that one of these three members shall be nominated by the local authorities.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I trust the Minister will give the amendment favourable consideration. As has been pointed out by the hon. member for Mirani, the local authorities are liable for half the cost of the construction of main roads and, assumedly, half the cost of maintenance. So it seems an equitable proposition that they should have representation on the board. The local authorities have an association from which an executive is selected, therefore there should be no difficulty in selecting a representative of the local authorities as a member of this board. As I pointed out on the second reading, the whole of the board should have been constituted from the local authorities, because they are men of experience, and, in many instances, have served for a long period as representatives of local authorities.

Mr. FOLEY: And served as roadmakers.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Lots of them, and there again we have evidence of the hon. member's ignorance of these matters. The chairman of the Nerang Shire Council, as well as other members of the council, started originally as men employed on the roads. And the same thing applies throughout Queensland. Those local authority men have had the practical experience in roadmaking, have acted as gangers, and in many instances, although not certificated engineers, are able to take levels and grades and do all the necessary work associated with engineering. There is no difficulty about the obtaining of a competent man to sit on that board, so long as the principle is accepted that with taxation the local authorities should have representation. Take the principle of democracy which so frequently finds such an able exponent in the Minister. One of the cardinal

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principles is that there should be no taxation without representation, and that has been accepted in different measures. It has been accepted, for instance, in connection with the Right to Work, or the "Loafers' Paradise" Bill—

Mr. COLLINS: Give it its right name.

HON. J. G. APPEL: What is the right name?

Mr. COLLINS: The "Right to Work Bill."

HON. J. G. APPEL: In the Right to Work Bill, we see that that right was accorded to those who were expected to find the whole of the funds in connection with that matter, and that principle having been recognised, I take it the Minister will recognise a like principle in connection with the constitution of this board and accept the amendment. And thus the representative chosen by the local authorities to sit on this board will materially assist in the success of the measure by his experience and knowledge of local government Acts and by his complete knowledge of the locality. I, therefore, urge the Minister to give this amendment favourable consideration.

Mr. GILDAY (*Ithaca*): I hope the Minister will not accept the amendment. The hon. member who has just resumed his seat talked about the principle of democracy. If it were a principle of democracy, I would willingly agree to favour the amendment. Under this clause, we are carrying out the principle of democracy, because the Governor in Council, which will appoint the members of the board, is representative of the people. We have always advocated that people who pay the rates be given the vote in local authorities, but hon. members opposite do not appear to agree with that system.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It is the men who pay the taxes that we say should have the vote.

Mr. GILDAY: I hope the Minister will not accept the principle advocated by the hon. member for Mirani. The local authorities franchise needs altering, and until it is altered it would be much better to have the elections as outlined in clause 3 of the Bill. The advocacy of this party in the past has been to broaden the franchise, so as to give the people who have to pay the rates the opportunity of saying who shall be their representatives. Fully 75 per cent. of the members of the present local authorities in Queensland would not be there if there was a proper franchise.

Mr. GRAYSON (*Cunningham*): I have been a member of a local authority for twenty-one years, so that I can claim to know something of local authority work. It is only fair that the local authorities should have one representative on the board. I think this Bill is being rushed through Parliament too quickly. An opportunity should have been given to the local authorities to peruse the Bill, and express an opinion as to what amendments they think desirable but they have been entirely ignored in the matter. Personally, I compliment the Minister on making an intelligent attempt to solve the problem of main roads in Queensland; but, although the Bill is going to affect the local authorities, the Minister objected to allow a local authority representative to sit on the board, although the local authorities have to find 50 per cent. of the revenue required for the maintenance of roads. This is not a party measure, and I

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am not going to take a party view of it. The people have been crying out for better roads for years. The Government will be amply protected by having two representatives on the board as against one representative for the local authorities. The hon. member who preceded me wants the franchise liberalised in the direction of one man one vote.

Mr. COLLINS: So as to come up to other parts of the world.

Mr. GRAYSON: We have members of local authorities on the Downs elected by Labour organisations, and the Labour party might elect a Labour man on this board if the Government will allow the local authorities to have a representative on it. I admit that some of the Labour men have done good work on local authorities. I am surprised at the Minister objecting to the amendment, as it is such a fair proposal. I trust that he will reconsider his decision, and accept the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: One would imagine that hon. members opposite were speaking on behalf of the local authorities, and one would expect the hon. member for Albert, who is always talking about the great unpaid Parliament in Queensland, to be in touch with local authorities. But to show how much those hon. members are out of touch with local authorities, I am going to read the resolution passed by the executive of the Local Authorities' Association. The president of the association is a member of the House—the hon. member for Aubigny—who is not here to support the resolution when the Bill is going through.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am on the executive.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Then, there is another hon. member on the executive who, I am satisfied, is so much out of touch that he does not know that the Local Authorities' Association executive have practically endorsed the principle of this Bill, as shown by the resolution I will read.

Mr. FRY: Did they say they did not want representation?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The local authorities realise that there are unfortunately members in this House who belong to the stone age, and do not know that the roads are behind the times. Many local authorities who are cognisant with the great road question have urged time and again that the Government should take action, but Liberal Governments have refused to take action. This is the resolution which was passed at the Local Authorities Conference, dealing with the control of main roads, in 1916—

"That a recommendation be made to the Government to create a country roads board on the lines of the Victorian Act."

The Bundamba Shire Council was responsible for the introduction of this motion. The resolution passed at the 1917 conference reads—

"That the Government be requested to assist in the formation and maintenance of all main roads, preferably by subsidising shire councils in the matter of expenditure thereon."

The Murilla Shire Council introduced this motion, which was carried unanimously upon

the recommendation of the executive committee. Now, we come to the most important resolution of the lot, as recorded in the Local Government Journal, of September, 1918. It is a long resolution moved by Mr. Diddams, who is anything but a Labour man, but who, realising the absolute failure of Liberal Governments to deal with roads, moved the resolution. After making a speech, Mr. Diddams moved—

“That a recommendation be made to the Government to create a country roads board similar to that existing in Victoria, on the following lines:—

(a) The constitution of a board consisting of three efficient engineers, who will be above and beyond political control as far as deciding what are to be regarded as main roads is concerned.

The section dealing with the appointment of a board in the Victorian Act does not lay down any qualification at all, but in order to meet the mover of this resolution I have gone further than the Victorian Act, and have made it an obligation on the part of the Government to provide that at least one of the members of the board should be an efficient road engineer. The resolution continues—

(b) These main roads shall be designed to connect producing districts with their despatching points, either at the railways, on navigable rivers, or at the sea-coast;

(c) Highways, to connect new settlements, and particularly such as are being prepared for our returned soldiers under Federal or State repatriation schemes.

I am giving effect to that in clause 19 of the Bill, which has been criticised so much by the “Brisbane Courier,” and others who do not understand the matter.

(d) These roads must be constructed to carry traffic necessitated by the new conditions of modern traffic, whether motor propelled or horse or cattle drawn;

(e) The material to be employed for the construction of roads, bridges, or culverts on these national highways, to be decided by the board appointed by the Government and responsible for the work.

The next paragraph is important, and should disarm the criticism of hon. members opposite who complain about the method of taxation laid down in the Bill.

(f) All revenues derivable from motor and wheel taxes, and other road revenues from licenses, fines, whatever connected with traffic over these roads to go into the maintenance fund, and thereafter allocated by the board in accordance with the Act.”

Those principles have been given effect to. I notice that the chairman of the executive of the Local Authorities' Association, the hon. member for Aubigny, said—

“I would like to express the thanks of the executive to Alderman Diddams for putting this paper before us, and for the fine work he put into it. (Hear, hear!)”

That motion was carried unanimously. I

think that that will disarm the criticism of the Opposition. Further than that, this will be a board of experts. The local authorities, while they might be able to nominate a man quite as good as the Government can find in any part of Australia, have admitted by this resolution that they have not been able to cope with this great question of roadbuilding which is being reduced to a science to-day, and I regret that I cannot accept the amendment. If the local authorities think they have a man who has all the qualifications necessary for such a position, there is no reason why they should not make the suggestion, but to embody it in the Bill would, I think, be a mistake.

(Sitting suspended from 6 p.m. till 7 p.m.)

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (continuing): The hon. member for Cunningham said that local authorities had not had an opportunity of discussing the Bill, and I wish to deny that statement. I would refer to a deputation that waited on me as far back as 25th July this year—a deputation consisting of members of the executive of the Local Authorities' Association, the Good Roads Association, and the Master Carriers' Association—a very representative gathering—and I have been in touch with those members since.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Who was the local authorities' representative?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. Diddams was the one who spoke for the Local Authorities' Association.

Mr. GRAYSON: He is a city member.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He spoke on behalf of the Local Authorities' Association, and since then I have kept in touch with the Good Roads Association, some of the members of which are members of the Local Authorities' Association, and they so closely watched the progress of this Bill that the day before the Bill was laid on the table of the House they asked me to furnish them with an advance copy of the Bill, which I did, and they met and considered it.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Did you furnish the executive of the Local Authorities' Association with an advance copy?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Local Authorities' Association did not ask for it, and I would point out that the president of the Local Authorities' Association is also a member of the Good Roads Association. I am pointing out that this body are so interested in the Bill that they asked me to let them have a copy as soon as it was available, which I did. Mr. Diddams was present at their meeting, and other members of the Local Authorities' Association were present and discussed the Bill fully, and submitted me their ideas with regard to amendments. The Bill has been public property for the last week, and it is of sufficient importance for the Local Authorities' Executive to have called a special meeting to deal with the matter. I have already indicated that the local authorities have endorsed the policy of this Bill by resolution, and they asked for a Bill on the lines of the Victorian Act. Section 4 of the Victorian Act dealing with the appointment of a board says—

“For the purposes of this Act there

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shall be a board to be called the 'country roads board,' consisting of three members, who shall be appointed by the Governor in Council."

To meet the Local Authorities' Executive I provided that at least one of those men should be an expert road engineer. All the speakers who addressed me on the subject said emphatically that this should be a board of experts recognising, as every man does at this juncture, that the making of roads is the work of experts. I cannot accept the amendment.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I would not like to say that the Minister desires to be discourteous, as that would be altogether wrong, but apparently the Minister quite unintentionally did not furnish the Local Authorities' Association with an advance copy of the Bill, while he did supply the Good Roads Association with a copy.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Local Authorities' Executive did not ask for one. The Good Roads Association did.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I would point out to the hon. gentleman, and I am quite sure he will see the justice of the point I am making, that, after all, the Local Authorities' Association is the responsible body, and they have to carry the burden of taxation which must inevitably come, and it would have been a proper course to have tendered to the secretary of the Local Authorities' Association an advance copy of the Bill. The Minister has remarked that there has been no meeting as far as he knows of the Local Authorities' Executive to deal with this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not say that. I said they could have called a meeting if they wished.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not know whether the Minister is aware that the Local Authorities' Executive consists of men, many of whom represent districts a long way from Brisbane, and it is not a very easy matter to get those gentlemen to come to Brisbane at a moment's notice. I am quite prepared to admit that some members of the executive, like myself, live in Brisbane, and it is an easy matter for us to get together; but might I remind the Committee that there is one representative on the Local Authorities' Executive who comes from Goondiwindi, and another representative coming from right away out west.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are practically suggesting that we should postpone the Bill till next session.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am not suggesting anything of the kind. I have not got up to speak in any way hostile to the Bill, as I recognise there has been a demand for several years for the Bill by the Local Authorities' Association, and I want to assure the Minister that I have no desire to oppose the Bill. I suggest that the amendment is a fair one, because the men representing the local authorities have had many years' experience, and anyone who will take the trouble to go along to the local authorities' annual meeting will find that the representation at that meeting is a representation of which any association ought to be very proud, and it will be found that, not only have you professional men, not only have

you medical men on the association, but you have men who are doing the carving and toiling—you have representation of the very highest class. Seeing that it has been emphasised, especially by the hon. member for Cunningham, that 50 per cent. of this money has to be provided by the local authorities, surely no one will say it is not a democratic thing to ask that there should be some representation from that body, which, to some extent, represents matters appertaining to Queensland which we even here cannot so efficiently represent. It must not be forgotten that many of these men have given their services free year in and year out, with the exception of the chairman, who may get a small amount, or the mayor, who may get a larger amount. They have given many years' service to the State, and probably have got a few kicks for their service. I do not think it an unfair suggestion for the Minister to consider, and I hope he will give earnest consideration to the question of allowing the local authorities the right to suggest one of the gentlemen who should occupy a position on this board. There is no risk attached to it, because if the Minister follows his own Bill he will find that he has the power to remove anyone off the board, and so if it happens that the person so appointed did not give satisfaction it would not be a difficult matter to remove him. Is it not a democratic proposal that the people who are finding half the money should be allowed to say who shall represent them? Is there anything wrong in that proposal? If I followed the Minister correctly, he said the local authorities had not asked for it, and the only thing that they asked for was that the members of the board should be professional men—men who thoroughly understood the business.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They asked for three engineers.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Early in 1916 the local authorities made a request that they might have three engineers, according to the hon. gentleman. Later, they followed it up by confirming the previous resolution from year to year, but not always in the same form, and I am certain, speaking as a man who has been connected with local authorities continuously for very many years, that the local authorities would not object to having representatives of their own. There are members on both sides of the House who know a great deal about local authority work. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley takes a keen interest in these matters, and I am quite sure that he will agree with me that our object in connection with this Bill should not be political; it should be to make the best possible out of the Bill. After all, it has or should have a very big bearing on the settlement of this community. I think I am right in saying that probably Queensland, above all the other States, requires to have what you might call varied representation on that board, because there are some parts of Queensland where main roads will have to be constructed which, to some extent, will be very largely experimental. I am speaking of some of our black soil country. And we should have someone on the board who has been in close touch with local authority work. Using that as an illustration, it does seem to me that unless we have the widest and fullest ability in connection with the construction of some of these roads, they will

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cost a great deal more to make them than it would to build a railway. And I am quite aware, therefore, of the importance of having someone on the board who thoroughly understands the business. The Minister has not pointed out that the local authorities have objected to be asked to do this particular kind of thing. I remind the hon. gentleman in connection with this matter where the roads are bad—and you have not to go far from here to Ipswich it will be found that the road is particularly bad, and I believe the Minister knows as well—

Mr. WILSON: More particularly when it runs alongside a railway.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am prepared to admit that. The chances are if you have a good road running parallel with the railway—although I am not urging that as a reason to oppose the Bill—it will bring competition. I believe that the more competition in all lines the better for the community generally, and the better for the people.

Mr. HARTLEY: It is an absurd argument to say that you should have a good road alongside a good railway.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I have heard people express the opinion that if a man starts in business alongside another man in business it will injure that man.

Mr. BRENNAN: Yes, if it is the same business.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member for Toowoomba can put forward his own argument, but my conviction regarding business men is that it is better for them to be together. At one time, when the tramline was being laid to Toowong, people said that it would kill the railway, but it did not kill the railway. It developed settlement, and both the tramway and the railway gained the advantage. It is a narrow argument to say that because someone in the same line of business is going to start near you they are going to kill you. It is a benefit to the community. I am not dealing with this Bill in any spirit of hostility. The executive of the Local Authorities' Association wish to give this Bill a trial, although it is experimental, and I hope the Minister will allow the executive of the Local Authorities' Association to have a say in one of the three men who will compose the board.

Mr. WILSON (*Fortitude Valley*): I cannot agree with the preceding speaker. This Bill has been drafted largely on the lines of the Victorian Act, where they have two engineers and one accountant on the board. This Bill provides for three experts, one of whom must be a qualified engineer.

Mr. MACARTNEY: What have the other two to be?

Mr. WILSON: They have to be experts. There is nothing in the Bill to say that a member of a local authority shall not be appointed to the board. How do you know that the Governor in Council will not appoint a man from the local authorities?

Mr. MACARTNEY: You say they have to be experts. Do you mean experts in politics or what?

Mr. WILSON: If ever there was a Bill introduced in this House which should be considered on non-party lines, I consider that

this Bill is one. We all realise that it is absolutely necessary for a measure of this sort to be introduced, and I am pleased, indeed, to know that it has fallen to the lot of the Labour party to introduce it. There have been repeated attempts for years to have a Main Roads Bill introduced by preceding Governments, but they could not see their way clear to bring it forward. Now that this Bill is introduced, I hope it will go through both Houses. It will prove that it is necessary to have good roads. We all realise the desirability of having good roads throughout the State. We know how the local authorities would deal with this matter if it were left to them. Some years ago they received a Government endowment of £2 for £1. I understand that this question has cropped up again, and some local authorities are in favour of reverting back to the old system of the subsidy. That will be a mistake. We know how local authorities manage their affairs. When the subsidy was in existence the money the local authorities had to spend was a limited amount indeed, and they naturally tried to make that money go as far a space as they possibly could. The roads were built with material that was unsuitable, and the money did not go very far. I remember that members representing different wards in the councils used to use their influence to get as much spent in the portions they represented as they could. It is absolutely necessary to have a board of this sort so that we can have efficient roads throughout the State. I believe it is difficult to get material to build roads in Queensland, but I can remember, as a boy in Victoria, that good roads were built with good material. The roads that were built in Victoria forty years ago are just as good to-day as when they were first made, with the exception that the metal may have been worn off a little. The roads are well made and well formed. The whole success in roadmaking is to have good drainage and a proper foundation. If you do not have a good foundation and good drainage you will not have a good road, no matter what class of material you put into it. Seeing that we have quicker means of motor transit to-day it is necessary to have a Bill of this sort. The days of the horse on the road are gone and it is necessary to have good roads for the motor transit. The amendment suggests that the local authorities should have representation on the board. I have had some experience of local authorities, and no one can say that there is anyone on the local authorities' executive that has had any practical experience in roadmaking. If it is left to them to appoint a man, then we might get someone absolutely unfitted for the position, because he will know nothing about roadmaking.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He is almost certain to be a city man.

Mr. WILSON: If we get two experts and a good engineer who thoroughly understand the business, that is all that is necessary. To hear the previous speaker one would think that the local authorities were ignored in this matter altogether, but that is not so. The Good Roads Association is largely composed of local authority men, and a big deputation of them waited on the Minister the other day when they were pleased to hear the explanation he gave. He pretty well outlined the Bill, and they were perfectly satisfied with it. I have not heard any

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complaints about the Bill at all. In fact, I have heard the Government eulogised for the manner in which they tackled this question. I think this question should be considered on non-party lines. There has been no evidence given yet to show that local authorities should have representation on the board. In all matters in dispute they have the right of appeal. Whatever shire is concerned can appeal, and have the matter thrashed out in a business way. If it is left to the local authorities they will deal with it like they did with the Greater Brisbane scheme, and it will be a long time before we see a Main Roads Act. This Bill has been drafted on the lines of the Victorian measure where 90 per cent. of the people interested are perfectly in accord with the measure.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The local authorities have no representation on the Victorian board.

Mr. WILSON: No, they did not ask for it. There was a good deal of objection to the Bill when it was first brought into existence in Victoria, but that has all passed away. The Act has given entire satisfaction, and the roads there carry very heavy traffic. I must say that the local authorities have done good work in Queensland. They are the unpaid Parliament, as they were termed by the hon. member for Albert, and their services should be more generously recognised.

Mr. MACARTNEY: They have been refused railway passes.

Mr. WILSON: Speaking for myself individually, I consider that when men have spent a number of years continuously on local authorities, say from ten to fifteen years, they should get a railway pass. (Hear, hear.) They are working all the time in the interests of the district they represent, and they are entitled to the same consideration which was given by friends of hon. members opposite in the Bill which was passed to give free railway passes to every member who served in three Parliaments or seven years.

Mr. MACARTNEY: There was no Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. WILSON: I think the local authorities are entitled to a good deal of consideration.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Yet your colleague the Home Secretary would not give them a pass the other day.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. WILSON: I hope the Minister will not accept the amendment because it will spoil the Bill. It is quite sufficient to have the board composed of men as provided in the Bill. In Victoria they have two engineers and an accountant on the board, and we provide for one engineer.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Why not have two engineers and an accountant here?

Mr. WILSON: I do not say that I am in full agreement regarding the Victorian board. You can get too many engineers. They are like too many lawyers, they are always fighting. (Laughter.) I congratulate the local authorities for the very able manner in which they publish their business in the little journal put before the people once a month. I advise anyone who wants to get some information about local authorities to study that journal.

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HON. J. G. APPEL: I do not approach this Bill with any object of hostility. It is a very fair Bill and one which will effect the object for which it was introduced. (Hear, hear!) The invariable custom prior to the advent of the Labour party was to forward to the executive of the Local [7.30 p.m.] Authorities' Association the copy of any Bill which affected local authorities, so that it could be studied by them and any suggestions they had to make could be made.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Local Authorities Bill?

HON. J. G. APPEL: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: But this is a Main Roads Bill.

HON. J. G. APPEL: But still it affects the local authorities, because they have to find 50 per cent. of the necessary funds.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would point out to the hon. member that we are now dealing with an amendment on clause 3.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Yes, Mr. Chairman, but this is a reply to a remark which fell from the Minister.

Mr. FOLEY: On the second reading?

HON. J. G. APPEL: No. The Minister, in replying to remarks that fell from myself, made certain statements, and I am simply replying to those statements, which are connected with the clause that we are dealing with. In his reply, the Minister said that three deputations had waited upon him, one in 1916—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No. I said three resolutions were passed by the local authorities—in 1916, 1917, and 1918.

HON. J. G. APPEL: But this draft Bill was never submitted to the executive of the local authorities with a request from the Minister for any suggestion from their standpoint as representatives of local authorities.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Bill is really based on those resolutions.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It may be based on resolutions, and still differ very materially from them; but the Minister practically accused members supporting this amendment of not being in touch with local authority government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Quite so.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That cannot be so. The Minister did not submit a draft of this measure to the executive of the local authorities.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I was under no obligation to do so.

HON. J. G. APPEL: But it has been the invariable custom of the department, when legislation was proposed which affected local authorities, to submit the proposed measure to them for their consideration or suggestion.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: This is not a Local Authorities Bill.

HON. J. G. APPEL: But it must affect them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It affects all the people of the State.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The local authorities have to find half the necessary funds.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He quoted the local authorities' own resolution.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Quite so. The Minister also mentioned the Main Roads Association. There may be members of the executive upon that association—apparently, there are—but they do not represent the local authorities. They represent the people who want good main roads, not for the service of the producer, but for pleasure. The fact was mentioned also that some main roads may run alongside good railways. I know of two main roads which will run within a few yards of railways in my own electorate. One of the roads advocated by the Main Roads Association is the road from Brisbane to Tweed Heads, which will run within a few yards of one of the best railways in the State.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

HON. J. G. APPEL: This matter was brought up by the Minister, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member may make passing reference to the matter, but he cannot discuss the Bill generally.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am giving my reasons why the Minister should accept the proposed amendment. I ask: Would it not be advisable that one of the representatives on that board should be a representative of local government, because, if the representatives are simply to consider the wishes of those who desire a good road for pleasure purposes, I do not think this measure will be a success from the standpoint of assisting settlement? I have heard no argument which is in any way conclusive against the proposed amendment. Who is more competent to say which roads should be necessary for the purpose of advancing settlement than a man with practical experience, such as a representative of the local authority would have? We know it will be absolutely necessary that one member at least should be an engineer of the highest qualifications—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is a wonder you would even go that far.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I would be foolish if I did not.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You should apologise to the local authorities.

HON. J. G. APPEL: And it is equally essential that at least one man on that board should be a man with practical experience of local government, and I hope the Minister will give the matter consideration. I do not urge that the Bill should be delayed—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are stonewalling.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Not at all. I am simply replying to statements advanced by the Minister in opposition to the hon. member for Mirani's amendment. I do not suggest that the Bill should be withdrawn with the object of submitting it to the local authorities, but the Minister said no request came from the executive of the local authorities urging that a representative of theirs should sit on the board. I would remind him that the local authorities were not in a position to do so, as the Bill was not submitted to them, and it falls upon us, some of whom have served for twenty-three years in local authorities—

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

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: As this measure is being debated on a non-party spirit, I wish to say that I disagree with the proposed amendment. (Hear, hear!) I think it would be a great mistake if the local authorities were represented on this board.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am hoping that the board will consist of men who are experts at the game—men who are going to make the question of roadmaking a matter of science and business, and tackle it absolutely unfettered by any fear or doubt as to what any ratepayers or electors might say regarding their decisions. I think it would weaken the board if any local authority representative were placed on that board, because that representative would feel that he had the entire responsibility of the local authorities interests on his shoulders, and that every proposal that came up for consideration would entail considerable loan obligations on behalf of the authority he was representing. We usually find that local authority representatives are more fearful of the effect that any decision in the matter of rates and taxes may have upon the voters than they are of the effect which it is going to have upon the community as a whole. That is my experience, at any rate. We frequently find instances where improvements demand attention in local authority areas, and yet the local authority is fearful to impose any greater rate, on account of the effect it may have upon the ratepayers in that particular area. I look for this Main Roads Bill to effect considerable alterations and improvements in the State, and—as I contended on the second reading—that this board should be entirely unfettered and free from Ministerial control, I now also contend it should be quite free from local authority control, because it is only by having three men entirely competent and absolutely uninfluenced by outside efforts that we can hope to see the Bill made the success which it should be.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I certainly favour the amendment, because it is quite possible in a country like this to sell the whole of your freedom, and to sell it very cheaply. Under this Bill we propose to put three men—who do not, perhaps, pay 10s. a year each in taxes—over a department that is going to put upon the community millions of pounds of expenditure.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Not at all.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. gentleman does not seem to know what he is talking about. In looking over the general rates paid by the shire councils, I find that ten cities paid £266,869, twenty-five towns £82,144, and 139 shires £400,889—roughly speaking, about £800,000 from the general rate. I contend that even the tax on vehicles, which would have to be made to pay for the roads which these men will insist upon being built, will be about 10 per cent. of the total amount of rates and taxes for the general rate; so that in additional taxation from the shires you will see that the Minister is going to collect at least £100,000 from the people who own vehicles. Then you have to impose taxation to meet the interest on the loans. If you go through the shires and add another 35 per cent., you are imposing

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a burden of something like a quarter of a million pounds a year. Although this is not a party measure, it is not hard to see that the interests in this House are divided. The people who are living in the cities would practically put taxation on to other people and make them pay. They have, perhaps, motor-cars, and may want to get outside—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must deal with the clause.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Practically, the producer will have to find the money, and the local authorities should have the one representative on the board. We should not sell our liberty altogether, and hand ourselves over to a body of three men who are going to be able to tax us almost out of existence.

Mr. SWAYNE: One thing we object to is the statement by hon. members opposite that there is an intention on this side to delay the passage of the Bill. If we can improve the Bill, we are within our rights in trying to do so. I feel sure that if the Bill becomes law without the amendment, the people of the country who have to foot the Bill will regret it. I say that as a country member knowing something about the requirements of the people, and recognising the possibilities obtaining under the Bill. The Minister referred to the request of the local authorities that the members of the board should consist of expert engineers; but the hon. gentleman has only mentioned one engineer. We know that quite recently political appointments have been made, so the interests of the ratepayers should be guarded. We know that the Labour party has contended that the heads of Government departments should sign the Labour platform. I contend that the statements of the rank and file of the party which controls the action of the Government in caucus open up grave possibilities. In the dinner hour I made up the capital value of rateable property in Queensland—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will not be in order in discussing that matter.

Mr. SWAYNE: One of the arguments used is that there shall not be taxation without representation, and such being the case, I am entitled to mention the liabilities which will obtain, and that is my reason for saying that the taxpayers should be represented upon the board. I find, from 1917 statistics, that the capital value of the rateable property in Queensland is something like £61,000,000, of which three-fourths, roughly speaking, is in the shires. A penny rate only on that amount means a tax of over £250,000. Seeing that there is no limitation to the rating power of this board, and that, even at the low rate of 1d., these people will have to find £250,000, I think they should have some representation on the board. Another feature which has been introduced in the discussion is the franchise of the local authorities. I say that it rests entirely with the people of Queensland.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. SWAYNE: It has been referred to on the other side. That is a matter that lies entirely in their hands. Not even the other House can block them from altering the franchise if they desire to do so, because we know that, if we disagree on two occasions, the Government can refer the

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matter to the people by referendum. What is necessary for the smooth operation of the measure is that the board and the local authorities should work amicably together, and I think that is a reason why the local authorities, whose interests are so closely affected by this Bill, should have representation on the board. The argument against has been used that the local authorities' representative would have to represent such a large interest for the taxpayers. I think that is the strongest reason why the local authorities should not place their interests entirely in the hands of those who may be out of touch and sympathy with them. I think that in many of the producing districts the upkeep of the by-roads leading to the railway stations and mills to which they take their produce will be of more benefit to them than the big trunk roads of the State. That all strengthens my argument that the local bodies should have at least one representative out of the three on the board. I contend that the general character of our local bodies in Queensland is not such as to warrant any apprehension as to what will ensue from having a local authority representative on the board. I believe that the local authorities could nominate a good man for the board, and that, if they had been consulted on this point, their answer would have been, "Yes, we want one representative out of the three." The Minister stated that a request has been made for three professional men to be appointed, but we have not the slightest idea as to what appointments may be made. I trust that the amendment will be carried.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am surprised at the speech of the hon. member for Mirani, after the rebuke delivered to him by his colleague, the hon. member for Oxley, who has put the position in a nutshell. The local authorities themselves, after considering this matter, have not asked for what is being asked by the Opposition to-night. The Victorian Act makes no provision for representation of local authorities; nor did the local authorities there ask for it. It does not even go so far as to lay down as to what the members of the board should be. This is not a wages board, where there are sides to be argued, but a board of experts in building main roads throughout the State.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Are they all going to be experts?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Of course.

Mr. MACARTNEY: What will they be experts at?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Roadmaking. The Victorian Act does not lay it down that one at least of the members should be an engineer, but this Bill is framed to meet the wishes of the local authorities that at least one of the members should be an expert engineer in practice—they may be all engineers so far as I know. When local authorities themselves have not asked for a representative on the board, I think it does away with the arguments advanced by the Opposition to-night. I have already referred to a large deputation which waited on me, and Alderman Diddams, a member of the deputation, amongst other things, said—

"The advantages of a board of experts

are many, not the least of which would be the establishment of a uniform policy throughout the State and the standardisation of works."

I think the hon. member for Mirani might very well withdraw his amendment. Three hours have been taken up in discussion already, and we have only got to clause 3 of the Bill. If the Opposition stonewall like this, there is not much chance of getting the Bill through.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: We are not stonewalling.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It looks like it. I cannot accept the amendment, because it would weaken the Bill. If the local authorities appointed a member—say it was the hon. member for Drayton, from the Darling Downs—what knowledge would he have of the Atherton tableland? On the other hand, what would a selector on the Atherton tableland know about the Darling Downs? Most likely, if I accepted the amendment, the man appointed would be a representative of the city of Brisbane.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: As one who has to do with the country, and with a very much greater area of land than the man who represents a town, I think the Government would show wisdom in accepting the amendment of the hon. member for Mirani. The Minister said that it might be impossible for any representative of the local authorities to have a general and wide experience of the whole of the country, and instanced his own constituency in the North, and asked what knowledge a resident there could possibly have of the Darling Downs. That applies to every appointment which may be made, whether it be the expert appointed by the Government themselves. It is very unlikely that any one man who may be selected will have a knowledge which will cover all the principal centres of the State. However, apart from that, the magnitude of the expenditure which will be

[3 p.m.] incurred, and the liability of the various divisional boards in connection with the repayments in thirty years, seem to show that, as a matter of common fairness, the local authorities should have the right of appointing a representative on the board.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The local authorities may be allowed to carry out the work themselves under the supervision of the board.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It is just because of that that I think representatives of the various local authorities will be wanted. I am quite aware of the tremendous advantage of this Bill. Anyone who has travelled in any part of Queensland and in New South Wales must admit that the condition of the roads in Queensland is deplorable. Immediately you step over the border you are on a different plane altogether. You find that immense importance it attached to main roads in New South Wales and Victoria, and there is a great necessity for a main roads board in Queensland, but I do contend as a matter of common fairness, that the people who are responsible for 50 per cent.

of the expenditure should have a say in the matter.

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

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 to 8, put and passed.

On clause 9—"Board to make surveys, etc., and purchase roadmaking machinery"—

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I would like to get an assurance from the Minister that the board will procure extra roadmaking machinery which they can hire out to shire councils or city councils who cannot possibly afford a large plant.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The board will have practically a free hand in matters of this kind, which I am sure is the desire of members on both sides of the House. In Victoria I find it is part of the policy of the board to buy machinery and hire it out to the local authorities with very good results, and I have no doubt that that policy will be followed here. (Hear, hear!)

Clause put and passed.

Clause 10—"Boards to prepare map of roads, etc."—put and passed.

On clause 11—"Board to recommend what roads shall be main roads"—

HON. W. H. BARNES: Seeing the great area of this State I would like to ask the Minister whether he thinks one board will be sufficient for the requirements of the State. The area is very much greater than that of a State like Victoria, and when we take into consideration the immense mileage of what may be called main roads, the question arises as to whether one board will be sufficient.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I recognise that this is a very large State as compared to Victoria. The area of this State is larger than the area of Victoria, New South Wales, and New Zealand thrown in, and we recognise that by providing in the Bill that as near as possible an equal amount shall be spent in each of the three divisions of the State. I take it that in the working of this measure it will be necessary to appoint engineers something on the lines of the New South Wales system. It may be necessary to appoint a fully qualified engineer in each of the three divisions of the State. The board will travel all over the State from time to time, but a resident engineer will probably be appointed. That, of course, is a matter for the board when they get into working order. I take it that a resident engineer will be necessary in each of the three portions of the State, or at least one for the Northern and another for the Central division of the State in order to carry out the policy, carry out the survey, and carry out the work in that area, but I do not think it is necessary to think about having a separate board for each division of the State. It is experimental legislation to some extent, and if it is found that the area of the State is so large and large sums of money can be found for roadbuilding, which I hope will be the case, it may be necessary to amend the Bill after a time.

Mr. GRAYSON: Paragraph 1 of clause 11 reads—

"Any road which is in the opinion of the board of sufficient importance shall be a main road."

Mr. Grayson.]

There is nothing to say what a main road is to be. Take the Burnett and the Darling Downs. I understand that you could not build a good road in those places under £500 a mile. Will the board compel a local authority to construct a main road through black soil country and maintain it, when probably it is not required? This measure is purely and simply for the outlying districts of Queensland. The cities will be exempted under the Bill because their roads are already properly formed.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: They pay the wheel tax all the same.

Mr. GRAYSON: The whole burden of taxation in connection with this Bill will fall upon country people, and it seems to me that this board composed of three men, if they are not very careful, will create a great hardship in the farming districts if they compel a local authority in any district to construct a road which is not required.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They are not compelled. If there is any dispute between the board and the local authority, the Minister's decision shall be final, and I cannot imagine any Minister forcing on a local authority a road they do not want or which is not needed.

Mr. GRAYSON: The explanation of the Minister is satisfactory to me. (Hear, hear!)

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 12 to 15 put and passed.

On clause 16—*Power to make watercourses, etc.*—

Mr. SWAYNE: This clause reads—

“The board may, in or through or along any private lands or road, make and open such ditches, gutters, tunnels, drains, or watercourses as the board thinks advisable for the purpose of draining, making, or improving any main road.”

And then it says—

“The board may for the purpose of draining, making, or improving any main road cause the drainage from such road to be diverted into any ditch, gutter, tunnel, drain, or watercourse on any road or private land.”

If that private land is damaged, perhaps ruined, by the diversion of water from the main road, or if a road belonging to any local authority is damaged by such diversion of water upon it, will there be any possibility of getting compensation?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The board will stand in the same position in regard to liabilities in that regard as the local authorities and the Commissioner for Railways. Clause 23 provides—

“The money to the credit of the fund shall be applied as follows:—

(a) Towards the payment of all expenses necessarily incurred in carrying this Act into execution, and in doing and performing any acts and things which the board is by this Act empowered or required to do or perform.

(b) Towards the payment of any sum due under an agreement lawfully made

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for the purposes of this Act or any sum recovered against the board by process of law—”

The board will be in exactly the same position as local authorities as regards the building of drains and opening of watercourses into private property.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I think there is some doubt about it. I think that by passing this clause we are giving the board direct permission to turn water on to any private land. I will ask the hon. member for Toowoomba if there is any compensation for water diverted on to private land.

Mr. BRENNAN: You had better give me a guinea first. (Laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It says here—

“The board may, for the purpose of draining, making, or improving any main road, cause the drainage from such road to be diverted into any ditch, gutter, tunnel, drain, or watercourse on any road or private land.”

If we pass that clause, we give the board direct authority to put water on a man's private land. There is not the slightest doubt about it.

Mr. GLEDSON: It might be necessary.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is not necessary to injure another man's property. If you injure another man's property, you should pay for it. Let it run into the natural watercourse, but not on to a man's private land. I think the Minister should omit the three words “or private land.” If the leader of the Opposition says it is all right, I have confidence in him; I will let it go. All the same, outside of law, when you come down to common sense, there is nothing in it. (Laughter.) There is not a man in this Chamber who believes that law is always common sense. (Laughter.) Neither is it justice. Law is law; it is neither justice nor common sense.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must keep to the question.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If we pass this clause as it is, it will give the board authority to pass water on to any man's land and damage it. I move the omission of the words “or private land” from line 26.

Mr. GUNN: I must differ from the hon. gentleman. (Hear, hear!) I think the clause is all right as it is. The shire councils now have control of the roads, and they often make a drain or drain a road on to private property, but the owner has the rights of compensation. The private owner has the same rights of compensation under this Bill. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): I might point out to the hon. member for Drayton that if he looks at the wording of the clause, it says that the board may cause the drainage to be diverted into any watercourse. It must be drained into a watercourse on private land. You cannot do anything else but divert it into the watercourse. We have had a lot of trouble in my electorate over this matter, because the council would not run the ditch into the proper watercourse. They tried to make a drain of their own and flooded people's property, and the department had to compel them to run it into a natural watercourse.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The deputy leader of the Opposition advises me that the clause is all right, so, by leave of the Committee, I withdraw my amendment. (Laughter.)

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 16 put and passed.

On clause 17—“*Materials of main roads belong to the board*”—

Mr. GUNN: I would like to know from the Minister if all the materials on the road become the property of the board? What about the minerals? In my electorate, stream tin goes across the main road, and I would like to know who owns the minerals.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If it is on the surface of the road, this Bill provides that it belongs to the board. So far as the minerals under the surface are concerned, the Mining Act will deal with them.

Mr. GUNN: We don't want the two Acts to conflict.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They will not conflict. The material on the surface of the road belongs to the board, such as timber, stone, or anything of that kind.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 18 put and passed.

On clause 19—“*Roads to new settlement*”—

Mr. VOWLES: There seems to be a good deal of doubt regarding this section. The first paragraph reads as follows:—

“The Minister may authorise the board to construct a road connecting a new settlement or any large area of Crown land about to be opened for settlement with a centre of population or railway station or seaport; and the board shall thereupon construct the same out of moneys provided by the Governor in Council for that purpose.”

The Governor in Council is referred to in this Bill previously, and, to make that absolutely clear that the fund is not to be attacked, it would be wise to add the words “from the consolidated revenue.” I understand that that is the intention.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is the intention, but the Parliamentary Draftsman thinks it is not necessary to add those words.

Mr. VOWLES: I think it would be better to make it absolutely certain by adding the words “from the consolidated revenue.” The newspapers seem to take up a peculiar construction with regard to the latter portion of the clause. That is because they do not understand it. I agree with the contention of the Minister that there is not much to complain about, because all that remains—so far as maintenance is concerned—is that if a road becomes a main road, the board has to maintain it in the future, but if it does not become a main road, the local authority has to maintain it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I suggest you might substitute the word “Parliament” for “Governor in Council.” That will make it clear.

Mr. VOWLES: I move that the words “Governor in Council,” on line 18, be omitted, with a view of inserting the word “Parliament.”

Amendment agreed to; and clause 19, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 20 and 21 put and passed.

On clause 22—“*Main roads fund*”—

Mr. GRAYSON: I notice that to the credit of this fund shall be placed—

“(b) All taxes and fees paid under this Act in respect of motor vehicles, traction engines, and wheels of vehicles.”

This is to be a wheel tax. I ask the Minister, in imposing a wheel tax, how will the farmers stand in connection with it. If the farmer has several drays and a sulky, and a reaper and binder with two wheels, will he have to pay on that?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He will not have to pay on his reaper and binder.

Mr. GRAYSON: I anticipate that there will be a large sum of money collected from this wheel tax, principally in the country. I hope that the districts where the money is collected will have the money spent in that area.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: In making the regulations for taxing vehicles, I ask the Minister to make it as low as possible for the vehicles used by the farmers. I think every working man and every farmer is entitled to have a low horse-power motor-car.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I quite agree with you. They will be able to get them if we get good roads.

Mr. SWAYNE: I would like to know if this clause, imposing a wheel tax, will interfere with the right of present local authorities to impose a wheel tax. Will this clause clash with the local authorities?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: When the regulations are framed, they will bring in a general wheel tax, and local authorities will not be able to impose a super tax.

Mr. SWAYNE: I hardly think it is fair to do that. It brings home to us the need for such an amendment as I moved in a previous clause, as most certainly the local authorities should be represented on that board. The clause contains this possibility that vehicles engaged in productive work will have to pay the tax, although they will not use the main roads at all. The vehicles engaged in carting produce to the railway station or on the farms will be taxed for the upkeep of a road over which their owners have no concern. The interests of the general producer must suffer from that. The day will come when the country producer will feel the weight of this taxation, and he will not get much out of it.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I would like the Minister to explain how this clause applies to the farmers and their vehicles. A farmer may have a hand trolley in which to wheel his produce to the railway station. Will that be taxed?

Mr. GUNN: It might be a perambulator. (Laughter.)

Mr. PETERSON: It might be a perambulator; but it is just as well to know the meaning of the clause, and I am sure the Minister will be able to give us a satisfactory explanation. In some places the farmers carry their cream over in a cream [8.30 p.m.] truck, and that is not a vehicle.

But when we are confronted with the definition of a “vehicle” later on, when

Mr. Peterson. }

the Bill is in operation, the Commissioner may rule that a hand trolley is a "vehicle," so I think it just as well for the Minister to make quite clear what a "vehicle" is, so that we will know where we are.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I should say that according to the regulations a vehicle would be something mechanical, or something horse-drawn.

Mr. GUNN: In some shire councils at present there is a wheel tax in operation, and now the Main Roads Bill will come along and impose another wheel tax, and I want to know which one will prevail? Does the farmer have to pay two wheel taxes, or does one tax prevail? It would be very awkward for him if he were compelled to fill in one form and pay a tax to the shire council and then fill in another form and pay a similar tax to the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The board will deal with that.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 23 put and passed.

On clause 24—"Equal expenditure in each State division"—

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I move the omission of the word "equal," on line 44, with the view of moving later on the omission of the words "in each of the three divisions of the State" in the same line, and the insertion of the words "Equal to the amount levied in each division of the State." The clause will then read—

"In the expenditure of the moneys legally available in each year for the purposes of this Act, it shall be the duty of the board to see that as nearly as is practicable an amount is expended equal to the amount levied in each division of the State."

That will make a very big difference.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you mean levied by the local authorities in the form of rates?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, by the Government on account of this board.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Wheel tax?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes. I put the tax from the vehicles down at, roughly, as low as £60,000 a year, and that would be putting a very low tax on them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: On what basis?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: This is, of course, only a rough estimate. The basis has to be fixed by the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The basis is the main thing.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Supposing you put it at 5s.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It that not too high?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes, it is high, but I would refer the Minister to what was done when the Premier was bringing in land tax proposals. He said he would get £160,000, but when the proposals were brought in, the amount reached £360,000.

The PREMIER: I asked you to give me concrete cases of overpayments.

[Mr. Peterson.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You have got them, and I could give you a lot more. My estimate was not as far out as the Premier's. If these taxes bring in £60,000 I would put it down something in this manner: South Queensland, £35,000; Central Queensland, £15,000; and North Queensland, £10,000.

Mr. COLLINS interjected.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. gentleman practically only represents gum trees and wallabys.

Mr. COLLINS: I represent one of the richest electorates in Queensland. You don't know what you are talking about.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I said that this is probably what each division would pay according to the number of vehicles. If that money were divided equally, it would mean £20,000 to each centre, but you are actually taking £15,000 contributed from the vehicles in South Queensland and dividing it amongst the rich people in Northern and Central Queensland. I do not think it right to tax the farmers in South Queensland and carry their money to Central and North Queensland, which is composed, to a large extent, of rich graziers and sugar-growers, while the people in South Queensland are mostly struggling settlers. If it is money loaned to the centres, that is a different matter, because that money is charged to the State, which pays the whole of the interests, and if Central and North Queensland were declared separate States they would then take over the loan money that had been expended on them. But, if we are going to tax the producers here so much on every wheel, and then take at least 10 per cent. or 20 per cent. of that to Northern and Central Queensland, you are going to inflict a very great injustice on the people of South Queensland. I hope the Minister will accept the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That might be all right from the hon. member's point of view, but the hon. member for Bulimba pointed out this afternoon that this State was so large that he thought it necessary to have more than one board. Recognising that, I have laid it down in the principle of the Bill that the amount should be, as nearly as possible, equally divided in each division of the State, although it must be admitted that the outlying portions—and especially the North—have been sadly neglected. That, of course, is because the State is so large. If we do not lay down some guide for the board, it is more than likely that a larger sum would be spent in South Queensland than in North and Central Queensland.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Give them equal portions of loan money.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It should be borne in mind that in the early days the Government spent large sums of money in South Queensland, while none was spent in the North, and perhaps very little in Central Queensland; so in future we want to lay down a policy that, as nearly as possible, equal sums of money voted by Parliament shall be spent in each division of the State. (Hear, hear!) The hon. gentleman who moved the amendment referred to the wheel tax, but it would be impossible to separate the wheel tax into three divisions, because once a man has a license for his

motor-car, it is not necessary for his headquarters to be in Brisbane or anywhere else; he can travel all over the State. I do not think the hon. gentleman need have any fear about the policy being carried out as fairly as possible. I think it is impossible to embody his amendment in the Bill with the prospect of good results. I hope he will not press it. The clause is elastic enough to allow the board to use its judgment in most cases, and I do not think that injustice will be done to the Southern part of the State.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am sorry the Minister cannot see his way to accept the amendment. There will not be the slightest difficulty in collecting the wheel tax in each centre from those using the roads for that purpose. Loan money is a different matter altogether, but if you tax a farmer on the Darling Downs on every wheel he has about the place, and send the money to Northern and Central Queensland, he is not going to be very much pleased.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are drawing on your imagination to a great extent.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: There is no imagination about it. There is going to be, I will say, eight times the amount collected in Southern Queensland—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The bulk of the wheel tax will be collected in Brisbane.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I ran out an estimate of a stretch of country in my electorate—about 6 miles to the railway station—and I find that the tax will be nearly half the amount of the local shire rates. If you put 5s. on each wheel it will come to about £70. That is most unjust. The Minister says he is going to divide the money equally between Northern, Central, and Southern Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: As near as possible.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And you are going to collect at least 75 per cent. of it, we will say, in Southern Queensland, and then you must send the money collected in Southern Queensland away to the North and Central of Queensland, where the bulk of the people are rich graziers and sugar-growers. I do not see why the people of the Darling Downs should be taxed and the money sent to those districts. I say that the people in the city will pay very little of this excepting those who own vehicles. As a last resource—it is no use calling for a division, because they would simply roll up—(laughter)—on behalf of the farmers' party in this House, I utter a protest against the farmers of Southern Queensland being taxed and the money sent to Northern and Central Queensland.

Mr. BRENNAN: The hon. member for Drayton knows the frightful condition of the black soil plains on some occasions, and that good main roads would be much appreciated by the farmer. The hon. member very nearly lost his seat at the last election through his conduct in abusing the useful legislation introduced by this Government for the benefit of farmers.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I quite admit that I won the seat very barely last time, but the reason for that was that the disloyal faction in this State stirred up the people against me. (Government laughter and disorder.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. GUNN: I must say a word in favour of the amendment. I believe the North and Centre have grievances, and I do not care if they get separation, but this is not a fair deal to the farmers in South Queensland. The farmers there have a greater number of wheels, and would pay the greater portion of the tax, and, therefore, should have most of the tax spent in Southern Queensland. North Queensland is not a farming district anything like the South is.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What about the Gulf district?

Mr. GUNN: The Gulf district consists principally of Government cattle stations, which do not even pay shire rates, yet their roads have to be made by the wheel tax contributed by settlers on the Darling Downs and other Southern districts.

Mr. GRAYSON: I contend that it is absolutely unfair that this wheel tax should be imposed, and that each of the three divisions of the State should get an equal share of it, because the greatest amount would be collected in the thickly-settled districts of the Burnett and the Darling Downs.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The whole of the wheel tax will only be a mere bagatelle, as far as the building of roads is concerned.

Mr. GRAYSON: I contend that the Government has no right to interfere with the collection of the wheel tax. In the timber areas on the Darling Downs and the Moreton district there are large bullock wagons used, which in a wet season cut up the roads very much, and it costs the shire councils in those areas a large amount of money to maintain and repair the roads. The Government are now going to step in and deprive the local authorities of the wheel tax.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The local authorities' executive asked for the wheel tax.

Mr. GRAYSON: It is the town local authorities.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No, the local authorities' executive, by resolution.

Mr. GRAYSON: We know that Mr. Diddams is a city alderman.

Mr. WILSON: The hon. member for Aubigny is the president of the Local Authorities' Association.

Mr. GRAYSON: I am certain that if the hon. member for Aubigny were here he would take the stand which I am taking. It is no use insisting on the amendment, as the minds of the Government supporters are made up. Hon. members opposite will support the Minister in any shape and form.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I accepted an amendment.

Mr. GRAYSON: Hon. members on this side express their views, even when they differ from each other. I am of opinion that the local authorities should be allowed to collect the wheel tax, and to expend the money in their own area.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I support the amendment, as I think it is only right that the amount collected should be expended where it is levied. The levying of the tax alone is going to cause a great deal of trouble.

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

People dislike taxation at any time, and when they are taxed, and realise that a big moiety of the tax is going to be transferred to another centre in which they are not directly interested, the feeling will be extremely bitter.

Mr. GLEDSON: Do you think the money collected in Queen street ought to be spent in Queen street?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It is largely so, but I am speaking of the country. The great bulk of the citizens in Brisbane will never suffer from the wheel tax, because they have no vehicle of any kind, but the farmer may have quite a number of vehicles. There are no main roads in the cities, which will thus be exempted from taxation. The main roads are in the country, and the country people will be taxed for the upkeep of the roads, and will also have to pay the wheel tax.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I understand the contention of the Minister to be that if the amendment is agreed to, the Bill will be practically ruined, but I cannot view the matter from that standpoint. A very much larger amount of money will probably be collected in one portion of the State than in another, and hon. members who support the amendment argue that it would be unfair to spend an equal amount of the total amount of taxation in those portions of the country which are not contributing equally to taxation as others are. In the Southern portion of the State, owing to the larger number of taxpayers, the revenue received will greatly exceed the amount collected from large areas in the North, which for the most part consist of Crown land. Then the amount levied by way of wheel tax will be considerably greater in the settled portion of the State than in those parts which are sparsely populated.

Mr. COLLINS: Do you know that there are 1,200 farmers in my electorate?

HON. J. G. APPEL: That is a settled portion of the State. A larger amount of money would require to be spent, for instance, owing to the greater distances, in the Western country, while it would serve a much smaller number of people than would be served in the settled areas of the State. A more equitable method of expenditure might be adopted than that proposed in the Bill.

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

Clause 24 put and passed.

Clauses 25 and 26 put and passed.

On clause 27—"Apportionment of the amount expended on permanent works and maintenance"—

Mr. SWAYNE: I move the insertion, after the word "rate," on page 13, line 41, of the words "not exceeding two pence in the pound." If the Minister had accepted my amendment on a previous clause giving representation to the shire councils on the taxing body, I would have been quite willing to withdraw this amendment; but, seeing that the taxpayers who will have to furnish most of the revenue have no representation on the taxing body, which has unlimited power of taxation, and may tax up to 1s. in the £1, if they like, or even more, I think it is desirable that there should be a limitation in the amount of taxation. I find, from 1917

statistics, that the value of rateable property in the towns and cities of Queensland is £16,000,000, while in the shires it is £45,000,000, so it will be seen that three-quarters of the value is provided by the country ratepayers, who are generally the producers. I find that a rate of only 1d. in the £1 will furnish over £250,000.

I find with that limitation it [9 p.m.] would give them a revenue of over £500,000, and surely that is enough revenue from one source! It will be duplicated from other sources, making in all over £1,000,000 per annum, and I do think that that is a reasonable limitation. Seeing that already in the upkeep of our roads we are rated up to the limit, I do think another 2d. in the £1 should be as far as this board of three should be allowed to go. That will allow of ample funds being placed at their disposal.

HON. J. G. APPEL: There is something in the contention of the hon. member for Mirani. Of course the local authorities are limited to a 6d. rate for general purposes and to a 6d. in the £1 for special purposes. The Government, in any taxation which they propose to levy, have to submit their proposals to Parliament, and Parliament has to agree to the proposals before that taxation can be levied. Then, again, the local authorities have to submit their proposals to the representatives elected by the ratepayers before they can levy their rates, but here we find an authority which is absolutely independent of the taxpayers; an authority which is not required to submit their proposals to the taxpayers, and under these conditions some limit should be placed upon the amount of the rate they are empowered to impose upon the taxpayers of the State.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am surprised at any one acquainted with the provisions of the Local Authorities Act supporting this amendment, because if I accepted it, it would be contradictory to the Local Authorities Act. Section 222 of the Local Authorities Act provides—

"For the purpose of providing the annual instalments or other moneys from time to time payable by a local authority in respect of any loan raised under this or any other Act and whether raised before or after the commencement of this Act, the local authorities shall from time to time cause a special rate, to be called a special loan rate, of sufficient amount to be levied."

HON. J. G. APPEL: There is a limit.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is no limit as regards the loan rate. Paragraph (2) reads—

"If the local authority fails to levy and collect such rate of sufficient amount as aforesaid, the Treasurer may make, levy, and collect a special loan rate of sufficient amount as aforesaid—"

That being so, if I accepted the amendment, it would be a contradiction of the Local Authorities Act.

Mr. VOWLES: That does not alter the fact that there should be a limit.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The limitation is provided in the fact that the local authorities have to agree with the central board to the work being carried out, and they also agree to the necessary

[*Mr. G. P. Barnes.*]

repayment. When it is borne in mind that the average loan to local authorities for road purposes is only for ten years, and I have made the term under this Bill thirty years, and that I have also bound the Government by saying they shall not charge a greater interest than is charged on ordinary loans to local authorities, it will be admitted that it is a very liberal proposal. I might mention that there is no absolute power in the board to force on any local authority an obligation which they are not willing and able to meet, and after accepting an obligation it is a fair thing that they should be prepared to strike a rate sufficient to liquidate the loan within a reasonable interest.

Mr. SWAYNE: If we had the representation I sought to obtain in a previous clause there would have been no need for this amendment, but seeing that the board is virtually irresponsible as far as the taxpayers are concerned, there should be some limitation. The rule is working backwards, as it were—the body from whom the taxation is obtained do not borrow the money, and the knowledge that there is a legal limitation to the amount of the rate will act as a check upon the board that does the borrowing, as they will know they will not be able to get more than a certain amount of revenue out of the people on to whom they pass the liability. They borrow the money, and they themselves are not liable. Somebody else has to find the interest, and under the circumstances that somebody else ought to have some protection. As it is, this board of three would have power to confiscate. They could impose any rate they liked, and I do not think it is a proper thing that a board of that kind should have such vast powers where the property of the people are concerned.

Amendment put and negatived; and clause put and passed.

Clauses 28 to 32 put and passed.

On clause 33—"Regulations"—

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I beg to move the insertion of the following new subclause to follow subclause (3):—

"(4) All such regulations shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament within forty days after the making thereof if Parliament is then sitting, or if Parliament is not then sitting within forty days after the commencement of the next session of Parliament.

"If either House of Parliament by resolution passed within one month after such regulations have been laid before such House resolves that the whole or any part of such regulations ought not to continue in force, in such case the whole or such part thereof as is so included in such resolution shall, from and after such resolution, cease to be binding, but without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done thereunder."

This clause deals with the regulations, and it will be at once apparent that the only means of obtaining publicity prior to the making of new regulations would be that provided in the amendment. The passing of the amendment will overcome a great deal of prejudice which is frequently met with when it is known there is enjoyed by the Government a certain power in the making of new regulations by proclamation. I feel sure, in entering upon new legislation

of this kind, it will be a very great relief to people generally to know that an opportunity will be afforded to members of Parliament to make objections. In any case, publicity is obtained by the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: I would suggest to the hon. member that he should have had his amendment printed, as it is very difficult to read it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: This is an important amendment, and I think it should have been placed in my hands, so that I could understand what it really means. Under the circumstances, I do not think I am justified in accepting it. I gather that it is on all-fours with an amendment which has been inserted from time to time in "another place" in Bills of this character. I cannot accept the amendment without knowing exactly what it means.

Mr. VOWLES: I am astonished to hear the hon. gentleman's remarks, because I took the trouble to tell him all about the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You told me about it, but it is a very long amendment.

Mr. VOWLES: I took the trouble to go to the Parliamentary Draftsman, and told him where it came from. I then went to the hon. gentleman, and told him where we proposed to put it in. It was just simply to save the trouble of having the Upper House putting the amendment in and sending it back to this place for acceptance. We do not care whether the hon. gentleman accepts it or not, because we know that this measure is going to become law; it is going to come back from the Upper House with this clause in it. It was moved to save any reflection being cast on this Chamber for passing legislation which is not complete. For the same old reason, hon. members opposite do not approve of the Upper House, and they have left the clause out again. They consistently do that. It has become a time-honoured practice. We know that it will be put in by the Upper House, and that this House will agree to it. Hon. members opposite will have to agree to it later on.

Mr. WILSON: Is that a threat?

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman says, "Is that a threat?" All I have got to say is that I put this matter before the Minister and he agreed to it. Now he disagrees with it. Where is the threat?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I understood the principle, but you did not place the wording before me.

Mr. VOWLES: I brought the document over to you.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I don't think it is word for word the same as the section in the Brands Act. Why not have your amendment typed out so that I could read it?

Mr. VOWLES: That is paltry. I do not care whether you accept it or not.

Amendment put and negatived.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I have a new subclause to follow line 13, of clause 33. I move the insertion of the following new subclause:—

"Notwithstanding anything in this Act or the regulations made thereunder or contained, no tax or fee shall be imposed on any vehicle used in production of farm or dairy produce, the owner of which

Hon. J. G. Appel.]

pays, or is liable to pay, shire council rates, unless such vehicle is used for hire."

The object of this is to provide that vehicles used in the production of foodstuffs shall not be liable to taxation. If further taxation is levied upon vehicles entirely used for that purpose, then it stands to reason that the cost of foodstuffs must be increased. We are anxious to see that the primary producer receives a living wage for his produce, and we do not want to see any unnecessary increase in the price of his produce. The subclause speaks for itself. The desire is to protect the primary producer from further taxation.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member is not very logical. He said it will increase the cost of living. The hon. member for Drayton was keen on the matter of no exemption just now. I said there should be no exemption, because everyone who use the roads should contribute. To follow up the hon. gentleman's argument that the vehicles used in primary production should be exempt we should exempt the baker's cart, and also the carrier's cart which takes the cream to the railway station. We should exempt all those vehicles if we carried the hon. gentleman's argument to its logical conclusion. Everyone should be exempt according to that. The local authorities were much concerned in this matter, and they passed a resolution urging a general wheel tax, to provide a fund for building and maintaining main roads. I have as much sympathy with the primary producer as anyone in this House, but I realise that we must raise revenue somehow, and I do not think it is logical to ask for an amendment of this character.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clauses 34 and 35 agreed to.

Schedule put and passed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. Bertram,—I beg to move that you do now leave the chair, and report the Bill with amendment.

Mr. VOWLES: I would like to say, in reference to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Warwick, which the Minister said did not agree with the printed amendment—and I said it did—I have given the printed material to the hon. gentleman to look at if he has any doubt about the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I said you did not give me an opportunity to compare it.

Mr. VOWLES: You said it did not agree with the printed material.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I said that that was my honest opinion.

Mr. VOWLES: If that is your honest opinion I would like to know what your dishonest opinion is? I am responsible for the hon. member for Warwick moving that amendment, and I can say that the written amendment was taken by me from page 8194 of the Queensland Statutes, and it is exactly the same.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I accept your word for it.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments, and it was agreed to.

The third reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

[Hon. J. G. Appel.

PORT DUES REVISION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

COMMITTEE.

(Mr. Foley, Mundingburra, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 to 5 put and passed without discussion.

The House resumed. The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment to the House, and it was agreed to.

The third reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

STOCK FOODS BILL.

CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S MESSAGE.

On clause 3—" Wholesale sellers to submit samples"—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I beg to move that we insist on our disagreement with the Council's amendment in clause 3, line 17, but suggest that the following words be added:—

" 'Or prescribed by-products' are inserted after the word 'food' on lines 17, 20, and 25, page 3."

Question put and passed.

A similar consequential amendment in clause 5 was agreed to.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had insisted on their disagreement to the Legislative Council's amendment to clause 3.

The Bill was ordered to be returned to the Legislative Council with the following message:—

" Mr. President,—

" The Legislative Assembly having had under consideration the message of the Legislative Council, of date 4th November, relative to the Stock Foods Bill, beg now to intimate that they—

" Insist upon their disagreement to the amendment in clause 3, line 17—but offer to accept the amendment provided the words 'or prescribed by-products' are inserted after the word 'food' on lines 17, 20, and 25, page 3; and also after the word 'food' in clause 5, page 4, line 40.

" In which proposed further amendment they invite the concurrence of the Legislative Council.

" Legislative Assembly Chamber,
" Brisbane, 6th November, 1919."

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT SAVINGS BANK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S MESSAGE.

The PREMIER: The Legislative Council have insisted upon the amendment being inserted in this Bill, but for the reasons I stated previously—that the rights of this Chamber have been interfered with, I think we should insist upon a disagreement with the amendment, and I therefore beg to move that we insist upon our disagreement with the Council's amendment.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the resolution, which was agreed to.

The Bill was ordered to be returned to the Legislative Council with the following message:—

“ Mr. President,—

“ The Legislative Assembly having had under consideration the message of the Legislative Council, of date the 4th instant, relative to the Queensland Government Savings Bank Act Amendment Bill, beg now to intimate that they—

“ Insist upon their disagreement to the proposed new clause and the amended title, for the reasons previously assigned, and for the additional reason that it is inconvenient to introduce into the amending measure a subject which is entirely foreign to the purpose for which the Bill was introduced, and which can be more appropriately dealt with when a general amendment of the principal Act is under consideration.

“ Legislative Assembly Chamber.
“ Brisbane, 6th November, 1919.”

CO-OPERATIVE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND ADVANCES TO FARMERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I beg to move that on clause 7, after line 22, the Council's amendment be disagreed to.

Mr. VOWLES: I am rather surprised that the hon. gentleman does not consent to this. It would improve the Bill to have those words inserted in clause 7.

Mr. PETERSON: He would be paying interest for fifteen years.

Mr. VOWLES: The whole object is to establish silos and induce the public to conserve fodder.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The whole object is to assist beginners.

Mr. VOWLES: To assist beginners! Surely £150 is not too much for a silo! If you are going to have a silo, why not have a good one?

The PREMIER: The Council exceeded their rights in altering the Bill.

Mr. VOWLES: Are we going to hold up a good Bill which is approved by both sides of the House because of a technical point?

The PREMIER: The Council should not exceed their rights.

Mr. VOWLES: We are getting too much of this formality.

The PREMIER: You did not move this amendment from your side.

Mr. VOWLES: We moved so many good ones that have been discarded by your side that we are getting tired of the business. At any rate, there are several members in the “other place” who have some idea of the wants of the farmer. Some of them are men of experience, and that is what they are there for. Some of them have been engaged in farming pursuits for many years. Is it reasonable that, for the sake of £150, extended over fifteen years, for the encouragement of the building of silos, we should lose all the good that is in this legislation, that has been so much talked about? We should discard the little jealousy which exists between this House and the other House, and say that, although they have no right

to interfere as they have in regard to public expenditure, nevertheless we realise that their amendment is a good one, and we do not want to see it thrown out through a fiction such as the Premier suggests. This legislation is going to be postponed, how long?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You surely do not suggest that the Upper House will throw out this Bill!

Mr. VOWLES: I do not know. I know there is only twenty-four hours left to deal with this Bill, otherwise it will be postponed for, probably, another three or four months, and it is desirable that it should become law as soon as possible. Let us hope that, before we meet again, the seasons will be so good as to encourage people who will come under the operations of the Act. The main thing is, not to waste time in another session in introducing the same old legislation, such as we have had session after session.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why did you not bring in a Bill like this before you went out?

Mr. VOWLES: We “live and learn.” I think we are progressing every day, and the Government will be progressing this evening if they use their common sense in sinking their pride and completing this good legislation.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member knows that this is a Bill which is intended to assist beginners. He will notice that all the loans are for short terms. It is supplemental to the assistance given by the Government Savings Bank. The term is for five years. If it was for fifteen years it would mean that one man might hold £150 for that period, instead of three farmers being able to erect silos. It is a system of insurance for dry seasons that every farmer should have the opportunity to embrace.

Mr. VOWLES: How many silos are there in Queensland?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Not very many, because previous Governments have not given farmers an opportunity to build silos. Recognising that this is a Bill to assist beginners, we want the money to be repaid as early as possible, so as to advance it again to other farmers. I think the Bill is a very reasonable measure, in spite of the Upper House usurping our undoubted rights.

Mr. BAYLEY: I am pleased to congratulate the Government on the Bill, but I hope the Minister will see his way clear to either accept the amendments proposed by the other place or agree to some compromise. If he is not prepared to grant the fifteen years, he may make it ten years.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You must admit that it is a very good Bill as it stands.

Mr. BAYLEY: I admit that it is an excellent Bill as it stands. The Government have made a good offer to the farmers, but the offer in the amendment is better still. This is not the only expense farmers have to meet; they are continually called upon to meet payments, which, in the aggregate, amount to a very large sum. They are at the present time going through a very severe drought. We must remember that, under a Bill recently passed, it is possible for dwellers in the towns and cities to borrow up to

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£800 for a dwelling-house, and they have twenty-five years in which to repay the amount. When you consider the large amount necessary to provide a settler in the country with a house and other improvements on his holding, we cannot but admit that the man in the city has great advantages.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must confine himself to the amendment.

Mr. BAYLEY: I trust that the Minister will agree to a compromise if he cannot accept the amendment. By doing so he will be conferring a great boon on the settlers in the country and on the State as a whole.

Mr. PETERSON: I think it speaks well for the intelligence of this side of the House that this is the only amendment which the Upper House has seen fit to put in the Bill, and the additional testimony of appreciation from one of the Downs members shows that we must have done something very good. I have been informed by a farmer that the proper definition of a farmer is that he is a man who is entirely surrounded by mortgages. The amendment gives a term of fifteen years to pay off a sum of £150. A silo is different to any other improvement, as it is a means whereby a farmer can make money. In a dry time fodder goes up to about £20 a ton. A farmer can put fodder into his silo for about £1 a ton, and when the dry time comes he will save the difference between £1 and £20. I am sure that the farmers will say that this proviso is one which is in their own interests. The 100 tons of ensilage contained in a silo of that capacity is practically equal to 100 tons of the dry lucerne, which costs at the present time £18 a ton, or more.

Mr. VOWLES: What would a 100-ton silo cost?

Mr. PETERSON: It would cost about £2 a ton to build—that is, about £200. The consensus of opinion of experts is that it is better for farmers to go in for silos on a 75-ton basis. The farming electors of Normanby will be very pleased to have the Bill as it stands.

Mr. SWAYNE: After all, fifteen years is not an unduly long time for a loan for a concrete silo, and, as the hon. member for Pittsworth pointed out, the farmer can pay the money back at any time during that period. It may be of great benefit, on account of drought and other causes, to have the loan spread over a period of fifteen years. The importance of the conservation of fodder has never been brought home to us so forcibly than it has at the present time, when stock all over the country are dying on account of the drought. It would be a great pity if, through the obstinacy of the Government, any risk was taken by not extending the term of the loan to fifteen years. In the case of silos of imperishable material, the Council have made the term for the repayment of the loan fifteen years instead of five, and they have not altered the amount of the advance in any way—it is still £150. If a farmer puts up a silo of perishable material, then the term of the loan is only five years. The term of fifteen years would only apply in the case of a first-class erection.

Mr. BAYLEY: With seasons such as we have experienced during the past few years, it is quite possible that in three out of every five years it may be utterly impossible for a farmer to conserve fodder in his silo, on

account of the drought. I urge the Minister to make some attempt to meet in this regard. We are having a series of bad seasons. They may improve in the future, but we cannot tell. I hope the Minister will accept the Council's amendment.

Question put and passed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—That the Committee disagree with the amendment of the Council, on line 23, inserting after the word "silos," the words "of other materials."

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had disagreed to the Council's amendments.

The report was adopted.

The Bill was ordered to be returned to the Legislative Council with the following message:—

"Mr. President,—

"The Legislative Assembly having had under consideration the Legislative Council's amendments in the Co-operative Agricultural Production and Advances to Farmers Act Amendment Bill, beg now to intimate that they—

"Disagree to the amendments—

"Because they constitute a direct interference with, and an infringement of, the privileges of this House.

"Legislative Assembly Chamber,
"Brisbane, 6th November, 1919."

APPROPRIATION BILL, No. 3.

RETURNED FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of this Bill from the Council with the following message:—

"Mr. Speaker,—

"The Legislative Council having this day agreed to the Bill, intituled a Bill to authorise the appropriation out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland of further sums of money towards the service of the year ending on the thirtieth day of June, 1920, beg now to return the same to the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

"But this Council protest most strongly against the innovation of the Government in not supplying to Parliament full Estimates and a Financial Statement showing the condition of the finances of the State as is usually done before the end of the year.

"W. HAMILTON,

"President.

"Legislative Council Chamber,
"Brisbane, 6th November, 1919."

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move—That the House do now adjourn. The business to-morrow, principally, will be the waiting for messages from the Council on certain Bills they have been considering this afternoon, and others which they will consider to-morrow. Whilst we are waiting for the messages, we may go on with the initiation of the two Bills, of which notice of motion has been given to-day. We will see, then, what progress we make, and it may be necessary to have a temporary adjournment to wait for further messages from the Council.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 10 o'clock p.m.

[Mr. Bayley.