

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 1922

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The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Bertram, *Maree*) took the chair at 11 a.m.

PRIMARY PRODUCTS POOLS BILL.

THIRD READING.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I beg to move—

“That the Bill be now read a third time.”

Question put and passed.

REGULATION OF SUGAR CANE PRICES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I beg to move—

“That the Bill be now read a third time.”

Question put and passed.

FRUIT CASES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I beg to move—

“That the Bill be now read a third time.”

Question put and passed.

MATERNITY BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Kirwan, Brisbane, in the chair.*)

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): I beg to move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to make better provision for the establishment and maintenance of maternity hospitals and baby clinics, and for other ancillary purposes.”

At this stage I do not propose to delay the Committee by giving a full explanation of the Bill. It is simply an authorising measure, which makes provision for the establishment of maternity hospitals in districts where there are hospitals and where there are no hospitals. Maternity hospitals may be established in association with already existing hospitals. I believe that there are a few already in the State. Provision is made for care and treatment in midwifery cases, for the treatment of diseases peculiar to women, for the establishment of baby clinics, for the training of nurses to deal with diseases peculiar to women in midwifery cases, and also with respect to antenatal and postnatal matters. There is also provision for the proper nursing and care of mothers and infants in remote parts of the State. Under the Bill, districts will be constituted, and it is possible that there will be more than one maternity home in each district. The Bill also makes provision for the appointment of medical officers, nurses, and for medical inspection. The whole of the cost of buildings and equipment will be defrayed by the Government. Those are the essential features of the Bill.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: In the event of anyone being willing to erect a suitable place for a hospital in the country, what assistance will the Government give?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Under this Bill provision is made for the whole cost of the establishment of hospitals and their equipment to be borne by the Government; but I have no doubt we would not be averse to accepting any kind offer from any benevolent person who desires to assist in that way.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: In the event of a man putting up a building which he is not desirous of handing over to the Government, will the Government subsidise him?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That question can be discussed on the second reading or during the Committee stage.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I am sure that the Bill will have the sympathy and support of every hon. member. (Hear, hear!) I certainly think that this step is not being taken too soon. Probably, in connection with a lot of legislation which passes through this Chamber, we lose sight of the fact that the women constitute very nearly half the population. I have heard the view expressed more than once that this world is largely a man's world, and it is very gratifying to know that the Government contemplate taking action in this particular direction. During debates in this Chamber we hear a good deal about the man on the land; but we seem to lose sight of the fact that there are women on the land, too. Their lives are very drab compared with the lives of the bulk of the men on the land.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: “The Women of the West” that Essex Evans described in his beautiful poem.

The PREMIER: And the women in the North, too. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. TAYLOR: In consequence of the deplorable housing conditions which exist in quite a number of these districts, the women are deserving of all the consideration and all the support that this Government or any other Government can give them, particularly during the time referred to in this Bill. At those times they should have the very best we can give. We have conveniences in the towns for both men and women, and we do not seem to realise the duty we owe to the women outback and in the far North. I am sure hon. members on both sides of the House will welcome this Bill. I take it that in cases where people can afford to pay for the services rendered they will be asked to pay, but where they cannot afford to pay they will not be asked to do so.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is definitely provided for in the Bill.

Mr. TAYLOR: That will be all right. Where people can pay they should pay; but in quite a number of instances it would be a hardship to ask the people to pay towards the upkeep of institutions such as those to be established under this Bill. With regard to those women in the very remote portions of the State who cannot be brought to the maternity hospitals or baby clinics that will be established throughout Queensland, it is gratifying to know that provision is to be made to see them through the critical time in their lives. We have to recognise that, although immigration is a very wise policy, the best immigrants we

Mr. Taylor.]

can have—if you can apply that term to them—are the immigrants born of Australian mothers in Australia. We want to do all we can to bring about an increased birth-rate.

Mr. GLEDSON: You do not want to make a second reading speech now.

Mr. TAYLOR: I take it that I am quite within my rights in making these remarks without interjections such as that. I do not think I am transgressing the Standing Orders in any shape or form. However, we welcome the measure, and I can assure the Minister that it will receive support from this side of the Chamber.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): With the leader of the Nationalists, I can assure the Minister that he will have no difficulty in passing this measure through the Chamber. This is a matter that requires early attention, because in many instances, owing to the lack of conveniences for those women who accompany their husbands to the distant portions of the State, loss of life has occurred; and if we can provide the necessary conveniences, they will be most gratefully received by every member of the community. As the leader of the Nationalist party has said, it does not matter whether you go to the North, the South, or the West, this want has been apparent—not only the want of maternity hospitals in centres which are convenient to settlements, but also the necessity of providing attention in the outlying settlements, where it is impossible to establish hospitals such as are proposed by the measure. The provision in the Bill to give the necessary facilities in districts where there are no medical officers is one of the best in the whole measure. Then, again, the provision in connection with the training of nurses is a valuable one. Trained nurses naturally prefer to remain in large centres of population in many cases, and it frequently happens that in cases of sickness in country districts the want of a trained nurse is very much felt. The district which I have the honour to represent is comparatively near to the metropolitan area, yet the scrub portions of the district, where there are practically no roads, are difficult of access, and it frequently devolves upon one generous philanthropic member of the community—a woman—to give assistance, and practically to devote the whole of her time in cases of sickness. However, this will be obviated under the Bill. People do not like to impose upon the services of these generous women, however willing they may be to do all they can for their fellow women. I can assure the Minister that the provision of medical attention in the bush will lead to an added sense of security on the part of those who do more than the manhood of the State in connection with the settlement and development of our country. It will give a feeling of security to women who go with their husbands to distant parts of the State if these facilities are afforded to them in case of need, owing to the non-existence of which, in many instances, lives have been lost in the past. I have no doubt that the knowledge that medical assistance will be available under this measure will actually increase settlement, owing to the number of women who will be prepared to go out with their husbands to settle on the land.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I should think it will have that effect.

[*Mr. Taylor.*]

HON. J. G. APPEL: I have no doubt about it. From my own experience I know that a man often hesitates to take his wife with him when he selects land in places in which, while not remote from the metropolis, yet, owing to the lack of communication, there will not be the necessary comforts which from time to time our womanhood require. I compliment the Minister on the introduction of this measure, and I am sure that every member of the community will realise the blessing it will mean to the womanhood of the State who accompany their husbands and settle in country districts away from the medical and nursing conveniences which are available in the metropolis.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I would like some information from the Minister as to the position of hospitals already in existence. The Toowoomba people are very much interested as to the position they will occupy when this Bill is passed. We have a hospital at Toowoomba which already provides for maternity cases. It provides for the reception of women for confinement, nursing, and care during such time as they need it, and also the care of the infants. It also makes provision for nurses while they are qualifying. The committee of this hospital are anxious to know how they will be affected by the Bill. The institution is quite independent of the Toowoomba General Hospital, although it is adjacent to the General Hospital grounds. The committee would like to know if they will continue to get the Government subsidy. I take it that the Government will not run another hospital counter to the one already in existence. It would not be wise to run two hospitals undertaking the same work. The hospital I refer to has been subsidised in the past, and I would like to know what its position will be under this Bill.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS (*Pittsworth*): I congratulate the Home Secretary on the introduction of this measure. I understand that he is responsible for the introduction of the measure, and representatives of country districts welcome it. In the country districts the train services are not altogether satisfactory, and we are in need of some convenience of this kind. In many country districts we get a man who has the money to build a house suitable for a medical practitioner to live in. I sincerely hope the Minister will see his way clear to allow some subsidy to be paid on such a building. In the country people have to give a guarantee to get a doctor to live in the neighbourhood. In some cases we have to guarantee a doctor £400 a year for three years until he gets a proper start. Where such a guarantee exists at the present time the Minister might make provision for a Government subsidy. It may happen that a doctor will get £250, and the extra £50 would have to be made up by the local people. I think the Government should subsidise that amount. When this Bill is passed I shall be one of the first members to ask for a maternity hospital to be established in one of the outlying centres in my electorate. We know that satisfactory results have accrued from the establishment of the bush nursing homes under the Repatriation Committee scheme. Unfortunately, the amount available for bush nursing homes is limited. I would like to know if the bush nursing homes will be subsidised under this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Government do not intend to interfere with the subsidies already in existence. Any home which is now subsidised will not be interfered with.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: There is only a certain amount of money available for the bush nursing homes. They have done wonderfully good work, and they take in other than maternity cases. Take the Millmerran district, in my electorate. There is a train service there only on three days of the week, so it is proposed to establish a maternity home there and make arrangements for a resident medical officer. I trust that the Minister will realise that the bush nursing homes have done excellent work, and, if the money is made available, they will go into other country centres, to which they are not able to go at the present time for want of funds. However, we shall be able to discuss the measure better on the second reading. I feel confident that the Minister will do everything he can to meet the requirements of the country districts, and I congratulate him on the introduction of the Bill.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I desire to say a few words on this Bill, but before doing so, I would like to congratulate the Premier upon reading the Labour party's official organ.

The PREMIER: This is "The Producers' Review." (Laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Quite right—the official organ of the Labour party.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will confine his remarks to the motion.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I compliment the Home Secretary and the Minister in charge of the measure upon the introduction of the Bill. (Hear, hear!) I am sure we all very much regret that the Home Secretary is not here himself to introduce it. (Hear, hear!) The Bill aims at one of the objects which practically all the branches of the Farmers' Union in my electorate have favoured from their formation.

Mr. RIORDAN: Your party had sixty years to put it into operation.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I regret the delays that have taken place in many cases, not only on the part of this Government but on the part of other Governments; but I compliment the present Government upon having—when their own platform failed—taken over ours. (Laughter.) I know cases where the lives of mothers of large families have been lost because sufficient provision has not been made in country districts for maternity cases. I know of an instance in my own electorate, below the Range, where a mother of seven or eight children died before the necessary assistance could be obtained.

I would point out to the Minister that only a certain amount of money will be available for this work, and I ask the Minister to make the most of it. There may be cases in which, as the hon. member for Pittsworth says, the Government might, with advantage, subsidise private persons to put up the necessary buildings in small outside townships and find that that method is cheaper than erecting their own buildings. Where two or three capable women have invested the savings of a lifetime in a building for a maternity hospital, it is quite possible that it would pay the Government better to subsidise them to

carry on this work than to erect their own buildings; and I hope that, when buildings are erected, tenders will be called.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing that aspect of the question.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Quite true. I am only saying that I hope the Government will make the most of the money available. I understand that the cost of some of the buildings that are to be used for this purpose has been excessive, and I hope the Minister will put the amount available to the best use by calling tenders when new buildings are required.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

[11.30 a.m.]

FIRST READING.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*) presented the Bill, and moved—

"That the Bill be now read a first time."

Question put and passed.

The second reading of the Bill was made an order of the Day for to-morrow.

WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): This Bill is an amendment of the Workers' Homes Act of 1919. It does not involve any new principle, but contains a series of machinery clauses which will enable the department to carry on the work under the Act with greater facility than is provided at the present time. The chief provision is the giving of power to extend the term of repayments from twenty years to twenty-five years. The Bill also makes provision for monthly payments in advance; and various other small amendments are made to the machinery of the measure. I do not need to give any further details at this stage; I am prepared to explain in Committee any of the provisions. I beg to move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): It seems rather an extraordinary thing that, after passing the principal Act in 1919, no endeavour was made to put it into force. The Minister said that this Bill does not contain any important provisions. There is a distinctly important provision, from the point of view of local authorities, in that land for the time being vested in the Minister, which is not the subject of a contract of sale and is not let to a tenant, shall not be subject to rating. There has been a tremendous amount of trouble in connection with a similar provision in the Repatriation Act.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I will explain that fully in Committee.

Mr. MOORE: The Bill distinctly states that they are to be exempt from rating. When local authorities have to go to the

Mr. Moore.]

expense of making and maintaining roads, performing services, and fulfilling obligations to enable access to be obtained to estates which have been cut up for building purposes, and that land reverts to the Crown, it is a most extraordinary provision to exempt the Crown from liability for rates. Look at the position many councils are in as a result of the operations of the State Advances Corporation. Advances are made on a property, and if the property comes into the possession of the corporation, although they may let it for six or twelve months, rates are not leviable. The Lands Department are affected considerably. The corporation takes any money that is available.

Mr. GLEDSON: That will be only while the house is empty or is being pulled down.

Mr. MOORE: Or when the lands are not built upon. The expense of maintaining roads has to be continued, and I do not think that such lands should be exempt from rating.

Mr. GLEDSON: Other Crown lands in the same districts are not rated.

Mr. MOORE: This is a case of where the land has been purchased and subdivided for the building of homes; and, as often happens—especially in connection with the Repatriation Department—those lands have reverted to the department. They should not be exempt from rating.

There is not very much to be gained from the amendments in the rest of the Bill. Section 19 of the original Act, which it is proposed to amend by clause 7 of this Bill, appears to me to be perfectly satisfactory, and I cannot see that any advantage will be gained by the tenant or the purchaser from this amendment. It may assist the speculator, but not the genuine man.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: No one can get one of these homes except subject to the principal Act. The principal Act provides homes for those who are in receipt of incomes of less than £260 per annum, who own no other land or home. Consequently, how could a speculator get hold of a house under that provision?

Mr. MOORE: I will leave my comment until we get to the Committee stage. I can see no reason for the amendment, and I cannot see that it will be of any advantage.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): Too much land that is being used by the State is not subject to taxation. Once the land is put into use by the Crown, or the Crown is receiving any money from it, it should be subject to all the rates and taxes that are levied upon land owned by any private individual. If timber is being taken off land, the Crown is receiving money from that land. The roads are torn up, and the local authorities should be reimbursed for the expense to which they are put in keeping the roads in good repair. I want to bring one case under the notice of the Minister. I was visiting the North Coast district, and I saw a very large amount of timber being taken off some land—

Mr. GLEDSON: That has nothing to do with the Bill.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It has something to do with the rating of the land. The land should be subjected to rates and taxes, notwithstanding that it is owned by the Crown.

[Mr. Moore.]

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Under this Bill the land will be subject to local rates, the same as any other home. The land is not taxed prior to the erection of the home.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Why make arrangements for that? Once the land becomes alienated, why should the owners, whether it is the Crown or anyone else, be relieved of taxation? In the case I referred to, the Crown was receiving a large amount of money from timber and other things, and the farmers in the district were taxed to the amount of 4s. per acre per annum to keep the roads in order so that the timber could be carted for the Crown. Land should be subjected to taxation immediately any benefit is being derived from it.

Hon. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): I recognise that the principal comment in connection with the Bill must be made upon the various clauses during Committee; and I have no doubt that we shall receive the information we desire when we get into Committee to enable us to deal with the measure in the way it should be dealt with. I believe I am voicing the opinions of hon. members on this side when I say that we believe that anything which will facilitate the securing of homes by workers will always receive the fullest support from members on this side. I am an earnest believer in workers as well as other people obtaining their own homes. I feel that it is very much better from the standpoint of family life that individuals should have their own homes, and not be subjected to possible inconvenience as a result of the sale or disposal of the houses which they are renting. There is certain information that we should obtain at this juncture. The hon. member for Drayton was under the impression that this Bill is intended to amend the Workers' Dwellings Act.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. member was mistaken, as usual.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: He is a poor man who does not make mistakes. Any man who tries to do anything is bound to make some mistakes.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: But we should endeavour to avoid making the same mistake twice.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Even when we try to do that, we sometimes fall in.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: "To err is human."

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The Act passed in 1919 has not been made operative, and that seems to be a most extraordinary thing. I have taken a cursory glance through that Act, which provides for perpetual leaseholds in addition to freeholds, but nothing has yet been done under this Act. Surely we cannot be very enthusiastic about this Bill when that has been the experience of the Government with the Act already passed!

At 11.45 a.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Kirwan, *Brisbane*) relieved the Speaker in the chair.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The cost of material has been too high.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: This Government are full of excuses. I know that in one Financial Statement it was stated that the workers' dwellings had been held up to some extent by reason of the cost of building. Here we have an Act passed in 1919 which was supposed to be in the interests of the

workers, and it has not been operative. Does that not show the amount of sympathy felt by the Government in connection with the matter? The Act was passed three years ago, and their excuse now is that building has been too dear.

Mr. GLEDSON: This Bill does not apply to workers' dwellings.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Is that not a most serious reflection upon the Government? Here we have a Government who are supposed to have bowels of compassion towards the workers. They say they are going to help the workers; yet they have not made any use of the Act they passed in 1919, and the Minister's excuse is that building was too dear.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: That is one reason.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Government now say they want to amend that Act before it can be put into operation. I do not know what the men outside will say; but we inside say that this is one of the Bills that the Government are introducing which they say is in the interests of the workers, but which is only fireworks. The same can be said of the Act passed in 1919. The Government are introducing this Bill just on the eve of their political death.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. gentleman would like to believe that. He keeps on saying it so often that he will come to believe it later on.

HON. W. H. BARNES: If the Minister wants to know my conviction, I do believe it, whether it is because it is said so often or not.

Mr. GLEDSON: The hon. gentleman had a big disappointment in 1915. He told everybody he was going to be returned with increased numbers.

HON. W. H. BARNES: How could I tell everybody?

Mr. GLEDSON: You told everybody you spoke to.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Here is one of those senseless interjectors. If he were not a member of Parliament, I would say that he was a brainless man; but it would not do for me to say that, because it would be unparliamentary. Here is an interjector who assumes that I have seen everybody. Here is an Act passed three years ago making provision for that wonderful principle of leasehold, and it has never been put into operation! The principle of leasehold is a baby which the party opposite have nursed, and they say, "Our baby leasehold must be hustled. We must do something excellent so that, when the New Jerusalem comes, we can say, 'Everything is in perfect order, and everything is in keeping with the halcyon days that are so near at hand.'"

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*): I hope that this Bill will be put into operation at a very early date. The hon. member for Bulimba was a bit anxious about an Act passed in 1919, and, when told by the Minister that it was not put into operation because of the high cost of building material, he ridiculed the idea. Members of the Opposition are largely responsible for the fact that that Act has not been put into operation. Hon. members know that they sent a delegation to London.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Is that delegation not dead yet?

Mr. MAXWELL: Have you not finished with that yet?

Mr. RIORDAN: I will not be finished with it for many years to come, because the people who are always prating about patriotism on that occasion did one of the most unpatriotic things in connection with this State that has ever been done in the history of any State or country. The hon. member for Bulimba talks about political fireworks and political death. He might know a lot about political fireworks and political death, but I know that this Government have been honest in all their actions. Their policy has always been in the front window, as they have not had any surplus money to store up their policy in the back stores, as hon. members opposite do in connection with certain measures. They put certain things in the back room and put their best wares in the front window in the hope of getting across to these benches.

I know the hon. member for Bulimba is not a prophet in regard to the amendment of the Workers' Homes Act any more than he is a prophet in regard to the elections. He prophesied that this Government would not carry over this month and that we would have an election in October. So far he has not shown that he is a prophet in that regard, and I am afraid he is a long way out.

HON. W. H. BARNES: October has not arrived yet.

Mr. RIORDAN: October is not very far away. However, we shall have an election in good time, and, when we do have an election, I am satisfied that we shall come back with a bigger following on this side than we have at present.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: You will want it. One is no good to you.

Mr. RIORDAN: When members get over here they are all pretty solid and they are all pretty honest, and our intentions in regard to this Bill are honest. The Government will remain in office by the will of the people on account of their action in putting on the statute-book a measure such as this, which will be for the benefit of the people, so that, instead of the people in a young country like this being huddled so close together that, as the Minister said on one occasion, they can hear one another changing their minds, they will have decent housing accommodation. It is time the Government took action to provide decent homes for the workers instead of leaving them at the mercy of the landlords, who batten on the working class in this State the same as they do in other parts of the world, and who are responsible for most of the suffering that exists amongst the workers to-day.

Mr. MAXWELL: What about the homes of the railway workers?

Mr. RIORDAN: The friends of the hon. gentleman were responsible for some of the pigsties that have been built by the Railway Department for the accommodation of the railway workers. I do not think the railway men are provided with decent homes, and the Commissioner should see to it that he gives these men better homes. Owing to the war, the cost of building has been excessive and money has been at the top price; but now we are getting back to normal times the Commissioner should see that the railway workers are decently housed. From what I have seen of the homes provided for the

Mr. Riordan.]

railway workers during my travels throughout Queensland, I do not think they are a credit to the Commissioner, and I hope that, when the Workers' Homes Act is put into operation, provision will be made to provide homes for the railway workers. I hope that the Bill will be put into operation at an early date, and that it will be extended to country districts such as Hughenden, Richmond, and Julia Creek, which are making great progress. Men who follow shearing in those districts leave their families in the towns; but, on account of the excessive cost of getting timber and iron out to those places, the worker is unable to erect a decent home. If the Government were to erect homes for these people, they would secure good tenants for all time. These people would be only too anxious to avail themselves of such homes. Hon. members who have travelled through Queensland must know the conditions under which the women have to live. They are compelled to live in galvanised iron homes in tropical Queensland, and it is a disgrace that they should be compelled to rear families under such conditions. Every assistance should be given to these people to build homes suitable for tropical climates, and I hope that the Bill will extend outside the more thickly populated centres, and that applications from country districts will receive immediate attention, so that homes will be made available for the workers in the country as well as for the workers in the cities.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): It is rather interesting to go back to 23rd September, 1919, when the Premier, who was then Secretary for Public Works, introduced the original Act, and I am going to quote a few of the reasons which he advanced at that time in favour of the introduction of the measure. To-day we are considering an amendment of "an Act to provide for the Erection of Workers' Homes," and find that not one single thing has been done in the direction of providing homes. On that occasion the hon. gentleman said—

"This Bill, no doubt, will receive the approval of all hon. members, as usual. (Opposition laughter.) The necessity for the Bill exists in the fact that at present in the State there is a great scarcity of houses, a scarcity which operates very harshly on workers. (Hear hear!) In consequence of the scarcity, rents are high and housing conditions are unsatisfactory. The Interstate Commission, appointed particularly by the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of making an investigation into the question of housing in the various States, in its report, which I have no doubt is available to all hon. members, indicates that there is a very serious shortage of dwellings, especially in the Eastern States. As a consequence of this shortage, there is a serious overcrowding in the cities, especially in the cities of the three Eastern States, and this has led to bad sanitation in the principal towns. It has led to high rents and, to some extent, to the destruction of home life, and altogether results in evil conditions with regard to the housing of population. It will have been noticed that the workers' dwelling scheme which has been in operation for some years now does not sufficiently cope with the problem. The workers' dwelling scheme, under the pre-

[*Mr. Riordan.*

sent conditions, requires the proposed borrower to deposit 25 per cent."

The scheme outlined in the original Act is certainly more liberal in that direction, although, of course, it only provides for perpetual lease. The terms laid down were that the individual who purchased one of these homes had to deposit 5 per cent. of the probable cost. That was the cash deposit required, and that was really the only security held at the time the dwelling came into the possession of the worker. Further on the hon. gentleman said—

"It is my opinion, after carefully considering the matter, that the rents chargeable against the borrowers under this scheme will not be higher on an average than the rents paid now by workers for houses giving similar accommodation—that is, houses of the same number of rooms—but the accommodation will be superior under this scheme. The rents will not be higher than the rents now paid by workers for a dwelling of similar size, but the advantage the worker will get will be that the weekly payments that he makes to the Government will make the dwelling his own within twenty years."

The Government have not built any dwellings at all, and yet they are now asking us to extend the time to twenty-five years. When the original measure was introduced with such a great flourish of trumpets, the Minister said that it was going to be of great benefit to the workers. Various settlements were to be made in which a great number of houses were to be built, and town-planning principles with regard to sanitation, and so on, carried into effect. Quite a lot of things were provided for in that measure, which was passed three years ago, but not one of them has been carried out, and the Government now bring in this measure to amend what has been a useless Act.

Mr. RIORDAN: Let us look ahead. Do not keep looking back.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Minister, when introducing the Bill in 1919, said that there was an immediate want of homes. He said there was overcrowding and bad sanitation, and that a lot of things wanted to be remedied, all of which were proposed to be dealt with by the Bill. With the experience we have had, what other conclusion can we come to but that that Bill was simply humbug and claptrap, and was never intended to be operative, and also that this Bill is not intended to be operative, but is simply put out as a bit of window dressing in order to delude the workers still further. There are probably some commendable features with regard to compulsory insurance, and so on, in the principal Act; but, notwithstanding the statement of the Minister that the Government were going to erect homes for the workers, they have not done a single thing in that direction, and when this Bill goes through, as no doubt it will, they probably do not intend to do anything more in the matter.

Mr. FERRICKS (*South Brisbane*): It is quite true that, when the then Secretary for Public Works made his speech three years ago on the passage of the principal Act, there was a shortage of houses, as stated by the leader of the Nationalist party, and that shortage has been accentuated since. But at the time the Minister of the day made

that speech secret arrangements were being made to send a delegation to the other side of the world to prevent money coming to Queensland, which prevented the Government from carrying out the provisions of the Act.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: That is not correct.

Mr. FERRICKS: So far as I am concerned, I am going to put the responsibility on hon. members opposite, who were then responsible for depriving the people of Queensland of the necessary funds for workers' homes. Notwithstanding the attitude of the hon. member for Bulimba towards the Bill, it contains a valuable provision, and one which I endeavoured to get inserted in the Workers' Dwellings Act of 1911, when the hon. member for Bulimba was a member of the Cabinet. It is provided in this Bill that a person who builds a house may, when the necessity arises, add to or increase the accommodation of the building. The necessity for such a provision in the Workers' Dwellings Act of 1911 was brought under my notice by the knowledge that young people starting in life very often proceed on modest lines, and erect a house sufficient for their accommodation, with commodious rooms and wide verandas capable of having additions made to them when family responsibilities and conditions generally require them to be made. When the Act of 1911 was going through the Chamber I moved an amendment practically on the same lines as clause 2 of this Bill. The then Premier, the late Hon. W. Kidston, after the amendment was rejected by the party opposite, came over to me and asked me to let him have a look at the amendment. When he had further considered it, he said he thought there was something in it. It appealed to him, and he promised me, without any suggestion on my part, that he would get the amendment inserted in the Bill by the Upper House, but I presume that vested interests in that day were not in sympathy with people building their own homes with Government assistance, and desired that they should be built through the operation of the building societies, which charged very high rates of interest; so nothing further was heard of the proposal. I am pleased that this provision is contained in the Bill, and it is one which, in my opinion, will be largely availed of. Not only may a person who builds a house under the operations of the Act subsequently enlarge it, but, if he acquires land on which there is already a building erected, he may utilise that building as the basis of the alterations proposed to be made under the provisions of the Bill. Under previous Acts that could not be done—I doubt whether the material of an existing house could be used. This amendment is a vast improvement, and one which will be of great assistance to those who are contemplating the establishment of a home. I agree that there has been a delay on the part of the Government—mainly for the reason I have stated. Judging from the light of after events, perhaps that delay has not been altogether without benefit to those who will become owners of houses under this Bill, for this reason: during the past two or three years the profiteer has been at large, and those people who have taken advantage of the war service homes legislation have found to their cost that the estimates have

been grossly exceeded, and that the materials put into the houses erected have been of a very inferior quality, and that the work generally has been slumped. The cost has amounted in some cases to hundreds of pounds over the estimate.

Mr. GLEDSON: A house only worth £600 has cost £900.

Mr. FERRICKS: Although the delay has been very irritating to those who are in search of houses, an ultimate benefit will accrue.

Owing to the house shortage the demand for house accommodation is not diminished; in fact, it has been accentuated. The introduction of this Bill will help to meet that demand and remove as far as possible any difficulty in the way of those who wish to acquire a home for themselves. I know it is not possible for all people to acquire homes. No matter how well intentioned a man may be, he has to shift in the course of his occupation to different parts of the State, and he does not remain sufficiently long in one place to make it worth his while permanently to establish a home. Such a man and his family are unable to take advantage of provisions of this kind. But that is no reason why we should not make provision for other people. I feel sure that this legislation will be taken advantage of. Now that the Government have overcome the harm done by the conspirators representing that section of the community which supports the Opposition, and now that the Government are able to proceed with their programme in spite of the delegation and its infamous work, this Bill will be put into operation at no distant date. I am very pleased to welcome it whole-heartedly, as I realise that it is a measure that will be of great benefit to the people.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): Any Bill that will have a tendency to enable a working man to own his own home is going to be of advantage and will do real good. I think that every encouragement should be given to the workers of this State to help them to own their homes. I shall be perfectly honest when I say that, if encouragement is given to the workers to own their homes, then the Government are doomed. I realise that when the workers own their homes they will not support a Government who lend themselves to such tactics as the present Government have done this session, and will wipe them clean off the Treasury benches. I feel this morning that my time is absolutely wasted as the representative of an important metropolitan constituency. I enter my emphatic protest against the attitude of the Government in forcing legislation through the House without giving us an opportunity of studying it.

Mr. BULCOCK: Did you see that "Billy" Hughes "gagged" the Labour party in the Federal House last night?

Mr. MAXWELL: I am not responsible for what Mr. Hughes does. I am speaking of the conduct of the Queensland Government, and I say unhesitatingly that the action of the Government, who pose as the champions of the liberty of the subject and the champions of free speech, in presenting a bundle of important Bills to be rushed quickly through this Chamber is a disgrace to any so-called democratic community. They will be responsible

Mr. Maxwell.]

to the people for their actions, particularly for bludgeoning through the important measure which was bludgeoned through last night.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member will discuss the Bill now before the House.

Mr. MAXWELL: I intend to do so; but I want to show the people outside, who are responsible for putting us here, that we are not given an opportunity to study these Bills. I have to talk to the people outside because there is no use talking to hon. gentlemen opposite, as they are not prepared to listen to any suggestions which are made from this side.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: We always listen to reasonable suggestions.

Mr. MAXWELL: They listen to them, but they always go over and "word" Mr. Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman will have to withdraw that.

Mr. MAXWELL: If it is unparliamentary, I withdraw it. When the hon. member for Burke was speaking, I asked him about the class of homes that were supplied to the railway workers, because I considered that the railway workers should be given homes similar to those provided under this Bill. The hon. member for Burke said that the Commissioner for Railways was responsible for the habitations that the railway workers lived in. The Commissioner is not responsible at all. It is a matter that rests entirely with the Government.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The Commissioner for Railways has nothing to do with this Bill.

Mr. MAXWELL: I am answering a statement which the hon. member for Burke was allowed to make. I am quite satisfied that the Commissioner for Railways would recommend different homes for the railway workers if he thought the Government would carry out his recommendation. Anything that will have a tendency to uplift the people and give them good conditions will have the support and assistance of hon. members on this side. I again enter my protest against the attitude of the Government in preventing the honest discussion of measures brought forward in this House.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): I have listened with a good deal of interest to the observations of hon. members opposite as to what may take place in connection with this Bill. I am satisfied that their prophecies, like a great many of the prophecies they have made in the past, are going to be wrong. Someone said that it was never wise to prophesy until after the event, and it would be better for the Opposition to prophesy what is likely to take place after the Bill is put in operation. The hon. member for Bulimba stated that members on this side were lacking in the bowels of compassion. He inferred that members on this side were entirely unconcerned about the well-being of the working man, while members opposite were overflowing with compassion for the worker. If the hon. member had been present at the last meeting of the Coorparoo Shire Council, he would have had an opportunity of exercising the bowels of compassion he talks about. One ratepayer in the Coorparoo shire, who is a returned soldier, found himself in difficult financial circumstances and

unable to pay his rates. He wrote asking the council to give him work for a week or a fortnight to enable him to pay his rates, but the request was point blank refused on the ground that it would establish a precedent, and that, if they gave work to one ratepayer, they would have to give it to others. The hon. member for Logan was in the chair, and he had an opportunity of showing his compassion for that man and of helping him in difficult circumstances.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Are you sure that I was present?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I said that, had you been present, you could have exercised your bowels of compassion.

Mr. GLEDSON: And you could have induced the hon. member for Logan to do the same.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I think that good and sufficient reasons have been given why this legislation has not been put into operation up to the present time. If there was no other reason, the fact that building material was such a prohibitive price would be sufficient for not putting it into operation. If workers had built cottages under the exorbitant rates which existed then, they would have had to pay interest on that increased cost for twenty years, and they would also have had to pay the increased cost as well. I am quite satisfied that the Government are going on with this proposition, and will proceed with the erection of workers' homes without delay. I know a number of places where the people are waiting for homes, and they expect to be able to get them under this Bill. Even if the land is under perpetual lease, the house stands just as well upon it, and the people live just as comfortably in the house; and certainly they have a much better opportunity of getting a home than if they have to pay £100 for a freehold under the Workers' Dwellings Act. When the Workers' Dwellings Act was going through the House it was felt that there were some people in the community who were deserving of help, but whose low wages and intermittent work would make it impossible for them to get a home under that measure, and events have proved the truth of that belief. I remember that some time after that Act had been passed I tried to ascertain the classes of individual who had been able to obtain dwellings under it by asking questions as to how many professional men, how many artisans, and how many labourers, amongst others, had obtained advances. I wanted to get at the numbers of ordinary working men—who were the most in need of help, and, I suppose, just as deserving as any other section of the community, if not more deserving—who had obtained assistance under the Act; but the then Secretary for Public Works, the hon. member for Bulimba, point-blank refused to answer me. The information would have a direct bearing on this measure. In many instances, particularly when the Workers' Dwellings Act first came into operation, some very expensive dwellings were erected, but those persons who want homes under the Workers' Homes Act are content to take less splendid dwellings. I know that in some instances in the North—where, in fact, everybody is satisfied with a much cheaper home—that is particularly the case. I know that on Charters Towers—where for the last thirty years there has been practically no freehold—the people are entirely unconcerned whether land is freehold

[*Mr. Maxwell.*]

or leasehold—in fact, leasehold is much better for them—the people do not demand double walls or so much decoration as in Southern Queensland, and comfortable homes have been put up for £150 to £200.

Mr. J. JONES: Under the old Tory Government.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: The Government had no more to do with the prices of those houses than they have to do with the eclipse of the sun which will take place this afternoon.

Mr. J. JONES: What about the royalty on timber?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: On Charters Towers perpetual leasehold is an advantage, and almost every one owns his home, because he can get half an acre of land for 5s. a year; and that fact in itself was due, not to the old Tory Government, but to the Labour party, because an agitation took place which practically blocked the selling of any private land, in the interests of the mining community as well as of the people who lived there. One of the reasons why the houses on Charters Towers do not need to be elaborate is, perhaps, that they are not built so much to keep the breeze out as to let the breeze in. Most of them are not ceiled and have single walls, so that not so much material or work is required.

It cannot be denied that houses are scarce in some cases. The hon. member for Toowong has brought up the question of railway workers' homes. I want to say that never in the history of the State were so many railway workers so well housed as they are to-day. The Commissioner for Railways to-day will put up a house for any permanent lengthman if he is agreeable to pay 5 per cent. on the capital cost; and I know numbers of them who have obtained homes under those conditions, and, from inquiries which I have made from time to time, I am satisfied that no railway worker who wants a house will get it under better or cheaper conditions, because the 5 per cent. interest is simply like rent. There is no question that the railway workers have been infinitely better treated under this Government than under previous Governments. I know that some workers are living in houses not much better than hon. members have mentioned, because they cannot afford to build a house, and, rather than pay the rents which are charged, they make shift with anything. Taken all in all, they are as comfortable as it is possible to make them; but I know of some persons who live in really discreditable dwellings in a fairly populous town for the simple reason that a four-roomed house, with 8 feet walls, built of iron, with one veranda, cannot be rented for less than £1 or £1 2s. 6d. a week. If a man has to pay that rent out of his wages—for small places, 24 feet by 24 feet, or sometimes 24 feet by 21 feet, with the two rooms at the back built in skillion fashion—it is no wonder that the people are looking to the Government to supply workers' homes. They are quite willing to undertake the obligation, which will be less under this Bill than under the Workers' Dwellings Act, and this measure will make it possible for quite a number of them to get homes who would have been quite unable to do so under that Act. It is well-known that a man must have land or money to the extent of £100 if he is going to get a home worthy of the name under the Workers' Dwellings Act;

but in quite a number of the cases in the North and West the land will not have to be bought at all, or, if it has to be bought, it will be very cheap. The Government will be able to put up comfortable standardised dwellings, and I am quite satisfied that many of the owners will not be twenty years in paying them off. When they get into them and feel that they are their own, they will clear them of debt in a few years. I welcome the Bill, because I know that it is needed, and it will not be long, once it is passed, before it is put into operation, and many people will have the opportunity of getting more comfortable dwellings than they have at the present time.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): One of the reasons advanced by the Government for the fact that the Workers' Homes Act of 1919 has not been put into operation—

Mr. COLLINS: Is the delegation.

Mr. KERR: No. The reason advanced is that the cost of material has been too high, but that will not hold water, because, in 1916-17, 632 houses were built under the Workers' Dwellings Act, which was passed by the previous Administration; in 1917-18, 345 houses; in 1918-19, 252; in 1919-20, 344; in 1920-21, 500; and in 1921-22, 590. Hon. members cannot say that my figures are wrong, as I have taken them from the report of the Board. If the reason advanced for not putting the Workers' Homes Act into operation holds water, the Government have been building homes for people under the Workers' Dwellings Act and charging them enormous prices. I would not suggest that that is so. The applications were made and considered on their merits, and perhaps the prices never entered into the consideration.

Then hon. members opposite say that the cause that the Act was not put into operation was the delegation. On the other hand, they make the statement that no appropriation was made by Parliament. If no appropriation was made by Parliament, where does the delegation come into the question?

Mr. GLEDSON: Because we did not have the money to appropriate.

Mr. KERR: There, again, the hon. member is not stating a fact, but is merely seeking to gull the people and blame those who are not concerned. If the hon. member will turn up the Estimates for 1919-20, he will find that £25,000 was appropriated in connection with the Workers' Homes

[12.30 p.m.] Act. Here we have three or four

Government members saying that no appropriation was made, and that that was the reason why the scheme was not carried out. The real reason was that the scheme was not acceptable to the people. No person who is earning sufficient to enable him to get a home is going to put that home on leasehold land. People in this free country want freehold, not only for their homes, but in connection with their agricultural operations. I am going to show why the Government were not able to bring this Act into operation. Section 4 of the Workers' Homes Act states—

"There is hereby created a Fund to be called the 'Workers' Homes Fund,'"

"Such Fund shall be administered by the Minister.

"All moneys appropriated by Parliament for the purposes of this Act, and all purchase money, interest, rents, and

Mr. Kerr.]

penalties, and all other moneys whatsoever received or raised by the Minister under this Act, shall be paid into the Fund."

There is provision for certain money to be appropriated by Parliament; and, as I have pointed out, £25,000 was appropriated. The raising of that money was possible only by the issue of debentures, on which the market rate would be possibly $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Under the then existing law the worker would have to pay on the capital invested in his home, say, 5 per cent. Is it not conceivable that he will be called upon to pay $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., which is equal to the interest on the loan money raised? Prior to this Act coming into force, we received money at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and it appeared likely that we would receive it at that rate indefinitely. The Government, however, gave away the Savings Bank. Hon. members opposite may say that we are receiving 75 per cent. of the excess of deposits over withdrawals; but they overlook the fact that, instead of getting that money at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest, we have to pay 1 per cent. more. That means that the money which went into the erection of workers' dwellings until this bungling Government came along cost only $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; while to-day the same money, coming from the same source, is costing $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Mr. GLEDSON: You are a great percentage worker!

Mr. KERR: That is common knowledge. It is not the high cost of materials that is responsible for the fact that there are 192 dwellings outstanding. This Bill is only camouflage; it is window-dressing; when it is examined, it is found that there is nothing in it. The person who picks up the daily papers will see that the present Administration have introduced a Workers' Homes Bill with the contention that they are doing something more for the workers. If that person reads the Bill, he will see that there is no departure from the principles embodied in legislation of previous Administrations.

I am going to take this opportunity of saying a few things which I was debarred from saying last night. After having spoken for a few minutes on a very important Bill, the "gag" was applied. Six Bills were handed to hon. members in the morning, and disposed of in a couple of hours. I can see that you are going to pull me up, Mr. Kirwan, and I will not proceed any further in that direction. (Laughter.) Owing to the bungling of the Government in regard to the finances of the Savings Bank and their amendment of decent Acts which were in existence, the worker to-day is suffering a disability; he has not been given one advantage in regard to the building of homes.

A great deal has been said in regard to the War Service Homes. In my opinion, a worker who is in a decent job, earning the basic wage or more, should not be forced to put down 5 per cent. on the capital value of a house. There is no such provision in the War Service Homes Act. When this Queensland Act was first brought in, the workers had a few pounds saved; but, owing to the conditions created by this Government, they are unable now to put down this deposit. The result is that they are not getting the homes they desire. If hon. members opposite were sincere in their desire to circumvent the operations of rack-renting landlords, they would remove the provision requiring that deposit. If they carried out

[Mr. Kerr.

the work by contract instead of by day-labour, the security provided by the home would be sufficient to cover the cost. The Government have taken back several hundred houses and have sold them at a profit in a number of instances. It is not too late for the Minister to bring in a clause to make the conditions coincide with those in connection with the War Service Homes in regard to the deposit. I would support a Bill that would give a man a home and would allow him to pay it off by instalments as rent. I am not in favour of the standardisation of houses. There should be a good deal of latitude given in that direction. A mistake was made with regard to War Service Homes when large areas of land were purchased and houses were constructed under the group system. If you live in a suburb, you like it to be the best. You do not like to see too much sameness. You like to see different gardens and different styles of houses. When you see houses all of the same type, the first thing that you want to do is to get out of that locality. It was impossible to carry on town planning under War Service Homes conditions. I would advise the Government not to adopt a system of standardisation of houses, and not to go in for the group system of building, because that system has not proved cheaper than any other system. I do not like to see half a dozen houses of the same style in one street. My argument is that a worker should have full control over the plans of his proposed home, so long as he keeps within the maximum cost.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The worker will have his choice.

Mr. KERR: The policy to-day is standardisation for cheapness, and I do not think it should be tolerated. The Bill provides that any money paid in addition to the ordinary monthly rental shall be applied towards the reduction of the principal sum.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: That is a sound proposition.

Mr. KERR: That is so, but I want a provision inserted when we are in Committee to allow of the establishment of a sinking fund, so that when the owner of the home gets into arrears with his rent, that fund can be drawn upon to meet his liability. Many people, instead of placing their money in savings banks, are placing it in war service homes, for which they receive interest. I know of a number of cases where people were in arrears with their rents and they were permitted to apply the money that they had invested, and which was really a sinking fund, to pay their arrears. I think the Minister should accept an amendment to enable that to be done in this case.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): Hon. members opposite have very short memories in connection with this business. The percentage expert, the hon. member for Enoggera, starts to work up a percentage business in connection with Savings Bank transactions. He stated that the Government at one time had a savings bank business, and received money from the people for which they paid $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and that they used that money for the purposes of building homes under the Workers' Dwellings Act. This expert thinks that all the people had to do was to come along with their deposits and put them into another worker's hands and say, "Here is my money at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent." He

forgot all about the fact that there had to be a banking establishment to receive that money.

Mr. KERR: The hon. member is talking nonsense.

Mr. GLEDSON: Here is our expert again. His own friends in the private banks pay 4 per cent. or 4½ per cent. for money, and they loan it out at 7 per cent., 8 per cent., and 9 per cent., and they require very good security.

Mr. KERR: Ask the Public Curator what he charges.

Mr. GLEDSON: The Public Curator pays 5 per cent. for the money he receives, and loans it out at 7 per cent. Our expert here says that you can pay 5 per cent. for the money that you receive, and you can loan it out at the same rate. How is a banking business going to be run—how are managers and clerks to be paid, if you are going to do that? When that hon. gentleman first came into this House he said that he was simple-minded.

Mr. KERR: The hon. member does not know too much about it.

Mr. GLEDSON: The hon. member for Enoggera does not know much about this business, either.

Mr. KERR: All your statements are wrong and twisted.

Mr. GLEDSON: He states that the Act passed in 1919 was not put into operation because the Government gave away the Savings Bank. We had in Queensland, as they have in other States, two concerns carrying on the business of banking. Both carried on the same business; both received money from the people for the purpose of investing in public works and other works; both paid a very big staff; and both paid high salaries to managers. An amalgamation has now taken place, and, according to the Governor of the Commonwealth Bank—Sir Denison Miller—it has effected a great saving in the expense of banking business. That means that the whole of the money to the credit of the depositors is secured to us—not at 3 per cent. or 4 per cent., as would be charged by the friends of hon. members opposite—but at 1 per cent. This expert, the hon. member for Enoggera, says that 1 per cent. should not be charged. Hon. members opposite have very short memories in connection with the Savings Bank business. Not many years ago some of the hon. members opposite went about the streets of Brisbane whispering, "You had better get your money out of the Government Savings Bank, because, if you do not, all your savings will be lost. The Government are bankrupt." They were seen going round about the different places, until there was a run on the Government Savings Bank. (Opposition dissent.)

Mr. KERR: You know that is not true.

Mr. GLEDSON: Those men now get up here and say that that is a reason why the Act passed in 1919 has not become operative.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member is making wild statements.

Mr. GLEDSON: Hon. members opposite say that they are out to see that everyone has an opportunity of building a home. They do not want people to have homes unless their friends build them and collect the rent. They get up, and with their

tongues in their cheeks, they say, "We would like every worker to own his home." Can we take them seriously? They live on rack-renting. The hon. member for Kennedy sometimes hurls a charge across this Chamber that we are rack-renters. They are the party of rack-renters. They live by rack-renting. We had another brilliant idea from this percentage expert. He said, "Why not adopt a similar system to that followed under the War Service Homes Act?"

Mr. KERR: I said to some of the provisions. Why not be honest?

Mr. GLEDSON: Again they have short memories. What is the system under the War Service Homes Act? To kick the workers out into the road. A disabled soldier was brought before the court by the War Service Homes Commissioner and thrown out of his home because he could not pay the purchase money.

Mr. KERR: Quote a case.

Mr. GLEDSON: You can pick up the papers and see cases every day where soldiers have been brought before the court and practically evicted because they could not pay their money.

Mr. J. JONES: What about the selectors who are being evicted by your Government?

Mr. GLEDSON: We are dealing with workers' homes at present. I hope this Government will never deprive any worker—a returned soldier or anyone else—of a home simply because he is unable to meet his payments for the time being, as was done under the War Service Homes Act, which the hon. member lauded to the skies.

Mr. KERR: Have they not done it?

Mr. GLEDSON: No. This amending Bill is necessary to make the Workers' Homes Act workable, and we can only make the Act operative when the Government can secure loan money. In spite of all that the friends of the Opposition have done, in spite of their attacks on the Government Savings Bank, in spite of their collecting £4,000 within a few minutes to send a delegation home, the Government have been able to get loan money, and they are now in a position to go on with the building of homes under the Workers' Homes Act.

The hon. member for Enoggera had another brilliant idea. He said, "Why not have something the same as they have under the Workers' Dwellings Act, and, if a man who is purchasing a home under the rent-purchase system is able to pay something over and above his monthly payments, instead of taking the amount off his principal, let it be put to the credit of a sinking fund?" If a worker pays during the year £20 more than he is required to pay, under this Bill that amount will be deducted from his principal, and his interest will naturally be less. But the hon. member's brilliant idea is to put that amount into a sinking fund in case the worker is in arrears at some time, when the money may be withdrawn from the sinking fund and used to pay his arrears. What a brilliant idea! Under this Bill that sum will be taken off his principal, which will mean that he will have less interest to pay; and, if he is unable to meet his payments at any time, the amount that he has overpaid will always be to his credit.

Mr. KERR: You toss him out of his home if he is behind in his payments.

Mr. Gledson.]

Mr. GLEDSON: While the present Government are in power they will never adopt the methods adopted by the Nationalists under the War Service Homes Act; and the workers will have to see that the Government are kept in power, because, if hon. members opposite are allowed to administer the Act, they may do what the hon. member suggests—throw the workers out of their homes if they are in arrears.

Mr. J. JONES: Like your Government evicted the selectors.

Mr. GLEDSON: The hon. member for Kennedy is now bringing up the question of forfeitures.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member is not going to discuss that question.

Mr. GLEDSON: The hon. member is bringing up the question of forfeitures in cases where the conditions have not been complied with; but that has nothing to do with this Bill, and when the proper time comes, the hon. member will get a satisfactory answer, and it will be shown that he is barking up the wrong tree.

As the hon. member for South Brisbane stated, this Bill provides that, after a home is built, the fund under the Workers' Homes Act can be drawn on to improve the home. That is a very good provision. The amendments included in this Bill would have been necessary after the homes had been built, and it is better to pass them now so that the workers' homes will be built under the best conditions.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*): I have read with interest the debate that took place in this Chamber when the Workers' Homes Bill was introduced in 1919, and it appears to me that the hon. member for Ipswich, in his usual manner, has been endeavouring to twist the statements of hon. members on this side, and has endeavoured to make it appear that hon. members on this side said something that they never said. The hon. member is particularly good at that kind of thing. I do not know whether he is the apologist for the Government, but I notice that he says a good deal more than Ministers. Probably he has not that vision which was described by the hon. member for Bowen. Perhaps after the eclipse of the sun he will get that vision.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member is not going to discuss the eclipse of the sun.

Mr. PETRIE: According to hon. members opposite, we on this side have no desire to uplift the workers and assist them to obtain homes for themselves. We are just as anxious as hon. members opposite to provide homes for the workers, as we know the difficulty there is in obtaining housing accommodation. Now that the Government have come forward with an amending Bill, I sincerely hope they will do something for the workers. They have made all sorts of excuses for their inaction in this regard. We have heard that old worn-out cry about the delegation and the war, and hon. members also referred to the high cost of material. Who was responsible to a great extent for the high cost of material? The Government established a State sawmill. Why could they not have sold the timber at a lower rate for these workers' homes? Instead of doing that, they

[*Mr. Gledson.*]

raised the royalties on timber to such an extent that the price was beyond the worker or of anyone else.

Mr. FOLEY: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. PETRIE: You do not like the truth. What I am stating is the truth. There can be no doubt that, because of the war and other causes, material has been very high in price, and it has not been possible for anybody to get a home at a reasonable cost. We have our Workers' Dwellings Act, which was passed by the previous Administration. That Act has been of great benefit to the workers. If a man has a little money saved, he would sooner secure a bit of freehold than get a perpetual lease from the Government.

At 2 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. PETRIE: I did not get up to speak with any intention of opposing the measure. Any legislation brought forward for the improvement of the condition of the workers, no matter under what Government it is brought in, will always have my support, if it is reasonable in its terms. There is no doubt that the principles contained in some of the measures introduced by the present Government are such as we can agree with, but we do not always agree with the method in which they are carried out. In common with other hon. members on this side, I wish to enter my protest against legislation being so hurriedly passed through the House. We ought to have more time allowed in which to consider the important matters which are brought before us. I refer particularly to the Unemployed Workers Insurance Bill, the second reading of which was put through last night under the "gag," several hon. members on this side not getting an opportunity of speaking on the measure. Not only under this Government, but also under past Governments, have measures been hurriedly rushed through the Chamber, and that undue haste has been the cause of a great deal of amending legislation. I hope that this Bill will pass its second reading, and that any necessary amendments will be made in Committee. I trust that, if any applications are made by workers for homes under this Bill, those homes will be erected without delay, and that when we meet next year we shall not then have the complaint made that, although the Bill has been passed, it has been allowed to remain inoperative.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: We will have homes in course of erection before the end of the year if the Bill passes. We will start simultaneously in various portions of the State.

Mr. PETRIE: I am glad to hear that. There is no doubt that the cost of material has been very high, and there are other reasons which have caused delay, but I think that the Government might have got over the high cost of material. They ought to be in a position to supply timber from their State sawmills for the building of these homes at a reasonable price. The high price of timber and other materials has been responsible for the delay in connection with the erection of houses.

Mr. MOORE: The Fair Rents Act, too.

Mr. PETRIE: I feel sure that hon. members on this side will be pleased to assist in

passing any legislation which will benefit the workers of Queensland, either directly or indirectly.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): During the course of the debate the hon. member for Queensland saw fit to bring my name into the discussion as chairman of the Coorparoo Shire Council. His remarks were directed against the attitude of the Coorparoo Shire Council for refusing an application made by a returned soldier for permission to work out his rates. I do not know what was the object of the hon. member.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: You ought to have been here during the early part of the debate and you would have heard what was said.

Mr. KING: I heard what you said.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: You did not hear what your colleague said.

Mr. KING: I could not connect the hon. member's remarks with the Bill before the House. Evidently some hon. members were making remarks which were not relevant to the Bill. At the same time, if a member on this side made a remark which was not relevant to the Bill, there is no necessity for a member on the Government side to perpetuate that sin. In reply to the remark of the hon. member, I would like to say that I do not think it would be advisable in the interests of the soldier himself to make any further explanation. So far as the soldiers of Coorparoo are concerned, my actions speak for themselves, and they can judge me according to my actions. This Bill proposes to amend the Workers' Homes Act of 1919. In my opinion, the Bill is absolutely unnecessary. I do not think there is any business in it, because the original Bill was passed in 1919, and there have been absolutely no operations in connection with it. I do not know if any applications have been received for workers' homes.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: There will be operations carried out under this measure before the end of the year.

Mr. KING: I heard the Minister say that in reply to the hon. member for Toombul, and I hope that assurance will be carried out. I see a lot of good in the Bill. I want to make myself perfectly plain now by saying that I intend to support the Bill, and I hope that it is going to have some beneficial results. I hope it will not be a Bill that is introduced merely for the purpose of catching votes.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: We have £50,000 on the Estimates for this work, and, so far as I am concerned, most of it will be spent.

Mr. KING: Up to the present it has simply been window-dressing. It is pure camouflage, and is probably an attempt to catch some of the country votes. We have had all sorts of legislation before us to placate the country voter, and probably this is a continuation of a well-devised scheme to try to catch a few more votes for the sinking ship.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The ship is not sinking.

Mr. KING: It is sinking pretty rapidly.

Mr. WARREN: It is leaking.

Mr. KING: It is very leaky.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Some of your party tried to scuttle the ship, but they were unsuccessful.

Mr. KING: The Bill is presumably brought in for the benefit of the workers. In the title it is called "The Workers' Homes Act." There is quite a lot of magic in those words "Workers' Homes." How the Government hope they will appeal to the unthinking workers! Hon. members opposite hope that those words "Workers' Homes" will have a magical result, and will secure to the Government many of those votes that they are longing for and which they think are highly necessary. However, they are not going to get them, because the workers are well aware of the present condition of affairs, and the state of affairs that they have passed through during the last seven years. Then, also, I suppose it was thought that it would add another to that long list of measures which are found in the index to the statutes under the heading of "Labour"—labour legislation, presumably, to improve the lot of the workers generally, but which is doing so little to bring about that beneficial result. One hon. member said that he hoped that the Bill was going to encourage the ownership of homes. I am afraid it is not. I do not care where you go—a man does not consider his home his own unless he has the title deeds of the freehold on which it is situated. He likes to think and feel and know that the deeds he holds are his title to the property, from which nobody can disturb him. He likes to feel, "This little bit of earth belongs to me, and nobody is going to move me from it."

Mr. WINSTANLEY: There is no such title.

Mr. KING: Subject only to the one condition that it may be taken away from him for public purposes, always, however, upon payment of adequate compensation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What about the Jimbour settlers, who had the opportunity of making their land freehold?

Mr. KING: They wanted freehold, but the conditions were too onerous. Of course, everybody likes to get freehold, but under this Bill people are not going to have the ownership of their homes which they would have under the freehold system. They are going to have a perpetual lease system, which does not assure a man of a home. It gives him a home for the time being; but, after all, it is only temporary.

Mr. BRENNAN: For ninety-nine years.

Mr. KING: It may be, but the possibilities are doubtful, because there may be such a reappraisal of rent, as in the case of the pastoral leases, as will make him only too glad to get out of it. I say that there is no encouragement under this Bill to acquire homes. It is brought in mostly for the purpose of curing defects in the principal Act, which are the result of hasty and ill-digested legislation. If that Act had been properly considered and digested in the first place, it would not have been necessary to waste the time of the House and of the country now in discussing a Bill of this sort. Unfortunately, such legislation has been rushed through, and now, when we want to discuss matters of vital interest to the country, we are simply "gagged." I, in common with others, want to protest against being refused the right to air my views on any subject on which I wish to speak. I had prepared quite a decent speech on the Bill that went through last night, but, unfortunately, I was stopped, like many other hon. members, and the country is a

Mr. King.]

the poorer for the loss of my words of wisdom.

Mr. KIRWAN: I had a speech ready, but I missed the 'bus.

Mr. KING: The hon. member does not often miss the 'bus. This Bill is introduced mostly for the purpose of curing defects in the principal Act, but also for the purpose of bettering it. Under the Act the Minister has power to cause a plan of land to be prepared showing roads, etc., in the case of subdivision of land, and to erect homes. Do you not think it would have been wise—if the Act had been properly considered, it would have been inserted—to give the power which is sought now—that is, to alter, enlarge, or improve the same? The Act was passed giving the power to erect homes, but there was no power in relation to altering, enlarging, or improving them.

Another defect in the Act was that it did not include a provision prohibiting the purchaser from mortgaging. There is a prohibition against his transferring, letting, or abandoning the property, but he could mortgage without the consent of the Minister. That is very undesirable. Another defect was that there was no liability on the purchaser to keep his home in good tenable repair. In every well-drafted contract of sale or agreement for lease that provision is inserted, and it should be inserted in a well-drafted Act of Parliament. That is one of the results of rushing through legislation. We now have to waste the time of the country on a Bill which proposes to include those essentials in the Act.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Do you know that that Bill was badly mutilated by the Legislative Council?

Mr. KING: That provision was not in the Bill when it left this House to go to the Legislative Council. Any action which the Legislative Council might have taken did not excuse this House from doing its duty and seeing that the Bill left it in a decent form.

Another clause which should have been included in the Act, and which is always included in every well-drafted contract of sale or agreement for lease, is what is known as the attornment clause. The Bill provides that attornment should be made a covenant in the agreement. Why it was omitted from the Act I do not know. The Government must see that they are placed in the same position as a landlord. This attornment clause is necessary to create the relationship of landlord and tenant as between the Crown and the purchaser. Otherwise the Crown has not the right to exercise the duties of a landlord. If a tenant makes default, and it is necessary to take proceedings, such as distraint for rent or ejectment under the Summary Ejectment Act, the Crown at present cannot take those proceedings. This Bill seeks to remedy that very important defect and supply that omission.

Those are the chief defects. I repeat that this Bill would not have been necessary had proper time been given to the consideration of the Act when it was before the House.

One of the improvements in the Bill—and it is a good one, and to the advantage of the purchaser—is in connection with the payment of rent. Under the Act rent is to be paid weekly, with quarterly "rests" for interest—that is, the interest is made up at

[Mr. King,

the end of every quarter. The Bill proposes that rent shall be accepted monthly in advance and the interest is to be calculated after every monthly payment.

There is a provision to extend the time for payment from twenty to twenty-five years, which I think is a wise provision. Subsection (3) of section 9 of the principal Act makes provision that, where more than one person applies for the purchase of the same house, preference may be given to the applicant who has the lesser income or the largest family. This Bill proposes to alter that, and leave the matter practically at the discretion of the Minister. I suppose the Minister will take into consideration those factors which induced the inclusion of the provision in the original Act.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: All those things will be taken into consideration.

Mr. KING: I see no reason why we should depart from that. The man who has the lowest income should be considered, and the man who has the largest family should be considered. I have outlined the essentials that the Bill should contain, and I hope the Minister will give the matter earnest consideration. The last clause in the Bill provides that land for the time being vested in the Minister, which is not the subject of a contract of sale and is not let to a tenant, shall not be deemed to be rateable land. That means that Crown land is not rateable, and that land become non-rateable as soon as it is acquired. We have here further exemption from the payment of rates, and the local authorities are going to suffer. It is very regrettable that there are so many exemptions from the payment of local authority rates. The local authorities have to carry out certain functions, and their functions and duties are being continually increased while their means of obtaining revenue are being continually reduced. This is one means for reducing their revenues, and it is a wrong principle. I would like to see all exemptions from payment of rates knocked on the head, and all land made rateable. I have no opposition to the Bill, but I have indicated where it may be materially improved, and I hope the Minister will accept those suggestions when we are in Committee.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Vanango*): In discussing this Bill, one might analyse some of the speeches made by hon. members opposite. The Minister stated that the reason why the principal Act has not been taken advantage of by the workers has been largely because of the increase in the price of material.

Mr. GLEDSON: And the delegation that stopped our supply of loan money.

Mr. EDWARDS: The Minister knows as well as I do that the increase in the royalty on timber has practically stopped any worker, unless he is in a very good financial position, from building his own home. It has actually frightened the workers of this State from going on with the building of their homes as they did in days gone by. The hon. gentleman knows that the enormous increase in royalties caused an increase of 150 per cent. in the cost of workers' homes as compared with the cost a few years ago. The hon. member for Ipswich stated that the reason why the Government could not put the Workers' Homes Act in operation was largely because of the delegation, while the Minister stated that the reason it was not taken

advantage of by the workers was because material was too expensive. Anyone can see that these two arguments are not consistent. There is one thing which has had a great bearing on the matter that the Minister neglected to mention, and that is the section which provides that a purchaser has to take out a life insurance policy with the State Government Insurance Office. That is another burden on the man who desires to build a home for himself.

Mr. GLEDSON: You know that is not correct. They are not compelled to take out life insurance policies.

Mr. EDWARDS: I am not going to take any advice from that preacher of class hatred. The advice of a man who preaches class hatred is no good to anyone.

Mr. GLEDSON: You have no right to make misstatements.

Mr. EDWARDS: If I were to make the false statements that the hon. member makes, I would be afraid to face the House. I say without hesitation that the section providing for a leasehold tenure has also had a great deal to do with the workers not taking advantage of the Act. Every worker who wishes to acquire a home desires a bit of freehold that he can one day call his own, and I am convinced that hon. members opposite would rather have a home on a bit of freehold than on a leasehold.

Mr. W. COOPER: You are wrong.

Mr. EDWARDS: I am convinced that the hon. member for Rosewood would not take up leasehold country. I am satisfied that his farm is freehold, or he can make it freehold if he likes. The object of every man in acquiring a home is to have a home that he can one day call his own. The Minister also stated that advantage had not been taken of the principal Act because it was badly mutilated in the Upper House. I understand that that is absolutely incorrect, as the only amendment inserted in the 1919 Bill in the Upper House was that land should not be acquired from public parks. That is another instance of misrepresentation by hon. members on the other side of the House. The blame is put on to anybody so long as the Labour party do not have to carry it. I am convinced that this amending Bill is introduced as another sop to the workers. The Act which was passed in 1919 has not been of any advantage to the workers, as nothing has been done under it, and this Bill is brought in to amend the Act. It is a great pity that we cannot get down to solid ground and really assist the worker who is in need of assistance. The only way to do that is, in the first place, to create confidence in the people that the State is going to be carried on on a sound basis. The Government talk about the hundreds of thousands of pounds which have been taken by private owners out of the timber industry. They themselves take a large amount by way of royalty out of the industry, and then tell the workers that they are out to give them cheap homes. The thing is ridiculous.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Many of the men in your electorate have made fortunes out of timber, after first getting the land at half a crown an acre.

Mr. EDWARDS: That has happened, and it should be stopped; but what do the Government do? When they charge royalties are they doing any better? They have taken hundreds of thousands of pounds out of the

timber industry, and they have not put it back again. Further, they have had that timber hauled over roads which have had to be kept up by the struggling ratepayers in those districts.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Considering the maladministration in connection with timber by our predecessors in your own electorate, you should not say anything about this Government. You ought to condemn the previous Administration.

Mr. EDWARDS: I am not speaking about the previous Administration. It is a paltry attitude on the part of the Minister to go back thirty or forty years, and point to somebody who did wrong in those days, instead of doing the right thing and looking ahead at the present time.

The chief argument used by hon. members opposite has been with respect to the delegation. That is the only cry they can raise. The Minister pointed out that it would not have been a good business proposition to build houses under the 1919 Act on account of the high price of materials; but hon. members behind him say that houses would have been built if the delegation had not stopped the Government from getting loan money. I mention that to show how misleading are the statements made by hon. members opposite. In the interests of the State it is time this sort of thing was stopped. Let us get down to bedrock and do something for the interests of the State, and create confidence in the country so that people will be encouraged to build their own homes. I feel sure that I am expressing the sentiments of the workers in this direction.

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*): I feel sure that this measure, which is brought forward to enable workers to acquire homes of their own, will meet with the ardent support of the wellwisher of the worker or of any other individual in the community. At the same time, it seems to me to lend colour to the suggestion which has been made—that this Bill, like many other measures brought in this session, has been introduced with the object of getting votes at the forthcoming election.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We got a lot in Townsville a few days ago.

Mr. GREEN: This Bill amends in certain respects the Act which was passed in 1919. It seems very strange that the provisions of the 1919 Act have not been availed of by the workers in this State, and many reasons have been given for that not being done. We recognise that from many causes the housing accommodation in the State is limited, particularly in the large centres of population. It is very difficult to get homes, and it will benefit the community to have a satisfactory measure brought forward to assist in that direction. One of the great objections to this measure is that it lays down the principle of leasehold tenure. It does not matter whether we consider that leasehold is as good as freehold, the fact remains that the workers of the State and others will not build homes for themselves under leasehold tenure.

Mr. W. COOPER: What nonsense!

Mr. GREEN: There is no nonsense about it. I can speak as to the industrial workers in the community in which I live. Allotments have been thrown open under lease-

Mr. Green.]

hold in the best portions of Townsville, and the people there have absolutely refused to build their residences on such allotments.

Mr. HARTLEY: There is great competition for perpetual leases in Rockhampton.

Mr. GREEN: I am only speaking of my own experience. People like freehold tenure in connection with their own homes. An Englishman's home is supposed to be his castle, and he has always looked upon his home as a sacred spot. If the tenure is made freehold, I feel sure that many people will then avail themselves of the facilities provided by the Bill.

Another question is with regard to the increased cost of building. The high price of materials has prevented private individuals, as well as those who have the privilege of coming under such a measure as this, from building residences. Those who have sufficient money to build houses for letting purposes are also prevented and hindered by the operation of the Fair Rents Act, particularly in the Northern centres, owing to the bare margin of profit which is allowed. There are also many other adverse conditions affecting property in Northern centres, such as wear and tear in connection with the climate and the danger from cyclones. A man would be foolish to invest any of his capital in residences if he desired a decent interest from his investment.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Surely, you are not saying that cyclones prevent people from taking advantage of the Act?

Mr. GREEN: I am talking about the possibility of obtaining homes, and of the causes which prevent, not only the workers of the State from taking advantage of the Act, but also private individuals from investing their capital in building homes for letting.

We know that the royalty or stumpage charge has materially affected the price of timber. The price of timber has made it almost impossible for workers in this State to procure homes of their own. It is direct taxation on everybody in the community. No doubt, the severe royalties placed upon the timber were responsible for the increase in price. The hon. member for Nanango, notwithstanding the unfair imputation on the hon. member for Ipswich, was quite right in his statement just now that the compulsory provision regarding insurance prevented many workers from taking advantage of the Act passed in 1919.

Mr. GLEDSON: It is an optional provision.

Mr. GREEN: It is only optional in cases where the insurance companies will not accept the risk. Why not be straightforward when dealing with a measure of this kind? Section 17 of the 1919 Act reads—

“The purchaser shall, unless exempted as hereinafter provided, effect and until the contract of sale is fully performed keep in operation an insurance with the State Government Insurance Office upon his life, in the form prescribed, in an amount sufficient to pay to the Minister, in the event of the death of the purchaser, the full amounts of the unpaid purchase money and other moneys secured by the contract of sale and this Act. Such policy of life insurance shall be deemed to be incorporated with the contract of sale and form part thereof, and the policy shall be assigned to and held by the Minister: Provided that the Minister in his discretion may accept in

lieu of the policy of insurance aforesaid, any existing policy of life insurance which, in the Minister's opinion, is a sufficient security:

“Provided that the Minister, in his discretion, may exempt any purchaser from compliance with this section upon being satisfied that—

(a) The purchaser is unable to pass any medical test prescribed as a condition for life insurance; or

(b) The payment of life insurance premiums would, by reason of the age of the purchaser, be a hardship upon him.”

I think that any fair-minded member in this House will agree that the hon. member for Nanango stated the exact position. The Minister also stated that the Upper House mutilated the Bill; but what do we find? We find that the Bill, as finally agreed to, was practically the same as when it left this House. There were only two slight amendments in it. One prevented the Government from taking park land, and the other was only a slight amendment. It is the compulsory insurance clause which has prevented the workers from taking advantage of the Act; and I am afraid that in connection with this measure the workers will likewise be prevented from taking advantage of it. Hon. members opposite are continually talking about the delegation being responsible for preventing the Government from obtaining the necessary loan money to carry out public works in this State.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is the object they went home for.

Mr. GREEN: Members opposite say that it is because of the delegation that workers' homes were not constructed under the Act which was passed in 1919.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is one of the results.

Mr. GREEN: I would remind the hon. member for Fitzroy that in the 1919 Act the money was to be raised by debentures to be issued in Queensland. (Opposition laughter.) I have no hesitation in saying that it was not the delegation that prevented money from coming to the State. It was the actions of the Government which destroyed the honour and the credit of the State and so prevented money from coming here. We know that since the present Government came into office they have increased the loan indebtedness by £30,000,000, although they received a record revenue last year amounting to over £12,000,000. They also spent £4,000,000 out of the Trust Funds; so how can they contend that the delegation prevented money from coming here? It was not the delegation that prevented the Government getting money, and that is not the reason why workers' homes have not been constructed under the principal Act.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): When the Bill was introduced in 1919 I supported it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Then, why not let it go through now?

Mr. FRY: If the Government have a total disregard of the hardships of the people who have been wanting houses, that is no reason why I should let the Bill go through without debate. On the last occasion I gave the Bill all the support I could, but the Government have not carried out any of the provisions of that Act. Not one house has been erected

[Mr. Green.

under its provisions. I would be lacking in my duty if I allowed that state of affairs to continue without referring to it. This is what I said in speaking on the Bill in 1919—

“Mr. FRY: I welcome this Bill, and intend to support it. The demand for houses in Brisbane cannot be denied. The house shortage at present is appalling. There are people coming to Brisbane and the cities generally, and they are unable to obtain houses. The houses that become vacant are very few, and people offer big prices for them. The Commonwealth Government evidently recognised this when they introduced the scheme for the soldiers' homes. The difference between the two schemes is that one is to be leasehold and the other freehold. With these two schemes in operation there is going to be a great demand for land surrounding the cities. I hope the competition between the Commonwealth and State Governments will not have the effect of increasing the price of land. If there is going to be any clashing at all I hope some arrangements can be come to by which the claims of the soldiers will be considered. I am supporting this Bill because I think it is a step in the right direction. I have suggested its introduction several times, with, of course, a little difference, in the case of ownership, for instance. I consider that the worker, after a stated period, should have the opportunity of becoming the owner of the freehold, but our differing on that point should not interfere with the passing of the Bill. I recognise that in time to come the people themselves will decide, by referendum or otherwise, whether the property which they hold as leasehold is to continue as such or be converted into freehold. This same question, by the way, came up in connection with soldier settlements. Some of the soldiers said to me that they would sooner have freehold. I said, “Look here, boys, take it as leasehold, then later on you will be able to decide, by referendum of the people, whether it is to become freehold.”

Later on I said—

“To my mind, the greatest obstacle in the way of acquiring a home is the securing of a deposit, and, in connection with the workers' dwelling, the securing of the piece of land. In my own case, the greatest obstacle to my owning a home was that I was unable, out of my earnings, to keep a family and save sufficient money to pay the deposit. Eventually, however, I secured the deposit, and then got my home fairly easily. I therefore have sympathy with this Bill, because I know there are thousands throughout the State who are placed in a similar position.”

And later still I said—

“These houses are not going to be the boon that hon. members may think, unless the travelling to and from the city is made more reasonable. The reason why house property within a penny section of the city is so expensive, is because the cost of travelling makes it heavy for a family. If a workman resides at a place which costs him 3d. or 4d. to reach the city, and he has a number of children, travelling becomes

very expensive; and, when that is added to the cost of the home, his house does not become as cheap as it appears on the surface.”

Those extracts will show that I gave the Bill all the support I could. The House considered the matter of such vital importance that it gave the Government £25,000 to go on with the work, but they have not spent a penny. And now they come here and talk about an amending Bill, and about the Upper House having mutilated the original Bill! No man with an atom of common sense—no man who can understand even the alphabet—can believe that the Government are justified in that attitude.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It was the worst time in the history of the State for building. Material was never so high in price.

Mr. FRY: Was it not the worst time in the history of Queensland for the people who wanted homes? Was it not a fact that in and around Brisbane one family was living in a house and another under the house? (Laughter.) I have seen that myself. I was called in to observe what was actually going on; yet the Minister has the temerity to say that that was the worst time to start to build. I know that the prices of material were high, but does that fact justify the Government in compelling the people to go on living under conditions which were detrimental to their health and generally undesirable? The interjection of the Minister does not display any great statesmanship, and, moreover, it falls to the ground when we hear one of his strongest supporters say that the Act was not put into operation because the Government could not get loan money. As the representative of a working-class community, I would be failing in the discharge of my duty if I did not criticise the Government and tell them what I think of their actions in this matter.

Too many party political considerations have been introduced into measures which have been placed before this House. I have seen a Bill introduced which was practically a replica of something already on the statute-book. Even minor amendments have been brought in with a view to giving hon. members on the Government side the opportunity to make speeches which would be popular with the people outside. That may be all right so far as private members of Parliament are concerned, but it is not good statesmanship. The Government must realise that character has a value as well as material. Material has a certain value; manual labour has a certain value; but it must also be borne in mind that there is the over-shadowing consideration of character. The character of a Government is determined by their acts.

Mr. HARTLEY: You are just about pumped out.

Mr. FRY: I am not at all pumped out, nor shall I desist in my criticism; but, if the hon. member were sincere in fighting for the working man's interests as I am, he would not be sitting quietly behind the Government and giving support to the amendment; he would be standing up and telling the Government that they should have done something before now. There is no genuine excuse for their not having money. If there is any reason at all, it is because the Government have not done the right thing. Have we not heard incorrect replies.

Mr. Fry.]

given to questions asked in this House? Is it not a fact that at intervals we have asked the same questions and got different replies? These are things which determine the character of a Government. Repudiation is a matter which determines the character of a Government.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FRY: And it must be borne in mind that in questions of finance the same rule applies to a Government as to a business house or a private individual. Any man in this Chamber would be very chary about lending money to a person who was known to repudiate his agreements, or give false information, or make misleading statements. He would consider whether it was worth his while. A business man's credit depends upon his standing, his character; and the Government's credit depends upon their character. If they say that they have no money because of a certain delegation, I say they confess that they have lost their credit and their good character. It is a shocking state of affairs that any Government should come into this Chamber and tell us that because three men went to England and spoiled their credit they could not build workers' homes.

It is a shocking state of affairs [3 p.m.] that they have so lost their self-respect that they will make such a confession to a representative Chamber in a democratic community. There is no excuse for the Government not going on with this scheme. This Chamber voted £25,000, which, even when timber was dear, would have provided at least 600 houses, and they would have settled 600 families, with a consequent relieving of the overcrowding.

Mr. WEIR: You are a financial genius to talk about 600 houses being built for £25,000.

Mr. FRY: I may have made a slip of the tongue. If it is only sixty houses, the Government can have no excuse. They have not built one house. They have not even put in the stumps or purchased the stump caps—which cost about 3d. All they consider is, what is going to get them votes. Have we not watched the progress of the Government since 1912? Have we not seen the Government, time and time again, bringing in measures at seasonable opportunities? Have they not from time to time been looking for interjections from hon. members of the Opposition upon which they could make a vote-catching cry? This Bill is in the same category as are all their actions concerning vote-catching. The Government have not given any legitimate reason why they should not have gone on with the scheme. Had the Government gone on building workers' homes the unemployed would have been assisted, and the burden upon the poor working man would have been lightened. It may be that the price of building material has been high and that it was the worst time in the history of Queensland to go on building; but it also must be remembered that the working man was having a bad time; and the employment which the building of these houses would have provided would have kept their families in at least a little comfort. Why should we take the advice of the Minister and allow this Bill to go through without discussion? We would be unworthy of the confidence of the people who have reposed their trust in us were we to do so. I want

[Mr. Fry.]

to see the Government take some active steps in the direction of building these homes, and at the same time not put up those weak excuses, which come only from people who have been spending the country's money in an extravagant way. If this were not a party House, the Government would have been put out before to-day, because they have not observed the instructions of Parliament.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is guilty of tedious repetition.

Mr. FRY: If so, I am not aware of the fact. A once prominent member of this Chamber—the late Premier—told us that, if we wanted to make a thing felt, we had to repeat it over and over again. I accept his advice.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is guilty of tedious repetition, and I shall have to ask him to resume his seat.

Mr. SIZER (*Nundah*): I have pointed out before that we ought to have more time to deal with legislation now by virtue of the fact that we have only one Chamber. This legislation was said by the Government in 1919 to be perfect. After three years, during which time the Act has lain dormant and the Government have not had a chance to find anomalies as the result of administration, it has become necessary for them to introduce a Bill to amend that Act. That is the strongest argument that could possibly be put forward in favour of having more time for the consideration of such legislation as this. It is remarkable that, whenever the Opposition oppose a measure, they are told they are trying to destroy it and make it such that it cannot be administered. When they agree to a principle—as we did, in the main, in connection with the principal Act—the Government allow the Act to remain inactive. Then the Opposition are accused of holding up proceedings when they condemn such ridiculous amending legislation.

I have said on other measures that the Government have found a new love for the primary producers. Nine-tenths of this session have been taken up with legislation dealing with primary producers. The cry of the "Daily Standard"—"Why should the 'cockies' get all this legislation?"—is evidently having some effect, and the Government are rushing on industrial measures knowing that they have lost support in industrial centres. They deserve to lose that support, by virtue of the fact that they have neglected those interests. They have had on their statute-book since 1919 the Workers' Homes Act, for the administration of which £25,000 was voted by Parliament. Still, they have done nothing. Yet the other day they passed a railway which constitutes part of a scheme which will cost probably £2,000,000. They can find £2,000,000 for some pet scheme of their own, but they cannot find any money to relieve the house shortage in Brisbane. That charge of inactivity will have an effect on them at next election. It shows their insincerity. Every day they are trying to play off one section against the other, and I am convinced that they must fall between the two stools.

I would like to know what is particularly wrong with the Workers' Dwellings Act. I

have no serious objection to this measure, but I fail to see why it is necessary when we have the Workers' Dwellings Act, which has proved to be sound, and which has enabled the people of Queensland to obtain homes cheaper than they can be obtained in other States in the Commonwealth. It seems that we are only burdening the statute-book by placing another Act on it containing the principles of an Act already passed. The Workers' Dwellings Act has been a success. Had this Government been responsible for that Act, there is not the slightest doubt that they would have worked it to death, and would have used it for all kinds of political purposes. They realise that past Governments showed far more wisdom and soundness in legislation when they passed the Workers' Dwellings Act. The Government are endeavouring to belittle that Act, and are endeavouring to place some fantastic scheme on the statute-book in order to obtain some kudos.

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member is ignorant of the attitude of this party when that Bill was before the House. We moved many amendments on it.

Mr. SIZER: They moved amendments because they had no alternative. They were not game to stand up to their responsibilities and oppose it. I have looked through many speeches delivered by the hon. member for Bowen, and I do not think there is anyone more inconsistent than he is in his arguments. In 1919 he said that the Unemployed Workers' Bill, then introduced, was a perfect scheme, but that it did not go far enough for him. The principles contained in that Bill have since been allowed to lie dormant without any protest from him. When the Unemployed Workers Insurance Bill was introduced yesterday, he said it was a perfect Bill, although he said it did not go as far as the other one which he also called perfect.

Mr. COLLINS: I said that the Bill introduced in 1919 was a long way ahead of the Bill introduced yesterday. Why don't you quote me correctly?

Mr. SIZER: The hon. gentleman has not the courage of his convictions to stand up and say what he thinks. He has a political conscience which is like putty and can be moulded to suit his own purpose. It can be moulded into this shape to-day and that shape to-morrow, but still it is the same thing. The older the hon. gentleman gets the more conservative he gets, and in a few more years he will be the most conservative man in this Chamber. The Government have allowed rack-renting to continue. They have allowed landlordism to continue, and they have been crying "Shame" for years and years whilst at the same time they had an Act on the statute-book which they claimed would overcome all those difficulties. Still, the hon. member for Bowen is content to sit behind the Government and allow them to drift, drift, drift, and further exploit the workers.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING FOR SOLAR ECLIPSE.

At 3.15 p.m.,

The SPEAKER said: I shall resume the chair at 4.45 p.m.

The House resumed at the hour named.

QUESTIONS.

APPLICATIONS FOR LICENSES TO SEARCH FOR PETROLEUM.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*), in the absence of Mr. Logan (*Lockyer*), asked the Secretary for Mines—

"Since 8th March, 1920, how many applications for licenses to search for petroleum have been received, and in what localities? How many of such applications have been—(a) granted; (b) refused?"

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*) replied—

District.	Applications received.	Applications granted.	Applications refused.	Applications withdrawn.
Brisbane	8	7	1	..
Blackall	30	30
Gympie	7	7
Gladstone	10	10
Herberton	3	2	..	1
Rockhampton ..	5	2	3	..
Roma	2	1	1	..
Totals	65	59	5	1

IMPROVEMENTS AT IPSWICH RAILWAY STATION.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*) in the absence of Mr. Sizer (*Nundah*), asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. At what date was the work of improving Ipswich Railway Station commenced, and on whose authority was the work commenced?"

"2. What was the estimated cost?"

"3. What sum has been expended on the work to date, and what further sum is expected to be required to complete the work?"

"4. On what date was the work suspended, and why?"

"5. When does he expect the work will be completed?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Lacombe, *Keppel*), replied—

"1. In March, 1915, on the authority of the then Minister for Railways.

"2. £100,000.

"3. £121,335 spent to date, £62,000 required to complete.

"4. In December, 1920, owing to the unfortunate money boycott instituted against the Government.

"5. The matter is under consideration."

COST OF INKERMAN IRRIGATION SCHEME.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Treasurer—

"1. What is the estimated cost of the Inkerman irrigation scheme when completed?"

"2. Out of the wells sunk in connection with it, how many are defective?"

"What is the estimated output of the well and plant provided for pumping in the present scheme, in acre inches, during the eight-hour period to which work in the cane fields daily is limited by the present award?"

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chilligoe*) replied—

"1. £400,000.

"2 and 3. The information will be obtained."

WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I desire to say a few words in reply to some of the points raised during the course of this debate. When moving the second reading I spoke only for a few minutes, but there are one or two matters that have been referred to which call for a reply from me. The chief matter raised by hon. members opposite is in connection with the fact that, although the principal Act was passed in 1919, no homes have been built under it and they condemn the Government on that account. By way of interjection, I stated that there were two chief reasons why homes have not been built under the Act, the principal of these being the shortage of loan money at the disposal of the Government. One of the charges we have to make against hon. members opposite—and it is worth repeating on every possible occasion when hon. members bring the matter up—is that a shortage of loan funds had to be faced by this Government as the result of the delegation which went overseas with a view to damaging the credit of the Government and, indirectly, of the State.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Very funny!

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: If loan funds are not available, it is only natural that no Government can go on with public works. For a time the Government had to curtail a good many of the loan works which it was proposed to initiate.

MR. VOWLES: You could have issued debentures under the principal Act.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is no use the leader of the Opposition interjecting that we could have issued debentures.

MR. VOWLES: Why did you not take advantage of that provision in the Act?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: It will be remembered that, owing to the operations of this boycott, the Government had to raise local loans to carry out urgent public works within the State. It is ridiculous in the extreme to say that the Government could have issued debentures for housing purposes under the principal Act, and at the same time issue a loan for urgent public works locally. That was the position with which the Government were faced and for which hon. members opposite, through their organisations outside, were to a large extent responsible. Happily that attempt was not fully successful; but it stayed the hand of the Government for a time in connection with their developmental policy. The Government are now in a position to embark on public works of a constructive character, amongst which the workers' homes are included. We have provided on the Estimates of my department this year a sum of £50,000, and I intend at a very early date after this Bill goes through to initiate works under the Act with a view to providing workers' homes. Provision will be made in drawing up the scheme to see that certain

things are not done which hon. members anticipate will be. One hon. member opposite suggested that these houses will all be built in the metropolitan area. This Government is not a Queen-street Government. We represent the whole of Queensland, and I will see to it that the districts in the Northern, Central, and Western portions of the State are fairly treated in allocation of the funds.

Then, with regard to the high cost of building construction, we know that shortly after the principal Act was passed in 1919 the cost of building construction soared upwards in Queensland and throughout Australia and reached its apex about 1920. We know that housing schemes of this character depend on the ability of the workers to carry out the contracts entered into between the Government and themselves. Consequently, it is no use introducing a workers' homes scheme where the houses are of such a costly character that the interest and redemption on them would represent a weekly or monthly repayment too high for the workers' wages to enable them to pay it. That is amply borne out in connection with the war service homes. We know that there have been a good many difficulties in connection with the administration of the War Service Homes Act. Some huge blunders were made by the Commonwealth Government in regard to the war service homes. I do not propose to refer to them in detail, beyond saying that there was a huge expenditure of public funds, involving great loss to the people of the Commonwealth, which the taxpayers later on will have to shoulder. But there is this clear analogy to be borne in mind, that, as a result of that faulty administration, the cost of the war service homes is imposing too high a burden on the occupants of those homes. The Commonwealth initiated various methods of construction. Later on they adopted the method of having their own sawmills, supplying timber therefrom to the contractors in some cases. I am not condemning the contractors in any way, but what was the position? The contractors for many of those homes had to take over timber, joinery, and other building materials at the book values of the War Service Homes Commission, and those book values were based on the highest prices which prevailed during the war period.

As a consequence, the majority of those homes are over-capitalised to the extent of £150. An adjustment board has been at work of late, and I understand it has written down values; but the position is that the men who took up those homes, in a great majority of instances, in every State in the Commonwealth, are carrying a financial burden of capitalisation altogether too great for them to bear, having regard to the incomes they are making at the present time. If a scheme of workers' homes is to be a sound one, then the cost must be curtailed, so that when a building is completed it will come within the capacity of the man who takes up the home to meet his obligations under the terms of the contract. If the Government had entered into a large housing scheme at a time when building materials and costs were high, then the workers would have been called upon to pay interest and redemption on a capitalisation higher than is a fair burden for them to be called upon to bear.

These two points which I have outlined briefly are the reasons why the Government have not embarked on this scheme at an

[*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.*]

earlier date. First, there was the conspiracy of the anti-Labour forces in Queensland; and secondly, the high cost of construction. However, building costs have come down considerably, and we shall be able to embark on this scheme with considerable advantage to the workers. It must be borne in mind that the men who come within the ambit of this Act are men in receipt of an income of less than £260 per annum. It deals with people who are not able to take advantage of the provisions of the Workers' Dwellings Act. We were only able to continue building under that scheme to a limited extent, because the worker concerned has to put down a fair amount of the cost himself, and he was not in a position to do so. Under this scheme a man is only called upon to pay 5 per cent. of the cost of the building as a deposit. The hon. member for Enoggera condemned that policy; but anyone who knows anything at all about building schemes, either under the Workers' Homes Act, under the War Service Homes Act, or under building societies or friendly societies, will recognise the absolute necessity of having such a provision in the Bill. It is necessary that there should be a financial responsibility on the man taking over the home so that he will be interested in continuing his payments. If men were able to take up homes with no financial obligations, they would have no direct interest in completing the purchase, and some men might be disposed to carry on until such time as drastic action had to be taken against them. By insisting on the 5 per cent. deposit there is a guarantee of the bona fides of the prospective purchasers.

The question of insurance has been raised. I consider that to be one of the good provisions in the principal Act. The payments which are made monthly will cover interest and redemption on the total loan, and they will also cover the cost of maintenance and repairs, and the cost of insurance on the life of the contracting party. It has also this advantage—that the purchaser is insured for the balance of the term of the
[5 p.m.] loan. Consequently, if misfortune overtakes him, and he dies, his widow and family will have a decent home as a free asset without any further burden. That is one of the attractive provisions of this scheme, if considered properly.

I think those remarks cover the points raised by hon. members opposite. I thought it necessary to make this reply in view of the misrepresentations of the position which have been made by hon. members opposite. I hope that the Bill will now go through speedily, and that we shall be able to go ahead with the scheme and provide for many of the workers of Queensland the homes which they are unable to get at present.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

(Mr. King, Logan, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

Clause 3—"Amendment of section 9—Contracts of sale"—

Mr. MOORE (Aubigny): I would like to know the reason for this amendment of section 9 of the principal Act, which seems to be perfectly satisfactory. The first para-

graph of subsection (3), which it is proposed to repeal, reads—

"Where more persons than one apply to become purchasers of the same home, preference may be given to the applicant who has the lesser income or the more numerous family, provided he is of good character and the Minister is satisfied as to his ability to perform the contract of sale."

At 5.3 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN took the chair.

Mr. MOORE: That seems to be a reasonable proposition. It lays down a definite principle on which the Minister may act. It provides that the man with the smaller income or the more numerous family shall have preference, and we all know that it is more difficult for a man with a numerous family to get a house than one with a smaller family or with no family at all. The Bill proposes to substitute the following provision:—

"Where more persons than one apply to become purchasers of the same home, the Minister, after taking into consideration the particular circumstances of each of such persons, may in his discretion decide which person, if any, shall be eligible to enter into the contract of sale."

It seems to me that it would be far more satisfactory to the individual who wants to secure a home to have it definitely stated in the Act which applicant shall be given preference.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (Mackay): There is nothing very vital in this, as the hon. member for Aubigny points out. The alteration has been suggested by the manager of the State Advances Corporation as an improvement. All the points enumerated by the hon. member would be taken into consideration by the Minister, and the applicant who was in the greatest need of a home would get it. Assume that half a dozen people were after the same house, each of the half dozen having the same number in family and the same income, and all of them being able to complete the contract of sale according to the requirements of the Act, to which of the six would the Minister decide to give it? It is better to place in the hands of the Minister the discretionary power conferred by the clause. All the factors bearing on the case will be inquired into, and the man most in need of a home will get it.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS (East Toowoomba): I have looked up this matter, and I find that the clause is in conformity with the regulations applying to Daceyville, in New South Wales. I recognise that where there is more than one application someone will have to make the decision as to which applicant shall get the house.

Mr. VOWLES (Dalby): I do not think this clause is satisfactory. The original Act distinctly lays down the basis upon which the Minister shall act in each instance.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: No; the Act lays down that the one with the lesser income or the more numerous family shall get the house.

Mr. VOWLES: We have an Act of Parliament which has been on the statute-book for some considerable time, and which has

Mr. Vowles.]

not been put into operation; and it has been decided to amend it before it has been put into operation in the form originally cast, simply because a man who has had nothing whatever to do with it—

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: He has had vast experience in connection with a business of a similar character. He has been in charge of workers' dwellings, and the same department will administer both systems.

MR. VOWLES: He has not had to deal with a provision similar to this.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I understand that all right; but the manager of the State Advances Corporation has had vast experience in dealing with workers' homes.

MR. VOWLES: Where did he obtain that experience?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: In connection with workers' dwellings.

MR. VOWLES: A man will be subject to certain conditions, just as he would be if he were dealing with a building society. If he makes default, there is a very heavy penalty. When a man goes on to a communal settlement, or however you like to describe it, he obtains the right to occupy a building under certain conditions and on a definite basis which is laid down. Once the building is erected it is definitely provided which applicant shall have preference. I do not know why the Minister should want to decide between rival applicants, as we have a machinery section to deal with that matter. The Minister should not want to be worried with things of that kind. When there is any difficulty the applicants can draw lots.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: They can still do that.

MR. VOWLES: That principle is being cut out. The Minister will now have to decide between rival claims, and it will cause him unnecessary annoyance.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—*Amendment of section 14—Condition annexed to appurtenant land*—put and passed.

Clause 5—*Amendment of section 15—Purchaser a tenant of Minister*—

MR. MOORE (*Aubigny*): Subsection (b) of section 16 of the principal Act reads—

“Such sum to be declared in the contract of sale as the Minister considers sufficient to provide for expenditure on insurance, painting, and repairs of the home as and when such expenditure may be required and also for recoupment to the Minister of a proportionate amount of the general expenses incurred in the administration of this Act.”

Now, it is sought to repeal the words—

“To be declared in the contract of sale.”

Those words should not be repealed. When a man makes a contract of sale, he knows exactly what amount he has to pay for expenditure on insurance, painting, etc. If you repeal those words, the matter is left indefinite.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: No.

MR. MOORE: When a man is purchasing a house, it is better that he should have an agreement.

[*Mr. Vowles.*]

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Subclause (ii.) of clause 5 of this Bill provides that the following words be inserted in lieu of those words—

“A sum which, if paid on the first day of each month, is calculated to be sufficient to liquidate within a period to be determined by the Minister, not exceeding twenty-five years, the unpaid purchase money of the home, together with interest at the rate of £5 per centum per annum on the outstanding balance of such purchase money at the beginning of each month shall be payable.”

MR. MOORE: I am referring to subclause (iii.). I think it is a mistake to repeal those words. A man should have a contract of sale, so that he will know exactly what amount he will have to pay. It is preferable to have it that way than that it should be left indefinite. I do not see that it will be to the advantage either of the purchaser or of the Minister.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): The amendment sought to be introduced by this Bill lays down the terms. The reason for it is quite obvious. Under the principal Act provision is made for the painting of the homes. It could not be determined in a contract of sale exactly how much it would cost for effecting repairs over a period of years. Take, for example, the painting of the outside of a house every six years. It might cost about £25; later on, when the cost of material comes down, it might be possible to do it for £18, and consequently the occupier of the house would get that advantage. The cost of effecting the necessary maintenance and repairs could not be determined twenty years ahead.

MR. MOORE: The Minister has quoted subclause (a)—I am not discussing that.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I pointed out the reason why that sum could not be provided in a contract of sale.

MR. MOORE: I am talking about subsection (b), in which it is proposed to repeal the words “to be declared in a contract of sale.” The Minister has dealt with the preceding subsection.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. member is referring to subsection (b) of section 16 of the principal Act.

MR. MOORE: The Minister is referring to subclause (ii.) of clause 5 of the Bill which relates to subsection (a) of section 16 of the principal Act.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I have stated that no estimate can be made of the amount required for maintenance and repairs over a period of years. How could you determine in a contract of sale the amount required for painting a building five years hence?

MR. MOORE: I think it is far preferable that the subsection in the principal Act should not be altered.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 and 7 put and passed.

Clause 8—*Amendment of section 20—Abandoned Home*—

MR. KING (*Logan*): Why is the right of the purchaser limited to three years?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: That is provided by the statute of limitations.

MR. KING: The statute of limitations provides for six years. This clause reduces it by half.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: The reason for it is obvious when one studies the sections of the principal Act. This deals with a case where a man has abandoned his home for a period of three years. A man might abandon his home and disregard his obligations under the terms of the contract of sale. Consequently, the department will have to look after the building, and there must be a limit put to the time within which a man may be able to return and claim reinstatement. Three years is a fair time for that.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): It seems to me that the Minister has got hold of the wrong clause. This is the case in which the department, after abandonment, has taken over the property and realised on it. This clause refers to the disposal of the money over and above the amount due to the department. Under ordinary conditions the individual would have six years within which to make a claim, and why should that principle be departed from now? Under the Local Authorities Act, if a local authority enters into and takes possession of certain property, the local authority has to keep an account for twenty-five years of the moneys received from time to time, and any moneys to the credit of that fund can be claimed.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: That is in connection with land which does not depreciate in value.

Mr. VOWLES: This is the case where there is a balance in favour of the original purchaser; and why should there be any new limitation so far as he is concerned?

Mr. PAYNE: Three years is a long enough period.

Mr. VOWLES: Six years is the ordinary period. You are dealing with the worker, and you are putting the worker who, through some unforeseen circumstances—perhaps through lack of employment—has been compelled to abandon his home, in a worse position than the ordinary individual. If the property is sold and there is a credit in his favour, the Government are going to deprive him of the rights enjoyed by other persons. We know that under the statute of limitations every man has a right to claim for six years.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I would like to endorse the remarks of the leader of the Opposition. The department has no claim whatever on this balance; it is money actually belonging to the person who has abandoned his property, and, surely to goodness, he should not be deprived of his right to recover this money if he makes application within the time allowed by the statute of limitations? Why should his right be curtailed?

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): This is purely a matter concerning the working man, and he should be given every favourable consideration. There has been too much humbug and insincerity about the Workers' Homes Act in the past, and it seems to me that this is a further instance of it. It may be a minor matter, but the fact remains that the working man, who has to work very hard for his wages and is struggling along under adverse conditions, is going to suffer, and the feeling of the Committee should be tested on the matter so that we may see who are and who are not the workers' true friends.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): I move the omission, on line 50, of the word "three,"

with a view to inserting the word "six." It seems to me that all the arguments have gone in the direction of showing that it is necessary to extend to the persons concerned the full period allowed under the statute of limitations. It is a reasonable proposition, and it seems to me an extraordinary thing that the Minister should want to pass the balance over to the credit of the fund in half the time allowed in other cases.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I do not propose to accept the amendment. It is very interesting to hear the protestations of hon. members opposite about their love for the workers. The workers have sufficient intelligence to estimate these protestations at their true value. I wish to quote section 20 of the principal Act, which will explain the conditions under which this amendment will operate. That section reads—

"In any case where the Minister is satisfied that any home in respect of which a contract of sale is not fully performed has been abandoned by the purchaser and is without a lawful occupant, the Minister may, in his discretion, either—

(a) Cancel the contract of sale, in which case the home and appurtenant land shall thereafter be subject to be dealt with and disposed of under this Act as if no such contract of sale had ever been entered into; but, nevertheless, the Minister shall have all the rights and remedies provided by this Act against the purchaser as for a breach of contract; or

(b) Enter upon and take possession of such home and appurtenant land and retain possession of the same, and let the same, and apply the rents and profits in payment of the costs and expenses from time to time incurred in connection with such home and land, and of the moneys, if any, due under this Act, and hold the balance, if any, in trust for the purchaser."

There is no very vital point involved either in the amendment under the Bill or in the amendment moved by the hon. member for Bulimba. We are dealing with cases where men deliberately abandon their homes—deliberately go away and fail to complete the contracts of sale.

Mr. VOWLES: It may be through force of circumstances.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: If a man has a home in Brisbane and has to go to Rockhampton to earn his livelihood, he would notify the department and take steps to protect his interests, as provided under the Act. A transfer of the property may be effected and all his interests properly safeguarded; but, where a man deliberately abandons his home and the department has to look after it and keep it in repair, then I think three years is a fair time during which to hold any money that may be in reserve. What man would abandon his home where there was likely to be much value? Any abandonment will take place in the early years of the contract of sale. No man would abandon his home after he had been making payments for about fifteen years without making arrangements with the department. This clause only deals with people who fail to carry out their contracts of sale—who abandon their homes and perhaps leave the

Hon. W. Forgan Smith.]

department with arrears unpaid. The department then takes possession of the home, looks after it, sees that it is properly maintained, and makes arrangements for a fresh purchaser or a new tenant; and I think three years is quite ample.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I cannot agree with the Minister at all. A man may be forced through circumstances over which he has no control to abandon his home, and it may not be by deliberate intent at all.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: If a man, by force of circumstances, left his home he would not abandon it. It would not be a case of abandonment. I understand the full meaning of "abandonment" as understood by the party opposite. It means the abandonment of all decent principles.

Mr. MOORE: Why should the worker not have the same time in which to claim any balance that the ordinary individual has? Why should his rights be curtailed in a way that the rights of the ordinary individual are not curtailed? If [5.30 p.m.] the owner of a piece of land in a local authority area has to go away through force of circumstances without making any arrangements in regard to it, the local authority under certain conditions has power to take possession.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The local authority is not called upon to do anything in the way of maintenance.

Mr. MOORE: The local authority has to spend money in keeping up the roads and other services around that block of land. Section 241 of the Local Authorities Act of 1902 provides that, if the local authority leases such a piece of land, all rent and other moneys payable under the lease shall be applicable. It reads—

"In payment to the local authority of all arrears of rates and other payments due in respect of such land, together with interest on all arrears of rates calculated as hereinbefore provided, from the time when such rates become due respectively, and in payment of all rates and other payments accruing due thereon.

"The residue of any such moneys shall belong to such person as would, when the same respectively were received, have been entitled to receive the rents and profits of the land if this Act had not been passed."

Section 242 provides—

"Unless within twenty-five years after possession is taken of land under the foregoing provisions of this Act, some person entitled in that behalf performs the conditions entitling him to demand a release of the land, such land and all accumulations of rent and other moneys recovered on account thereof shall vest absolutely in the local authority."

The man who is compelled by force of circumstances to abandon his house should have the same rights as an ordinary individual whose land is leased by the local authority.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Abandonment would be done with a view to evading obligations; otherwise, why should a man abandon his house?

Mr. MOORE: We know there are circumstances under which a man is forced to

[*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.*]

abandon his house, and under reasonable conditions he should be granted the same privileges as an ordinary individual. If there are any profits over and above the amount due to the Crown, they belong to the individual who has purchased the house. Why should the owner of the house in this case be limited to a period of three years in which to claim the money to which he is entitled, while an individual in other cases is allowed a period of six years? I cannot see why the Minister should not accept the amendment. Before the Minister agrees to build a house for an individual, he inquires as to whether that individual will be able to pay the purchase price. If that person, through unfortunate circumstances, has to leave his house, why should he not be entitled, after the Crown has been paid in full, to the same period as an ordinary individual in other cases in which to claim the balance to which he is entitled? A period of six years is allowed under the statute of limitations. Under the Local Authority Act there are provisions made to protect the owner of land.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Land lying idle does not necessarily depreciate in value.

Mr. MOORE: There is no difference in the principle. I cannot understand the objection of the Minister to placing this individual exactly on the same plane as an ordinary individual who purchases a house.

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*): I hope the Minister will accept the amendment. The balance of the money, after the claim of the Crown has been satisfied, belongs to the individual who originally owned the house.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: "Who originally owned the house?" He does not own the house until the contract of sale is completed.

Mr. GREEN: If the house is sold and the Crown paid in full, any surplus there may be belongs to the original owner.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Why would a man abandon his interest in the house?

Mr. GREEN: A man might do so through adverse circumstances. The husband might die and the wife might have to get out.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: If the husband died, the wife would not have to get out, because the insurance policy would mature and she would have the house.

Mr. GREEN: There are many other cases of adversity which might compel an individual to leave his home, and what right has that man to be penalised for it?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: That would not be a case of abandonment.

Mr. GREEN: You can foreclose on a man when he leaves the place.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: We could cancel the contract of sale altogether.

Mr. GREEN: When money is lent on a house it is supposed to be a good proposition for the Government.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Under subsection (a) of section 20, we could adopt the course of cancelling the contract of sale, and assume that the contract had never taken place.

Mr. GREEN: And the Government would claim the surplus. You do not advocate that, do you?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I speak for myself. You cannot put words into my mouth. You have plenty to do to explain away some of the statements made by Mr. Garbutt without putting words into my mouth.

Mr. GREEN: Here you may sell a good business proposition, and limit the time in which any balance which is due to the person on whom you have foreclosed to a period of three years, when under other Acts a limit of six years is allowed. I cannot understand why the Minister will not agree to the extension of the time to six years.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I will give you an extra year, if that will be any advantage?

Mr. GREEN: Four years will be better than three, but why not make it six? I hope the Minister will agree to the amendment.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): It is rather amusing to listen to the arguments of hon. members opposite on this question. They seem to be confused as to the meaning of the word "abandonment." The word applies here to a man who deliberately picks up his goods and chattels and goes away leaving his house in the hands of the Government. If a man is forced to leave his home by circumstances over which he had no control and a balance would be coming to him from the sale of the house, it is only natural to think that he would make arrangements with the department. If I had an agreement with anyone and did not carry it out, I would not get the money which might otherwise come to me: I certainly would not be allowed three years in which to claim it. It can be seen that Opposition members are not in earnest. I can understand them wanting to protect the occupants of these houses, but it is ridiculous for them to say that, if a man abandons his home and there happens to be a surplus coming to him after the house is sold and the Government loan is satisfied, a period of three years is not sufficient time for him to put in a claim. If a man had to leave his home through circumstances over which he had no control he could not be said to have abandoned his home. He would come along to the department and make arrangements as any other common-sense man would do, and, if there was anything coming to him, it would be settled straightaway without waiting for three years. Why waste time when there is nothing in this at all? You are not going to give any benefits to the men who need the house if you make it six years or twenty years. Hon. members opposite want to make it six years just because that happens to be the law in another direction; but the whole surroundings here are altogether different. I am surprised to hear the miserable arguments coming from hon. members opposite. They are hard put to it for something to talk about when all they can suggest is to alter the time from three years to six years.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): It is rather unfortunate that hon. members on the Government side will not give members on this side of the House any credit for decency of motives. We are asking for an amendment in all sincerity, and we mean exactly what we say and say exactly what we mean. The Minister has been asked to accept an amendment which will put the claim for the money on the same footing as every other person in

the community enjoys at the present time in regard to the home that he owns. We are not asking for the worker a bit more than other members of the community enjoy, but the Minister seeks to give him less rights than any other individual member of the community. Section 20 of the principal Act gives the Minister two alternatives. He can cancel the contract of sale, or he can—

"enter upon and take possession of such home and the appurtenant land and retain possession of the same, and let the same, and apply the rents and profits in payment of the costs and expenses from time to time incurred in connection with such home and land, and of the moneys, if any, due under the Act, and hold the balance, if any, in trust for the purchaser."

There is a distinct direction there for him to hold the balance in trust for the purchaser. The amendment proposed in this Bill seeks to limit the time during which the Minister shall hold the balance in trust for the purchaser. The Minister fixes the time at three years, and beyond that time the purchaser shall not be entitled to the balance of the money. What is the position? The Minister talks about abandonment. We know the word "abandonment" is used in the section of the Act. I asked the Minister the meaning of the word "abandonment," and the hon. gentleman says that it means running away from his liability. There is a wider meaning to it than that. It also means giving up possession. For some reason the owner cannot carry on the home and he gives up possession. It is just the same as a mortgagor who makes default; still, the purchaser, like the mortgagor, has the equity of redemption or an equitable right.

Mr. BRENNAN: There is no such thing as equity of redemption now. That is a thing of the past. That is the old system.

Mr. KING: It is something which the purchaser is entitled to be paid. He has the equity, and he is entitled to be paid whatever sum is due to him. What is the position? Here is a man with a property. The Minister can cancel the contract and let the property to another purchaser. He makes provision for reletting whereby the department is paid in full. Suppose there is a surplus; who owns the surplus? That money belongs to the man who has the equity in the property. Why deprive him of it? The statute of limitations fixes the time during which he is entitled to it at six years. Any man can claim within six years, so why deprive the worker under this Bill of the same right which every individual in the community enjoys at present?

Mr. BRENNAN: Suppose the council sues him for rates?

Mr. KING: The rates on the property are protected for twenty-five years. If there is an accumulation of rent and it is held in trust for the owner of the property, then so long as the rates are paid any surplus from the accumulation of rent belongs to the owner of the property for twenty-five years. The Government deny that right to the worker in this Bill. This is supposed to be a Bill introduced for the benefit of the workers. Hon. members opposite sneer at us because we stand up for the protection of the worker. We have as much right to stand up for the protection of the worker as any hon. member

Mr. King.]

on the other side. The worker is now to be denied the right that is given to any ordinary money-lender. We want an amendment inserted to give the worker the right to claim up to six years. I want the Minister to bear in mind that we are out to look after the workers. If we find that the worker is not getting a fair deal, we will stick up for him. We have as much right to stick up for the worker as the Government, and we have as much right to look after his interest. I am not going to stand the cheap sneers and jibes of members on the other side who pretend to represent the workers. The Minister says that we stand up and pretend to love the worker when we do not mean what we say. In saying that, he is saying what is not true. I intend to stand up for the rights of the worker, because we have as much right to do so as the Minister or any member opposite. If I think that a worker has a right to money coming to him under this Bill, then I am going to stick up for him and see that his rights are preserved.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Maekay*): I feel quite impressed with the speech of the hon. member who has just sat down when he talks about his love for the worker—a “love which passeth all understanding.” Some of the speeches of hon. members opposite are quite different to the speeches they made yesterday, when the unemployed man was referred to as a loafer. Yesterday we had all sorts of opprobrious epithets hurled at the unemployed just because they happen to be out of work. To-day we find the same hon. members working themselves up into a state of indignation about what they consider to be an injustice to the worker. There is no injustice to the worker here. This amendment deals with the case of an individual who has failed to complete his contract with the department and has abandoned his property. If we take the dictionary meaning of the word “abandonment,” we find that it means “active abandoning, or a state of being abandoned; entire desertion.” This clause deals with the man who deserts his home. He pays a deposit, owes money upon the home, and then deserts it without notifying the department in any way. The house is without a lawful occupant, and is at the mercy of anyone who may come along. It might be burnt, and the security of the Government completely wiped out.

We have two remedies under the principal Act. If at the end of three years a defaulting party does not come forward to claim any balance it goes back into the fund—a form of reimbursement for the trouble the Government have been put to in dealing with the business. No one will abandon a house unless for the purpose of evading his lawful obligations. Hon. members opposite, who are defenders of property rights, wax quite indignant at a provision which, after all, only protects the public interests. It is the public who provide the funds for these homes, and if an individual deserts one of them, and seeks to evade his legal obligations, it is right and proper that the Crown should exercise its rights.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): If anyone has interests in property, his rights should be protected, and the Opposition desire to protect the unfortunate man who is forced to abandon his property from force of circumstances. The Minister asks: “What man would abandon a home after fifteen years?” I reply by asking the Minister if he can

[*Mr. King.*

forecast the future? So long as the future of the working man is uncertain, so long as it holds out a risk of losing all the money he has put into the place, he should be safeguarded. I do not agree with the Minister when he says that no man would abandon his house unless to evade his legal obligations. A man may abandon his house, not of his own free will—the circumstances at the time may force him to do it. Many ambitious men who start out to do the best they can for themselves and their families find that circumstances make it necessary to give up what they have been fighting for.

The Minister gave one definition of “abandonment”; let me give another—

“To leave in the control of another, and, hence, to give up; to relinquish or give up with the intent of never again resuming or claiming one’s rights or interest in.”

There are many definitions, and the Minister’s attitude is pure quibbling. It does not explain away the fact that every day in the week men give up homes, and no man should be placed by the Government in a more disadvantageous position than that in which he is placed by ordinary money-lenders. I think the Minister would be wise to accept the amendment rather than take up the serious position of forcing it to a vote.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I think the Opposition are quite reasonable in insisting on this amendment. It seems to me that the Government are acting worse than Shylock in this business. It is not a matter of recouping themselves for their outlay. We hear a lot of definitions of the word “abandonment”—there are about 800 of them—and the Minister has made the best of his case, and that is nothing at all. It seems to me that a Government who pretend to represent Labour ought to be the first to take the part of a man who has to give up a home. Does the Minister think that such an unfortunate man does it for the pleasure of the thing? I have seen queer things this session, but I did not expect to hear this from the Minister. It seems to me that the Government want to do worse things than the banks, which are compelled to make a notification with respect to any unclaimed money which comes into their possession. The Government want to take their pound of flesh and the blood as well; they want to take something they have never earned. I am glad that the Opposition are putting up a fight for what they regard as a crucial thing. Something is needed to open the eyes of the people to the actions of a Government who are grabbing everything they can—not only in taxation, but also things they never earned. They have not the business capacity to earn anything; but, when some unfortunate worker has got to give up some interest in a home, these gentlemen, who profess to be the friends of the worker, grab what he leaves. I hope the Minister will reconsider his attitude.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I would point out to the Minister in charge of this Bill that the word “abandonment” in the clause must mean ordinary abandonment and not abandonment in law. If it meant abandonment in law, the interest would be gone for all time. If you look at the dictionary, which has just been quoted, you will find the following definitions of “abandon”:—

“Leave, quit, renounce, forgo, resign, give up, surrender, relinquish.”

I ask the Minister to reconsider this proposal. Why put the worker, when some asset belongs to him, in a worse position than any ordinary individual?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Withdraw the amendment and negative the clause.

Mr. VOWLES: We are agreeable to that.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): I think it is about time we had legislation introduced in this Chamber which does the fair thing by the people. That has not been the character of the legislation we have had introduced in this session and in previous sessions, and the amendment is moved purely in the interests of the workers and of Queensland. I am inclined to think that, if this sort of thing goes on, the Government will own everything in Queensland in a short time.

[7 p.m.]

Hon. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): I understood the Minister to say that, if my amendment were withdrawn, he would be prepared to allow the clause to be negated. On that understanding, I beg leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 8 put and negated.

Clause 9—"Amendment of section 22—*Remedies of the Minister*"—put and passed.

Clause 10—*Exemption from stamp duty; exemption from rates; exemption from personal liability*"—

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): The position will be rather difficult for local authorities. Under ordinary circumstances a private individual has to submit plans to local authorities, which decide whether the subdivision proposed is the most suitable. If the local authority considers that too much of a burden is being placed upon it in the subdivision of an estate, it can require the owner to do certain work before it allows the plans to go through or allows any portion of the estate to be sold. The Crown is not accepting any of the responsibilities which a private owner has to accept. When they cut up an estate the local authorities will have no say, but will have to make roads and footpaths and carry out drainage. That will be rather expensive. Whether the houses are occupied or not does not make very much difference to the liability of the local authority.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: They will not be built until approved tenants are available.

Mr. MOORE: I understood the idea was to acquire a block of land and build a whole row of buildings on the town-planning system. That will entail a great deal of expense on a local authority—expense which will have to be borne eventually by the occupiers of those houses, or by the ratepayers if those people are to be exempted. In view of the amount of money involved, it would be rather a mistake to claim exemption for those who eventually purchase the houses. If the houses are built on one block of land which is valued in one piece—and I suppose a small valuation would be placed upon it—the whole of the land should not be exempted from rates if one house in the block becomes vacant and reverts to the Crown. A tenant may purchase a house and be in it a couple of years, during which time he may pay no rates. We have had experience of cases in which tenants have been two or three years

in arrears with their rates. When the property reverts to the Crown, there is no possibility of getting any rates. When the Crown takes over the place, the rates are absolutely lost to the local authority. Considering the work the local authorities have to do in making roads, they should be adequately protected by the Crown when they are doing a certain amount of work in connection with the settlement scheme undertaken by the Crown. When they seek to make conditions more healthy for the tenants, the Crown should not place any undue burden upon them.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I have already stated that it would not be a fair thing to exempt this land from taxation. I therefore move the omission, on line 20, of the word "not." The land will become rateable if that amendment is adopted. I understand that where the land is Crown land and it is acquired for the purpose of workers' homes, that land is not rateable. When land is resumed for public purposes—probably taken over from a private owner who has up to that time paid rates—it becomes non-rateable. This is going to inflict a hardship upon the local authorities. There are too many exemptions already from local authority rates—we have had experience in connection with war service homes. It has caused no end of trouble to local authorities generally and local authority clerks.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The amendment is out of order, as it will impose a further charge on the Crown.

Mr. KING: If the clause is deleted, it will not make the position any better.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. gentleman is raising a very debatable question. The principle should be dealt with when the Local Authorities Act is being amended.

Mr. KING: We cannot deal with the matter under the Local Authorities Act.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Yes.

Mr. KING: Crown lands are not rateable.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The Local Authorities Act can be amended.

Mr. KING: When will we be given an opportunity of amending the Act in that direction?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: An opportunity will be given to amend the Act this year; but I do not say it will be amended in this direction.

Mr. KING: The Bill might provide for the amendment of the Act "in certain particulars," but not including this particular, and we would be denied the right to raise this question. Even if we delete the clause it will not better the position of the local authorities, because these lands will be exempt from taxation. If the amendment is out of order, of course, I cannot urge it.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I rise to a point of order. I submit that the amendment is out of order, on the ground that it will impose a further levy on the Crown. If the amendment were carried, it would mean that any land vested in the Minister for this purpose would immediately become subject to local authority rates, and the department would have to pay those rates. Consequently it would be a further charge on the Crown, and would exceed the

Hon. W. Forgan Smith.]

appropriation recommended in His Excellency's message in connection with the Bill. No amendment can be accepted that increases the charge on the Crown.

The CHAIRMAN: The point raised by the Minister, I am afraid, is fatal to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Logan. The hon. member is doubtless aware that the message from His Excellency recommends the necessary appropriation to give effect to the Bill, and any amendment that would increase the charge on the Crown is out of order. On those grounds I must rule the amendment out of order.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I desire to say a few words in connection with the general contention of the hon. member for Logan and the hon. member for Aubigny. I recognise that the question of local authorities imposing rates in connection with Crown property is a debatable one. It can be argued from the local authorities' point of view that rates should be levied, but an inferior authority cannot levy on the Crown. Whether Parliament will ever allow an inferior body to levy on the Crown is very problematical. Hon. members opposite have raised this question time after time, but I venture to say that, if some disaster overtook Queensland and they got on the Treasury benches, they would not amend the Local Authorities Act in this direction. They never attempted it during the time they were in power, nor has a similar party which is in power in the Commonwealth ever raised any question of the local authorities having power to levy rates on Crown property. Under this Bill we are meeting the local authorities to a certain extent, inasmuch as we are making the land upon which a house is built subject to local authority rates, although it remains Crown land until the contract for sale is complete.

Mr. KING: It is a contract for purchase.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Until the contract is completed the property is Crown property, so that we are meeting the just claims of the local authorities to a certain extent. The hon. member for Aubigny referred to the possibility of large areas of land being cut up into building allotments, necessitating access thereto being provided by the local authority. Look at the matter from the point of view of an investment. Take a 30-acre block of land which has not been used and for which only small rates are being paid. If that block was cut up into 30-perch allotments and houses built on it, the increased rates which the local authority would get over a number of years would more than repay the cost of roads giving access to the area. I do not think it would be a fair thing to impose this proposed charge on land which is not at present being used for building purposes. It would be imposing an additional burden upon the men whom we are endeavouring to find homes for at the least possible cost.

Dealing generally with the question of group settlement, it has theoretically much to commend it. The system appeals to us if under it a large number of similar houses can be built at a comparatively small cost, having regard to the fact that a large number of houses can be built according to a standardised design. I made some investigations in the other States in connection with group settlements during last recess,

[*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.*

and the opinion generally expressed by the authorities charged with the administration of group settlements was that they were not the success originally anticipated. A good many people do not like the idea of living in a street where all the houses are built on the same uniform design, the same size, and the same colour. I propose to give the individual purchaser as much freedom of choice as possible, having regard to the amount of money advanced for the building of a home. I propose, so long as I am administering the Act, to have from fifteen to twenty standard designs prepared for the respective costs, and to allow intending borrowers to select the design which suits their individual requirements. The man who is going to pay for the home should be given as much freedom of choice as possible. The same thing holds good in regard to the locality in which the house is to be built. Men often want to live in a locality where their friends are, and that is particularly the case with regard to our womenfolk; and I see no reason why, under this Bill, if a piece of land can be got at a reasonable price, an approved person should not be allowed to exercise his choice in that direction.

Mr. SIZER: What is the position under the Workers' Dwellings Act?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Under the Workers' Dwellings Act the applicant has to have the land and a certain amount of the cost of the house. Under this Bill a man requires to have only 5 per cent. of the total cost of the land and buildings, which is a very different proposition. While there may be groups formed in certain places, I propose to give as much freedom of choice as possible in the way of selection to the men who are going to buy these homes. Land will not be resumed until it is intended to build homes; and building operations will be gone on with at the earliest possible moment after land is resumed.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I quite agree with the Minister that the amendment is outside the scope of the Bill; but there are many things that have to be considered, and some provision should be made to protect the local authority in regard to arrears of rates which may be due on any property under the Bill. The principle underlying this measure is that the object is to establish communal settlements.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: No. That may be done. It is a question of administration.

Mr. VOWLES: That is what we understood when the principal Act came into force. We understood that the same principle was to be adopted as was adopted at Daceyville, a suburb of Sydney, set apart for workers. That may be all right from the community point of view.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: And from a utility point of view, too. You can have a number of different designs.

Mr. VOWLES: I can quite understand that until such time as the contract of sale is completed the land is not subject to rates. The Minister said that Crown lands should not be subject to rates, and I agree it would not be a fair thing to tax the tenant or purchaser until he gets into occupation. But local authorities have to incur a considerable amount of expense in connection with these areas, and it might happen

that, if a tenant goes out of possession and the property is resumed by the Crown, there are arrears of rates on the property which the local authority will not be able to recover.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: If one tenant becomes a defaulter, the department will get another tenant.

Mr. VOWLES: Once the land becomes Crown land again, through the action of the department in resuming it, the local authority cannot recover any rates, and that will wipe out all the arrears of rates, if there are any. Some provision should be made to protect the local authorities. I understand that the position has arisen already where the Crown have resumed land and the local authority is unable to collect arrears of rates. Once the tenant assumes the liability for the property, the local authority should be protected in regard to rates.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): If we assume that "A" is in possession of the land and he owes £2 in rates, "A" becomes a defaulter to the department and abandons his property. The department will then arrange for a new purchaser, and the new purchaser will take over the rates due on the property.

Mr. KING: Will the new purchaser be liable for the rates on the property?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Yes. If the first purchaser becomes a defaulter, and is unable to complete the contract of sale, the department will arrange for a new purchaser. The new purchaser taking over the house and land also takes over the obligation, and is liable for the rates.

Mr. KING: Does he take over the liability?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Yes.

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*): Local authorities cannot claim any rates from the Crown, and I would like to point out that this is a very serious matter for them. It affects their revenue considerably, and not only have we the State properties to consider, but also the Commonwealth properties. I know many instances where roads have been made and water laid on to war service homes, but the rates have not been paid, and there has been practically no revenue for the local authority.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Once a house is built and one person defaults in the payment of rates, the new tenant takes over the liability for rates.

Mr. GREEN: I can understand that, but it has often been found almost impossible to get sanitary charges or rates from these tenants who hold leases on Crown lands and reserves.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: You collect both from them.

Mr. GREEN: We do not. In a big proportion of cases it is impossible.

Mr. STOFFORD: The whole of the Mount Morgan rates are obtained from leasehold.

Mr. GREEN: They may be, but in a lot of these small places it has been found impossible.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: You have collected rates from the Townsville Railway Reserve for years.

Mr. GREEN: We get practically no rates from the Reserve in the North Ward, the Rifle Range Reserve, or the Pound Yard Reserve.

Mr. KING: Land vested in the Commissioner for Railways is absolutely exempt.

Mr. GREEN: It does not hit the local authority so much as it does the thrifty man. The man who saves and builds his own home on freehold land finds that, if insufficient revenue is collected because of these defaults, the rates are increased, and he has to carry the additional imposition. Last night I was prevented from speaking on a Bill which imposes a great number of liabilities on local authorities, and all these provisions put additional taxation on the thrifty individual who owns his own home. If the Minister says we have no power to levy rates, why is the clause inserted? Is there any necessity for it?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Yes. I stated when I was speaking that the local authorities can get the rates from the new tenant.

Mr. GREEN: So soon as the Government take over the areas of land involved, the local authorities are deprived of a large revenue which they have been getting from them.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): The Minister says that, if a property is bought and the purchaser gives up possession owing rates and it is subsequently relet, the subsequent purchaser is liable for those rates.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Yes.

Mr. KING: I am very glad to hear him say that; but I do not think it can be enforced unless the Minister will make it a hard-and-fast rule in his department that it shall be a condition of the lease of any incoming tenant that he shall be liable for those arrears. In the case of forfeited selections, the Secretary for Public Lands always protects local authorities in respect of arrears of rates to the extent of any improvements. That is a departmental ruling very much appreciated by local authorities. If the Minister will do the same in connection with these workers' homes, his action will be appreciated by the local authorities, and will meet the requirements of the case.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): The Minister may believe that this will be as he would like it to be; but under the State Advances Corporation, if a block of land is forfeited, no matter what rates are owing, the local authority has not the slightest [7.30 p.m.] chance of getting them. When reselection takes place, the arrears are not a charge on the property; they are wiped off absolutely. As soon as the State Advances Corporation forecloses and takes over a block, if there is anything left over after the claims of the Department of Public Lands are satisfied, that department can make a payment to the local authority. The State Advances Corporation absolutely wipes its hands of all responsibility. It endeavours to place the responsibility on the Department of Public Lands, but, after its claims have been satisfied, there will not be very much left for the local authority.

Mr. STOFFORD: Does not a large amount of that responsibility rest on the local authority?

Mr. MOORE: I know several cases where the State Advances Corporation has foreclosed on property, leased it for seven or eight months, and has not notified the local authority. The roads have to be maintained, yet the State Advances Corporation disclaims all responsibility for rates. It is not a fair thing that the Corporation should take advantage of a local governing body, which

Mr. Moore.]

has to maintain roads and perform other services for the occupiers of that land. The experience of local authorities in connection with war service homes points to the probability of their having to do a considerable amount of work and get no revenue. When a person has a service rendered, he should contribute in a certain measure. The Minister may think that this should be done, but I do not think there will be any chance of enforcing it.

Mr. WILSON: The rates are always a charge on the land.

Mr. MOORE: Not after the Crown has forfeited the land. My experience has been that we have never had a chance of getting the rates.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): Hon. members of the Opposition are merely raising undue difficulties in connection with the matter. We know that there will be a great demand for the class of house which will be built as a worker's home. It must be remembered that, in the first place, 5 per cent. on the capital value of the land and house must be paid by the purchaser as a deposit. That means that on a £600 house you have £30 in hand. Further payments will be made at the monthly rate by the occupier. Consequently the department will always have a certain amount of money in hand. Assume that in the course of a year or two that man defaults and a second person has to take over the place, the house will still have its original value.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: What about depreciation?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: One knows perfectly well that depreciation does not enter into the question in connection with the home to any great extent for a number of years. I would like to be able to buy in the suburbs of Brisbane at the present time any houses that were built ten years ago, for the price it took to build them—houses which in the meantime have had very little spent on them. The position is that the rates will be arranged for by the department.

Clause 10 put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with an amendment.

The third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Wednesday next.

CAIRNS HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER INVESTIGATION BOARD BILL.

SECOND READING.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): This Bill is very largely supplementary to the Water Power Bill, which was passed by the House this week. It is proposed to establish a Board comprised of local authority representatives to inquire into and report on the feasibility of the Barron Falls as a hydro-electric proposition. The various shires will appoint representatives to the Board and the Government will appoint two. Those local authorities will pay half the cost of such investigation. The Crown will subsidise them £1 for £1, with a limit on the Government contribution of £1,000. I think that this is a matter which the local authorities up there have been very active in for some considerable time past. I was interviewed when in Cairns a couple of years ago,

[*Mr. Moore.*

and during the last recess the Premier received a number of deputations from local authorities asking that this be done.

The Board will have power to make a full and complete investigation into the possibilities of the Barron Falls as a hydro-electric proposition. If, in the course of its investigation, it can formulate a sound scheme for submission to the Government under the Water Power Bill that we passed this week we can proclaim it a water power area and proceed with the other steps provided for in that Bill. The Board so formed will be something in the nature of a Commission. Certain powers will be conferred upon it, and the Board can employ experts to supply it with the necessary advice in relation to matters that require expert knowledge and professional knowledge. I beg to move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): This Bill has to be read in conjunction with the Water Power Bill. Under the Bill a Board will be constituted for investigation purposes. What is the occasion for a special Act of Parliament with respect to Cairns? Is not the necessary power given under the Water Power Bill, or will it be necessary to have a special Act of Parliament with respect to each place?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: No.

Mr. VOWLES: This appears to me to be surplusage. All the Bill seeks to do is to create a Board. Section 7 of the Water Power Bill says—

“The Governor in Council may, from time to time, by Order in Council—(i.) Constitute any defined part of Queensland wherein is located the whole or any part of any stream, lake, or other source of supply wherefrom or whereby water is or may be utilised for the generation, storage, use, or supply of power a Water Power Area under such name as is declared by the Order.”

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: A Water Power Board would not be constituted a Hydraulic Authority until after full investigation.

Mr. VOWLES: That is natural; but what is the occasion for a special Act of Parliament to deal with Cairns?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: To establish a Board constituted by members of the local authorities at their request.

Mr. VOWLES: Only for that reason?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Yes.

Mr. VOWLES: I could not see where the Water Power Bill was defective, and I could not see the necessity for special legislation dealing with Cairns unless there had to be a special Act of Parliament for each place.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is done at the request of the local authorities.

Mr. VOWLES: I am satisfied with that. I take no exception to the Bill. It is purely a question of research. The people in the shires will have to foot the bill, and I understand there is to be a subsidy from the Government, but the aggregate amount is not to exceed £1,000. If we can get the results we should get from the Barron Falls and the Barron River under a scheme such as is suggested here, I think the money will be very well spent.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

(Mr. Kirwan, Brisbane, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 to 9, both inclusive, put and passed.

Clause 10—"How expenses to be paid"—

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I beg to move, after line 47, the insertion of the words—

"provided that such amount shall not exceed in the aggregate £1,000."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 10, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 11 and the schedule put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with an amendment.

The third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Wednesday next.

FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): This Bill is a simple measure of one clause, dealing with the question of hours to be worked in bakehouses. The Bill provides—

"(59B.) Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act in regard to overtime, no person shall engage or be engaged in or in connection with the baking of bread for sale at a time when such person would be prohibited from so engaging or being so engaged by the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916, or by any award, order, or agreement thereunder, if he were an employee within the meaning of that Act."

The object of bringing in this Bill is to deal with a difficulty that has arisen in various parts of the State. I have received two deputations in connection with this matter in Brisbane quite recently—one from the Master Bakers' Association and one from the Milling, Baking, Cooking, and Allied Trades' Union. Both those bodies are in favour of this measure, and have requested that it be brought in. The object of the two deputations was to impress upon me how undesirable and how unfair a trade was being carried on at the present time. We know that there are men in business who employ men and loyally carry out the awards of the Arbitration Court, and it is not fair that they should be hampered in their operations by bogus partnerships which are occasionally entered into to evade the provisions of the award. I understand that the methods that are adopted are that where three or four men are employed together they are given a small share in the business and they are registered as a company, and, while they are really only employees dependent upon their weekly wages, they are placed outside the jurisdiction of the Arbitration Court and the Department of Labour, and they work during hours which legitimate traders cannot work, and, therefore, legitimate traders cannot reasonably compete with them. The object of the Bill is to prevent unfair trading, and to provide that baking shall be carried on only under the conditions that are set out in industrial awards governing that occupation. I beg to move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): While there might be a good deal in this matter from a city point of view, I think that if those who are desirous of having this amendment went to the country they would have a different opinion.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: The Arbitration Court provides for special conditions in the country districts.

Mr. CORSER: Special working conditions?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Yes. The different awards governing the industry provide for the different conditions in the various centres of the State.

Mr. VOWLES: This is going to cause very great inconvenience to the public in country districts, as a baker will not be able to deliver a loaf of bread to a man who may come into town after 6 o'clock at night. I have seen the inspector coming down in the morning and standing outside the butcher's shop in Dalby to see that the butcher did not sell meat before 8 o'clock on the Monday morning.

The PREMIER: What were you doing in town before 8 o'clock on Monday morning? (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: I was going to my office. I do not know whether the regulations are still in force, but on one occasion the local butcher was summoned at the police court in Dalby for a breach of the regulations. It was in the summer time, and he had no cold storage. He killed the beast on Sunday; but was not entitled to kill it until after 4 o'clock on Monday morning. The meat had to be put on the table at 8 o'clock, and everyone knows that meat that has only been killed four hours is not fit for human consumption. I have seen the same inspector standing outside that place to see that the public were not served before 8 o'clock. In some cases the meat was for hotels, and the boarders were compelled to get to their places of business by 8 o'clock.

Mr. POLLOCK: I know twenty towns in the West where there are no inspectors.

Mr. VOWLES: You are very lucky.

Mr. POLLOCK: I consider I am unlucky.

Mr. VOWLES: It is all very well to make a law that may be suitable for the city, where there is every convenience, but where you have a travelling public like you have in country towns the conditions are totally different. Take the case of a droving plant. The men can only travel the distance the stock can travel, and, if they want to get their supplies—in the form of meat and bread—unless they have special messengers to send into town, they very often cannot get them until after 6 o'clock. If this Bill is passed, they will find that they cannot get a loaf of bread after hours. Many people in the country have to travel over very bad roads, and in wet weather they get into town late, and the baker will not be permitted to supply them with bread if they require it. The bakers have told me that this will affect the people, not only in Dalby, but in many other country towns. It will be a breach of the law if they supply bread after 6 p.m.

Mr. KIRWAN: If the baker is summoned you will get a job.

Mr. VOWLES: I got a job in the butcher's case, but I could not get him off, as he had committed a breach of the regulations, and he was fined.

The PREMIER: Could he not have got permission to supply the meat?

Mr. VOWLES: He might at the present time, but at that time he could not. In the face of this alteration in the law, can a baker in a country town get a permit to sell bread after 6 o'clock at night? I know he cannot. The law has to be general.

Mr. BRENNAN: The clause says "baking bread."

Mr. VOWLES: I understand it applies to delivery, too.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: It applies only to baking bread.

Mr. VOWLES: If that is so, I misunderstood what the Minister said.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: It applies to work in the bakehouse.

Mr. VOWLES: If it has only to do with baking, then there is nothing more to be said.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I do not know that the Minister has made that point very clear.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Of course I made it clear.

Mr. CORSER: I think country bakers will be very greatly inconvenienced, and the people in country districts will be inconvenienced. It will act very unjustly where drovers come into country towns at all hours and have to receive their supplies.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The Act does not deal with the delivery or the sale of bread.

Mr. CORSER: Does it include bakers and their families in country districts? Will it bring them under the industrial conditions?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Not in the selling of the bread.

Mr. CORSER: If it includes the baking of the bread, it brings them under the industrial conditions. It will apply to the sale of bread, because they cannot open their bakehouses after hours to sell bread.

Mr. STOPFORD: They cannot do that now.

Mr. CORSER: Yes, they can. I think it is going to be very unjust to country districts.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): We have to be very careful.

Mr. STOPFORD: You ought to have been very careful years ago. (Laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Every case is not like Brisbane. You cannot always have your baker at your back door, and you cannot always have your bread baked in the morning and delivered in the afternoon. In some country districts bread is delivered 8 or 10 miles away from the bakehouse, and very often the baker will bake his bread at night after Arbitration Court award hours, and his family will deliver it next day. If you are going to interfere with those small businesses, you are going to prevent men from attempting to make a living. You practically hamstring them with all these regulations. Every bit of legislation introduced during the last seven years has tended to prevent people from working, and there has been no encouragement whatever to help anyone to work or to help anyone to engage in industry and give employment. The whole of the legislation for the last seven

[*Mr. Fowles.*

years has been in the direction of putting as many difficulties as you can in the way, and really preventing men from earning a living.

Mr. HARTLEY: They would not have to try very hard to prevent you from earning a living.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I can earn a better living than the hon. member. (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): This Bill is on the same lines as the Bill we had before us some twelve months ago in regard to the tobacconists in and around Brisbane. It is an endeavour on the part of the large employers to get rid of their small competitors. There was an attempt on the part of the large tobacconists to have the one-man shops and the two-men shops brought under the award in order to prevent competition, but there was an agitation on the part of the small shopkeepers, and the Bill was immediately dropped. The same principle is being adopted under this Bill.

[8 p.m.] There is an endeavour on the part of big firms to cut out the small bakers who are endeavouring to carry on business and make ends meet. It is a mistake to apply the provisions of a Bill like this to the country districts. Brisbane conditions do not apply to country districts where the population is sparse.

The PREMIER: It will only apply where there are factories and shops districts.

Mr. MOORE: There are numbers of small towns where there is only a one-man shop, and it is going to be a hardship in a case like that. I can quite understand this Bill being made applicable to Ipswich and similar places, where there is a large population, but it cannot be applied to country towns where there is no competition.

The PREMIER: A deputation waited upon me in North Queensland asking for this.

Mr. MOORE: I can quite understand that there will be individuals everywhere who will ask for restrictions to be placed on trade, so as to prevent somebody else making a living.

The PREMIER: The desire for it is widespread there.

Mr. MOORE: I do not think it is fair that this provision should be made applicable to a large district. It may be a good thing in a town where there is a large population, but it is a different proposition in a country place, where people will have great difficulty in securing supplies if shops are closed at these specified hours.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I quite agree with the hon. member for Aubigny in regard to restricting the areas in which the provisions of the Bill shall operate. Country conditions are altogether different to those in towns and cities.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: It only applies to factories and shops districts. Small country towns are not factories and shops areas.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Premier told us a few minutes ago that a deputation waited upon him in North Queensland requesting that this legislation should be introduced. He did not tell us whom that deputation represented—whether it was representative of the people engaged in the trade or not.

The PREMIER: It was a deputation of people who were interested in the trade.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I showed you two letters—one from the Master Bakers' Association and one from the Baking Employees' Trade Union.

Mr. TAYLOR: That was in the metropolitan area. If the Bill is going to apply to country areas, it will certainly inflict hardship. People in those places are paying more for their bread than people in the metropolitan area, owing to the fact that there are only a few flour mills in Queensland, and the flour has to be carried long distances by rail, and after that by bullock waggons: and the imposition of the conditions of this Bill would be a great hardship on those communities. It would be much better if we had the areas where the Bill is to come into operation specifically defined, so that people would know exactly what to do.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Kirwan, Brisbane, in the chair.*)

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

The third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Wednesday next.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION BILL.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Kirwan, Brisbane, in the chair.*)

Clauses 6 to 8, both inclusive, put and passed.

Clause 9—“*Applications for establishment of schools or classes*”—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. J. Huxham, *Buranda*): At this stage I might explain that all references to local authorities will be cut out of the Bill. I think that will meet the wishes of hon. members on both sides of the House. I move the insertion, on line 32, after the word “by,” of the words—

“any society, association, or body of persons.”

Amendment agreed to.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I move the omission of lines 33 to 36, namely—

“(i.) Any local authority or any two or more local authorities having jurisdiction within such locality; or

“(ii.) Any society, association, or body of persons.”

Amendment agreed to.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I beg to move the omission, on line 26, page 5, of the words “local authority.”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 9, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 10 and 11 put and passed.

Clause 12—“*Special rates by Local Authority*”—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I propose to negative this clause.

Clause put and negatived.

Clauses 13 to 20, both inclusive, put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved—

“That the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of further considering clauses 2, 4, 5, and 6.”

Question put and passed.

RECOMMITTAL.

(*Mr. Kirwan, Brisbane, in the chair.*)

Clause 2—“*Interpretation*”—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I beg to move the omission on lines 7 to 12, page 2, of the definitions. This omits the interpretation of “Local Authority” and “Local Authorities Act.”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 4—“*Board of Agricultural Education*”—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I beg to move the omission, on line 32, of the word “two” with a view to inserting the word “three.”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 5—“*Superintendent of Agricultural Education*”—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I beg to move the omission, on line 30, of the word “Council” with a view to inserting the word “Board.”

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I am glad the Minister has agreed to this amendment. I suggested it last time the Bill was before the Committee, but he “gagged” it. (Laughter.)

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 5, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 6—“*Duties of the Board*”—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I beg to move the omission, on lines 44 to 47, of the words—

“(b) To co-operate with local authorities in the establishment of agricultural schools and classes and, generally, in the promoting of agricultural education.”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 6, as amended, put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with further amendments.

The third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Kirwan, Brisbane, in the chair.*)

Clause 1 put and passed.

Clause 2—“*Annual endowment*”—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. J. Huxham, *Buranda*): I beg to move the omission, on line 7, page 2, of the words “in natural science.”

Amendment agreed to.

Hon. J. Huxham.]

Clause 2, as amended, put and passed.

The HOUSE resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with an amendment.

The third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

AUCTIONEERS AND COMMISSION AGENTS BILL.

SECOND READING.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flanders*): This Bill is the outcome of deputations and representations on the part of the auctioneers and commission agents and of the general public. Away back in 1910 the Government of the day had a Bill prepared; but it was not introduced, and since has been forgotten. In 1920 a deputation waited on me and urged the introduction of this measure as a protection to the public and to the decent auctioneers and commission agents from the sharks who were invading the business. I informed the deputation that I would give full consideration to the question, and, after doing so, I am satisfied that a Bill of this kind is absolutely necessary. In making my inquiries I called on the Commissioner of Stamp Duties for a report upon those persons who follow these callings, and I propose to give a sample or two of his remarks—

“It is within my knowledge, from documents coming before me for stamping and also impounded by the Inspector of Stamps, that many persons are taken in by fraudulent misrepresentation of the position of such businesses by spurious advertising.

“As previously pointed out, I consider the only reasonable safeguard to the public doing ordinary business with commission agents as well as the prevention of the evil herein mentioned, is the passing of a measure for the registration and proper control of persons carrying on this class of business.”

He also says—

“Cases have come under my notice in estates where supposedly reputable commission agents have defrauded persons of large sums of money by various devices—even having bogus mortgages executed. However, the greatest danger to the public is in the buying and selling of properties. A case recently was brought unofficially before me where an agent had a nice little property for sale; price, say, £425. A buyer called, and was anxious to purchase because his wife was very pleased with it. The agent informed him that as the vendor desired to get away he required cash, or the greater part of the money paid immediately. The buyer went away to arrange for this, and came back some few days later prepared to pay the whole amount in cash. The agent, apparently satisfied that this man was a sure buyer, negotiated with the vendor to purchase the property for, say, £390 cash, getting the transfer made out in the name of either a clerk in his employ or some other person known to him. Upon the return of the buyer he was told the purchase price was £450. In this case the agent not only netted his commission from the vendor but also the

further sum of £60, the difference between his purchase for £390 and the sale at £450.

“A common excuse with some agents when people call for their deeds is to say they are with the Stamp Office. At odd times people call here to know why we retain their documents, and then when they are told such documents are not here the trouble begins with the agent, who invariably is able to raise sufficient money—possibly by treating another client similarly—to pay up, bring the documents along, and have the matter, which should have been arranged by him months before, completed.”

I could give scores of cases where it is alleged that the heartless scoundrel known as a “snide” agent has received the little hoards of widows and other unfortunate people, and I am satisfied that it is our duty to protect the public against such unscrupulous scoundrels and also to protect the honest auctioneer and commission agent against the dishonest man, and, if possible, to prevent such unmitigated scoundrels from doing this kind of thing in Queensland. We cannot eradicate scoundrels of this type altogether, but we can do something to make it difficult for them to carry on their nefarious calling.

I have taken advantage of this opportunity to bring the provisions of the Auctioneers Act of 1864 up to date and to deal with the auctioneers and commission agents in one measure. There are many anomalies in the Act of 1864, and, as many of the provisions of a Commission Agents Bill apply equally to auctioneers, it is thought most convenient to take that course.

The Bill, so far as it affect auctioneers, comes into operation on 1st January next. The provisions regarding auctioneers will not apply in certain cases, such as sales by the Department of Public Lands, by the Sheriff, by order of the Court, by a poundkeeper, local authorities, the Public Curator, and so on. The provisions relating to commission agents are to be in force only in specified areas prescribed by Order in Council, for the obvious reason that there is no particular demand for the Bill in the provincial towns, although it is absolutely necessary in the metropolitan area, and for the additional reason that most, if not all, commission agents in the smaller towns carry on commission agency business merely as a side-line. Probably they do not make more than one or two sales in the course of a year, and it would not be necessary or desirable to harass them by asking them to pay the license fees, provide fidelity bonds, and so on. Areas in any part of Queensland may be proclaimed, if necessary.

The Bill, of course, replaces the Auctioneers Act of 1864, and provides for the appointment of a registrar and such other officers as may be necessary. Auctioneers' licenses are to be of two kinds—general licenses, which will operate throughout the whole State, and district licenses, which will be in force in the district in which they are issued. An application for an auctioneer's license is to be made to the clerk of the court in the locality in which the auctioneer resides, and is to be accompanied by a fidelity bond for a sum not exceeding £500 and by testimonials as to character signed by five reputable citizens, and by the prescribed

[Hon. J. Mullan.

fee of £5 or £15, according to whether the license required is a district license or a general license. If the court is satisfied as to the respectability and suitability of the applicant, the license, of course, will be granted. At present the application is made to the court for a certificate, and, strange to say, it is the Treasurer who grants the license. Under this Bill the whole business can be settled expeditiously and locally without any trouble to anybody concerned. Any person who carries on business without the proper license is liable to the penalty of imprisonment for six months or a fine not exceeding £100. The Bill prohibits night auctions, but the Minister may grant permits for auctions of goods at bazaars, the proceeds of which are to be devoted entirely to any church or charity. There is also a provision that sales of wool included in catalogues, after the wool has been inspected during the day, may be carried on without any limitation, the reason being that very often wool sales are carried on on a very large scale and have to be conducted very expeditiously. The Bill is not intended to harass any bona fide business, but to protect business people and the public.

The Bill also deals with bogus advertising, and prescribes a penalty for persons who indulge in that practice. Auctioneers cannot sell the property of a client [3.30 p.m.] without his written consent, nor can an employee of an auctioneer sell without the written consent of the person who owns the goods.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Would not the fact of his sending it in for sale be an order to sell it?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Of course, if he sends it in *bonâ fide*, no doubt it will be all right. Moneys received in respect of sales shall be applied in the payment of commission and the payment of such moneys as may be due to the auctioneer, and the balance must be placed, until paid to the account of the seller of the property, in a special or general trust fund. That money shall not be attachable for any debt owed by the auctioneer. In that way we safeguard the seller of the property and save him from the misfortunes that on some occasions in the past have overtaken people who have placed their property in the hands of dishonest auctioneers. Auctioneers must render accounts to their principals within fourteen days. Auctioneers who fraudulently convert moneys to their own use are liable to imprisonment with hard labour for five years, or to a penalty not exceeding £200. Auctioneers cannot sue for fees unless they are licensed and have written permission to sell from the owner or his agent; and they must not charge fees exceeding those prescribed.

Applications must also be made for commission agents' licenses. They, too, must be accompanied by a bond not exceeding £500, by certificates as to character signed by five reputable citizens, and by a fee not exceeding £5. The Bill contains provisions dealing with commission agents similar to those dealing with auctioneers—such as the carrying on of a business without a license in a district in which it is necessary to have a license, in regard to the issuing of bogus advertisements, the selling of property without the written consent of the owner, providing for the application of trust funds, the rendering of

accounts within fourteen days, in regard to the fraudulent conversion of money, and so on.

Mr. BRENNAN: Will those conditions apply to the sellers of wool?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes. We have consulted those persons, and, provided we give them the right to sell at night if they so desire, they are satisfied with the other provisions of the Bill. When a company carries on business, the chairman of directors, the manager, or other governing officer, shall be liable for any offence.

The Bill provides for the keeping of a register of auctioneers and commission agents of the State, and for the publication of a list of auctioneers and commission agents in March of each year. Auctioneers and commission agents may appoint a substitute to carry on their business on the payment of a fee of 10s.; and, in the case of the death or insolvency of an auctioneer or commission agent, the executors, administrators, or trustees may transfer the license with the approval of the court.

Provision is made in the Bill for the cancellation of the license of an auctioneer or commission agent in certain cases, such as his being convicted of an indictable offence.

The Bill gives the Governor in Council power to make such regulations as may be necessary for carrying out its provisions.

The Bill represents an honest attempt to regulate the business of auctioneers and commission agents and to protect the honest business man and the community generally from the human hawks who are ever ready to rob the unwary investor. I beg to move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): This is a machinery Bill, and there is not very much principle in it other than that it is an attempt to regulate the business of auctioneers and commission agents. I think it must be generally admitted that it is time legislation was passed to deal with this branch of business. We have had a law dealing with auctioneers in the past; but the remarkable thing is that the auctioneer who sold by public auction—which necessarily implies publicity—was compelled to pay a fee, and the man who sold privately, and whose transactions were not open to the light of day, had no fee to pay for the right to carry on his business. I am rather surprised that the Minister has not gone further in introducing the Bill. I think that many commission agents carrying on business in the country would be glad to pay a reasonable fee as a protection against bogus commission agents, who, in proportion to population, number as many in the country as in the city. There is certainly provision that—

“The Governor in Council may from time to time, by Order in Council published in the ‘Gazette,’ declare that the provisions of this Act relating to commission agents shall come into operation and be in force in such districts as are specified in such order; thereupon such provisions shall come into operation and be in force in such districts accordingly.”

The only class of commission agent referred to will be found in the definition clause, which provides that “commission agent” means—

“Any person who, within a district

Mr. Vowles.]

in which the provisions of this Act relating to commission agents are in force, as an agent for others, whether on commission or for or in expectation of any fee, gain, or reward, and either alone or in connection with any other business, exercises or carries on the business or advertises or notifies that he exercises or carries on the business of buying, selling, or letting houses, land, or estates, or negotiating for such buying, selling, or letting, or buying or selling hotel businesses, boarding-house businesses, stockkeeping businesses, manufacturing businesses, or trading businesses whatsoever, or any interest in any of such businesses."

"That, to my mind, imposes unnecessary limitations. I am rather inclined to think that there are men in the country who would not be averse to paying a fee and coming within the operation of this measure."

Mr. KIRWAN: It is not often you find people looking to be taxed.

Mr. VOWLES: There is a class of man who does not advertise. Before a man should be entitled to carry on business as a commission agent he should have an office, and he should advertise that he is a commission agent. That should be the first essential. I have seen many cases in country districts where the name "commission agent" has been misleading. Hon. members would be astonished if they knew the number of licensed victuallers who charge commission on stock transactions. Even solicitors do, though I have never done it. The reason they do it is that the commission agents do legal work—they make a practice of it. I see that the rights of the legal profession are being preserved, as the Bill says—

"This Act shall not in any way affect the provisions of section 41 of the Supreme Court Act of 1867, nor the provisions of the Money Lenders Act of 1916."

Section 41 of the Supreme Court Act of 1867 is the contempt of court section. It has been observed in the breach, and things have got to such a stage in Brisbane that not only do commission agents charge the commission which they are entitled to charge, but they actually charge for clerical work done, in addition to attendance fees, letter-writing, and all that sort of thing, on the same lines as a professional man would do.

Mr. KIRWAN: They charge for transfers, too.

Mr. VOWLES: Yes; it is a pity that some of them are not brought under the contempt of court section. If we are going to legislate to protect the commission agent, he will have to stick to his own business, and he should be prosecuted for transgressing, as he is now doing.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is the reason why subclause (3) of clause 2 is inserted.

Mr. VOWLES: That has always been there.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: This will call special attention to it.

Mr. VOWLES: It is just as well to bring it before their notice. Some of these men have gone to the trouble to qualify as conveyancers; they have put in years of study and they have paid the fees; they are carry-

ing on business as commission agents and are registered as conveyancers, and they are entitled to their fees; but, unfortunately, the man who has not qualified is in the same position to-day. That should be remedied. It seems to me that this Bill is going to be rather good for the State Insurance Department, because it means that more business will be brought in in the way of fidelity guarantee bonds.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Bill provides for a fidelity bond from the State Insurance Commissioner "or other prescribed security." The fidelity bond from the State Insurance Commissioner is mentioned because we are issuing a special rate.

Mr. VOWLES: There are one or two things I would like to bring under the Minister's notice. We know what the law is in respect to auctioneers—it has been in force a long time. They receive a license and pay certain fees, and there is no desire to interfere with them. There is a desire on the part of the city auctioneers to have the fee the same in the city as in the country. Clause 16 reads—

"Every person who desires to obtain a commission agent's license shall lodge with the clerk of a court within the district wherein he resides an application in the form prescribed. . . accompanied by a fidelity bond in a prescribed amount not exceeding £500 . . ."

Is there going to be a discrimination between the amount of the fidelity bond in the different areas? A commission agent can carry on business by telephone or telegram or by correspondence, and he might have to lodge a fidelity bond for a different amount to a person carrying on business in another area. It appears that the words "not exceeding" were never intended to be inserted in this clause.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They are intended to be there, all right.

Mr. VOWLES: Then you are going to discriminate.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We may discriminate between the city and the country. They do not do much business in the country in comparison.

Mr. VOWLES: You are not dealing with stock and station agents. The different districts are to have different fidelity bonds. The rest of the Bill is purely a matter to be dealt with in Committee, when certain amendments will be submitted. They have been posted to me. I think they come from the persons chiefly interested in Brisbane, and I will bring them up in Committee. I am glad that this Bill has been introduced. The time is fully ripe for it. If it is going to protect the public, it will accomplish some good. It will not do any good in connection with the case mentioned by the Minister. If a man is dishonest and has funds at his disposal, it does not matter what the fee is, he will pay it and carry on his dishonesty.

Mr. KIRWAN: The fidelity bond will be a protection.

Mr. VOWLES: In the case mentioned by the Minister, where a man entered into a secret agreement, he should, if possible, be dealt with criminally. I do not think that it would be possible to do that, but he should be dealt with with the utmost rigour of the law. When men improperly use funds

[Mr. Vowles.]

entrusted to them, legislation like this is not going to deter them.

Mr. KIRWAN: Supposing we struck them off the roll, like we do solicitors.

Mr. VOWLES: You could do that. He could only carry on business during such time as he had a certificate. Cases like that should not only be reported, but the department should see that such persons are brought to justice.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): The Bill proposes to create an auctioneer's license and a commission agent's license as two entirely separate things, clauses 6 to 14 dealing with auctioneers and clauses 16 to 25 dealing with commission agents. I think everyone realises that commission agents' interests are connected with those of auctioneers. It appears to me that there is nothing to warrant charging for two distinct licenses. Those concerned will tell you that the two businesses are inseparable. I think the Minister should take the matter into consideration and co-ordinate those matters a little more than has been done. The Bill provides that sale by auction shall mean—

“ . . . the sale of any property whether real or personal of any kind or description whatsoever by outcry, knocking down of the hammer, or any other mode whereby the highest bidder is the purchaser . . . ”

That provision gives no power for an auctioneer to sell other than under the hammer. We know perfectly well that some auctioneers in Brisbane carry on a good deal of business not under the hammer at all. We should not restrict the auctioneer to selling under the hammer. Very often a private sale is carried on, and under this Bill it would be necessary for a commission agent to handle that matter. The auctioneers should be permitted to sell in a different manner to that which is provided by that clause.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Can the hon. member tell me of any auctioneer who is not a commission agent?

Mr. KERR: There are many auctioneers who do not conduct commission agency business. If the Minister agrees that the two classes of work are carried on by one firm, then we should make provision in the Bill to allow that to be done. The Bill restricts sales by commission agents to transactions in connection with houses, land, estates, hotel businesses, boarding-houses, storekeeping, manufacturing or trading businesses. I think a good deal more protection should be afforded for the £15 for a license fee. It appears to me that, if they join up auctioneers' licenses and commission agents' licenses and have a sliding scale of fees for auctioneers it would get over that difficulty. I do not agree with the principle in the Bill with regard to the fidelity bond, which prevents any insurance company other than the State Insurance office from issuing a bond for £500. I do not think the auctioneers and commission agents object to the bond, but they do not think a monopoly should be given to the State Insurance office, which has the power of veto. If the State Insurance office is not satisfied that an applicant for a license is worthy of a bond of £500, it may withhold the bond, but an insurance company may be prepared to take the risk. I do not think that such

a monopoly should be created. I also desire to say something in regard to the clause dealing with moneys obtained. We know perfectly well that many people who buy from auctioneers run monthly accounts, and the auctioneers have bad debts. According to this Bill the bad debts will revert to the seller of the goods, and the agent will not come within the jurisdiction of this clause, because it is provided that he must sell more or less for cash, and, unless he sells for cash, the seller will accept the responsibility for bad debts. I have circulated an amendment providing that auctioneers shall have a residential qualification in Queensland. My reason for doing that is because of the fact that during show week we have auctioneers coming from the South and taking business out of the hands of the auctioneers of this State. It is only right, when we are asking the auctioneers to pay a fee, that they should be protected from the auctioneers of the other States.

Mr. BRENNAN: What do they sell?

Mr. KERR: Principally stud cattle. I hope that matter will be considered by the Attorney-General.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): There are just a few points in this Bill which I want to emphasise. I quite recognise that the Bill is required, but I would point out that there is just as much need for protection in connection with the agents who sell live stock as there is in regard to the agents who sell land. Very often an agent will send a man out long distances to inspect stock that he has for sale, and subsequently the stock is sold by an outside individual, and the agent has all his work for nothing. A certain amount of protection is required in that direction. Then, again, all auctioneers should be compelled to have a registered office. If a man has got a sign up, it shows he has some standing in the place, and that he is in a better position than the street agents that we have in a number of towns. The street agents only poach on the larger agents; they get hold of their lists and then endeavour to have the commission. Restrictions are necessary in this connection. However, this is more of a Committee Bill, and we all agree that such a Bill is required. From the experience I have had, I am sorry to see restrictions proposed in certain directions, and I hope that, when we get into Committee, the Attorney-General will agree to enlarge the scope of the Bill in the matter of selling stock and also in regard to the amount of fees. In country districts in particular I do not think it is a fair thing to charge two fees.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There need only be a district fee in the country.

Mr. MOORE: It is unfair that they should have to pay two fees.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They need only take out a general license. A man who takes out a general license will be covered for the whole of Queensland.

Mr. MOORE: I am quite satisfied to take the Minister's word for it; but from my reading of the clause it appears to me that they will have to pay a double fee. We all agree with the general principle of having these agents licensed and supervised so that the public will not be taken down in the way they have been taken down in the past,

Mr. Moore.]

in many instances by having statements made to them that are not correct. I think the Bill is a very desirable one.

Question put and passed.

The consideration of the Bill in Committee was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

HEALTH ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Kirwan, Brisbane, in the chair.*)

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): I beg to move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Health Acts, 1900 to 1917, in certain particulars.”

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I notice the Minister did not give any information. I have no doubt that it is very desirable to amend the Health Acts, but we would like to know in what direction. If we are not going to get the information at this stage, I certainly trust the Minister will give us every opportunity, in the way of time to peruse the proposed measure so that we may become acquainted with it. It is most technical, and I should imagine, from what has taken place, that it will be a fairly large Bill.

The PREMIER: A very reasonable request.

Mr. VOWLES: The Premier must remember that we have not had an opportunity of perusing some of the legislation introduced.

[9 p.m.]

The PREMIER: The hon. member has shown that he is very conversant with the Bills we have dealt with to-night.

Mr. VOWLES: Thank you. (Laughter.) We would like a little information at this stage from the Minister; but, if we cannot get it now, we expect sufficient time later on when the Bill comes before us to enable us to get into touch with its contents.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I hope the Minister will give us fair and reasonable time to discuss the Bill when it comes before us. He has told us nothing about its provisions. He has simply told us that the Health Act is to be amended “in certain particulars.” We are given to understand that there are some very important matters to be dealt with, and we want the fullest opportunity to discuss them. Yesterday we had six Bills put into our hands, every one of which came on for discussion immediately. Five of them were very important Bills, while one Bill was not, perhaps, of such importance as the others. It is not fair to put half a dozen Bills into our hands and expect us to deal with them in a proper way in such a limited time. All we ask is that the “gag” shall not be applied in connection with this Bill, and that we shall have a fair opportunity to go thoroughly into it. It should not be treated as a party measure.

Mr. SIZER (*Nundah*): I regret that we have no knowledge as to what this Bill will contain. If there is one measure which needs amending more than any other, it is our Health Act. I would like the Minister to delete the words “in certain particulars” from his motion. A tremendous amount of discussion will arise on the Bill, and the deletion of those words would give us free scope for discussion. I think that provision should be made in the measure to prevent the pollution of streams.

[*Mr. Vowles.*

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You will find that the measure is comprehensive.

Mr. SIZER: It may be comprehensive in regard to the subjects it specifically deals with, but I am afraid that it will not deal with all the matters which should be dealt with. No Health Acts Amendment Bill should pass through this Chamber unless it contains a definite provision to clear up the long-standing evil of the pollution of streams. We have been told, when we have gone to the Health Department on the matter, that it is outside their jurisdiction; and, when we go to the Treasury, that it is not a matter which comes under the Rights in Water and Water Conservation and Utilization Act. I would like to ask the Minister if it is proposed to deal with that matter?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Bill deals with sewers and drainage.

Mr. SIZER: I would like to know whether the Bill makes provision for dealing with noxious streams, because that is a matter which requires to be dealt with in Brisbane as soon as possible. Some of the trades which are alleged to be noxious are being unduly harassed. The local authorities are unable to deal with them. I would like to know if it is the intention under the Bill to reform the Health Department and make it more efficient in regard to micro-biological and bacteriological research, and bring it thoroughly up to date? I would like to know whether the Commissioner for Public Health is to have greater powers to deal with epidemics? We remember that at the time certain epidemics occurred nothing was in readiness to cope with them.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Had you better not wait till you get the Bill?

Mr. SIZER: The difficulty is that, if the order of leave is limited by the words “in certain particulars,” we shall be confined to those narrow limits. This is a non-party measure, and I think we should be able to deal with the whole subject of public health. I regret that the Minister remains silent. The Bill should also deal with the question of lead-poisoning.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You will have an opportunity for full discussion on the second reading, and I will accept any reasonable amendments in Committee. It deals with lead-poisoning.

Mr. SIZER: I do not think the Bill deals with the whole question of public health as it should be dealt with. I therefore move the omission of the words “in certain particulars,” so that we shall have an opportunity of dealing fully with all matters relating to public health.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I desire to second the amendment. When the Estimates were under discussion, I dealt with the nuisance in Breakfast Creek, which is in my electorate. If the Minister will give me an assurance that that matter is dealt with in the Bill I will be satisfied. He has assured us that lead-poisoning is dealt with in the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I cannot give you an assurance with regard to that.

Mr. KERR: If the motion goes through with the words “in certain particulars,” I shall not have an opportunity of getting a clause dealing with the Breakfast Creek nuisance inserted in the Bill. I have gone to

considerable trouble in order to ascertain how this nuisance could be removed, and I have approached the Commissioner for Public Health, the Home Secretary's Department, and various other public departments in that connection. I am anxious to see a definition of "noxious trades" included in the Bill. If the Minister assures me that noxious trades are going to be dealt with in the measure I shall be satisfied.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The local authorities have power now to deal with noxious trades.

Mr. KERR: They have not got the power, or, if they have got the power, the Government are not game to make them exercise it. The local authorities have told me that they can deal with an ordinary nuisance in a backyard where there is a smell, but it is a very different matter dealing with the Breakfast Creek nuisance. The people living in that area are not going to walk round the woolscour and tannery day and night to ascertain where the nuisance arises. I think the Minister should give us an assurance that the Bill will enable us to deal with noxious trades and with the pollution of Breakfast Creek, because this is the last opportunity we shall have this session of dealing with it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Commissioner for Public Health will have greater powers to deal with such questions under this Bill.

Mr. KERR: Will the Commissioner have power to remove the nuisance at Breakfast Creek?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He will have greater powers than he has got at the present time.

Mr. KERR: Everyone knows that the pollution of Breakfast Creek is a menace to the people in that area. They have got to close their doors to keep out the smell. The Minister has given us a half promise that the Commissioner has power to deal with it. If it is found that he has not got the power to deal with it, I hope the Minister will accept an amendment to give him that power.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I recognise that this is a technical Bill. I take it that the Bill is framed on the recommendations of the Commissioner of Public Health, because I do not think anyone else would bring in such legislation without his recommendation; as the Commissioner is the recognised authority on health matters. I think members should be supplied with copies of the Bill beforehand.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You will get a copy of the Bill to-night.

Mr. FRY: I am very pleased to get that assurance from the Minister. We have Bills handed to us at the second reading stage, and we have hardly got time to study them.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): We are anxious to know if the Bill will deal with the pollution of streams. The Minister is not aware of the great nuisance that exists in Breakfast Creek. Unfortunately, we have discovered that the local authorities can do nothing. Three or four of the local authorities in the contiguous areas obtained the best legal advice, and they were told that they could do nothing. If they acted against that legal advice, it would be disastrous for them. Now that we are going to have an amendment of the Health Act we

should get some promise that the pollution of the creek from this woolscour will be dealt with. That is a reasonable request. Everyone who lives in that area knows what a nuisance it is. Anyone going home in the tram along the Bowen Bridge road can notice what a nuisance it is. The smell from the creek extends sometimes as far as Mayno Railway Station. There is always an obnoxious smell coming from the woolscour, and we would like to know if we can deal with it under this Bill. We recognise that an industry has been established there, and it is a most difficult proposition for the local authorities to deal with.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I will endeavour to do something when the Bill is introduced.

Mr. TAYLOR: If the local authorities try to act, they will find that the Harbours and Rivers Department has control over streams, and they will be blocked there.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We can deal with it in this Bill.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): During a discussion of some legislation which was introduced last week hon. members on the Opposition side drew the Premier's attention to the fact that a copy of the Brisbane Tramway Trust Bill had been supplied to the people vitally interested, and the hon. gentleman replied that it was a good practice to follow on certain occasions.

I asked the Premier, not as a member of Parliament but as the secretary of the Local Authorities' Association, to supply that association with a copy of this Bill so that the executive might consider it with the object of giving the Government all the assistance we possibly could to make it a workable measure, but my request was not acceded to. The local authorities throughout Queensland have very important duties to do in connection with the administration of the Health Act; and, if they could have had an opportunity of seeing the Bill, they would have been of great assistance in making it a workable measure.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You will have the whole of the week-end to consider it. We will not take the second reading until Tuesday next.

Mr. KING: This Bill is intended to amend the Health Act in certain particulars. If we could get a copy of it before it is introduced, we could help to make it a workable Bill and a useful Bill, and one that will be of some use to the community generally. I hope the Minister will accept the assurance of hon. members on this side that the object of the Opposition is to assist the Government in making the Bill all it ought to be.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*): I think that the request made by members on this side of the House is very reasonable. I know that the Breakfast Creek nuisance has been very serious, and a great many people have complained of it, but nobody seems to be able to deal with the difficulty. The local authorities do not appear to have the power, and it has already been explained by the leader of the Nationalist party that the Harbours and Rivers Department is in a similar position. There are many things in the city which require the attention of the health authorities as well as the local authorities, and I hope this Bill will have the effect of ensuring that the health of the people shall be conserved.

Mr. Petrie.]

Another great nuisance is the mosquito trouble. The mosquito is supposed to carry a lot of infection of disease, and although attempts have been made to deal with the matter, it is very difficult to control. We have a scattered area and infested swamps which are producing mosquitoes in very large numbers, and are a menace to the community. I hope that the Minister will consider these matters, and that we shall have a Bill which will enable the authorities to improve these conditions.

Mr. SIZER (*Nundah*): I interpret the assurance of the Minister to mean that he is prepared, in Committee, to consider an amendment from this side of the House to cover the nuisance referred to. If he will give us the opportunity of bringing these matters within the scope of the Bill and making it effective, I am quite prepared to withdraw my amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If it is found to be practicable under this Bill, I will do so.

Mr. SIZER: Under those circumstances, I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*) presented the Bill, and moved—

“That the Bill be now read a first time.”

Question put and passed.

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

OFFICIALS IN PARLIAMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Kirwan, Brisbane, in the chair.*)

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I beg to move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to Amend the Constitution of Queensland by further amending the Officials in Parliament Act of 1896 in certain particulars.”

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): Does the Bill involve any increased expenditure?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It does not increase Ministers' salaries or the number of Ministers. It merely provides for the alteration made necessary by the abolition of the other Chamber and the removal of the additional portfolio to this Chamber, increasing the number of Ministers here from eight to nine.

Mr. VOWLES: Without any expense to the country?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There will be no increased expenditure under the Bill.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

[*Mr. Petrie.*

FIRST READING.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*) presented the Bill, and moved—

“That the Bill be now read a first time.”

Question put and passed.

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

The House adjourned at 9.29 p.m.