

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 1923

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TUESDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER, 1923.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Bertram, *Marce*) took the chair at 3.30 p.m.

QUESTIONS.

IMPORTS OF CHAFF, POTATOES, AND HAY FROM SOUTHERN STATES.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“How many tons of chaff, potatoes, and hay, respectively, were received at Wallangarra from the Southern States of the Commonwealth for the State of Queensland during the half-years ended 30th June, 1922, 31st December, 1922, and 30th June, 1923? Also, what quantity of the abovementioned lines was similarly received for the month ended 31st July, 1923?”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Kippel*) replied—

“The tonnage of chaff, potatoes, and hay is not recorded separately, but the following gives particulars of agricultural produce, other than grain:—Half-year ended 30th June, 1922, 15,382 tons; half-year ended 31st December, 1922, 13,219 tons; half-year ended 30th June, 1923, 24,304 tons. The figures for July, 1923, are not available.”

COST OF ESTABLISHING PLANT NURSERY ON BRIBIE ISLAND.

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

“Will he furnish details of the establishment of a nursery on Bribie Island—
(a) Cost of clearing; (b) cost of fencing; (c) all costs to date?”

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

“(a) and (b) Cost of clearing and fencing, £591 5s. 5d. The work was done as a whole, and the two items were not differentiated. (c) £1,887 16s. 3d. This nursery was primarily established for the propagation of banana plants for distribution free from diseases, but, in addition, it will be used for the propagation of other plants and for a quarantine station for imported plants. The soil is suitable for this class of work; there is a good water supply, and, being isolated, the danger of the introduction of noxious pests is minimised. The nursery is yet in its infancy, but in addition to bananas, propagation work is now being done with regard to imported nuts and avocado pears, with our native nuts, and for the improvement of mangoes by budding.”

PAPERS.

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

Forty-seventh report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the year 1922.

Twelfth annual report of the University of Queensland for the year 1922.

MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.
COMMITTEE.

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

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

Clause 3—"Developmental Roads; Developmental Roads Fund"—

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): Should not the word "may" on line 15, after the word "road," be "shall"?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I move the insertion, after the word "roads" on line 37, of the words—

"and, before any moneys placed to the credit of such fund shall be expended on a main road or developmental road, plans, maps, and estimates of cost shall be submitted to Parliament for approval."

I think it is very necessary that we should have that provision to prevent extravagant expenditure. We would not allow the Commissioner for Railways to build a railway anywhere without furnishing plans, maps, and estimates of costs; and, if we are going to allow the Main Roads Board to construct roads without doing that, we ought to give the Commissioner for Railways the same power. If it is a good principle in the case of the Main Roads Board, why should we not allow the Commissioner for Railways power to build a railway just where he chooses? I am asking for the same control over expenditure in connection with main roads as Parliament has in regard to railways.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): Evidently the Minister in charge of the Bill is not taking this amendment seriously, but he might well do so considering that the cost of making these main roads—according to an answer to a question put in this Chamber a few days ago—averages over £2,340 a mile. That is a very considerable expenditure, and to leave it to an individual practically to say where such an amount shall be expended is not wise, particularly as a considerable portion of the cost will have to be borne by the individuals in the districts through which the roads pass. In one case a mile of road cost £6,000, and any Government ought to consider the advisability of not allowing a board to go in for promiscuous expenditure on that scale without giving some control to Parliament. We do not know what the fund is going to amount to, but we do know that the shire councils in the districts through which the roads pass will have to pay half of the cost spread over a term of twenty years after their construction, and that may be a very big burden on them. Before giving carte blanche to the Main Roads Board to construct roads at the enormous cost at which roads are being constructed to-day, Parliament should have at any rate some idea—I do not say definite plans—as to what the expense is likely to be. The Department of Public Lands is taking tremendous power under this Bill; we are practically asked to give it carte blanche in the expenditure of the money. There is no stipulation as to the size of the fund, and when we are asked to give power to the Main Roads Board to carry out work which may run into hundreds of thousands of pounds—at the cost which is being

incurred by the Board to-day—I think it is time that Parliament had some opportunity of expressing an opinion as to whether any proposed expenditure is justified.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Airns*): The hon. member for Aubigny said that I was not taking this amendment seriously. If the hon. member will look up the records of the House, he will find that he had ample opportunity of opposing the present method of main road construction when the present Act was before this Chamber.

Mr. MOORE: This is a new measure altogether.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The amendment amounts to a departure from the policy outlined in the principal Act, and both the hon. members who have spoken supported the clause in which that policy is contained.

Mr. DEACON: We have learned more since.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not take the amendment seriously, because it would be ridiculous to submit to Parliament every proposal for expenditure of money on main roads. The hon. member could have achieved his object by moving to repeal the Main Roads Act altogether. If the Country party are opposed to the building of main roads, it is well that the country should know it.

Mr. CORSER: You know that that is not right.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Well, that is the sense of the amendment. The hon. member knows quite well that to submit to Parliament every proposal for a main road, with plans and specifications, as in the case of railways, is ridiculous. If the hon. member is opposed to the building of main roads—

Mr. DEACON: He has told you he is not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member suggests that every proposal to expend £2,000 or £3,000 on a portion of a main road—which the local authority concerned has fully considered and the cost of which it bears half, so that the Government expenditure would amount perhaps to £1,500—should be submitted to Parliament with plans and specifications.

Mr. MOORE: Under this Bill the local authority has not got a say.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. gentleman knows quite well that that is the policy carried out by the Main Roads Board.

Mr. MOORE: No. You look at the Act.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In connection with this criticism of main roads work it is interesting to take the case of one main road being constructed in the Landsborough district, which is in the electorate of the hon. member for Murrumba. I have a letter from the shire clerk in that district dealing with that road. That is a costly road, but a well-built road, and, when it is completed, it will be one of the best pieces of road in Queensland. The shire clerk says—

"The average annual expenditure on the old road for the past five years (exclusive of loan works) is £1,600.

Hon. W. McCormack.]

Assuming the completed new road to cost £46,000, the annual interest and redemption repayment to the Government will be approximately the same amount, with the distinct advantage of a first-class road as against a very inferior one previously."

Mr. DEACON: Is the road finished?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is not quite finished. The road will cost £46,000, and the interest and redemption will amount to £1,600.

Mr. KELSO: What about the upkeep?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: For the last five years it has cost on an average £1,600 per annum to keep the road—not in repair—I have been over it—but in some sort of repair by tipping loads of stones into muck holes. When the road is finished it will be a first-class highway.

Mr. DEACON: When it is finished you will know the cost.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There will be little or no repair work required for a number of years on the road, and the interest and redemption on that first-class road will be only equal to the amount that the council was spending previously by putting loads of stones into muck holes along the road. If the construction of that road is not a good business proposition, I would like to know what is a good business proposition. If the construction of those roads can be applied generally—I think it should be applied generally—then main road construction is a good business proposition for the country districts of Queensland. I admit that up to the present we have no main roads completed. The roads are not yet in operation, and some people are a little afraid of the high cost of road construction; but, once they see the roads and use them and know the many advantages that accrue to a district from good roads and see the actual benefits of those roads as against the absolute waste of money previously expended, there will be a demand for road construction—not only for main roads but for roads within the shires themselves. The cost quoted by the hon. member for Aubigny is for the construction of costly roads in mountain sections.

Mr. MOORE: You said it was the average.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are doing some of the roads that are most needed and where people have no access at all to any centre. I refer now to a mountain road in the Beaudesert district. That is a very costly road. It is like undertaking railway construction to undertake the construction of heavy mountain roads. We are undertaking that work first because the people on that tableland have no access at all. When we do that work we should do it properly. The same argument applies with regard to the Cairns Range. The road up the range to the Atherton Tableland, I admit, is a costly job. It is granite country, but once the road is completed it will be there for ever. When we undertake those costly works first of all it is not fair to take the average cost and apply it generally as the average cost of road construction throughout the State. The amendment has no business in it. I am surprised to know that the Country party want every job that is done in country districts to be brought before Parliament first. The futility of such a suggestion appears on the face of it. The

country districts would get no work done at all if that was the case. Parliament would spend the whole of its time in dealing with proposals that I now have to deal with. The expenditure is under the control of a responsible Minister. The Main Roads Board recommends the expenditure, submits all the estimates, and the vote is appropriated by Parliament. The whole of the proposals will eventually come before hon. members, and they will be able to ascertain, when the Estimates are going through, how the money is being spent. They can criticise the expenditure on the Estimates, if they so desire. Another factor is that the local governing bodies consider the plans and specifications before they agree to them.

Mr. MOORE: They will not under this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They will.

Mr. MOORE: You are cutting out that power.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are not cutting it out. Does the hon. member for Cunningham intend the amendment to apply only to developmental roads?

Mr. MOORE: I was only talking about developmental roads.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The amendment is only intended to apply to developmental roads?

Mr. MOORE: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. gentleman wants every "tiddly-winking" road—for, after all, a developmental road is a "tiddly-winking" road in comparison with a main road—submitted to Parliament for approval. Is that what I understand?

Mr. DEACON: No, the amendment includes main roads.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Apparently the hon. members for Cunningham and Aubigny do not agree. There appears to be a split in the party. It is important to consider that the local authorities control their own expenditure, as they consider plans, specifications, and estimates before they agree to the proposals.

Mr. KING: Not under this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes.

Mr. KING: That provision is distinctly omitted in this Bill, which omits clause 15 of the principal Act.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I take certain power to compel them to do certain things. I take power to build roads even if they are not agreeable.

Mr. KING: I am moving an amendment to include section 15 of the principal Act.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I take the power to compel them, even when they do not agree, if I consider it necessary. That power is contained in the principal Act, but it is not likely to be exercised in regard to main roads, because there are any number of local authorities who are quite agreeable to take their responsibility in connection with main roads. If that is so, why should we go out of our way to force a local authority if it refuses to accept money to build main roads? There are any number of local authorities quite willing to build main roads, and we do not want to force an unwilling

[Hon. W. McCormack.]

body to accept money for that purpose. There is no business in the amendment, and I am surprised to see the Country party supporting the abolition of the principle of main road construction.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): The object of the Minister in charge of the Bill was apparently to lecture the hon. member for Cunningham, who introduced this amendment. I do not know what he had for lunch that did not agree with him—(laughter)—but he rose as if the hon. member dared to do something that he had no right to do.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Minister, figuratively, took the hon. member over his knee and started to give him a beating. Has it come to this—that, before any member on this side of the Chamber can speak, he must get up and say, "By your leave, Mr. Minister?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; I only ridiculed the amendment.

HON. W. H. BARNES: If that is so, would it not be as well if we approached the Minister in a humble fashion beforehand and asked him what he is prepared to allow us, who have certain rights on this side, to do? I have not got on my feet to say I am going to support the amendment, but surely the Minister was absolutely inconsistent in his criticism. He asked why the leader of the Country party did not raise his objections when the principal Act went through. Have we got into this position in Queensland that, when a Bill goes through and when, in the light of experience, something else crops up that enables an hon. member to see an opportunity of improving that Bill, it is wrong for that hon. member to rise and say there should be an alteration? Did anyone ever think that some of these main roads would cost up to £6,000 per mile?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are on the mountain.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Some of the people building them will be on the mountain also. There are places where it is necessary to make good roads.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In the Beaudesert district?

HON. W. H. BARNES: And up in the Cairns district. Throughout Queensland, irrespective of place, it may be found necessary to spend money on main roads, and it has been found necessary. I rose mainly for the purpose of emphasising that because hon. members do not agree with the Secretary for Public Lands he has, figuratively speaking, used the stick on the hon. member for Cunningham. The hon. member for Cunningham is one of the most thoughtful men of this Chamber. I want to emphasise the point that the Minister should and must—because this is of interest to hon. members generally—give consideration to all matters that are put before him in all reasonableness.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Are you voting for the amendment?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not say that I am voting for the amendment, but I hope that the Minister will listen to the arguments which the Country party are bringing forward.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They can look after themselves.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): No doubt the idea that prompted the hon. member for Cunningham in bringing forward the amendment is the fact that the policy of the Country party with regard to main roads is not in operation. The Minister has said that the Country party are against main roads and are out for the abolition of the principle of main roads construction. He is wrong. We have a platform in regard to main roads, and the chief plank states—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Will you let me have a copy of that platform?

Mr. CORSER: The Secretary for Public Works may have a copy if he can understand it. Clause (e) of our platform reads—

"(e) Main Roads.—As feeders to railways—to be constructed by the Main Roads Board at the cost of the State and afterwards maintained by Main Roads Board and local authorities."

It cannot be said with that platform that the members of the Country party are against main roads.

The PREMIER: You are up against your own platform.

Mr. CORSER: We are not. The operation of the Main Roads Act to-day is not in accordance with the platform of the Country party when it asks the country districts to pay half the cost of the main roads and pay half the cost of maintenance. We agree that half the cost of maintenance should be a charge on the local authorities; but we say that main roads are highways; they are feeders to railways—links between various districts—and they should be constructed by the State.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope that the hon. member is not going to enter into a discussion of the question of whether the main roads shall be constructed by the State or under the present system. There is an amendment before the Committee to the effect that the plans, maps, and estimates shall be submitted to Parliament.

Mr. CORSER: I do not intend to enter into that phase. I say that the same objection arises in connection with these main roads as existed in connection with the old guarantee principle of railway construction.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I think the Secretary for Public Lands is wrong in his statement that hon. members of this House are opposed to the main roads policy.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I did not say that you were. I referred to the two hon. members who spoke previously.

Mr. FRY: I see the great possibilities in the main roads policy. The construction of good roads is just as essential as the construction of sound railway lines, built after a well-considered policy for the development of the State. I also see in the clause a possibility of having a very valuable estate close to Brisbane—the St. Lucia Estate—opened up by declaring Boundary street, West End, a main road, and eventually constructing a bridge or tunnel across the river to open up that large estate, which would provide homes for many thousands of people.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would like to call the attention of the Committee to the fact that the hon. member for Cunningham has moved an amendment.

[4 p.m.] The discussion so far appears to have revolved round the advisability or otherwise of constructing main roads. I hope hon. members will keep to

Mr. Fry.]

the question before the Committee—that is, an amendment that plans, maps, and estimates be placed on the table of the House.

Mr. FRY: I am not wanting the Board to place plans, etc., of the St. Lucia Estate on the table. I am quite prepared to trust the construction of that road to the Main Roads Board. I merely desire to call attention to the fact that within a mile and a-half of the city there are probably 2 or 3 square miles of country that could be opened up by the Main Roads Board under this clause. I see the possibility of this being done, and, consequently, I am supporting the clause. As to whether plans, etc., should be submitted to Parliament, that is immaterial so far as I am concerned, although it may affect some of the country districts. As to the St. Lucia Estate, it is merely a question of bringing under the notice of the Board that this is an essential work.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): It seems to me that the hon. member of Cunningham is a little afraid of the excessive cost of the roads; and, when you come to consider the enormous amount that these main roads are costing at the present time, you can sympathise with the amendment. Although the road mentioned by the Secretary for Public Lands is a most expensive one, and while what he said is quite true, the hon. gentleman is unfortunate in his choice. It must be understood that the Maleny lands are probably the best dairying lands in the world, and are of a high rateable value, but they are almost isolated. The hon. gentleman said that the roads there were in a terrible condition, and that the hundreds of pounds expended yearly on that road were merely thrown into mud holes. If there were thousands of pounds more spent on that road, the people would be very pleased; but the road is costing much more than it should. That is the reason why the hon. member for Cunningham has moved his amendment. He thinks that if the amendment were agreed to, there would be some control over the amount to be expended. I say without fear of contradiction that some brake is necessary in regard to the capital expenditure on these roads, otherwise the people who are benefiting, or who are supposed to benefit, by the construction of the roads are going to have a serious weight put on their backs, that they will not be able to bear. We recognise that the principle of constructing main roads is right, and the Minister knows as well as anybody that hon. members on this side of the Chamber are as anxious for main roads to be built as any member on the other side of the House. All we object to is the excessive cost. What the Minister stated is true; we have not one road completed yet to prove whether they will be lasting or not. Our engineers tell us that these roads are going to last as long as any other roads; but when you come to consider the excessive rainfall on the North Coast, about Landsborough and other places where roads are being constructed, we must consider whether the upkeep is not going to be too great for the district to bear. When we have conclusive proof that the roads are going to last as long as our engineers tell us they will, then we shall not consider whether they cost a few pounds extra or not. Up to the present Queensland has been practically without main roads, and if we build good main roads, Queensland is going to be a very much better place to live in.

[*Mr. Fry.*

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): It seems to me that the Minister got right away from what I have been contending for. The main objection I have to the Board expending money is just this: We are handing them something like £600,000 this year to expend on main roads, and very probably next year we shall hand them a couple of millions; and we would not hand the Secretary for Railways enough money to build a couple of miles of railway unless he first tabled plans, etc.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We table the expenditure in the Estimates.

Mr. DEACON: If the Secretary for Railways wanted to spend £10,000 on a small railway, he would first have to table the plans of that railway.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: So have I to table the expenditure.

Mr. DEACON: The Secretary for Railways has to table the plans and say what he is going to spend the money on.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will give you details.

Mr. DEACON: The hon. gentleman instanced a case where the Main Roads Board built a road costing something like £6,000 a mile up a mountain, and which is not yet completed. Already the Board has spent over £5,000 a mile on a road on level country.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Where?

Mr. DEACON: At Allora.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It must be a bad bit of country.

Mr. DEACON: It was good country, and they could not build roads like it anywhere for less money. It is a good road. I have nothing to say against the road, as it is well built; but it cost that amount of money, and it will cost as much to build a road of the same standard anywhere else.

Mr. HYNES: How far had they to cart the metal?

Mr. DEACON: Through the fence. (Laughter.) The metal is alongside the road. They had not to cart it more than 100 yards.

Mr. HARTLEY: Before you had the road wagons used to sink down to their axles.

Mr. DEACON: The main thing is that we are building roads that are going to cost that amount of money anywhere, and we ought to have some check on the expenditure. The Bill is going to allow one Minister—and one Minister only—to handle millions of money.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Did not your local authority agree to that road?

Mr. DEACON: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Were they not elected by the people?

Mr. DEACON: Yes, but they did not know that it was going to cost that amount of money.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The estimates were given.

Mr. DEACON: The estimates were not given, because at that time the engineer could not give an estimate of the cost.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They give estimates now.

Mr. DEACON: At the same time Parliament has to find all the money. If we are going to allow a body of men to spend money in this fashion, they may load a shire more than the people can bear. Who is going to pay the cost then? We know that the shires in Victoria have been loaded beyond their capacity to pay, and the same thing is likely to happen in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Deputations have urged the construction of roads on these terms.

Mr. DEACON: It is quite possible that a shire will send a deputation to ask for £1,000,000 to be spent, although they know they cannot pay it back. They may come afterwards and say, "We cannot pay for it. Will the country pay for it?" There ought to be some better check on expenditure than there is now.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): I have listened to the speeches of hon. members opposite. I was dealing all the morning with Main Roads Board matters in connection with the shire of which I am a member. The position indicated by hon. members opposite does not arise, as we always get plans and specifications of a proposed road and the estimate of cost.

Mr. MOORE: Why don't you read the Bill?

Mr. GLEDSON: I have read the Bill.

Mr. MOORE: Then you should see that that is left out.

Mr. GLEDSON: The Bill is designed to improve the present Act. We should have the support of hon. members opposite instead of the criticism which they are offering to the work of the Main Roads Board.

Mr. MOORE: Read clause 6.

Mr. GLEDSON: The fact is that what Opposition members are asking for is already contained in the principal Act. Plans and specifications of proposed roads are tabled in the councils' offices.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Not in connection with developmental roads.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is a typographical error.

Mr. MOORE: That is one thing which has been left out. This comes under the control of no one but the Main Roads Board, which is what we are objecting to.

Mr. GLEDSON: The position will be the same with developmental roads as in connection with other roads. The plans and specifications are prepared for the road and submitted to those who are responsible—that is, the local authorities—and they go into the matter. Under the amendment of the hon. member for Cunningham, instead of the plans and specifications going to the local authorities, they would come to members of Parliament, who would have to consider whether the plans and specifications in regard to the proposed road were correct. The amendment is ridiculous, and should not have been moved. In addition to plans and specifications being submitted to the councils, the councils have also the right to call for tenders. The work is not limited to the control of the Main Roads Board; the councils have the right to carry out the work with their own employees if they wish. If they do not carry out the work themselves,

the Main Roads Board will do it under the councils' plans and specifications and according to their estimates.

The question of the cost of main roads has been raised, and that is a serious matter for the local authorities and also the Government, because it is costing a considerable amount of money to build these roads, which are intended to be permanent. The main road between Brisbane and Ipswich is being built at a considerable cost. A tender was received for one section of a mile and a-quarter amounting to a few pounds short of £7,000, but neither the Main Roads Board nor the local authorities accepted it. It appears that the cost of making these roads is excessive, and something will have to be done to provide for the position. In the division I am in we have 100 miles of roads, not all main roads.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member is not going to discuss the matter of main roads. The question before the Committee is as to whether plans, maps, and estimates of cost of proposed roads shall be submitted to Parliament for approval.

Mr. GLEDSON: I did not intend to discuss the whole question of main roads; it is the submission of plans and specifications I am dealing with. At present plans and specifications are submitted to the councils, and they will be submitted under this Bill.

Mr. VOWLES: Not unless it is amended.

Mr. GLEDSON: Opposition members have been told that the intention is that the councils shall have a say in connection with these roads, and that plans and specifications will be submitted to them; but hon. members opposite are not satisfied with the assurance of the Minister that that is so.

Amendment (*Mr. Deacon*) negatived.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I move the omission of the following words, on lines 1 to 3, page 3:—

"The local authority within whose area permanent improvements have been created on a developmental road"—

with a view to inserting the words—

"The Board shall in like manner, as is provided in section 27 hereof in the case of main roads, apportion the cost of permanent improvements on developmental roads between the various areas benefited thereby and the local authority of each such area."

The intention of the Bill is not made clear. The Bill provides that a local authority in whose area permanent improvements have been created shall bear the cost. I think we could follow the principle laid down in the principal Act that the cost shall be apportioned in accordance with the benefited area. Subsection (b) of section 27 of the principal Act reads—

"The proportion of half the amount so expended as aforesaid, which is allocated to each such area having regard to the benefits it has obtained from the expenditure."

Under the Bill as it stands a developmental road may go through three different shire councils, one of which may in no way be benefited, yet that shire council has to foot the bill. These developmental roads are mainly for the purpose of connecting up a

Mr. Kerr.]

particular centre with a railway station. To get to that railway station a great deal of land may be traversed, but no benefit may accrue to a local authority, as the ground may be marshy, and that local authority should not be called upon to pay anything, because it is not benefited. It may be argued that nearly one end of the developmental road for, perhaps, a quarter of a mile goes into the shire which receives the most benefit, and that that shire has only to pay one-fourth, whereas the other shires concerned which are not receiving any benefit whatever must also bear part of the cost.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If it goes through three or four shires, it is a main road.

Mr. KERR: It appears to me that you are going to get tangled up.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is something in what you say.

Mr. KERR: Take the road in my electorate leading out to Moggill and Brookfield, running between the Taringa shire and the Moggill shire. Under no circumstances could you call that a main road, because it is leading nowhere, and it would be a developmental road in that instance. Under this Bill the Taringa Shire Council, which is getting no benefit from it, will have to pay a certain amount, and the Moggill Shire Council will pay less. That road passes through several shires, and I appeal to the Minister to introduce into this Bill the same principle which has been embodied in the principal Act, so that those shires will bear their proportionate costs.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, Cairns): The hon. member says that these roads may extend beyond one shire, and in that case the question of the allocation of cost will have to be considered. The question might crop up in connection with main roads, but this Bill deals with developmental roads only. In Victoria they only build developmental roads within the area of each shire. They run out from a railway perhaps, and they are only developmental roads.

Mr. KING: A developmental road under the Victorian Act is a different thing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are taking power in this Bill to declare a main road to be a developmental road. We have had many instances in which different districts could have been benefited if we could build a road to them under the Main Roads Act; but we could not do that, although we may be able to give them some help by the construction of developmental roads. I have no objection to accepting amendments on this Bill, but I wish to understand them thoroughly and appreciate just how they affect the general construction of the Bill. The hon. member's amendment has only just been handed to me.

Mr. KERR: It was submitted at the earliest possible moment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why did the hon. member not have it printed? He has had the Bill for the last three weeks. It is very difficult for a Minister to take the responsibility of accepting amendments unless he thoroughly understands their effect. I am not averse to accepting amendments which will improve the Bill—I am prepared to have it improved as much as

possible—but hon. members should get their amendments properly drafted, so that they may be considered with the Bill itself, in order that the Minister in charge may see how they fit in with the general principles of the measure. It is a draftsman's job.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): The principle which the hon. member for Enoggera wishes to have incorporated in this Bill is clearly laid down in the section to which he referred, and the acceptance of the amendment would make provision for any situation which might arise where developmental roads extended into more than one shire. It merely says that in such a case the provisions of section 27 of the principal Act shall be applied. Hon. members will quite understand that a road may be made through the areas of more than one local authority to open up a large area of land, and the intervening local authorities may perhaps gain very little benefit. The amendment would enable the proper charge which each local authority ought to pay for the maintenance of the road to be apportioned.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is only an interest payment by the shire council.

Mr. TAYLOR: The amendment provides that the cost shall be borne in proportion to the benefit obtained. I think that the Minister recognises that there is something in the amendment, which is not moved in any spirit of opposition to the Bill. I think that, if there is one thing which is necessary in Queensland to-day, it is a bold progressive main roads policy, and these developmental roads are, of course, going to assist in improving the principal Act by providing outlets for areas which are perhaps some distance from main roads, so that they may be brought into more profitable use. I hope the Minister will accept the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It will have to be redrafted.

Mr. KERR: Recommit the Bill.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I think that the amendment will improve the Bill. We are not situated as Victoria is. I know Victoria very well, and I know the system of developmental roads which do not extend beyond the shires, but it is quite a different proposition here, and I think that the Minister will admit that the amendment will help to rectify mistakes which have been made under our local authority system. It seems to me that some of our shire boundaries are ridiculously placed. If a portion of a fairly large shire is not working well with the rest of the shire, it applies to the Home Secretary for constitution as a separate shire, and it is recognised that the boundaries which are sometimes decided upon are quite ridiculous. If it were otherwise, the reason for this amendment would be less apparent. It seems to me that we cannot get the full benefits of a Bill like this unless some amendment of this description is included. I am very pleased to see that the Minister is anxious to meet a case of this description, and to know that he is willing to try and improve this measure. We certainly appreciate his attitude. I think that the amendment would be a great improvement on the Bill. It may happen that an area receiving the most benefit will pay no interest whatever. The amendment would be an improvement on the Bill, and would be to the benefit of the districts concerned.

[*Mr. Kerr.*]

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I am glad to see that the Minister is prepared to improve the Bill. We know that shire boundaries have not always been fixed by the Government on their own initiative; but they have been so fixed as to meet the wishes of people who desire to be included in that particular shire. It is quite possible that in the construction of a developmental road for the purpose of developing a certain area the greater part of that road will pass through another shire, and it may happen that that shire, which will [4.30 p.m.] receive no benefit at all, would have to bear the whole burden and the shire receiving the whole of the benefit will have to bear none of that burden. The Minister complains that we have had the Bill three weeks and have not seen the necessity for this amendment before, but I would remind him that he has probably had the Bill for six months, and he has not until now seen the necessity for the amendment. This is really the most important part of the Bill. If you cannot get the cost apportioned in this way, the Bill is not going to be of much use. I am glad to know that the Minister is prepared to accept something on the lines of the amendment.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I am sorry that the amendment has not been drafted in such a way as to be acceptable to the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am trying to draft one of my own.

Mr. KING: I am very glad to hear it. I know the Minister is very sympathetic towards the amendment, and I can only regret that it was not put before him in such a way as to enable him to seize it with both hands and accept it. Perhaps hon. members on this side are somewhat to blame for not having the amendment ready, but we were waiting to hear the Minister's second reading speech, which was delivered late on Friday night, before we could come to any definite conclusion as to what amendments were necessary. We have not had an opportunity of seeing the Minister's second reading speech until we came here to-day and perused "Hansard" and it was therefore almost impossible to get the amendment drafted in the form that we wished. However, the spirit of the amendment is there, and, as I see the Minister is busily engaged in drafting his amendment, I hope we shall have an amendment adopted before this discussion finishes.

Mr. COLLINS: Have you circulated your amendment? I have been trying to get a copy of it, but I cannot.

Mr. KING: I shall be very pleased to give the hon. member a copy. Section 27 of the principal Act says—

"The Board shall, before the thirtieth day of June in each year, apportion half the amount expended on permanent works and maintenance during the preceding year between the various areas benefited thereby in the following manner:—

It shall, before the thirty-first day of January in each year, determine—

(a) The permanent works and maintenance from which each of the areas respectively has benefited;"

Subsection (b) is the principal subsection. It says—

"The proportion of half the amount so expended as aforesaid, which allocated to each such area, having regard to the benefits it has obtained from the expenditure;"

We know that main roads are main roads because they go through more than one local authority area. I assume that a developmental road will not be treated as a main road merely by reason of the fact that it goes through more than one area. We can conceive of cases where a developmental road will probably go through three different local authority areas simply to benefit the most remote local authority, because there happens to be a settlement of some sort in that area. This developmental road has to come from a main road through one local authority area through another local authority area, and into a third local authority area, to benefit some settlement of forty, fifty, or sixty families. That third local authority area is going to get the benefit of that developmental road, and probably under existing circumstances it will pay the least towards the expense of the maintenance of that developmental road. The object of the amendment is to apportion the cost according to the benefit received, in the same manner as is provided in connection with main roads.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Would an amendment on these lines meet the wishes of the hon. members opposite: "To provide that where two or more local authority areas are benefited by the construction of a developmental road the apportionment of the cost in connection with the benefit received shall be effected in the same manner as is provided for in the provisions applying to main roads?"

Mr. KING: If the Minister will accept an amendment on those lines, I think it will cover the whole ground. I am glad to see that he has developed the powers of draftsmanship which are not very prominent in this Chamber.

Amendment (*Mr. Kerr*), by leave, withdrawn.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I beg to move the insertion after the word "prescribed," on line 11, of the words—

"Provided that where two or more local authorities are benefited by the construction of developmental roads the provisions of the Main Roads Act in regard to benefited areas shall apply."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I beg to move the insertion, after the word "maintenance," where it first occurs on line 20, page 3, of the words—

"Provided that the Board shall pay annually to the local authority out of the Developmental Roads Fund one half of the amount so expended."

I am moving this amendment with the idea of getting a statement of the position from the Minister. I presume he has obtained statistics to show what benefit local authorities will get by the policy of developmental roads as against the policy of main roads. We know that under the Main Roads Act the cost of construction is borne equally by the Government and local authority, and that

Mr. Kerr]

the cost of maintenance is shared on a similar basis. Under the policy of developmental roads the whole of the cost is going to devolve on the Main Roads Board, while the whole of the cost of maintenance is to be borne by the local authorities. In addition to the cost of maintenance and upkeep by the local authorities, they are to be called upon to pay half the interest on the total cost of the road. I would like the Secretary for Public Lands to give the Committee some information as to whether those roads which have now been declared main roads will be declared developmental roads. I refer particularly to the roads in the country part of my electorate.

Mr. COLLINS: Do you represent the country?

Mr. KERR: Yes—an important part of the country.

Mr. COLLINS: Market gardens.

Mr. KERR: No. The Moggill road has been declared to be a main road, and the cost of its construction and maintenance is borne equally by the Main Roads Board and the local authorities. Under this Bill this particular road will be declared a developmental road.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How do you know it will be?

Mr. KERR: Undoubtedly it will be. If that is so, the Main Roads Board will undertake the construction of the whole of the road and the local authorities will maintain it in repair, in addition to paying half the interest on the total cost for a period of twenty years. Will the Minister indicate to the Committee which is the better proposition—the proposition under the Main Roads Act or the one proposed under this Bill?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): There is not much difference. On main roads local authorities will pay interest and redemption on their half, working it off in thirty years. In the case of developmental roads no capital expenditure will be charged to the local authorities. On the other hand they will have to keep the road in repair. That is the alteration proposed. Under the Main Roads Act they have to pay half the cost of the repairs and half the redemption cost. It will work out at about the same thing. The idea is to establish a quid pro quo, and, when we declare a road to be a main road, the local authorities will not be at any greater disadvantage than when it was a developmental road. They will have the advantage that they will be relieved of the cost of construction of developmental roads and will have to bear the cost of their upkeep. That is the real advantage gained. The State, as a whole, will pay half the interest and the whole redemption on those roads, but to-day the local authority has to pay the whole of the upkeep and the whole of the repair work. There would be no reason in introducing the Bill if there was not an advantage to local authorities. The local authorities under this Bill can have roads declared developmental roads, whereas under the principal Act they would have to pay the whole of the construction cost. If it is declared a main road later on, they come in on the "fifty-fifty" basis.

Mr. KERR: Do you say it is the intention to declare them main roads later on? That is not provided for in the Bill.

[Mr. Kerr.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes. You will notice that we may declare a main road a developmental road and a developmental road later on a main road. That is rendered necessary because some of the main roads to-day will be declared developmental roads, as we want to do something to them. As soon as the population and traffic increase, and it is necessary to declare them main roads, we shall then have the power to declare them main roads, and the local authority will come in on a "fifty-fifty" basis in regard to their cost and their upkeep.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I take it that the greater proportion of the developmental roads mentioned in clause [19D] (1) are in the Upper Burnett?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; we are going to do the work there out of the Public Estate Improvement Fund.

Mr. MOORE: I thought developmental roads were going to take the place of road work under the Public Estate Improvement Fund.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, in that particular area the land is carrying the burden, the same as soldier settlements.

Mr. MOORE: They are paying into a fund?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, and the money is taken from that fund.

Mr. MOORE: In the case of lands not being selected, I presume the Main Roads Board will look after the land until it is ratable?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, there are no local authorities in those areas.

Mr. CORSER: It is just dormant; you have not suspended it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, I do not agree with the amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. Kerr*) negatived.

Clause 3, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 4—"Amendment of section 20—Application of certain provisions of Local Authorities Acts"—put and passed.

Clause 5—"Powers of entry, etc."—

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I beg to move the insertion, after the figures "14," on line 4, of the figures "15." That will involve the insertion of the words "or developmental" in section 15 of the principal Act, as well as in all the other sections set out in this clause. Section 15 of the principal Act reads—

"The Board, before recommending to the Governor in Council—

(a) That any road be a main road;

(b) That the maps, plans, and estimates of any proposed new main road or deviation from an existing main road be approved;

(c) That plans and estimates of any permanent improvements to any main road or any part thereof be approved, shall serve on each local authority in whose area such road is or new main road or deviation is proposed to be made, or improvements are proposed to be made, notice of its intention to make such recommendation."

It also provides—

"Such notice shall fix a day, not less than thirty days from the service of the

notice, upon which any objections which may be made by any local authorities concerned will be considered by the Board before making any recommendations."

And further—

"Provided that any local authority which feels aggrieved by any such recommendation may, within thirty days after the consideration of such objection, appeal to the Minister, who may vary or disallow such recommendation."

This proposed clause will simply put developmental roads on the same footing as main roads. The Minister said in the course of discussion a few minutes ago that the omission of section 15 in this clause was a typographical error, and that he would accept an amendment. I presume that it is only necessary for me to move the amendment without any further comment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I now find that section 15 was intentionally left out because the Main Roads Board considered that, as the State was to carry the whole cost of the construction, the local authorities would not be inclined to care about developmental roads, especially those going into new areas in their districts. Consequently, there will be very little settlement. Personally, I cannot see any reason why the local authorities should not be consulted. I intend to accept the amendment, because I already have power under the Bill to build the road if circumstances warrant. However, I again repeat that we are not likely to force roads on people who do not want them.

Mr. Fry: Money is too scarce.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Perhaps the local authorities have some right to see the plans and specifications of a road. I will accept the inclusion of section 15 in this clause.

Amendment (*Mr. King*) agreed to.

Clause 6—"Consequential amendments"—put and passed.

Clause 7—"Amendment of schedule"—

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I think there is something wrong with clause [29], on page 5. I beg to move the insertion, after the word "functions," on line 34, of the word "or"; the omission, on line 35, of the word "the," and the insertion of the word "such"; and the insertion, after the word "officers," on line 36, of the words "as may be prescribed or mutually arranged." The clause will then read—

"Making agreements with local authorities for the carrying out of functions or duties under this Act by officers of the local authority, and on such conditions and terms of payment for such services by such officers as may be prescribed or mutually arranged."

When I say "prescribed," I mean that officers may be under some award as to their remuneration. If there is no award, it will have to be a matter of arrangement between the parties concerned as to what their remuneration shall be.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (*Hon. W. McCormack, Cairns*): The draftsman is here now, and he states that the amendment should be confined to the insertion of the word "and" after the word "functions," on line 34. I will accept the amendment, if the hon. member for Logan will put it in those words.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I move the insertion, after the word "functions," in line 34, of the word "and."

Amendment (*Mr. King*) agreed to.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I move the omission, after the word "and," on line 35, of the word "on."

Amendment (*Mr. King*) agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 8—"Reprinting Act"—put and passed.

[5 p.m.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (*Hon. W. McCormack, Cairns*): Mr. Kirwan, I beg to move—

"That you do now leave the chair, and report the Bill with amendments to the House."

I may say in regard to the amendment to clause 3, that I will get it redrafted by the draftsman and will recommit the Bill and have the amendment put in proper order.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

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

UPPER BURNETT AND CALLIDE LAND SETTLEMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (*Hon. W. McCormack, Cairns*): In moving the second reading of this Bill, I desire, in the first place, briefly to outline the provisions of the Bill so that hon. members will be aware exactly of what is intended in the Bill, and later on I intend to deal with the whole scheme in a general manner.

The Bill is divided into five parts. Part I. deals with the application of the Bill to a particular area. Part II. deals with the method of opening the land for selection. Part III. deals with the establishment of public works and the building of roads in the area. Part IV. makes provision for providing water facilities on the farms; and Part V. deals with finance.

The new scheme of settlement will be applied to what are known as the Upper Burnett and Callide areas. Hon. members will see by the map the area that is proposed to be settled under this scheme. It embraces all the land that is shown in the coloured area. Provision is made for the exclusion of certain land, if thought necessary. I may state at the outset that the system of settlement by setting apart a certain area of land and applying the provisions of a particular Act of Parliament to it is novel, and I hope will be successful. We have had the old system in force for many years, and our settlement has not progressed as it should have done. The newer ideas and the necessity of making conditions more favourable to prospective settlers is imperative if we are to prevent the trend of people from the country to the town. We must be prepared to make the conditions of life better and to give more help at the outset than has been done under previous laws. That is the policy governing the land settlement schemes of the future. The old system, where a man selected a piece of land and was allowed to starve if circum-

Hon. W. McCormack.]

stances so forced him, will not bring settlement to-day. The conditions existing in other occupations and other vocations are much preferable, although finally a man may get a competence on the land. The old conditions of having to live for years without communication, without means of providing water, and without the help that should be given to our settlers, have passed away, and we must adapt ourselves to the newer conditions. Some people are inclined to say that there is too much spoon-feeding. Many people who originally selected land never got any benefit from it; they did a lot of toil on the land, cleared it, in some cases fenced it, improved it somewhat, but, because of the lack of markets and the lack of means of communication, the land reverted to the storekeeper or some other person in the area who provided provisions for the selector, and probably it was left for many years before some other selector came along, took up the land and made a success of it. The method of selection under this scheme is briefly the group system. Hon. members who know the present Land Act will understand what I mean by the group system. Under that system intending selectors may form themselves into groups, or they may secure selections singly under the group system. The idea of the group system is to give people in authority an opportunity of discriminating in the selection of settlers. The open system of a ballot, irrespective of whether a selector is a suitable man or not, is a bad one. Under the group system the Lands Department has full authority over the selection of settlers. Where the settlers are classified they may select in groups. They may agree among themselves to form a group, and they may agree as to the selections they intend to select within the group. In that case we do not interfere. But if there are disputes among themselves as to the different parcels of land that they desire to select, then that particular group ballot among themselves for the particular selections. In the case of individuals they may select under the group system, but the whole of the selectors have to be approved of by the Lands Department, and, in this instance, I have established a Land Settlement Committee who will handle practically the whole of these selectors and select from the applicants the men whom they think will make a success of the cultivation of the soil.

Mr. WALKER: Who are on the Committee?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is composed of one of the leading officers from each department concerned. We want to have the Department of Agriculture represented, the Department of Lands, of course, the State Advances Corporation, and an officer from the Water Supply Department. All sections dealing with all sides of settlement will have representation, and the Committee will recommend, of course, to the Minister. Personally, I shall only come nominally into the business, because I shall not have the time or the knowledge to give attention to the many details that this Committee will have to attend to. We are making provision for the erection of a butter factory in the area. Of course, we shall not proceed with the building of a butter factory if the local people are desirous of getting a co-operative factory. It will be better to have factories established under the Co-operative Agricultural Production and Advances to Farmers Act; but, if they are not prepared to do that—and probably they will not be—

[*Hon. W. McCormack.*

we shall establish a factory. We could not ask selectors of one or two years' standing to find the necessary money.

Mr. WALKER: If they are not prepared to do it, then you will do it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not think they will be prepared to do it, because they will not be ready, but we shall build the factory, if necessary. I think there is a factory in the Rannes district now, and there is one at Gladstone.

Mr. CORSER: There is one at Mundubbera.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They may be all that is necessary, but provision is made in case they are not in a financial position in the earlier stages of development to erect a factory under the Co-operative Agricultural Production and Advances to Farmers Acts. We shall also build roads. The department are now engaged in road-clearing under the Public Estate Improvement Fund. Any enhancement in value due to works will be taken into consideration when fixing the capital value or rental at which the land will be opened for selection. These roads, when constructed, will be handed over to the local authority, and the settler will then come within the ambit of the operation of the local authority. He will pay his rates, and will depend upon the local authority for road upkeep in the area. It is not proposed, under the Act, to establish a local authority. We only intend to carry out certain work which it would be unfair to ask the local authority to do at present, because they have received no rates from the area, or the rates which they have received are not sufficient.

Mr. FRY: Afterwards they will rate the settlers and maintain the roads.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The same as is done in connection with existing soldier settlements.

Mr. FRY: The principle is the same.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In connection with soldier settlement schemes we do not have the opportunity of getting such good land as there is in this case.

Part IV. deals with water facilities. This is one of the most important departures from the usual settlement scheme. We propose to find water—to erect a water facility for either the individual selector or a group of selectors. A group of selectors may join together as a trust and erect a water facility. The money for providing water will be obtained from a fund to be established under the Bill called the "Upper Burnett and Callide Land Settlement Fund." The water facilities will be erected, and the cost will be in the form of a loan carrying interest and redemption over a certain period. With regard to the establishment of a permanent water facility—that is a tank, well, or bore—it will be over a period of fifteen years, paying interest only for the first two years, but having after that, of course, to meet the full obligation. The expenditure on reticulation or machinery will be repayable over a period of seven years. Hon. members will recognise the difference. One is in the nature of a permanent work, and the other a work which depreciates quickly. Of course, seven years is a fairly long period to allow. Really, four or five years is the safe margin; but we think that in this instance we can allow seven years; windmills and other appliances last over seven years,

and we think the term of seven years will give the selector a reasonable chance to meet his obligations. We are also providing that a bore or water facility which is a failure shall be a charge upon the fund. It would be very hard upon an individual selector or a group of selectors if a costly bore or well was sunk and it was a failure. Somebody has to bear the burden, and we think that the State, as a whole, should bear the burden of any bores which prove complete failures. If it fails after twelve months it is charged to the selector or the group. If it fails within the first twelve months it is a charge upon the fund.

The latter part of the Bill deals with finance. It is proposed to have a fund at the Treasury called the "Upper Burnett and Callide Land Settlement Fund." This year I have placed on the Estimates a sum of £50,000 for developmental work in the area.

The principal part of the work will be to provide water. I believe that one of the main requirements of a selector is a supply of domestic water and water for his stock. We have had tests made in the area, and I shall deal with that matter later on. The fund will be replenished, of course, from time to time by repayments of the money from the selectors, and will be used over and over again—probably it will be more than £50,000 finally. But it will not be a direct charge upon revenue; it will be loan money which will be repaid to the State over a number of years by the selector. In addition to that provision, the selector will have access to the State Advances Corporation under the same terms and conditions as are applied to every other selector. He will have the means of purchasing stock, building a small house for himself, and doing any other improvements that may be necessary. The provisions under the Bill are quite apart from the provisions applied under the State Advances Act. The success of this scheme means a great deal to the State, and one of the great drawbacks in regard to settlement has been the supply of water. In many places they have ample grass in a dry time, but the usefulness of the stock is destroyed by having to walk miles for water, and we hope to get over that difficulty.

So much has been said about this scheme that I find very little new to be said about it. I have gone over the speeches of hon. members representing the district for many years past on this subject, starting in 1902. They seem to have been particularly well informed for quite a number of years as to the possibilities of the district. The district within the ambit of the proposed scheme comprises an area of 2,500,000 acres. The land is classified by the Department of Public Lands, under the following headings:—

	Upper Burnett.	Callide.	Total.
First-class agricultural..	Acres. 186,000	Acres. 104,680	Acres. 290,680
Second-class agricultural..	400,000	391,083	791,083
First-class grazing ..	498,000	90,676	588,676
Second-class grazing ..	336,000	488,083	824,083
	1,420,000	1,074,522	2,494,522

I have been over the area myself. Of course, I have never investigated the land, but I

understand from the Department of Agriculture that the land on the flats and on the frontages is first-class agricultural land. The selections have been so designed that each selector will get a portion of the rich land on the river or creek frontages. Some of the areas on Monal Creek near the proposed township have been designed in areas of 50 acres, but, generally speaking, the minimum is 160 acres for agricultural selections and 1,280 acres for grazing selections.

Mr. MORGAN: Fifty acres for workers' homes?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are not workers' homes. The grazing homesteads range in area from 1,280 acres to 5,000 acres. One departure which is being made in this proposal is that we allow the grazing homestead selector to cultivate his land or dairy on it if he chooses. Under the old law, of course, he was not allowed to do that—he had to stick to grazing. The tenure of the smaller selections is perpetual lease, but the grazing homesteads—the larger areas—will be offered under the twenty-eight-year tenure provided for by the present Land Acts.

Mr. CLAYTON: How much will you allow under freehold?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member will have to remove this Government from power if he wants that.

Mr. CLAYTON: Do you not think it advisable to make it optional?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; but I do not intend to enter into a controversy on the respective merits of perpetual lease and freehold. The reason for the differentiation in tenure is obvious. The larger areas will probably be used for grazing purposes and dairying, and we do not desire to hand over to any person a lease in perpetuity of a large area of land—say, 5,000 acres—which in later years may be divided into two or three holdings. As development takes place, such an area may be close to a railway or close to a main road, and we consider twenty-eight years is a reasonable term to give in respect of such selections.

Mr. MORGAN: Will that country carry sheep?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not know, but I do not think so. The hon. member should know that people have had sheep on it.

Mr. CORSER: Forty years ago.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The country is fairly well watered, and with the facilities which we propose to give there should be no danger of failure in that direction. As hon. members know, we have sunk a number of bores with success. In all, nineteen bores have been sunk, seven on the Cania side, and twelve on the Mulgeldie side. Of the former, five gave splendid supplies of good water, and of the latter, six gave flows of salt water, and six small supplies of water suitable for stock.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: How deep?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Not very deep. A water diviner is up there at present—although, personally, I have not much confidence in water-diviners—and the reports are very encouraging. That country should be excellent for dairying. Of course, I am speaking from hearsay; I have not done any dairying. I went through the

[Hon. W. McCormack.]

country in a good year, with grass and water everywhere, and there is no doubt that it is a lovely piece of country. Some people say that they have very dry periods. No doubt, they do; but if they can dairy successfully on the Dawson, I can see no reason why it should not be successful on the Burnett. I think that the land in the Callide end is first class; perhaps more can be said for it than for the Burnett. If all our experts can be believed, no doubt this scheme will be a distinct success, and will settle a large number of persons who will be able to make a living at dairying, maize-growing, cotton-growing, pig-raising, and so on.

Mr. MORGAN: With a lot left to chance.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member knows that there is an element of chance in everything. The rainfall is one of the subjects that have caused a good deal of discussion. When I went through the area people in every part said that the land was not fit for closer settlement, but they did not say that when they were seeking compensation for resumption. The tale told regarding the rainfall and the value of the land prior to the resumption was quite different from the tale of the same people at the time of the resumption.

Mr. MORGAN: It may be valuable for grazing, but useless for closer settlement.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is very easy to distinguish between grazing land and agricultural land. Surely we are not paying the experts in our Departments of Agriculture and Public Lands who do not know their business.

Mr. MORGAN: Some of them could not make a living on a farm themselves.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is another question. Nowadays, everyone must work a farm on scientific lines. If he does not, he goes to the wall. But it is no use for the hon. member to belittle the efforts of every man who happens to be a scientist. Much of the progress of the world to-day is due to the scientist. The idea that the man who does the labouring work does everything is not correct. We must call to our help all these forces, and co-ordinate them, so that we may get the best results from them. (Opposition laughter.) The fact is that the advisers of the Government in both departments—the surveyors which have been working on Crown lands for years, and the agricultural experts—all say that the settlement of this land is going to be successful. I hope they are correct. No authority so far has informed me that the settlement is going to be a failure.

But let me get back to the question of rainfall. The average rainfalls at the towns and telegraph stations adjacent to the districts—which are the only records available to us—are as follows:—

Town.	Average.	Period over which Record was taken.	
		Inches.	Years.
Gayndah	30-32		49
Eidsvold	29-00		30
Hawwood	28-10		35
Camboon	27-93		46
Banana	27-51		49
Westwood	30-26		45

The rainfall indicated is ample for carrying on successful agriculture. The only difficulty—this is a difficulty applicable to the

[*Hon. W. McCormack.*

whole of Australia—is that in certain areas they have a fairly good rainfall, but the rain falls in one period of the year. There must be some better method of cultivation than is carried on in some portions of the State.

Under a proper system the [5.30 p.m.] moisture will be retained. There is no doubt that, when you see well-cultivated farms in dry areas—I have noticed in the Central District well-cultivated fields of cotton with badly-cultivated fields alongside—one realises that the question of cultivation is the all-important one in regard to retaining the moisture. One man has a beautiful crop of cotton looking green and well, and immediately alongside another man has neglected his crop and it is showing the effects of the drought. It is plain to me that proper cultivation is essential in dry areas to retain the moisture. In the Burnett-Callide Valley district there is sufficient land, and the areas are divided in such a way as to give a fair field for cultivation and the growth of crops that can serve farmers and see them over the drier periods of the year.

Mr. DEACON: Roughly, what is the area for cultivation?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: About 290,000 acres of first-class agricultural land and much of the second-class land is cultivable.

Mr. ROBERTS: The hon. member for Cunningham means the area of each block.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I cannot say. The area is greater in some cases than in others. The contour of the country prevents the giving of the same amount of arable land to each selector. So far as it is possible, we are giving an area of 50 to 60 acres for cultivation, and the remainder of the land back on the ridges can be used for grazing purposes. That is the idea behind the designing of these blocks. If the land on the frontages is as good as stated, a person should have no difficulty in making a good living on a 160-acre block.

Mr. MORGAN: I wish you were out making a living on it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will make a living anywhere that the hon. gentleman will make a living, and at any particular calling.

Mr. MORGAN: I could not make it on 160 acres.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Because you would not.

Mr. PEASE: He is too lazy.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member for Murilla has followed a different occupation. He wants to grow sheep or cattle. We know that many graziers have splendid land which they will not utilise for the growing of cotton because they want to grow sheep. They want an area big enough for that purpose. The man who grows sheep is not an agriculturist at all. The hon. member for Murilla is not an agriculturist. All his life he has been engaged in another occupation.

Mr. MORGAN: I have grown wheat and cotton, too.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. gentleman was running a newspaper in Victoria when I first heard of him.

Mr. MORGAN: You were running a billiard saloon once.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; the hon. gentleman is quite wrong.

Mr. FRY: Why does the Minister not get on with the Bill and get away from these personalities? We are not interested in personalities, but we are interested in the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I can give the hon. member for Murilla more than he can think.

Mr. MORGAN: I do not think you can.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: All your actions are not clean and above-board.

Mr. MORGAN: They are cleaner than yours.

Mr. FRY: I think it is up to the Minister to get on with the Bill.

Mr. MORGAN: He can mention all my actions if he likes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. gentleman started these personalities.

Mr. MORGAN: You started them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. gentleman started it by suggesting that I should go and make a living on 160 acres of land—an occupation that I have never followed for a day of my life.

Mr. MORGAN: I asked you to live on 160 acres.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Anyhow, I can make a living anywhere the hon. member can make a living. In connection with the settlement of this land we have established depôts throughout the area during the last month. We realise that this question of settlement is a big job. As soon as the land comes into our possession in October we shall have 1,500 portions of land ready for settlement. We realise that it is a big job to get 1,500 suitable men upon those blocks.

Mr. FRY: Will you give preference to returned soldiers who have failed on soldier settlements?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No. Preference will be given to nobody. The only preference that will be given will be to the man most suitable. I shall explain later on what we consider "suitability" to mean. We have established these depôts in five different places in the area. We have a married couple and about twelve tents in each camp, with horses and saddles to show the selectors round the area. We have a Ford motor lorry at the Mundubbera end. The applicants for land will be taken to the first camp by the motor lorry, and they will then go from camp to camp on horseback, being shown over the land by a guide. We have also the same organisation at the Rannes end. We recognise that many of the selectors will come through from Rockhampton, and will come back through Mundubbera. The Mundubbera people will go over the area and come out at the Rannes end and will come back via Rockhampton.

Mr. KELSO: Is that organisation ready now?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We have not yet got possession of the land, but our organisation is now ready to deal with intending applicants and show them over the land preparatory to their making application when the land comes into our hands in October. We expect to take the applicants

over the land in batches of up to twelve in number. If that is properly organised and the intending selectors are shown properly over the area, we shall have no difficulty in securing sufficient selectors to take up the land.

Mr. KELSO: Do you still stick to the statement that there is to be no preference?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will explain later on what we propose to do. Up to date we have received 1,777 applications for land. The application forms are sent out to the people desiring information about the land, and those applications have been classified. On those application forms certain questions are asked of the applicant. One is the amount of capital a person has, the number in the family, and whether he has had previous experience or not in farming, and so on. All those questions are answered by the applicant. The applications have been classified, and this is how they work out:

Persons with a capital of £200 and over, married, with a family of two or more, 390.

Persons with less capital than £200, married, with a family of two or more, 265.

Persons with a capital of £200 and over, married, with a family of one or no family, 135.

Persons with a capital of less than £200, married, with a family of one or no family, 125.

Single men with a capital of £200 and over, 333.

Single men with a capital of less than £200, 380.

Then we have also 171 applicants who have not filled in the required information. That makes a total of 1,777 applications for land in the Upper Burnett district. We shall have 1,500 blocks available on the 1st October. They are really ready now, but the land does not come into our possession until early in October. Every day large numbers of applications are being received. They are really inquirers desiring to know what information they must set out in their applications.

Mr. MORGAN: Have many of them visited the lands?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No.

Mr. MORGAN: They are simply working in the dark?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Very few have visited the district. Some of the applications are from people in the Burnett district, and they know the land. A number of applications have come from Rockhampton and the Rannes end, and quite a number from North Queensland. Most of them, of course, are from New South Wales, and some of them are compatriots of the hon. member for Murilla.

Mr. MORGAN: The best class of man you can get, too. (Laughter.)

Mr. KIRWAN: We hope they will not become "Jeremiahs" when they come here.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Dealing with the applications, we propose to take into consideration the amount of capital a man has. It may be argued that

Hon. W. McCormack.]

the possession of no capital should be a bar. It will not be a bar, but we want men to have some capital to see them over the first period on the land.

Mr. FRY: Would you take into consideration the man with experience as against the man with the money?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The man with the money will not get preference over a man with a family of growing boys without any money, because, probably, the latter will be the best selector.

Mr. FRY: He has got more capital than the other man.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Land Settlement Committee is composed of reasonable men, who have a knowledge of the business they are undertaking, and we can be sure that they will do the best in making their arrangements. The Committee has drawn up some resolutions dealing with the proposed method of land to be selected. I will read them for the benefit of hon. members—

"1. That special areas be set apart for two classes of group selections—

(a) Organised groups of not less than five persons and not more than twelve;

(b) Group settlement generally to provide for individual selection.

"2. That the section of land to be made available under (a) and (b) alternate as far as possible;

"3. In allocating the portions for (a) and (b) due regard be paid to quality and character of country, natural water supply and rail and road communication; each section to embrace land of fair average quality;

"4. That each prospective applicant be required to complete a schedule of particulars in the form of the attached draft.

"5. That all applications be referred to a committee or responsible officer deputed for the purpose to decide on the suitability or otherwise of the applicant.

"6. That only approved applicants be eligible for allotment of portions.

"7. System of allotment for 1 (a)—

That in order to obviate overlapping in the choice of contiguous blocks required by any one group, it is suggested that areas for groups of certain sizes be defined in units of five and six and that the selection lithos be marked accordingly. In the event of two or more groups applying for the same sections of land, priority between the groups to be decided by ballot

"8. That in the event of any portions in the areas set apart for selection by organized groups not being applied for up to the date appointed for receiving applications, such be made available for selection by individual applicants under the group system generally."

That outlines the system to be adopted.

Mr. KELSO: You have completely done away with the ballot system?

[*Hon. W. McCormack.*

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Under the group system the ballot system never did apply.

Mr. MORGAN: The ballot system is not a good system.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, the ballot system is a bad system. The group system is a system which has been in the Land Act for years. The hon. member for Murilla, who came from Victoria, was a group selector. The main object of the group system is to get rid of indiscriminate balloting. Under the old system you might have one hundred applicants and the man who was successful at the ballot might be the least likely to become a successful settler, and he might have deprived others who could make the best use of the land of the opportunity of securing it.

Mr. KELSO: I am not finding fault. I am only pointing out you have entirely eliminated the ballot system in this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. gentleman is not an agriculturist, although he may know something about political ballots. (Laughter.) As I stated before, the history of these Burnett lands has been dealt with many times. I tried to think of something new to say about it, but I found that everything that could be said has been said about it. I believe we have an opportunity here under conditions different to the old settlement conditions of creating a new province. The area available will, if successfully settled, add a new province to Queensland. Similar land with similar rainfall has been successfully settled in other portions of the State. Kingaroy, for instance, has been successfully settled, and, I understand, it is similar land to the Upper Burnett area. If successful settlement can be achieved in the Kingaroy district, it can be done in the Upper Burnett.

Mr. EDWARDS: The Kingaroy lands are the best in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I understand that a good deal of the Burnett land is classified as first-class agricultural land and is equal to the Kingaroy land. There is a very extensive area available, with fine watercourses running through it. We all have an interest in land settlement schemes. Unless we can settle the people on the land successfully, and especially land such as the Burnett land is, then progress is hopeless in Queensland.

Mr. CORSER: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If the Burnett scheme cannot be made successful, I do not know how we as a State are going to get on. It has been pointed out by the officers of the Lands Department that the Burnett area is one of those areas where closer settlement can be successfully established. The Government have secured that land and are now opening it to selection. We are building railways into the area from three points. We are spending a large amount of money on railway construction. We are providing every facility for the success of the settler, and, if this settlement scheme is not going to be a success, the outlook for Queensland, as I said, is very bad indeed. But I am optimistic enough to believe that this will be found to be one of the finest examples of close settlement in Queensland. Hon. members on all sides of

the House are willing to give the prospective settler opportunities that have never yet been given in the history of this State. Every one agrees that we must make the conditions attractive in order to encourage people to go on the land. We recognise that the advantages of the city dwellers over the dwellers on the land are so numerous and outstanding that it is very difficult to induce them to leave the city areas. All the facilities that go to make life easy and pleasant exist in the city. You have simply to turn a tap and you have water, to turn a switch and you have your electric light. The conditions of settlement I have outlined will afford a much greater chance to the settler of earning a competence than the conditions existing in the earlier days, when the settler had to battle against adversities, and the conditions of life have been so difficult that the tendency has been to say, "I am willing to accept wages and live in the city." The development of this country depends upon the development of such areas as the Burnett. We cannot maintain our high standard of to-day and attract people to Australia if land settlement is a failure. Primary production is the main factor in Australia to-day. The secondary industries will come with the population. When we get people settled on the land and it is developed to the fullest extent we shall then be in a position, not only to establish secondary industries but to have markets for their output. To-day we find it difficult to establish secondary industries in a young country like Australia. We must consequently turn the attention of people to land settlement; and more particularly is that so in a State like Queensland. Our only chance of progress is in land settlement. The Government have outlined a bold policy in regard to land settlement.

Mr. MORGAN: Have you made provision for townships?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Township sites have been designed, and settlement in turn will follow the land settlement.

The progress of the State is bound up in these schemes. We have schemes for the resumption of land in other portions of the State. In all these schemes the main objective is the settlement of a rural population on the waste lands of Queensland. All talk of immigration is "bosh" unless we can find land to put our settlers on. People who get some cheap notoriety talking about immigration, and arguing that the Labour party are opposed to it have never gone into the matter beyond saying, "We must fill up our empty spaces."

By a constructive policy we must, first of all, secure land settlement, together with the establishment of primary industries, to deal with the production from that land. The first step has been taken, and I am very pleased to have the opportunity, while Secretary for Public Lands in this Government, to have the control of this scheme and to have some say in its inception and the conduct of things generally, so that later on I may look back with satisfaction on the work in which I have been engaged.

Mr. COLLINS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Soldier settlements have failed primarily

because there was too much rush to get men on the land. The land set apart was not suitable, and the settlers were not given proper areas. Again, settlers were put on the land irrespective of whether they had any desire for, or knowledge of, the cultivation of the soil.

Mr. MORGAN: Hon. members on this side of the House told you that at the time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Whatever has been done has been done. My opinion is that there was too little criticism. I wish for criticism in this matter. Nothing can stir up those in authority like good constructive criticism. Nothing can be gained by abuse. Abuse is no argument at all. In the matter of soldier settlements, I hope that hon. members opposite will show me how to pull the chestnuts out of the fire, because I realise they are in the fire. With this scheme I have the experience of others to guide me, and I hope to see but a small proportion of failures.

The Burnett district offers us the first opportunity. The land is ours, and there is very little burden on it, as we had not to pay much for compensation for land resumption. We did resume small areas of freehold, but selectors will not be asked to carry a great burden.

I offer the Bill to the House. There is nothing political in it. It is a scheme that has for its object the successful settlement of this land. I desire constructive criticism—not abuse. Our policy with regard to leasehold is a settled policy, and while the Government remain in power, that policy will be continued. Nothing can be gained by urging freehold as against leasehold. The land will produce as large and as productive crops under leasehold as under freehold.

Mr. MORGAN: But it will not give you such contented settlers.

Mr. KIRWAN: Rot! What about Jimbour?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If the Bill can be improved by any suggestions from hon. members opposite, those suggestions will be entertained and accepted. If the scheme is successful, it will be the forerunner of further successful schemes in Queensland and of a policy of immigration, because, when we supply our own people with land under our scheme, we shall have to go further afield for settlers. We shall say to them, "Here is a scheme that has been successful. Similar land and similar opportunities exist in this State. Come to our country and become Australian citizens."

I have much pleasure in moving—

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

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I must thank the Secretary for Public Lands for his explanation and for his invitation for constructive criticism of the Bill. He wants, also, the criticism of those who have had some experience in these areas. I have lived the greater part of my life in the Burnett district, and have had practical experience there, so I think I can speak with some authority. I claim some knowledge of the difficulties met with in the past in the settlement of our land, and I can offer some ideas to rectify the wrongs of the past and to bring about a more contented

Mr. Corser.]

settlement in the future. I trust that the Minister will accept any suggestions of mine in the spirit in which they are offered. The whole of the Burnett and Callide valleys are within the boundaries of my electorate, and I am happy to think that the Government are out to develop such an important part of the State. I feel sure that, if advice is accepted from the best authorities and the scheme proceeds along practical lines, it will be possible to bring about a successful and happy settlement of these areas.

We have to consider that the biggest error will lie in bringing about settlement on areas that cannot be considered livable areas. We must decide to settle our lands in areas that will provide, not only a living, but a decent possibility of comfort, and a possibility of contentment for the family of the settler as well as of the settler himself. In bringing about this settlement we have to educate the settlers as to the possibility of the further development of the soil—to bring about a condition of happiness in the home, and so enable the man on the land to keep his children with him. If you want the best settlers, you have to give the men a possibility of working along lines that will be remunerative to them.

The Burnett scheme has been wooed for many years by many suitors. We have had opportunities for pressing railways from all different angles, and we have had them analysed by parties both in and out of office. It was not until the latter part of 1913 that the first railway was passed from Mundubera by the Liberal Government. Since then four railways have been rejected by the Legislative Council, until to-day we have a system that provides for a railway from three different centres, making a centre at Monto Junction, providing for the opening up of all the land which has been resumed and is now in the hands of the Crown to commence operations in October next. This is the largest opening of Crown lands that we have known in the State. Probably 5,000 farms will be made available in this area, but whatever is done and whatever the area is going to be, we must remember that our duty lies, not only in making available the land, but in making available the possibilities of a successful and remunerative occupation to those connected with the scheme. Our duty does not cease in making the land available.

There are many new features in this Bill—features that have not been prominent or known in our previous legislative enactments for land. I propose to approach them from the point of view of duty to the State. We do not want to intrude party politics into such a scheme as this. We hope the settlement will be successful, not primarily for the State but for the sake of the individuals who go there. The Minister certainly has a great opportunity, and, if his administration

is going to be a sound one, we [7.30 p.m.] shall have a prosperous settlement in the Upper Burnett. On him depends the possibility of the future happiness of the settlers or whether those who take up this land will suffer hardships. The Government have had years of preparation. We have heard of this Upper Burnett scheme since 1902, and ever since the Government came into power they have been dealing with the question, starting from the railway commenced by the Denham Government in 1913. To-day we have for the first

[*Mr. Corser.*

time an idea of the scheme which the Government have launched. We have heard a lot about the Upper Burnett settlement scheme, but to-day for the first time we see just what this scheme is. I have no doubt that the Minister claims it to be the "last word" so far as settlement conditions are concerned from the Government point of view; but hon. members on this side may be able to offer some suggestions which will be of value. Personally, I think we can offer very many. This scheme is supposed to contain the maximum amount of generosity that the Government can offer.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Consistent with public interests.

Mr. CORSER: The interest of the State should be the interests of the people who are to go there. Unless the settlement is a success no public interest is served.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Of course, we could offer them a premium to go on the land, but that would not be a common-sense attitude.

Mr. CORSER: It would show a very bad state of affairs if our lands were such that it was necessary to give selectors a premium.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I mention that as an exaggerated system.

Mr. CORSER: It would be very exaggerated. Any scheme for the settlement of the Upper Burnett and Callide lands will have my best wishes, and anything I can do towards assisting the settlement on those lands will be done, as I have advocated consistently the opening up of the best lands that are in the Burnett. I was hoping that from year to year a certain area would have been thrown open for selection, and, as these settlements developed, we could have learned what was essential in the preparation of the next area of land. However, the Government have brought the whole area, consisting of millions of acres, under one scheme. Advocating, as I have done ever since I first entered this House, the value of the land in the Upper Burnett, or some parts of it, I am pleased to find that steps have been taken at last to do something to settle those lands. An expenditure of millions of pounds has been necessary in order to make these lands available. We have railways under construction in this area which are costing two and a-half millions of money, and an expenditure of many more millions will be necessary successfully to open that land and successfully settle it. If there are to be 5,000 farms, or 15,000 farms, we shall want practically £1,000 a farm to make them successful. We have to consider not only the expenditure on a particular farm, but the expenditure for the construction of factories, main roads, and the finding of water, medical, and telephone provision, etc., so that we want a considerable amount. If the Minister estimates that a sum of £500 per farm is essential for the first lot of 5,000 farms, it will be seen that millions of money are necessary before we are absolutely ready to go on with this settlement.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The expenditure will be warranted.

Mr. CORSER: I am not saying that it is not warranted—it is essential and the money has to be found—but what I want to know

from the Minister is whether he has the money to-day to go on with the settlement. Before we settle 1,500 settlers there we ought to have the money to make possible the conditions provided by the Bill. We should have sufficient money to provide the facilities given under the Bill and for assistance under the State Advances Corporation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We have.

Mr. CORSER: The Minister has appropriated £50,000 for the scheme.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is for this coming year.

Mr. CORSER: And we are going to open 1,500 farms.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is only for water.

Mr. CORSER: But where is the money to lend the settlers for improvements? The Opposition have no other desire than to provide for the needs of the settlers, but we do not want the Minister to come along afterwards, if he cannot get the money which is necessary, and say that the action of friends of the Opposition has stopped the Government from getting the money which is essential. Before one settler goes there the Minister should have the amount of money which is necessary, in the opinion of his department, for the successful carrying on of that one farm. And what is sought in one instance should be his object right through—he should have the money for a certainty before he puts any individual with his wife and family on the land. We must remember the responsibility which lies on the Government in placing settlers with their wives and children on land in these settlements. They are not farms—they are only selections; the only improvement thereon might be a survey peg. I started at one myself at Wetheron with the railway 23 miles away, so I know what I am talking about. The settler will probably be inexperienced, and he is asked to convert his selection into a flourishing farm. For years that settler will not be a producer; he has to convert the selection from virgin scrub or forest into a farm. That is how his energies are going to be absorbed during the first years, so that it is essential that the necessary money shall be available to him as provided by the State Advances Act or other lending Act, and the measure must not be restricted in its scope by something to the contrary provided by regulation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A lot of that land wants very little ploughing before it can be farmed.

Mr. CORSER: Some of it is land of as fine a quality as there is in the State. I know that some of it has no timber on it. When you get near the top end of the Callide Valley the land is without timber on individual blocks.

Mr. KIRWAN: Is it good near Three-moon Creek?

Mr. CORSER: It must be good if we are going to spend £3,000,000 to build a railway and open it up first between Three-moon Creek and Splinter Creek.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Quite a lot of the land will not require much effort to plough it.

Mr. CORSER: I say that what is applicable to one farm should not necessarily be the basis of administration for the whole lot,

because there is a great amount of land, as shown by the map on the wall of the Chamber, that is not agricultural land at all. According to the map, second-class grazing country is included in the scheme. We must not focus our eyes on the best pieces of land; we should look at the whole lot.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A grazing selection does not require very much attention.

Mr. CORSER: What is the area of grazing selections—from 1,200 acres?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Up to 5,000 acres.

Mr. CORSER: It will take more than 5,000 acres on the worst of those areas for a man to make a living on; he will not do too well on that. However, we shall come to the grazing area afterwards. Millions of money will be required for assistance to settlers, public buildings, medical provision, schools, halls, and all similar things that the Government may or may not intend to construct. We have also to provide money for advances through the State Advances Corporation. We do not want the Minister to make the excuse later on that he cannot finance the settlers in the way that they should be financed. We want to look ahead.

Now let us come to some of the features of the Bill. Some of them provide for what the Government say is the maximum amount of assistance which has ever been provided or is ever likely to be provided for settlers on our land. We are told that this is the last word in land settlement schemes.

Mr. W. COOPER: It is a big improvement on anything the Opposition instituted.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member may make himself believe that; but let us analyse the measure and see what are the facts. We only want to look at it from the point of view of facts—not from the point of view of bald statements. This is what was said in Victoria by the Premier in May last, as published in the metropolitan Press of the 25th of that month. Speaking of the rural scheme of the Government, he told the people of Victoria—from which some of his settlers are expected to come—

“Yes, we will be glad to get a few thousand young Victorian farmers. My Government intends to make them highly tempting offers.

“During the past year in Queensland the foundations have been laid for a great policy of rural development. Now the elections are over, we will push on strongly with a number of big schemes.

“Many thousands of new farmers will be settled this year. The Queensland Government will give them a generous deal. The conditions of settlement will be more generous than at any time in the past.”

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: We have the Bill, and have had it expounded. Let us compare it with what happened in times past. Being a settler under the conditions myself, I know how to appreciate the actions of the Government of the past in what are sometimes spoken of as the dark ages. Let us compare the supposed dark ages with the scheme which the Government to-day claim is the best that has ever been submitted.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you suggest that we should alter the system, or leave it as it is?

Mr. CORSER: The Minister has invited criticism, and I am giving it. If the Minister wishes to alter it, let him alter it now in the direction asked for by me. I am going to show that the Premier's statement that this is the best system and the most generous system that has been put forward is not in accordance with fact from the selector's point of view. We know that under previous Governments the tenure of agricultural holdings was something very different. Let me commence at another point.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Go on.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I was just going to throw you a lifebuoy.

Mr. CORSER: For the satisfaction of hon. members opposite, I shall proceed from where I started. Under the old agricultural selection system, which system is supposed to have originated away back in the dark ages and against the interest of settlers, every landless man in Queensland could secure a homestead, by paying 2s. 6d. an acre over a period of ten years, and he could secure from 320 acres to 640 acres as an agricultural homestead. The rental for that period was 3d. an acre. At the end of the ten years the owner of the land could hold the land in fee-simple. The present Government offer a perpetual leasehold. It is claimed by the Government that the land is equal in value to £3 an acre or more. They propose to charge 1s. an acre a year for the best part of that land, and to provide for a reappraisal of the rental at the end of fifteen years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are fixing your own valuation.

Mr. CORSER: I am not; I am quoting from the "Daily Mail" of 25th May of this year from the remarks by the Premier, who said—

"The tenure will be perpetual lease, and we are practically giving the land to the settlers. The original appraisalment will be from £3 an acre"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It will not; that is not in the Bill.

Mr. CORSER: It is not in the Bill because the Minister has not told us everything. Continuing, the Premier, in referring to the value of £3 an acre, said this to the people of Victoria—

"upon which value the tenants will pay their annual rental. The unimproved value will be subject to reappraisalment every fifteen years."

There we have perpetual lease tenure with land valued at £3 an acre, for which 1s. an acre per annum rental will have to be paid in some instances, with a provision for reappraisalment after fifteen years. That is an area of 160 acres. We have that now, as against an area of 640 acres under the old dark ages system of freehold conditions with 2s. 6d. an acre purchasing price, secured by 3d. an acre rental over a period of ten years, when the holder would be able to get the land in fee-simple and have a home of his own. Now, which system is the better?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Who told you that the rental would be 1s. an acre?

Mr. CORSER: The late Secretary for Public Lands made that statement, and the Premier also stated that the rental for the best land would be 1s. per acre per annum. In the bigger areas we are not to have the

perpetual lease tenure. We are to have grazing homestead of 1,280 acres on a lease for twenty-one years with reappraisalment every seven years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You know that a grazing homestead will be valued at less than £3 an acre.

Mr. CORSER: I know that perfectly well; I am not speaking about that. It is provided that grazing farms will comprise an area of from 1,280 acres, and it also carries a personal residence qualification, as the holder must reside on the land for the whole period of the twenty-one years of the lease. Under the old dark ages system that we hear so much about—a system that we on this side wish to encourage—the farmer could obtain an area of Crown lands of 1,280 acres at 10s. an acre, and 50 per cent. of that money was to be paid over a period of twenty years—that is 5s. an acre.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: When £2,500,000 was spent in providing railways.

Mr. CORSER: We are not talking about railways. We are talking about land settlement. The railway is not going to make the improvements on the farm. Let me resume my own argument—I did not interrupt the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You have to take the result of the market into consideration.

Mr. CORSER: You have to take the result of the market, and you have not prepared for that. You have not fixed any percentage of the profit of the market yet. The second instalment of 5s. on this agricultural farm, which was to be paid after the twenty-first year, is now extended over ten more years. There are two conditions of our freehold system which we claim was far better than the system of leasehold which is offered to-day. Those are matters which we on this side of the House have advocated and claimed to be the correct policy. I am not going to enter upon a long debate on the question of perpetual leasehold, because it would be futile, as the Minister has it laid down that he will not alter it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You can alter it after you win the elections.

Mr. CORSER: Yes, and when we win the election we will give a freehold tenure if the settlers so desire. When we opened land to settlement we gave the man who proposed to work the land the option of saying whether he wanted the freehold or the perpetual lease tenure.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: This Bill does not give that option to the intending selector. The industrial delegates of the city met together and decided what the land programme of the Labour party should be. It was not the farmer who decided that policy. The farmer has not got the privilege of saying how the worker in the city shall be controlled—what tools he shall use, or what shall be the tenure of his land. Neither should the industrial worker have the right to dictate under what tenure the farmer shall work his land.

Mr. DUNSTAN: You dictated the freehold system to them in the past.

Mr. CORSER: We gave them the option, and we propose to do it again.

Mr. DUNSTAN: You dictated freehold.

Mr. CORSER: The Government in office prior to the present Government offered the

[*Mr. Corser.*]

selector perpetual lease or freehold tenure. The Workers' Political Organisation at Mount Perry asked me to interview the late Government and have lands opened to perpetual lease. The late Liberal Government made the tenure optional, and not one of those who asked for the perpetual lease conditions was an applicant.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Ninety per cent. of the original selectors of the Widgee Estate preferred perpetual lease.

Mr. CORSER: Because they were compelled to. I am not going to argue the benefits of the one system against the other at the present. I am prepared to leave it to the individual settlers who are land-owners and who want to become landowners. We are providing that there shall be no ballot. We also provide that the settlers shall come along and that the land shall be offered to them. The Bill provides that within three months of his application being accepted the settler shall go on this land, and that in six months, if the Minister is not satisfied with the progress of that settler, he can turn him off. The Minister virtually says to the settler, "You shall improve your lands." Paragraph (k) of clause 4 provides that the settler shall comply with this condition—

"Within a time to be fixed by the Minister to effect such improvements as in the opinion of the Minister are necessary for the proper working of the selection,"

and he must maintain those improvements. So far so good. The Minister is the sole adjudicator. Clause 6 contains this provision—

"The Minister may from time to time, under and subject to the State Advances Act, make advances to allottees of portions and selectors of selections within the area."

The selector shall put on the improvements, and the Minister from whom he has to borrow may lend him the money. If the settler has failed to put on the improvements, the Minister should be compelled to make the money available, because he cannot fulfil the condition of placing the settler on the land if he does not get the money. That is essential. The Bill does not provide that the money shall be forthcoming; it provides that the Minister secures the State Advances Corporation as his agent, and that organisation, on behalf of the Minister, makes such allotments as its discretion and the regulations permit. Another point: Does the Minister know to-day what will be the price to be charged for that land? Will the settlers know before the land is allotted to them what the price will be per block?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We will attend to that.

Mr. CORSER: The Minister says, "We will attend to that." It is essential that, if a selector is going to take a block of land, the price should be made known by the Government before that land is allotted. I have always advocated, and do so now, offering it as a suggestion to the Minister, that on every parcel of land available for selection the Minister should state how much money the State Advances Corporation will be permitted to advance on that selection. The Act provides for £1,200, yet we find that the average amount advanced by that institution last year was not £200 per individual farm.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They do not go in for it.

Mr. CORSER: They do. I will show you what they will go in for. In 1922, settlers applied for £541,826, and the amount actually advanced was £155,311. In fairness to future settlements, and in order to improve the conditions of the present settler, there should be marked on the plan the amount of money that the State Advances Corporation is prepared to lend on each block.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How can we do that when the basis rests upon what the man does himself? We are assuming that

Mr. CORSER: No, we are not. You compel him to put improvements on. The Minister claimed that the average amount held by each applicant of the first 1,700 was £200.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I did not say that.

Mr. CORSER: When the settler gets that amount, the Minister, by this Bill, can compel him to find water, and he can be compelled to use that money.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will find water for him.

Mr. CORSER: If the settler does not find water, the Minister will find it for him and will charge him for it. If the land had any mortgageable assets, could not the Minister absorb them all in the first mortgage he takes?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; the State Advances Corporation would do that.

Mr. CORSER: I quite understand what the hon. gentleman will give him. He will admit that the Bill provides that, when water facilities have been given him, the Minister has the right to take a first mortgage. Afterwards, when the State Advances Corporation operates, it becomes first mortgagee and the State mortgage becomes a second mortgage. The Minister takes a first mortgage for water over all the assets of that individual.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is correct.

Mr. CORSER: What mortgageable assets has he got when he goes on to a vacant piece of land except his personal assets?

Mr. KIRWAN: His labour.

Mr. CORSER: His labour! But the Minister does not contract that he shall employ him to put down that particular bore. There is nothing in the Bill to say other than that the Minister shall require

[7.30 p.m.] him to find water, and, if he does not, that the Minister shall find it. It does not say that he is going to use the settler's labour; so what mortgageable assets will the settler have? It is provided that the Minister can even secure a lien over the first crop to provide security for the advance in regard to water. What then will the settler have to mortgage to the State Advances Corporation? All his mortgageable assets are gone. The water, or the hole in the ground, has already been mortgaged to the Secretary for Public Lands under this Upper Burnett and Callide Land Settlement Scheme; therefore the selector has the clear-cut issue that he has to borrow from the Crown as though his selection were a vacant piece of land. It is void of improvements, because the improvements there are mortgaged already.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The whole of the money will have been spent in providing water.

Mr. Corser.]

MR. CORSER: I am not disputing that at all. You find him water and take all his security. Considering that the money will have been spent in providing water, it is quite easy for the Minister to settle how much the State Advances Corporation is prepared to advance on that individual block. It is no good coming along afterwards to the settler and saying, "We cannot advance any more because it is not a good piece of land." We know what the State Advances Act provides and what the leaflets provide. I have a leaflet here showing the conditions under which the State Advances Corporation advances money. It is a curious thing, but I am afraid that we are going to render this scheme somewhat inoperative by using the machinery of the State Advances Corporation. The State Advances Act is a good one, but the regulations under the Act are not satisfactory in that they do not provide the assistance which Parliament has dictated should be made available to the settlers who go on the land. We find in His Excellency's Speech, delivered not so long ago, that the Government claimed that the Government were going to amend the State Advances Act, as it was not operating to the best advantage to the settlers. They are not doing that, however; but, under this great scheme for the settlement of the Upper Burnett, the Minister is going to ask the State Advances Corporation to act on his behalf in the matter of advancing money.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why not? Why build up two departments?

MR. CORSER: Because it has failed. The Act provides that a total advance of £1,200 may be made to each settler, yet we find that during 1922 only £297 was advanced to each applicant. That is all the State Advances Corporation advance under its regulation. Have I not a right to complain that the settler in the Upper Burnett may not get his £1,200 when the experience we had last year and the experience right throughout does not indicate that the State Advances Corporation is going to be very liberal?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are going to give him water, anyhow.

MR. CORSER: You are not giving him water; you are making him pay for it. On a perpetual lease selection under this scheme water should be provided by the Crown. If the settler cannot own the land, how can he own the waterhole or well? On a perpetual lease selection he cannot shift it.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Can he shift it off a freehold?

MR. CORSER: No, but with the freehold tenure he owns the land, and in fifteen years he cannot be reappraised and pushed off of it.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: He owns the crust of the land.

MR. CORSER: He does not even own the crust under a perpetual lease selection; the Government own the lot, and ask him to pay for the well when it belongs to the Crown. The settler should only be asked to pay a rental for the well. If you sink a well on a selection, it is part of the selection. If there is water in a creek, you do not sell the selector that water. It is part of the selection.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is where you are wrong. It belongs to the State.

MR. CORSER: So far as the value goes, it belongs to the settler. I know that under

[*Mr. Corser.*]

the Rights in Water and Water Conservation and Utilization Act the edge of the rubble or sand or gravel in the stream ends the selection, but the value of that water is added to the value of the land by the Crown.

THE SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed him under the Standing Orders unless he has been deputed by the leader of the Opposition to speak in reply for the Opposition.

MR. TAYLOR: I have deputed the hon. member to speak on behalf of the Opposition.

MR. CORSER: I have been asked to speak for the Opposition. I want to get down now to the State Advances Corporation which the Minister has invited the settlers to accept. This institution provides that £400 may be made available for unspecified purposes. Will the settlers get £400.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Secretary for Agriculture is amending that Act this session. You can discuss it then.

MR. CORSER: We have asked for it long enough. The Act now provides also that £300 shall be made available, £1 for £1, for buildings, ring-barking, clearing, fencing, and water conservation.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are dealing with another Bill altogether.

MR. CORSER: I am not. It provides £200 for water conservation or boring. It also provides £100 for lifting water. That Act makes provision for water, if it was operated properly. Under the State Advances Act twenty-five years are given for the repayment of money advanced to provide water, but under this proposal fifteen years is the maximum, and up to seven years for machinery.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If it fails, you have to pay under the State Advances Act. Under this proposal you do not pay.

MR. CORSER: I quite agree with the hon. gentleman, and on many occasions I have shown the unfairness of the State Advances Corporation. If a settler sank a well 60 ft. and it was proved to be a dry one, or if he sank six wells and they were all dry, the State Advances Corporation would not give him a penny.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Because the corporation is a bank. That is why I am making different conditions under this Bill.

MR. CORSER: And they made a profit of £5,000 last year. We want something more liberal than the State Advances Corporation if we are going to make the Upper Burnett scheme a success.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The "Courier" says the scheme is too paternal.

MR. CORSER: There is a bit too much "Minister" in it.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, there will be responsibility.

MR. CORSER: It is not the scheme I thought it was going to be. Even if the Government insist on their perpetual lease policy, I was hoping for a system that would provide what I have advocated ever since I first entered this House—water before settlement—individual water for every block, and not charge the settler £200 or £300 for water immediately he goes on the land. Before you give him the land under per-

petual lease or anything else the Crown should make provision for water and charge rental over a period of years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why charge him for roads or anything else? Why not give him the whole lot?

Mr. CORSER: There is no reason for the Minister jumping at these conclusions. He must remember that under this scheme the settlers have to pay for everything; the Government are not giving them anything. The Minister is going to construct roads and culverts, but the cost will be charged to the settler. Last Friday we were discussing a Bill that provided for developmental roads, but that does not apply here. The Minister has got a different idea here. He is going to build developmental roads through the Public Estate Improvement Branch, and he is going to load the individual blocks with the cost of these roads.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Of course he is.

Mr. CORSER: Then I tell the hon. gentleman that when the settlers go there they will not know the price of land, because they do not know what this loading is going to be. The hon. gentleman tells us he has got a scheme: that the Government have considered it for five years. The settlers are due to go on the land next month, and the Government cannot tell them what the price of their land will be. Probably they will not know for six months after they get there, and, if they have not fulfilled the conditions, they are going to be passed out. The Minister is going to be the judge; he is going to say, as head of the Lands administration, whether they will or not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Your Government made them pay for the railways.

Mr. CORSER: They did not. In 1913 I moved in this House a resolution for the abolition of the railway guarantee principle, and the Minister voted with Mr. Denham and his Government against me. He kept the Denham Government in power then. The Minister who is now blaming me for it voted with the Denham Government against me to retain the guarantee principle.

Mr. COLLINS: You kept in power the Government that imposed it.

Mr. CORSER: I did not. But for Labour members we would have wiped it out at that time.

Mr. COLLINS: Why did you advocate the railway guarantee principle?

Mr. CORSER: I was not here on the introduction of the railway guarantee principle. All Labour members supported its introduction. I came here in 1912 and moved a motion to abolish it in 1913. While individual newspapers may say that too much is being done for settlers, we must remember the trials and trouble through which they have to go; we must realise the hardships and conditions of to-day as compared with those in the past. If good conditions were not offered, what could settlers expect to do with the prices of implements three or four times more than they were before? When this Government came into power they stated that there was a machinery combine in operation, and that they would bring about a reduction in the prices of agricultural implements. What have they done? The price of implements is two or three times as much as it was in those days.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORSER: The prices of materials have also gone up. I was hoping that we would have had a Bill providing water for settlement purposes, and providing for access to the extreme end of this area which is to be opened. Some of it is 30 miles from the proposed railway, and has been confiscated by the Crown from past tenants.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is not correct.

Mr. CORSER: You took it, because the tenants had no say in the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why?

Mr. CORSER: Because the Act of Parliament did not permit them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was resumed under the old Government's law.

Mr. CORSER: But it was never proposed to resume land 30 miles away from a railway.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are paid full compensation.

Mr. CORSER: They do not think so. I was hoping that roads would be provided, and that we would have had plenty of funds to ensure a successful settlement. We were hoping that when the settler took up his block, he would have water, iron, wire, and cattle to start dairying with.

Mr. COLLINS: Do you want all those things given free?

Mr. CORSER: Not free. The water should be provided on the block as part of the State asset. When you have perpetual lease, the well should belong to the lease and rent should be charged for it.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Where would the funds come from?

Mr. CORSER: You have already surcharged the selection, and you have not got water on it. You have fixed £3 an acre as the value of the land, and there is no water on it. The land practically costs the State nothing, as it is Crown land. I know what the troubles of a settler with his wife and family are, and we want to make it as easy as possible for him. We only wish to assist the Minister to-night.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What would you give for that land if you were offered it as freehold in fee-simple?

Mr. CORSER: I do not know that you would get very much for it if the railway was not going there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: With the railway going there?

Mr. CORSER: The Minister knows that a great proportion is second-class grazing land. What do you expect to get for that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What would you give for the good land?

Mr. CORSER: I am not going to mislead the Minister, or cause an impression that may not be correct, so I leave it to the Government to answer that question for themselves.

Mr. KIRWAN: You are a beautiful fencer.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member will agree that there will need to be a lot of fencing up there before this is all over.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What would you give for the land as freehold?

Mr. CORSER: If you asked big buyers, they would not take it because of the Federal and State land taxation.

Mr. Corser.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Federal and State land taxation is much greater on freehold land than the rent we are going to charge.

Mr. CORSER: I should think it would be, but there is no land tax on 160 acres of such land. Why does the Minister refer to that? The land he is offering in 5,000-acre blocks as grazing farms under homestead conditions, with personal residence the whole time, would not carry any land tax.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There are people paying 1s. 4d. an acre in taxation for freehold sheep country in Queensland.

Mr. MOORE: They are paying 2s. 5d.

Mr. CORSER: There are a lot of injustices possible under our laws. A second mortgage is to be given to the Minister, who is going straight away to ask 5 per cent. interest on the money required to find water. He is going to give only two years for payment of interest alone, as against five years under the Agricultural Advances Corporation. He proposes to give fifteen years for repayment of the loan as against twenty-five years under the State Advances Corporation, and for equipment he is only going to give up to seven years for the payment of interest and redemption. I do not know that the conditions are much easier when we analyse the whole of the principles of the Bill.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: What is the life of the equipment?

Mr. CORSER: The life of the equipment may be the life of the occupant. I am not saying that the equipment should not be totally paid for by the selector over a longer period.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Seven years.

Mr. CORSER: Seven years for what—windmills? I have had a windmill for twenty-five years, and it is as good as when it was put up.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Without renewal?

Mr. CORSER: No, with one renewal, and I have had one part repaired. I am not saying that the settler should not pay for the equipment of the well, but I hold that the well should be leased with the selection, because it is a perpetual lease selection. Why charge the selector when posterity is going to benefit from the water found on that particular frontage?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Did you never hear of a man putting up a big building on a building lease and the whole thing reverting to the original owner? What does he do that for?

Mr. CORSER: He does it under his own conditions. Here the Minister makes his own conditions. For a time I was the only member advocating the claims of the Upper Burnett. As I said before this evening, we have been wooed from every side—we have had too many suitors—and now we are faced with a settlement scheme. We have been waiting for it for many years; but I cannot say that this scheme offers those things which I was hoping for. I am to some extent disappointed with the degree of generosity which the Government have displayed. I was hoping that the scheme would have been much more generous than it is. I have offered certain suggestions to the Minister, and I hope he will take them in the spirit in which I have offered them.

[*Mr. Corser.*]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Does not a man have to pay for the water he uses from a reservoir?

Mr. CORSER: That water from the reservoir is a commodity which he uses.

Mr. CARTER: Is not the other used too?

Mr. CORSER: Yes. You can charge him rent for the well; but because he uses water he is not necessarily trying to get round the whole of his selection. You might as well say that you should charge the selector with the whole of the cost of the dam, weir, or other water-conservation system because he uses some water out of it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He takes his portion.

Mr. CORSER: He no more owns the well than he owns the river from which another man takes water. He may be charged a greater amount for his land because he has a frontage to the river, but he should be charged only for the water he takes from the facility, whatever it is. Under a system of perpetual lease he should not be charged for the well. I hope the Minister will accept the suggestions I have offered in the spirit in which I have made them. I want to help to make the conditions such that a successful settlement is possible. Now is the time to do it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you think we should give grazing farmers generally water facilities free?

Mr. CORSER: We are referring to a particular Bill. The grazing farmers have the means of securing their water.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They have not perpetual leases.

Mr. CORSER: No; and neither have these grazing farmers perpetual leases. They have, however, personal residence conditions for the whole period of the leases—twenty-eight years. But the man out West can leave his place; he can put in a bailiff at the end of five years. If the Minister does not embody my suggestions in the Bill, I shall nevertheless do my bit, as the representative of the district, to bring about the successful settlement of these areas and the success of the farmers who will select them. I am not going to deny the settlement of this district or the district itself—I have advocated both all along—but I am sorry that the conditions have not been made as generous as they should have been, and I hope the portions will not be too small; we have not yet seen the plan.

Many years ago we secured an analysis of the possibilities of this district. I have in my hand a report made by Mr. Phillips in 1906. In 1897 the people of the district, at their own expense, sent to Great Britain a pamphlet setting out the potentialities of the Upper Burnett lands.

Mr. KIRWAN: Did you send a copy of that to "Billy" Hughes when he turned the whole scheme down?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MAXWELL: "Billy" Hughes did not turn it down.

Mr. CORSER: The scheme was not turned down by "Billy" Hughes. What he said on that occasion was that, if it was to be a settlement, he would advance the money, but he would not advance for railway building alone.

Mr. KIRWAN: That is wrong.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member for Brisbane to obey my call to order. I ask the hon. member to set a better example. (Laughter.)

Mr. CORSER: The Prime Minister was prepared to advance the money, provided the scheme was in accordance with the ideas of soldier settlement of the Federal Government; but, in any case, that time seems to have gone. We have approached the scheme ourselves, and the Minister claims to have all the necessary money; but I hope the time will come when the selectors will have the option of taking freehold or perpetual leasehold, whichever they prefer.

Mr. BULCOCK (*Barcoo*): I suppose that the measure which we are discussing at the present moment is one which is worthy of the greatest consideration that any measure is likely to claim during the lifetime of this present Parliament. Certainly a scheme such as this—the opening of a tremendous area of land, involving the considerations which it does—is of more than passing moment from the point of view of the welfare, not only of those persons who will be primarily associated with it—that is, the selectors who will take up this land—but also of the whole of the State. We have to bear in mind that the taxpayer will have to bear the burden of financing a scheme such as this, for it is obvious that for some considerable time it will be a charge on the Treasury, and not a revenue-producing concern. Consequently we have to discover means whereby the selector may have his interests reconciled with those of the community as a whole, and I claim that in the Bill which the Minister has presented we see a very definite and commendable progress in that direction.

I listened with a good deal of care to what the hon. member for Burnett had to say. The main suggestion he made, or the chief bone of contention in his remarks, was that water was not being provided on the selections.

Mr. CORSER: No. What about financial assistance?

Mr. BULCOCK: I shall deal with that as I go along. The hon. member suggested that water should be provided before the farm was taken up. Consider the logical outcome of such an argument. If you are going to provide water—a primary necessity—you must also provide other primary necessities. You must fence; you must supply stock; you must build a house.

Mr. CORSER: Water is the main thing.

Mr. BULCOCK: It may be the main thing, but the other things are just as important in some respects; and, if you admit the principle that you must provide water before the country is selected, you must admit the same principle in respect of other necessities. We must not look at this scheme as if the settler were taking up the land for six or twelve months only. The majority of these settlers are going to establish themselves there for the balance of their natural lives. The people who take up the land will hand their selections over to their sons, and, in some instances, I venture to say to their sons' sons.

Mr. MORGAN: What about the imprisonment clause?

Mr. BULCOCK: I am glad it is there, because I believe it will stop trafficking in land. It is time it was stopped. The hon. member also made some reference to the fact that in the old days—I think he termed them the dark ages—one could get a 640-acre

block for 2s. 6d. an acre by paying 3d. an acre a year for ten years. I admit that that was so; but one has to bear in mind that the land is the heritage of the people, and some of the blocks which were traded away to private enterprise by previous Governments have a far greater value than that which was placed upon them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And on some of those selections there is still standing scrub.

Mr. CORSER: That can be rectified.

Mr. BULCOCK: More especially in such a settlement as this we must conserve the rights of the whole of the people, and not admit any possibility of land trafficking in any direction. It is only natural, I suppose, that the Opposition should raise some objection to the system of leasehold tenure; but it is the only justifiable system, and it is even more justifiable in its application to this particular scheme when one considers the amount of public money that will be tied up. The taxpayers are making an investment, and in the ultimate analysis they should be allowed to participate in the benefits which accrue, in common with but not to a greater extent than the selectors who take up the land.

The hon. member also suggested that he was an advocate for the Burnett scheme when he first came into the House. I understand that he was an advocate for the Burnett scheme, and so far as that is concerned his attitude in that direction is, to [8 p.m.] me at least, commendable, but he evidently failed to impress the Governments of the past as to the validity of his scheme.

Mr. CORSER: In 1913—the second year that I was here—we passed a Bill.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. gentleman says that in 1913 a Bill was passed dealing with land settlement.

Mr. CORSER: No—in connection with the construction of the railway.

Mr. BULCOCK: The failure of the whole past project may be put down to the jealousy of the different ports and various factions, which prevented the development of this tract of country. Unfortunately, this question has been the battleground and shuttlecock of every political party since the hon. member for Burnett discovered this land, and, perhaps, long before he appeared on the political horizon.

Mr. MORGAN: It is the same now.

Mr. BULCOCK: That may or may not be so, but to the everlasting credit of the Government who occupy the Treasury benches to-day let it be said that they are the first Government who have taken the adventurous road of opening this land. And not only have the Government taken that road, but they have enunciated new principles in land settlement apart from the principles laid down by previous Administrations, which, owing to their inertia, proved unsound. The Bill introduces some new principles of land settlement and some new methods of land settlement. I think the Minister should be commended for introducing a scheme like this and having the courage to apply it, not to a small or circumscribed area, but to the greatest area that has ever been opened for closer settlement purposes in the history of this State, and I do not think I shall be far wrong if I say in the history of Australia.

Mr. Bulcock. }

We might with advantage analyse the scheme, and see what it stands for. This scheme is of a gigantic nature. It is not a small thing that, if it proves a failure, can be pigeon-holed in some musty, dusty hole in the Department of Public Lands and conveniently forgotten. If this settlement proves a failure, then the Government who instituted it must necessarily go to the wall. It is obvious, therefore, that every thought, every consideration, and every effort must be bent towards making this scheme a success, which it undoubtedly will be under the climatic conditions that exist and with the nature of the soil that we know to be there. It is obvious that this land should have been opened before. In passing, I want to say that when the Hughes Government were approached, there was some suggestion that £2,500,000 would be made available for the settlement of this land under certain conditions. Those conditions were turned down. I am pleased that they were turned down, for on perusing Mr. Gullett's report on this scheme I found that the money was to be made available conditionally on the Government making the whole or portion of the land available for oversea settlers. As an Australian I believe that Australians should have first access to the soils of the State that are available. Although we might have been a little bit disappointed a year or two ago when we hoped that the land would be opened, yet we have gained immeasurably by waiting, because I venture to say that had we brought settlers from overseas, even if they had been brought here under the auspices of paternal Governments—both the State and Federal Governments must have participated in the scheme—we would have been confronted with a colossal failure, because you cannot acclimatise the man from overseas, and you cannot settle him as well and expect him to make a success in the same way that our Australian kith and kin can do.

Mr. MOORE: Many of them have done it.

Mr. BULCOCK: There has been some suggestion that our leasehold principle will not prove acceptable to those people desiring to take up holdings in the area under consideration. I think that is disproved by the fact that, although there are only 1,500 blocks available for settlement in the near future, the Minister has more than sufficient applications to cover the total number of blocks that will be made available.

Mr. MOORE: They would rush the land if it was freehold.

Mr. BULCOCK: Let us examine the capital value of the land if it was freehold. There is, in the first place, an expenditure of £2,500,000 for railways, all of which would have to be borne by the prospective settlers at once by an addition to the capital value of the land. They would be required to pay straight out, and that puts the whole argument out of court. The only system for settling this area is the leasehold system as laid down by this Government and by this party. There is no question about the validity of the scheme. Possibly we have had exaggerated reports on both sides. Those who have been opposed to the scheme have presented the very worst report of the soils as shown on the map in this Chamber. That has been held up as the mean average quality of the land. Others have claimed that the first-class farming area,

which is shaded green on the map, has been set out as the average quality of the land. I think it would be ever so much fairer if we took the mean average opinion; that would give us a fair idea of the quality of the soil in the area. I believe you could find in that area of land productivity and utility corresponding to the different classes of land throughout the whole of the State, and possibly the Commonwealth. I think there is an infinite variety of soils, and an infinite variety of pursuits may be engaged in in consequence. I believe we can find soils well adapted for any agricultural enterprise, and I know, from my own knowledge, that the quality of the soils as set out on the map is not accurate, because included in the third-grade area are many alluvial pockets that would allow a return from cultivation. I am pleased that the Minister proposes to allow the holders of the bigger areas to go in for agriculture as well as grazing pursuits, because in every holding I believe there can be found small areas—perhaps 5 to 10 acres or more—of soil eminently suited for cultivation. The consensus of opinion is undoubtedly in favour of the Government's activity in this direction. On 20th June, 1922, the Brisbane "Daily Mail" in an editorial expressed regret that the scheme was not being proceeded with, and stated that the Burnett lands were eminently suited for a big farming population. We maintain, too, that they are eminently suited for a big farming population, and we are doing the practical thing. We are taking steps to ensure that we shall get a big farming population there in the near future.

The Minister has told us something about the classification of the soils. It will be seen that the soil is capable of sustaining any branch of agricultural industry. As the classification is not conclusive, and as the lesser frequently includes the greater, or the poorer includes the better, it is obvious that the people who are going to take up land there are going to be fairly happily situated. Sometimes, when we read about this scheme, those of us who have been considering it cannot but pause and think of the difference between the schemes submitted to-day and the schemes, or want of schemes, of the Tory days. In those days the man who went on a farm perhaps was able by the sweat of his brow to gain something at the end of a long and strenuous life, but a good many of the old pioneers who took up land under the old freehold system are now in Dunwich. That is the system which hon. members opposite seek to perpetuate. Under our system in this paternal State there are no insurmountable difficulties, and a man can get land, and having got land he can get finance, and having got land and finance—provided his heart is in the right place—he can succeed, and add wealth to the State. That is the main essential, because we are essentially a primary-producing State. I was interested to see the report of an agricultural chemist who was seconded from the New South Wales Department of Agriculture quite recently, in which he dealt with the proposed land scheme in the Burnett. I knew that gentleman in my student days as a worthy and competent officer of the New South Wales Department of Agriculture. He dealt, amongst other things, with the adaptability of the soil and what it is capable of producing. In January, 1922, he mentioned that the cream cheques of the selectors

[Mr. Bulcock.]

on the outskirts of this area ranged from £40 to £100 per month.

Mr. MOORE: Is that the advertisement you put in the "Worker"?

Mr. BULCOCK: No, it is not. I do not desire to say that would be the constant return.

Mr. MOORE: It would not.

Mr. BULCOCK: But it is an indication of the fertility and productivity of the Burnett district. There is no doubt that the land is of vast expanse, and, in the main, of high quality. As we propose eventually to induce certain people from other States to come to Queensland, we might venture on some relative comparisons of the value of land in this area with other parts of Australia. I find that the land in the Mundubbera district changes hands at from £5 to £7 an acre.

Mr. CORSER: Where did you get that information from?

Mr. BULCOCK: Land in Victoria of the same quality realises £20 an acre.

Mr. MOORE: Don't talk nonsense.

Mr. BULCOCK: It has been suggested that farmers will not succeed on the leasehold tenure basis, but farmers in Victoria despatch their produce to the same overseas market as we do and are able to pay £29 an acre and in many instances higher rates for land they are farming, which is not so attractive as our land.

Mr. MOORE: Have you been around the Mundubbera district?

Mr. BULCOCK: Yes.

Mr. MOORE: Then why don't you talk sense?

Mr. BULCOCK: Anyone who is not biased and looks at this question from an honest point of view will admit that my statement is correct.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BULCOCK: The rainfall for this particular area, as indicated by the Minister, ranges from 28 to 30 inches a year, the data extending over a number of years. It is obvious we have not very concise detail on this particular question, but it is at least obvious that the greatest portion of this rainfall falls in the first four or five months of each year.

Mr. CORSER: Which are the months when the evaporation is the greatest.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. member for Burnett wants me to tell him the hottest months of the year. It is a most childish question. Of course, the first three or four months are the hottest months. If the greatest amount of rain falls in the first four months of the year, it is obvious that during this period the settler will devote his attention to the growing of crops and to making provision to tide him over the winter when feed is scarce. The land has this additional attraction—that, during the first four months of the year, the cotton crops will be passing into their greatest degree of growth, and we have ample evidence of the suitability of the land for the growing of cotton. As the rain falls in the first four months of the year, it will be possible to grow cotton during that period. I want to plead with the Minister to give some preferential treatment to those farmers who are prepared to make some provision for winter feed. I am not enamoured of the scheme as

laid down by the Council of Agriculture for the conservation of fodder.

Mr. KELSO: Oh!

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. member for Nundah may say "Oh!" but with a little more experience he will learn that I have not refrained from criticising the Council of Agriculture when I have deemed it necessary. The scheme of the Council of Agriculture for the conservation of fodder is one that I would not like to see introduced into this area or perpetuated there. The true principle of fodder conservation lies in the farmer storing his surplus fodder on the farm to make provision for bad times. Fodder can be conveniently and economically stored. It is necessary, therefore, that silos should be constructed throughout the area. We cannot rely on the haystack or any other means of conservation, but all surplus crops harvested before winter should be conserved in silos to carry them over the cold months.

Mr. MORGAN: How do you account for the fact that in some States the silo has gone out of date?

Mr. BULCOCK: I am not prepared to subscribe to that statement, because it is not true.

Mr. MORGAN: It is true.

Mr. BULCOCK: More capital is being invested in silos throughout Australia than ever before. If the hon. member said that the farmer was going in more for the stacking of silage or the creation of pit silage there might be something in what he says. The truth underlying the whole subject is that the manufacture of silage in one form or another is more popular to-day than it has been for some very considerable time.

Mr. KELSO: Have you read the report of the Board on this particular country?

Mr. BULCOCK: Yes, I have read all the reports I could get concerning this country. There are some questions which might be touched on in this connection more in the nature of a warning in the light of experience we have had in the past. In this area there are some ticks, and consequently some redwater. If dairying is to be the greatest agricultural activity in this belt, it is at least possible—I do not say it will necessarily follow—that the tick will spread. We all know that the tick very greatly reduces the milk supply of our herds that are infected. I suggest that rigid inspection be instituted and satisfactory and efficient steps taken, somewhat along the lines of the principles laid down by the Secretary for Agriculture when he proposed to create a tick buffer area on the border of New South Wales—which unfortunately fell through—to try and keep the tick and the consequential effects of the tick in check. If we give these questions consideration, we can make this a model farming area where co-operation is necessary, and develop individualism where individualism is best suited to the needs of the farmer. We have seen in the past that under the system of balloting the indiscriminate handing over of parcels of land to individual selectors has not proved a success. I am glad that the Minister on this question has taken his courage in both hands—if I may say so, because there will be some comment about this principle—and has determined that those who are to be allowed to select these lands shall be subject to the approval of the Minister. I suppose the Minister uses his name in this direction in a purely formal

Mr. Bulcock.]

manner. This approval will no doubt be vested in a Land Settlement Board, which will be set up and will consist in the main of the responsible heads of the departments whose activities intrude in this area.

We might initiate some principles to be laid down in regard to the selectors. I suggest that a married man with a family and experience and a small amount of capital is the most desirable selector, and should receive first consideration.

I would take as the second most desirable class the married man with experience, a family, and no capital, because I believe he will make a satisfactory selector. The single man with experience and capital comes next, and the single man with experience and no capital next. I would confine my first choice to residents within Queensland, then for second choice I would apply the same qualifications again, and extend them to applicants from any other part of the Commonwealth.

Mr. MORGAN: You would give the capitalist first choice?

Mr. BULCOCK: I will develop that as I go along. As a good deal of State money will be involved, it is obvious that we must get the highest possible returns for the State capital that is invested in the scheme. There are individual cases which will have to be considered on their merits; but a very careful selection will have to be made to get the highest degree of productivity from the lands to be settled.

The question of water is a very important one. The hon. member for Burnett suggested that it is the most important question that we have to discuss. I do not see that there is any particular need to discuss this question, because the water will be provided whether the selector likes it or not, and the cost will be a first charge against the selection. That brings me to the consideration of a point raised by the hon. member for Burnett—the question of rural credit. I do not think that agricultural prosperity should be brought about by a tax on industry. I think that this principle is vicious and unscientific in its application, and that it will yield bad results. Some system of rural credit must be established. I do not think that the Advances to Settlers Scheme or the Rural Co-operation Scheme will give that maximum amount of assistance that the settler will require. Every farm is going to represent a fairly large amount of involved capital. If water is put down and the charge is made either a first or ultimately a second mortgage in the hands of the Department of Agriculture, the advances available will be diminished by the value of the water created on that particular land.

Mr. KELSEO: Suppose you sink a well and it is dry?

Mr. BULCOCK: Then the charge is on the State and not on the individual selector. That is provided in the Bill, and I thought the hon. member would at least have known it. It is a remarkable thing that for every £100 of value produced in the Commonwealth £65 comes from primary production.

Then we come to the amount of money available for the encouragement and help of the primary producer, and for every £100 we find that only £20 is again made available to the primary producer. Those figures are rather astonishing. Well might the farmer say that he is indirectly called upon to sub-

scribe to the safe conduct of industry while he is denied the finance that he undoubtedly should have by virtue of the amount of wealth that he produces in our community. In order to make this scheme a success it will be necessary to revert to some of the tried principles of personal credit. The principle is not a new one and has been in operation in certain parts of the old world, especially Europe, for a great number of years. It is a remarkable success. The principle is that a man gets finance on his personal character and progress, and it is a significant thing that, while millions of money have been advanced under this form of banking, there have been practically no derelictions from repayment.

Mr. KELSEO: It works well in Scotland.

Mr. BULCOCK: Of course the Scotch temperament might be particularly suited to it. It also works well in Belgium, Switzerland, and Italy. Italy was the pioneer of the scheme.

Mr. MOORE: The storekeepers are carrying it out to-day.

Mr. BULCOCK: Yes, unfortunately, and charging 14 and 15 per cent. for carrying it out. As we are embarking on a question of such great magnitude, it is up to us as a State to establish a State farm to be run on commercial lines. I do not mean an experimental farm particularly, but a farm conducted on sound agricultural and commercial lines to see what the State, as a landlord, is capable of doing with the land it is letting out to tenants. By doing this the State would gain some idea of the problems confronting the farmer, and the application of such a principle would tend to create a greater sympathy for the farmer and give us a better understanding of the difficulties under which a farmer in a particular area might be labouring.

Mr. KELSEO: Another State enterprise?

Mr. BULCOCK: Not necessarily a State enterprise. If it did not pay, it would be obvious that the farmers would not be able to pay the rents we are asking them to pay.

Mr. KELSEO: You said it should be on a commercial basis?

Mr. BULCOCK: I think it should be on a commercial basis.

Mr. KELSEO: Judging by the other State enterprises, it is foredoomed to failure.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. member can only look at this question through the gloomy smoked glasses of a pessimist.

Mr. KELSEO: I have clear glasses—not smoked.

Mr. COLLINS: They are mentally smoked.

Mr. BULCOCK: I want to talk about the experimental work necessary to develop this area. Take the question of cotton. On the authority of Mr. Jones, we find that for some years prior to a year or two ago no cotton seed was imported, nor were any experiments conducted to try and evolve the most satisfactory cotton for Queensland. There is a big probability of cotton being successfully established in this area, and it is abundantly clear that we should experiment in order to evolve the class of staple necessary for the maximum return from the land. Already those of us who have taken an interest in the cultivation of cotton can see a gradual process of elimination. Certain noted characteristics of certain cottons are disappearing, and individual characteristics

[*Mr. Bulcock.*]

are beginning to creep in. The State is in duty bound to experiment in order to determine the staple of cotton most suited for the district and the overseas market.

There is a big and vexed question of sheep farming in connection with this undertaking. The most successful farmer is the mixed farmer, and we know that this area is going to be an ideal mixed-farming area. No mixed farm is complete without sheep. Hon. members opposite have said that sheep ceased to be profitable in this area some years ago owing to worm and spear grass. That may be so on big areas where sheep are not subject to close scrutiny at regular periods. In the Riverina district we find that, whilst spear grass is as bad as here, a type of sheep has been evolved by the farmer that is giving excellent results.

Mr. WARREN: It is not the same grass they have to contend with.

Mr. BULCOCK: The merino is not going to give satisfactory results, and it is no use going in for English breeds. We shall probably effect a compromise between the two—something in the direction of the Border-Leicester-Merino, the Lincoln-Merino, the Dorset Horn-Merino, the Romney Marsh-Merino, and the Shropshire-Merino. I would therefore suggest the establishment on the experiment farm of small test flocks. It is only a question of going to New South Wales, where we can buy all the ewes and rams that we require. The farmers are successfully raising crossbred sheep on the spear grass infested area of Southern New South Wales. It is obvious that this scheme means more [8.30 p.m.] than the advancement of individual farmers. Properly handled, it means a reconstruction of the whole industry. It means that it will take farming operations out of the daily monotonous routine yielding only a small pittance for the year's hard work, and put it on a more satisfactory basis; and it will make large areas of Crown lands available for settlement, and return more to the collective individuals who will make up the settlement, and therefore to the State as a whole. It is obvious that a scheme like this is only going to be a success if you have sympathy and understanding between the departments who will be responsible for its administration and the field officers who will be on the job. I hope that any action of an arbitrary nature on the part of the officers who are charged with the administration of this scheme in this particular area will be speedily recognised and speedily dealt with. I would also say in this connection that, when the scheme is launched, members of the Opposition will be ill-advised if they rise in their places and choose the least successful man as an example of what the Burnett scheme has done. Let us discuss, if we can, the mean average success or want of success. In connection with the soldier settlement scheme it has been the consistent policy of the Opposition to take the most unsuccessful man on the worst farm, and to say that his case represented the whole soldier settlement.

Mr. MOORE: The Minister said they are a failure.

Mr. BULCOCK: There are some men who have made a success on soldier settlements, just the same as there are men who have made a failure, and men will make a success on this settlement, just the same as other

men will make failures. We shall profit by the lessons that we have got in connection with our soldier settlements, and we shall take all sorts of good care, I hope, that these lessons will have been satisfactorily absorbed, and we shall therefore guard against the errors that were committed in that particular direction.

It has been said that this Bill is too paternal—that it involves too much Government interference.

Mr. MOORE: That is right.

Mr. BULCOCK: Let us see what they did in England. England is the father of Britons, and we all know about "Britons never, never, never shall be slaves." The Department of Agriculture in the agricultural districts in England had and exercised those powers: Different farmers were ordered to improve their methods or to give up their farms; they were also forced to plough land which was under grass and plant cereals. As a result of these directions there was an increased yield, though individual farmers had to sacrifice profit to obtain this. The result was that 2,500,000 additional acres were added to the cultivated area.

Mr. WARREN: During the war period.

Mr. BULCOCK: During the war and after the war, when the agricultural policy of Great Britain was receiving very serious consideration.

There is one question, too, that should be raised in conjunction with the term of the holdings. Hon. members opposite have objected that an individual cannot gain full control of his land until he has completed a period of six months' residence. I think that period should be twelve months, because in twelve months on a farm you only go through every routine operation once, and if you are going to limit it to six months, you have only gone half-way through, and you cannot determine whether a man is going to be a success or whether he is going to be a failure. But if you extend it to twelve months, and make the settler go through all his routine operations once, then you have some more satisfactory grounds on which to work.

In conclusion, I want to say that we have unused land of the State in the Upper Burnett; we have unused labour of the State in the form of people who desire to get land to cultivate and cannot get it; and we have available State cash. Therefore, we have the three factors making for success—State capital, unused labour, and unused land. The function of this Bill is to bring the three together in such a manner as to make for success—in such a manner as they were never brought together before. And this tract is going to be developed in such a way that it will become one of the greatest agricultural areas of the State. People of the South talk about the Darling Downs. The best land on the Burnett is equal to the best land on the Darling Downs. It is obvious there is going to be a good deal of cotton grown on this area. The story of "King Cotton" in America is by no means inspiring from one point of view—that is to say, the number of poor, unfortunate, little "kiddies" who are required to work in the cotton fields during harvest time. In the State of Texas last year, according to the American statistician's report, there were no fewer than 250,000 children, whose ages ranged from four to six years—that is to say, they were aged

Mr. Bulcock.]

four, five, and six years—engaged in the picking of cotton.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Shame!

Mr. BULLCOCK: It is a shame. I take it we do not desire to perpetuate that state of affairs here. Better far that cotton should never be crowned "King of the Burnett" than that little "kiddies" who live there should have their lives wrecked and their childhood squandered picking cotton to make profits for somebody overseas, and I hope it will not be very long before this question will be satisfactorily faced and honourably dealt with, and that the exploitation of child labour in our cotton fields will become impossible. (Hear, hear!) We can afford to do it. The price of cotton does not warrant the employment of children in our cotton fields, and it is obvious that in protecting the children we shall not be doing anything to hinder expansion in the cotton industry.

On the whole, the Bill is a good one and Time—who is an honest fellow—will judge the results of the honest endeavours of this Government.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): This is a big scheme, but I cannot say that I am altogether in favour of it. I consider the chief necessity of successful farming is individual self-reliance and individual enterprise. This is going to be interfered with to a very considerable extent under this Bill. You will not get the best class of farmers to take up land if you are going to have someone to dictate to them what they are to grow, how they are to grow it, and if you are going to impose onerous conditions upon them. Men who go in for farming—successful farming—are not going to be helped by having a big load of debt put on to them at the very beginning. I am very much afraid that, under the generous conditions allowed for under this Bill people will be encouraged to spend more than they should at the beginning, and there is nothing more difficult to get out of than a load of debt put around a farmer's neck at the very beginning of his operations.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is only water to be provided.

Mr. MOORE: There is only water to be provided in one particular instance, but there are several other clauses in the Bill under which a settler is entitled to secure money, and I am very much afraid that, if you are going to allow individuals without capital to go on the land, even if they are experienced, as the Minister himself said, it is going to make for failure. There is only one man in a thousand who can go on an agricultural farm without capital, borrow all the money required, and make a success of the business. I know a large amount of successful farming in Queensland up to the present has been carried on without the farmer having an opportunity of placing a load of debt round his neck at the beginning. We know very many of these successful farmers had to struggle in the beginning, but they won through; but I very much doubt if they would have won through if conditions had been made available for them to borrow money easily at the beginning, as they probably would have wasted a considerable amount of money or not have got the benefit they should have got from it. I am afraid that under this scheme a large number of farmers will find that money easily got is very hard to pay back. I quite believe in the principle of selection

of settlers going on the land, but I am not altogether in favour of the committee that the Minister suggests. I do not know that the experts in different departments are going to be an altogether satisfactory committee to say whether an individual will make a successful farmer or not. I would rather see one or two individuals outside the Government service who have lived in the area on the committee to select settlers to go on this area of land. Another thing I do not like is the fact that the Government are perpetuating the mistakes that other Governments have made—they are going to cut up the land into too small areas. It is no use pretending that 160 acres in a great deal of this country, even if it is first-class land, is enough for a man to make a living on. It is all very well to talk about the average rainfall—the average rainfall is not worth a snap of the fingers—it is the distribution that counts. The average rainfall is most misleading when people are being induced to go to a settlement which is being opened up. It may be of no use to a man so far as agriculture is concerned, and of very little use in connection with dairying. We have a certain amount of evidence given by the officials of the Lands Department during the last ten years, and I cannot say that that evidence leads me to believe that a large portion of this land is suitable for small area settlement. When we talk about grazing farms of 1,200 acres, which the Minister admits can only carry cattle, and about grazing areas of 5,000 acres which will carry a beast to 15 acres, I do not see that there is going to be much successful settlement on areas of the size allowed. I would much prefer the Government to be more generous in regard to the area of land allowed, and instead of trying to settle too many people on a given area, give them a good opportunity. The Government seem to think that, if they can give a man a little more land than he can make a fair living on, he will make money out of it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, it is only because he will not cultivate it.

Mr. MOORE: I object to putting a man on an area so small that he will always have his nose to the grindstone. The settler is practically always going to be a wages man for the Government under this scheme. The hon. member for Barcoo instanced a few men living on the outskirts of this area, who had made big cheques during one month of the year, to show that the land is suitable for dairying, and that the individuals who select it will be able to do well. A question was asked in the House to-day as to how these reports were got. We know they were advertisements, and for their own ends the Government sent officials round to the farmers in these areas. They did not tell them that they were Government officials; they said they were collecting information for the newspapers. When they went to a farmer and asked him how he was doing, the farmer spread himself and let himself go to make out what a good farmer he was. He, perhaps, took out the best months in the year and said, "This is what I have made." Then we find the Government collecting these varied exaggerated interviews with the farmers and publishing them in the "Worker" in the "Daily Standard," and in the "Alert" in Maryborough, and paying for them, to show how well the farmers were doing in these

[*Mr. Bulcock.*

particular areas, as if the statements quoted were an average instead of selected instances. Is that the class of advertisement which is wanted to induce men to go on the land? Is that the sort of thing which is likely to encourage successful settlement?

Mr. PEASE: It is wanted to counteract the propaganda on your side.

Mr. MOORE: It is most misleading, and gives a false impression. It is most unfortunate that the Government should come down to a position of affairs in which they send men round to collect information and then pay for its insertion in Labour newspapers as an advertisement to assist their political propaganda.

Then the hon. member for Barcoo quoted statistics to show the suitability of the land for settlement. I do not want to decry this country, as I do not know enough about it. I have looked up the various reports of the Land Commissioners from 1915. I have not got Mr. Bourne's report, but I have the Land Commissioners' reports for the various districts which surround this area. I have not got reports for the middle of the area because there do not appear to be any, but I have taken the Gayndah and Maryborough districts and the Banana district which is at the other end—presumably the rainfall and the quality of ground which they speak about are similar to what they are in this area. I suppose that, without knowing that the Burnett scheme was coming on, they have during the last eight years given fair and reasonable reports to the Lands Department as to the suitability for agriculture and dairying of those areas. The Land Commissioner for the Maryborough district, in his report for 1914, says—

“BIGGENDEN.

“Dairying is still active in the Biggenden area in spite of the fact that the rainfall has been very irregular.

“General agriculture is not making the headway I should like. The principal thing grown is maize, and this often fails for want of rain at a critical moment.

“GAYNDAH DISTRICT.

“Owing to the continuous dry weather the prospect for the coming season does not appear to be very bright, but still farmers are hopeful.

“Greater progress would have been made in dairying but for the fact that in most cases cattle had to be driven so far to water.

“A good crop of maize would have been harvested in this locality had the rain come six weeks earlier.

In the same year the Land Commissioner at Banana said—

“The rainfall for the year was 17.14. Generally speaking, surface water except in the Dawson River is gradually giving out, and a system of tanks and dams is urgently needed to make good this loss. Underground supplies in shaft wells of from 40 to 100 feet deep have greatly diminished, and in many cases completely given out. About twelve bores from 50 to 250 feet deep were put down during the year with varying success.

“No progress was made in agriculture, owing to the bad season.”

In 1916 and 1917 the seasons were abnor-

mally good. In 1918 the Land Commissioner at Banana said in his report—

“The first part of the year was very promising, but was followed by a prolonged dry spell. The absence of rain caused serious loss to stockowners, and many had to seek relief country. The year's rainfall was 30.06 inches, or 25 inches below the average.”

Mr. CARTER: That applies to the Darling Downs.

Mr. MOORE: I am not saying whether it applies to the Darling Downs or not. I am pointing out that taking the average rainfall for the last twenty or thirty years, as the Minister did when he was advocating this scheme, does not prove that the land is suitable for agriculture. If you are going to settle people on small areas, it is essential that they should not have, as we have here stated, runs of bad years, because they are not going to be able to make a “do” of it. The report goes on to say—

“Although there is good land throughout the district adapted for general farming, this is unlikely to succeed, owing chiefly to the uncertain rainfall.”

That is from Banana, which is just outside the top end of this area. There is a Land Commissioner at Banana. He has a big district, and this is his report for the whole of his district. It is wrong to settle people on the land in small areas, when the rainfall is irregular and uncertain.

Mr. CARTER: It is more regular than the rainfall on the Darling Downs.

Mr. MOORE: I should be very sorry to see people settle on 160 acres on the Darling Downs except in favourable localities. If the reports of officers of the Lands Department do not happen to suit the hon. member for Port Curtis, surely I have a right to endeavour to protect settlers going on those areas without asking the hon. member's permission. The report says—

“In later years dairying may be a success when a railway line is built through the district.”

In 1918 the Land Commissioner for the Gayndah district said—

“A few of the selectors of the scrub lands in the neighbourhood of Eidsvold purchased dairy herds with the intention of commencing dairy farming, but the drought compelled an abandonment of this intention. General farming in this locality has been undertaken to some extent, but it has been found that owing to the visitation of periodical droughts, and the long distance—17 to 30 miles—from Mundubbera, the nearest railway station, this pursuit is not a paying proposition. It is almost unnecessary to state that grazing has been a most successful business for some years, and there is every prospect of a continuance of prosperity owing to the high price of cattle. Under existing circumstances, the small holders can only eke out a bare existence by reason of limited opportunities for grazing on small holdings.”

That does not sound very favourable.

“Fortunately for the selectors in the parish of Hollywell, Eidsvold district, the bore put down by the Government on a site chosen by the department's water testers was a success, and provided the only permanent water in the locality,

Mr. Moore.]

otherwise the greater number of their selections would have had to be abandoned. In the case, also, of the two Government tanks excavated at Gurgeena, good supplies of water have been conserved, sufficient for the use of selectors during all the dry weather."

In 1920 the Commissioner at Banana said—

"The district, which is essentially a pastoral one, experienced another dry year. The rainfall was 19.83, or 4.13 below the average. Stockowners were unfortunate in losses of stock, while others were forced to travel to other districts for grass and water."

In 1918 the Commissioner at Gayndah said—

"The year opened very favourably as regards rainfall, but unfortunately one of the worst seasons on record was encountered, which resulted in losses of stock and a large diminution as compared with 1917 in the output of dairy and farm produce."

The Commissioner at Rockhampton in 1918 said that in the Dawson Valley much scrub was felled and burned; other farm work could not be done on account of the drought. The long spell of dry weather prevented the extension of the dairying industry.

In 1920 the Commissioner at Gayndah said—

"The rainfall for the year was a vast improvement on the records for the two previous years, during which disastrous droughty conditions prevailed, causing a serious diminution in the supply of natural surface water. The district abounds with stretches of fertile land of various descriptions well adapted for agriculture, a large part of which has been settled. The success that was hoped for from agriculture has not been realised in consequence of the irregularity of the rainfall."

During those eight years, apparently, there were only two seasons in which the rainfall was sufficient for close settlement. I say that, with the officers of the Lands Department making reports such as that, the Minister should see that he does not encourage people to go on to areas which are too small. His own officers report that they must have a decent regular rainfall.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I discussed it with a surveyor who has lived there for years.

Mr. MOORE: I have discussed it pretty fully with men who have lived in the district, too, but I am taking the reports of the hon. gentleman's own officers, and the Minister must take some notice of them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: My proposal is based on their glowing reports.

Mr. MOORE: In 1916-17 and 1917-18 the reports were glowing reports—they had had two abnormally good wet years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They were reported on more favourably years ago.

Mr. MOORE: I was looking back only to-day to 1910, but I could not find any satisfactory information. The reports at that time were very short, and there was little information in them. The only useful information I could find was in 1915 and the following years.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Do you admit that the district is not adequately settled?

[*Mr. Moore.*

Mr. MOORE: I am not doubting that it is not adequately settled. I have just quoted an extract to that effect.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Have not the farmers about Gayndah and Mundubbera been successful?

Mr. MOORE: I do not know that they have. Two friends of mine have just left that district because they have been unable to make a living. Both of them are good, practical workers, and both of them left because of the inadequate rainfall. When you are going to launch a big settlement scheme of 1,500 farms and put some of the farmers on 160 acres, and when much of the land is poor, as the Minister admits, and when much of the rich land is subject to flood along the creeks and gullies, you want to be careful.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The floods are not disastrous.

Mr. MOORE: They may not be disastrous from the point of view of the loss of life or stock, but they damage the crops. The Secretary for Mines has had some experience of the district, but I doubt very much if he would care to undertake to make a decent living out of 160 acres in an area like this. Why not give them a little more? In New South Wales and Victoria the Governments made exactly the same mistake of endeavouring to settle people on areas which were too small. The fear always seems to be that, if a man gets a little more than he can make a bare living on, he will become a capitalist.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No.

Mr. MOORE: I contend that a man should have an area such that, if he gets a couple of bad seasons, he will have something to fall back upon.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have increased the areas on Mount Hutton.

Mr. MOORE: You have enough land here to do the same thing now. Why not start off with larger areas?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Mount Hutton land is not so good.

Mr. MOORE: I know it is not so good, but I am not talking about the quality of the land. The quality of the land does not matter a snap of the fingers if the rainfall is not there. The reports of the officers of the Lands Department show that they have had five bad years out of eight—five years in which there was not sufficient rainfall for successful agriculture. I have heard hon. members on the Government side say that some people make a living too easily—I quite understand that the Australian spirit is not one which believes in keeping its nose to the grindstone on 160 acres, half of which is poor land, if it can get something better somewhere else. When you take into consideration the tenure, the Government or Ministerial interference, and the small areas—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You know very well that the Government has been a good landlord.

Mr. MOORE: It may be a good landlord, but the Ministers are more or less unsympathetic. The farmers certainly know that, if a large number borrow money and cannot pay, they will not be turned off if agitation can prevent it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And the same argument applies to the area.

Mr. MOORE: I also want to question this fetish of the Government in respect of perpetual lease. I do not believe in it. I am going to ask the Minister to say straight out and honestly whether he considers the conditions of perpetual lease are as attractive to settlers as freehold was under the previous Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: More so, for actual production, but not for speculation.

Mr. MOORE: I have taken some examples of land—some in a parish in the Nanango district and some in a parish in the Toowoomba district. I knew the land at the time it was taken up under the old tenure, and I have compared land almost right alongside it under the perpetual lease system. An area of 159 acres was taken up in the parish of Neungna, in the Nanango district, under the old agricultural farm section of the Act—twenty years' terms, with an upset price of £1 6s. 8d. and a rental of 8d. per acre. In twenty years that land became freehold. On the other hand, only two blocks away, 129 acres of land of similar quality were taken up about seven months ago under perpetual lease conditions, the upset price being £4 and the annual rental being 1s. 2/2/5d. an acre. This man has to pay the rent all the time.

[9 p.m.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He would have to find capital for the freehold. Do you believe in continuing that system?

Mr. MOORE: Yes. There is no more capital required, and it makes for better settlers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Where is there any successful settlement? We have 600,000 to 700,000 people in Queensland, and half of them are in the cities.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: They got timber reserves for 2s. 6d. an acre.

Mr. MOORE: We do not want to go to extremes. The Minister claims that this scheme is more attractive than any scheme advanced by other Governments. The most successful settlement was effected under schemes outlined by past Governments. In those days they may not have had the conditions for securing loans at the outset of their farming career, which perhaps might have been a millstone round their necks.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Quote Cunning Downs.

Mr. MOORE: I am not concerned about repurchased estates. The next area under old conditions in the Nanango district is 334 acres, the upset price of which was £1 1s. 8d. an acre, with a rental of 6½d. per acre per annum for a term of twenty years. The next area under perpetual lease conditions is 96 acres, with an upset price of 27 10s. per acre, and a rental of 12 3/5d. per acre per annum. The next block, under old conditions, is 158 acres, with an upset price of 15s. per acre, and a rental of 4½d. per acre per annum over a period of twenty years. The next area, under perpetual lease, is 150 acres, with an upset price of £2 5s. per acre, and an annual rental of 8 1/10d. per acre. I know that block, and I know it is not nearly as good as the block of which the upset price was 15s.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is bad classification.

Mr. MOORE: Under the perpetual lease-hold system, the lessee has only to pay a rent of 1½d. per cent. per annum on the capital value. That is supposed to be attrac-

tive. How do the Government make it up? They increase the upset value in order to get the revenue. It is really not any more attractive but less. Instead of paying 4 per cent. or 5 per cent on a fair value, it is 1½ per cent. on an increased upset value. The rent is really higher, and, what is more, it has to be paid for ever.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why do the pastoralists make a "do" of it?

Mr. MOORE: The pastoral lease is quite different from perpetual lease.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He has only got it for a period of twenty-eight years.

Mr. MOORE: The man under the perpetual lease tenure is supposed to get something that is as good as freehold. I am endeavouring to point out that the freehold tenure is ever so much more attractive to the individual, and he is likely to become a better settler than under the perpetual lease system.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How many farmers in England own their own land?

At 9.3 p.m.,

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

Mr. MOORE: Why did the farmers in England and Ireland leave their farms to come out here to get freehold land? Because they objected to a rack-renting landlord. They come out here now to a rack-renting landlord again. This land is subject to reappraisal. After the man has put in a certain amount of work the land is to be subject to reappraisal, and he is to be taxed on his own efforts.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is a Land Court for that purpose.

Mr. MOORE: Let me take the cattle industry. When the appraisal took place in that industry the price of cattle was high, and high rents were fixed. When the price of cattle fell, the rent still went on. There is not an appraisal every year. The same thing is likely to happen here.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There was also an appraisal when the price of cattle was low, and, when the prices rose, the cattle-owners had an advantage.

Mr. MOORE: I admit that it operates both ways. Is this a satisfactory system? Is this a system by means of which you will get successful individuals on the land?

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: What about Jimbour?

Mr. MOORE: I could quote the Jimbour Estate, where men were forced to take perpetual lease or forfeit their land. That does not prove that it is a good system. That does not prove that it tends to successful settlement, or that you get the best men to take up land. We want the best men on this land to develop it to the highest degree. We do not want to get men who do so much and no more, because the Government tell them that they have to do so much. We want men of individuality—men who are self-reliant and enterprising to make the best use they possibly can of the land. If you get that class of man, they will not brook interference by the Government. They want the best possible tenure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: My experience is that they will take all they can get from Governments.

Mr. Moore.]

Mr. MOORE: And then walk off. You do not have that under the freehold system.

Hon F. T. BRENNAN: The banks get them there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The selector wants all those things if he can get them.

Mr. MOORE: He wants to have that opportunity, and, in my opinion, he will make the best settler. Another thing that will tend to make this scheme unsuccessful is that the Government are placing the management of the financial part of the business under the State Advances Corporation. Anybody who has had anything to do with that institution knows how absolutely hopeless it is. It is wrapped round and round with red tape. It takes weeks and weeks for a man to get even an ordinary little advance, and often he gets disgusted before he gets it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you think we should build up another organisation?

Mr. MOORE: I would build up two organisations rather than go on with that one.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We should reorganise this one.

Mr. MOORE: It has been going on for years, and has not been reorganised. Let me give the Minister an instance with regard to a returned soldier settler. This man had to wait over twelve months before he could get a loan from the State Advances Corporation, and then he only got it because the Department of Public Lands guaranteed payment to the corporation. This block was one of the best areas on the Gowrie Estate. It was a reserve priority selection for soldier settlers. When this man got that land it was said that the rainfall was too small, and he would not get the advance. However, he got the advance and the land turned out to be good. A little while ago he wanted to put up a fence, and required money from the State Advances Corporation, and he asked if he could buy two coils of barbed wire in his district, because it would be cheaper there than buying them in Brisbane and having them sent up. This was agreed to. He bought that wire five or six months ago, and the people who sold it have not been paid yet, because the corporation has not sent an inspector up to see whether the wire was put in the fence properly.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I admit that there is some little trouble like that.

Mr. MOORE: I went into the department a month ago, and said that these people should not be kept waiting for their money, and I was told that the matter would be fixed up straight away. I went in again to-day, but the money has not been sent up yet, because an inspector has not been up to see if the barbed wire has been put in the fence. If such a state of affairs as that is allowed to occur, then the whole position wants reorganising. We should reorganise it now, and see that the red tape does not bring the department into such a state of inactivity.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You will not find any red tape governing the water supply.

Mr. MOORE: This water supply seems to be another baby like the State Insurance,

[*Mr. Moore.*

which is to be brought up on every occasion. The Minister has a new idea about providing water, and I admit that it is a good one. It is absolutely useless to put a man on a block of country without water, and the Minister has only to peruse the reports of the Lands Department to see how deep one has to go in this country before he gets water and how quickly it diminishes. It would be absolute madness to put men on these dry areas without first providing some means whereby they can secure water; and especially would this be the case with men without capital. A man should have at least capital equal to one-third of the total improvements on the property. I know what it is to go on to a bare paddock and endeavour to make a farm out of it with limited capital. It is a heart-breaking task.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He would want at least £300.

Mr. MOORE: He wants to have capital of his own to start with. Even if the intended selector has had experience and is without capital, the Minister should be very chary about putting him on these blocks of land, because it will be interminable slavery to him. I believe, like the hon. member for Bowen, that we should give free land to them. The hon. member for Bowen wants them to be free men and not slaves; but I cannot understand him supporting a Bill such as this, which does not intend that the man shall own his own land, and provides that he shall be under the dictation of Government officials as to how he shall work that land. If the hon. member calls that man a free man, he has a different opinion of what freedom is to what I have. I want to see these people get every opportunity. I recognise that a large amount of the country is very good country, but I also recognise that a large amount of it is very poor, and that the rainfall is very irregular. I hope the Government will make provision so that the area that each selector will receive will be such that he will not necessarily have to rely wholly on cultivation or dairying. If the areas are limited to 160 acres, then most of the selectors are going to have a struggle. Some of the land in the Kingaroy district is among the richest in the State, and some of the land in the Burnett district is just as good; but a man does not always get 160 acres of first-class scrub land. Even if he did so, his limited capital is likely to be laid out in implements. It is possible that, if he secures a rich area, by burning off and planting maize with the aid of a hoe, as many of our farmers started, he may do fairly well. Some of the men who have started in that way have made a success of it because there has been no expenditure on implements to start with. It is the most satisfactory and economical way of utilising land of that class. When you are going to put a man on a class of land where he is liable to lose his crop by inundation, and he has only a limited area to graze his stock, you are going to put him in a position of having always to make a struggle. If there happens to be a continuance of years such as the reports of the Land Commissioners for the last eight years indicate, the expense to the Government is going to be tremendous. If the land is freehold, the selector is more likely to stick to it and make more of an effort to keep it than he will under perpetual lease. Under

the perpetual lease, if a farmer is up against it, he simply walks out, as he loses nothing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How many people who took up lands under the freehold tenure in certain districts have remained on them? They have sold out and got off them.

Mr MOORE: Where is that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In the Cairns district. There is not one man who originally selected there on the land to-day.

Mr. MOORE: That may be very poor country. I am talking about a good district where men make a comfortable living by energy and enterprise.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It produces more than the Darling Downs.

Mr. MOORE: I can tell you of a district that was selected under freehold tenure where 80 per cent. of the selectors are still on the land and making a success out of it.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed him under the Standing Orders.

Mr. W. COOPER (*Rosewood*): I have listened to the complaints that have been made by the hon. members of the Opposition in connection with this Bill. I am quite surprised at some of the statements which have been made, especially at the comparison between the conditions laid down by the previous Governments—or, as one of the hon. gentlemen said, in the dark ages—and the conditions of settlement as laid down by the present Government. I know the conditions under which the farmers in the district which I represent took up their land in the Rosewood Scrub. The terms were 2s. 6d. per acre payable in twenty years. It was particularly hard work to clear the land. They then had to go either to the banks or to some private concern and pay from 7 per cent to as high as 12 per cent. for the money to enable them to eke out a living on those areas. The hon. member for Aubigny said that under the perpetual lease system men who were not able to make a living off the land were as likely to take up land under that system as under freehold.

Mr. MOORE: I did not say they would not be able to make a living.

Mr. W. COOPER: The hon. member said they would not be as likely to take it up under that system as under freehold.

Mr. MOORE: That is quite right.

Mr. W. COOPER: If the perpetual lease system is not as good as freehold, how is it that the pastoralists never adopted the principle of purchasing their land under the freehold tenure? I went to the settlement on the Richmond River in the early days, and I want to say, without fear of contradiction, that there are not 5 per cent. of the original selectors who own property there to-day. We have heard it said that the Government is a landlord. I want to ask hon. gentlemen opposite if the Government can be compared to the rack-renting system adopted by those men who purchased land on the Richmond River from the original selectors—purchased the lands there from 15s. to £1 an acre, and exact as much as £2 10s. to £3 10s. per acre rent annually from tenants? That is a rack-renting system 100 per cent. worse than any Government is likely to adopt.

Mr. MOORE: What sort of markets have they alongside them?

Mr. W. COOPER: They are at least 500 miles from Sydney. Unfortunately for the majority of those farmers the New South Wales Government have adopted the principle of not linking up with Queensland in order to give those settlers an opportunity of getting their produce to the nearest market. If a man selects land in the Burnett district, he will, no doubt, be charged over a period of fifteen years for the water which will be put on his selection. If he desires after a certain period to sell out, what will he do? He will place upon that selection a value according to the amount of money that it has cost him to put down water, and consequently that improves the goodwill of his property. Hon. members opposite think that land cannot be sold under the perpetual lease tenure, and that the amount of improvements cannot be realised. At the same time we hear of and see advertisements week after week of pastoral lease selections to be sold, and enormous prices are asked for them although the leases only have ten and twelve years to run. The owners get rid of them. I ask hon. members opposite whether the same does not apply to hotels. Not 10 per cent. of the hotelkeepers in Brisbane own their hotels. They are practically under a perpetual lease system, and they are enabled to sell out, and huge amounts of money are being made by the sale of the leases and goodwill of the hotels. The same application may be placed on perpetual lease farms.

I have lived a good portion of my life in Queensland and I have also lived in New South Wales, and I know places where farmers pay a lot to take up a leased farm. On the Hunter River the Government were so lenient as to give settlers the land, and to-day they are charging unfortunate tenant-farmers as much as £4 and £5 per acre per annum rent. No Government could be half as bad as the private landlord. If we had not introduced the principle of freehold tenure, I am quite satisfied that out of the rents received by the Lands Department in Queensland we could have built all the railways and roads necessary to bring about closer settlement, and it would not have cost the Government one penny. The reason why hon. members opposite are opposed to the perpetual lease scheme under this Bill is because they want to see land speculators. Under the old system most of the selectors took up 640 acres of land—hon. members opposite have called it the splendid system of previous Governments. Perhaps the selectors worked some of that land. Other settlers came along, and they paid as much as £1 10s. and £2 10s. an acre for the land for which the original settler only paid 2s. 6d. an acre to the Government. The purchaser had to pay the Government the rest. It was purely and simply a land speculating system adopted by hon. members opposite previously. We do not want that system. We want to enable the man best able to make a living on the land to get the best possible bargain. In the Rosewood electorate where the farmers took up land the largest holding was 48 acres. Under this scheme we are cutting this land up and making 150 and 175-acre blocks of first-class agricultural land. I defy any hon. member to say that he can work 100 acres if he goes in for intensive cultivation. The possibility is that he will work about 35 to 40 acres and will graze the rest. I do not say that with very good land 175 acres is too much. After all, the man

who goes on a farm has many difficulties to put up with.

Mr. MORGAN: The greatest is the water question.

Mr. W. COOPER: No Government can control rainfall, and, if I were able to do so, I would not be in this Chamber. I heard it said that the reason why we got the recent rains was because we closed the "pubs" at 8 o'clock, consequently there was a drought on and we wanted more water. The possibility is that, when this land is thrown open, instead of that happening which hon. members opposite anticipate, we shall have more settlers applying for the land than we can cope with. The Government in their wisdom have provided a scheme by which they will first and foremost put a water supply on these holdings. Anyone who knows anything about going out and starting on the land will realise that the most essential thing is water, and that the first thing after the block is fenced off is that water should be provided. If the settler is charged with the expense of placing water on his leasehold and at any time wishes to sell out, he has the right to place that expenditure as a portion of the improvements on that selection. The incoming tenant will be only too pleased to pay for the water because it is already provided for him. It is not as if the Government placed him there and charged him and then turned him off without compensation, or as if he could not dispose of the land. If that were so, there would be something in the complaints made by hon. members opposite. I believe that the Burnett lands are suitable for closer settlement. Whether they are as good as has been claimed I am not in a position to say. The scheme proposed by the Secretary for Public Lands is one of the most lenient schemes that has ever been brought before us so far as land settlement is concerned. If it is a failure, the failure will only be brought about by the opposition of hon. members opposite—by their "stinking fish" cry because the Government have adopted a scheme that the Opposition never thought of.

Mr. MORGAN: I suppose we shall stop it from raining.

Mr. W. COOPER: If we could bring rain, undoubtedly you would endeavour to prevent it. The position of land settlement in Queensland to-day, particularly under this Bill, is an advance upon the methods adopted by hon. members opposite. That is the reason we see so much hostility shown to this measure. I heard the hon. member for Aubigny make a complaint against the State Advances Corporation. He said there was too much time in bringing about [9.30 p.m.] an inspection and then too long a delay in making the advance to the settler who was asking for the money. He has given his experience, and now I will give some of the experiences I have had in my dealings with the Corporation. I made an application for an advance for a farmer in my electorate who was to all intents and purposes a beneficiary under his father's will. He wanted to purchase the old homestead, and under the will this property had to be sold on a certain day. He had no money other than about £400, and he could not think of any means by which he could obtain the balance required. I happened to speak to him and he said, "Well, Mr. Cooper, if I can get sufficient money to buy my father's farm, I will buy it." I asked, "How much

do you want?" He said, "The upset price put on it by the executors is £1,500. If I could borrow £1,100, I would purchase that farm." I asked, "How long is it before you will want it?" He said, "In about five days. I have tried several private firms and I have tried the banks, and they will not advance me nearly the amount I want on the property, consequently I have to let it go." I said, "Will you come to Brisbane to-morrow and make an application to the State Advances Corporation and see if we can obtain the money for you?"

Mr. CLAYTON: When was this?

Mr. W. COOPER: Last year. He came to Brisbane and a man was sent up the next day, and the following day the advance was agreed to and he got £1,150 to enable him to purchase the farm. That is my experience compared with the experience of the hon. member for Aubigny. I am not going to say for one moment that there have not been difficulties placed in the way of the State Advances Corporation making advances, but in ninety-nine cases out of 100, when an application is made for an advance, it receives prompt attention. They have not got an army of inspectors. An inspector may be away up on the Darling Downs, and it will take him some time making the inspections required, and hon. members opposite, and hon. members even on this side, should take into consideration the amount of time it takes to go round making inspections. They should, at all events, take into consideration the manner in which these applications are made, and the amount of money which is asked for. No institution anything like an institution should be would advance the amount of money asked for in very many cases. If the amount advanced has not been as much as has been asked for, it is because the property to all intents and purposes is not worth the amount asked for. The State Advances Corporation has been a boon to many settlers. One settler in particular came to me and said, "Mr. Cooper, if I could get £400 I could make a living off my farm." I went with him to the Corporation, which advanced him £400, and in eighteen months' time he came along and thanked me, and said that that very day he had paid off every penny of the amount advanced.

Mr. ROBERTS: He made £1,100 in a little over twelve months?

Mr. W. COOPER: I said £400. I was discussing two different men, and, if the hon. member were not asleep, he would have heard what I said.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member is not going to discuss individuals. He may give an illustration.

Mr. W. COOPER: I will not discuss it. However, I am very pleased that the Minister has introduced this Bill. This is something which has not been done before. It is far and away more lenient and progressive than any other land settlement measure ever introduced into this Chamber. The amount of money which will be expended upon the railway is also in advance of any other scheme previously introduced. It is practically building a railway in advance of land settlement. One reason why Queensland has not advanced to the extent she should have done is because men have had to go too far away from the railway lines, and consequently could not land their produce in the markets.

[Mr. W. Cooper.]

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I recognise that in launching this Bill the Minister is bringing into existence something we have not had previously in this State, and I am doubtful if a measure of this sort has ever been put into operation in any other part of the world. It is experimental legislation to a great extent, and time only will prove whether it is going to be a success. I wish the Minister to recognise that it is the duty of the Opposition to point out difficulties in connection with the measure, just as we did in respect to soldier settlements, to try and get the Government to make it as nearly perfect as possible. I remember when the soldier settlement proposals were going through the Chamber, many of us on this side who have had experience on the land pointed out that the soldiers were not likely to make a living on the land allotted for the settlements. The Minister has acknowledged to-night that the soldier settlements throughout the State have been a failure. I think it is only right for the hon. gentleman to make that admission, when he knows it is true. We on this side said time after time that the soldier settlements would not be successful. We condemned them on the ground that the land set apart was not suitable for cutting up into small areas.

When the Mount Hutton settlement went through, knowing the land and what it was suitable for, I recommended the then Minister not to throw it open in too small areas. The Minister has said to-night that he has found it necessary in the Mount Hutton district to double those areas. Why was it not done in the first place? Those settlements have been a failure because the Government did not recognise the necessity of giving the soldiers a fair area of land. It is not a matter of whether 50 acres or 60 acres or 30,000 acres or 40,000 acres are a living area; it is a matter of what land is adapted for under climatic conditions. Soil may be analysed and proved to be suitable for the growth of cereals and other crops, but, owing to the fact that the rainfall is not sufficient, it is no use going in for closer settlement if we cannot secure water by artificial means. The land may be good to look at, and may be exceptionally productive in a year in which there is an excessive rainfall, but you have to take a period of ten years and get the average rainfall for those years before you can arrive at a conclusion as to what is a living area. I think that the Government are making a mistake in cutting up land under this scheme into areas as small as 160 acres, and they would be well advised if they made the area 320 acres. Take the areas which are going to be opened up under grazing homesteads tenure. The Minister is opening land in 1,280-acre blocks under grazing conditions, and he has admitted that the land is not suitable for sheep.

Mr. CARTER: He said he did not know.

Mr. MORGAN: He said he did not think it was suitable. He said that people had tried sheep in the old days, and had gone out of sheep. But it will be admitted that 1,280 acres of first-class grazing land, suitable for sheep and capable of growing good merino wool, would be too small an area. Let us deal with the cattle country, which the Minister is opening up in 5,000-acre blocks. I have been through that country on two occasions—I have been through Gayndah and Mundubbera—and, whilst I have not been all over it, I have had an

opportunity of judging its quality, and I certainly saw some very nice scrub country. Suppose I have seen the worst of it. The Government are going to put men on 5,000-acre blocks. If it is classed as second-class grazing country, it means that each settler will be able to graze only 350 head of cattle. Can a man make a living out of 350 head of cattle? We know perfectly well it is impossible.

Mr. BRENNAN: He may be able to grow cotton.

Mr. MORGAN: If this is second-class cattle country, how can it be suitable for cotton-growing? But even if it is, how can a man make a living on that area? The Government are making the mistake of throwing open country which is known to be cattle country in such small areas as 5,000 acres.

I also wish to refer to the fact that the Government are going to endeavour to place water on the land by the expenditure of money borrowed by the settler.

Mr. CARTER: They are going to make water for him.

Mr. MORGAN: They are going to charge him with the cost. I have been advocating some such scheme for many years, but I do not care for the system which the Government propose to adopt. I think it would be much better if the Government made the water on the block and then had the block so improved revalued. Suppose they valued a block at £1 without water. If it is going to cost £300 to make the water, would it not be better to add that cost to the value of the land and allow the successful tenant to pay the interest on that money in the value of the land? That is, if the water cost 1s. an acre, and the land was worth originally £1 an acre, let the settler pay interest on £1 1s. I think that is better than lending him £300 and making him pay it back in fifteen years.

At 9.42 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. BRENNAN: He pays no interest for two years.

Mr. MORGAN: The settler has to clear and fence, and build a home, and, as a general rule, it is five years before he begins to reap any benefit. I think the settler should not be called upon to pay anything by way of rental or interest till after five years, or such shorter period as is sufficient to enable the land to become revenue-producing. One of the biggest burdens which the settler of to-day has to face is the fact that he is called upon to pay out cash. It is like using up his capital. I think the Government would be well advised if in this scheme they gave the settler a greater period to get on his feet.

The class of settlers for this land has also been mentioned. I think the success of the settlement depends upon the class of man who is placed on the land. It does not matter what land is opened for selection or under what conditions, there are always a number of people who go on that land never intending to become successful farmers or graziers. The same thing applies in other walks of life. Nature, perhaps, may have intended that some individuals shall not be successes in one walk of life, but they may be successful in some other walk of life. To-day money seems to be the only thing people are endeavouring to get hold of. We are living in an age when the success of an individual

Mr. Morgan.]

is gauged according to the amount of money he is able to make.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is a very bad standard.

Mr. MORGAN: It may be. Unfortunately, we are unable to alter it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What about the man who made two ears of wheat grow where one grew before?

Mr. MORGAN: Why does he do it? He does it for the purpose of making more money on his selection.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No. Farrar did not do it for that purpose.

Mr. MORGAN: I admit that many of our scientists have died poor men. Some of the inventors of the most important machinery that we use to-day died in the poorhouse. The point is that a man will probably work in an endeavour to make his property produce twice the amount. Why? For the purpose of making more money. Supposing I cultivated my land in order to produce twice as much, would I be doing that for the fun of it, or for the purpose of paying taxation to the Government, or to benefit someone else? It is for the purpose of accumulating wealth so that I can educate my family and give them a start in life, and so that I shall not have in my old days to accept State aid. Why do men, especially married men, have to work? They know very well that they have someone depending upon them, and without money they cannot get along.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The success of the undertaking is something, too.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes. If you go on to a man's farm, and you find that he is heavily in debt, you say straight away that he is not a successful farmer. If you find a man in any business is not able to meet his liabilities, you immediately come to the conclusion that he is not a success.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Plenty of men with millions of pounds work night and day.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Why do we come here?

Mr. MORGAN: Some of us may come here because it pays us to come. Some of us may come because we have a disease. (Laughter.) Some of us may be like gamblers, and, when we get into politics, we do not want to get out of it. I want to emphasise again that the success of this scheme depends upon the class of people who are to be placed upon the land. I am pleased to know that the old ballot system, where the names of the applicants were put into a box and the successful drawer obtained the land, is not to be the system in connection with the allotment of this land. That is a bad system, and one that I have condemned ever since I came to Queensland, because I know that the men best entitled to the land do not get it under that system. I would suggest to the Minister some system of appointing a board, consisting of three thoroughly competent men. I am not going to say that they should be public servants. It might be possible for the hon. gentleman to get one or two who are not connected with his department. Land for selection should be opened by proclamation. Then applications should be called. There may be a dozen applications for one block and twenty or thirty for another. The applicants should attend before a land board, and be

severally examined. They should have to answer certain questions that the board would submit. By this means the board would weed out the men who were not suitable. The questions they could be asked would be as to the amount of money they possessed to work the land, whether they were married men, and what family and experience they had. Experience is the most important qualification for applicants for this land to possess. The applicants might be narrowed down to three, and, if you got three men with equal qualifications, it might be necessary to ballot for the land. That system has been in vogue in other parts of the world. If it were adopted here, the right class of men could be placed on the Burnett lands. If you do not select the right class of men, the scheme is not going to be a success. Hon. members on this side of the House have discussed the difference between the perpetual leasehold and freehold tenures. Personally, I am a firm believer in the freehold system, but not from the speculative point of view. The hon. members sitting behind the Government think that because we believe in freehold we do so from a sinister motive—that we want to step in at some time or other and purchase the land. We could speculate under the perpetual lease system if we desired. It is not a matter of speculation, but a matter of principle founded on long experience on the land. I recognise, and the Minister must recognise, the fact that, if a man is going to be a success on the land, he must be contented and happy. If we are all the time watching the clock and engaged in an industry so as to get a bare existence from it, it is not going to be a success. Our occupation must be congenial to us. If it is not, we are not going to make a success of it. If you place men on the land in the full knowledge that after a certain period they will get the freehold, so that they may leave it to their wives and families after they are gone, they are more likely to make a success of it than under any other system.

Mr. PEASE: Cannot they do that under the perpetual lease?

Mr. MORGAN: Yes, but they do not get the same value or the same security for it. Under a perpetual lease a man cannot borrow anything like what he can if he possesses a freehold tenure—not even from the State Advances Corporation. In fact, they will turn him down, whereas they would entertain an application for an advance on a freehold more readily.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: What is the difference between perpetual leasehold and freehold?

Mr. MORGAN: A selector may go on to country 30 or 40 miles from the railway, such as some of this land may be. He works it, and, with his family, suffers a lot of hardship. Eventually, as years go by, that land increases in value. During the whole of this time perhaps he has had only sufficient from what he produces and markets to give him a living. I defy any hon. member to name any man who has become a wealthy man out of the produce he has grown on the land. I know men who have done well, but not from the produce they have grown. I have known men in the wheat areas in the Southern States who selected land originally at £1 an acre, and, after working for thirty or forty years and reaching old age, have been able to retire, as they are entitled to do, and leave the land to their sons. If a man

[*Mr. Morgan.*]

happens to have 640 acres of land, he has that to show as an accumulation for his forty years of work.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There will be an increment from the perpetual lease.

Mr. MORGAN: The increment is taken away in this manner: After fifteen years there is a reappraisal, and nobody knows what is going to happen when that reappraisal is made. The perpetual lease would not be so bad if there was a proviso to the effect that you could not increase the rental above 50 per cent. The perpetual leaseholder would then know that whatever happened after fifteen years his rentals would not be increased by over 50 per cent. To-day everything is obscure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If the system of perpetual lease had operated from the date of separation from New South Wales, the people would now have free railways.

Mr. MORGAN: That is a different position. The freeholder can go out and settle, and as people become more numerous in the district, each freehold goes up in value and the owner gets the whole value of the freehold, to which, after his work upon it, he is entitled. He is also a shareholder in the prosperity of the perpetual leaseholder, but the perpetual leaseholder does not participate in the prosperity of the freeholder. You will therefore see that all of the people of Queensland who are freeholders are shareholders in the perpetual lease prosperity, whereas only the owner of the land shares in the increased value of the freehold.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The land should be used for use—not profit.

Mr. MORGAN: If a man goes into the country and shows that he can make two blades of grass grow where one had grown previously, surely he is entitled to the profit! He gets that under the leasehold system. It has been mentioned by those opposed to the freehold system that the value of the land was made owing to a city, town, or railway cropping up in its locality. First of all, a man goes into the country, and if he proves successfully what the country is capable of producing the business man follows the farmer. The Secretary for Public Lands said to-night that he is not going to build towns first and settle the land afterwards. No one would expect such a thing. The settler goes out and blazes the track, proves the value of the country, and along comes the business man. In five years the business man makes more out of his business than the farmer makes in ten or twelve years.

Mr. CARTER: It is the produce merchant and the corn dealer who make the profit.

Mr. MORGAN: No—the publican.

Mr. PEASE: Business men of all descriptions.

Mr. MORGAN: My friend is fair; they all hit the farmer up.

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member address the Chair.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes; but the boisterous member for Port Curtis is endeavouring to draw me off the track.

[10 p.m.]

Mr. MORGAN: The man who goes on to the land and works it has just as much right to the increased value brought about

through his work as the man who enters into a business. If a man starts a business proposition, we do not participate in the enhanced value, but the unfortunate part about it is that the rest of the people who prevent a man getting a freehold participate in the increased value of the leasehold.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why don't you organise? You are in the hands of a lot of corn dealers.

Mr. MORGAN: What happened in New Zealand will happen in Queensland. The Government were defeated in New Zealand owing to the fact that they brought into operation the perpetual lease system, and, when a sufficient number of men had selected perpetual leases and a party came along and said, "We are prepared to convert your perpetual leases into freehold," a sufficient number of members were elected to oust the Government and put in a Government who believed in freehold. The same thing will happen in Queensland. Every man who selects a perpetual lease—whether it is a perpetual lease building site, whether it is a perpetual lease seaside resort, whether it is a perpetual lease farm—eventually will give us their votes, if we say we are prepared to give them the opportunity of converting their land into freehold.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You ought not to be so immoral as to give them freeholds.

Mr. MORGAN: It is the system we believe in. We advocate it openly. The hon. gentleman, no doubt, is strongly of opinion that perpetual leasehold is the proper tenure. I have had just as much experience, and I am just as strong in my view that the Government are doing a wrong thing in trying to develop Queensland on a perpetual leasehold basis. It is not a matter of politics at all. It is purely a matter of principle.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you believe in a single tax?

Mr. CARTER: You believed in a land tax once.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. MORGAN: I never believed in a land tax. I have never supported a land tax, and I have never believed in a single tax.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. CARTER: Did you not vote for Max Hirsch in Victoria?

Mr. MORGAN: I voted for Max Hirsch as a freetrader.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I would ask the hon. member for Port Curtis to refrain from interjecting.

Mr. MORGAN: It is a matter of principle with me, and it is a matter of principle with my party. I honestly believe that if we give the freehold of the land we are likely to settle more people on the land. The difference between leasehold and freehold is this: In the case of a leasehold, no matter what amount of land a man may have, he is going to take out of the land during the period of his lease all he possibly can, and he is going to put back into the land as little as he possibly can. If a man owns his own home he will do all he can to improve it, but he is not going to improve it if it belongs to somebody else. If you rent a home you will not keep it in the same state of repair as you would if

Mr. Morgan.]

it were your own. I recognise that this is a very bold scheme, but I want the Minister to understand that he is cutting up these areas into blocks which are too small. He is making the same blunder that was made in every one of our land settlements by previous Governments, and also in connection with soldier settlements. The aim has been to get numbers instead of quality.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No.

Mr. MORGAN: It is far better to have 700 selectors on a given area of land who are able to meet their liabilities and live in comfort and educate their children properly than to have 1,400 men who are continually running to the Government asking for concessions and saying that they are unable to meet their obligations and who owe money to the tradesmen. It is far better to have 700 prosperous men in a district than 1,400 men who are eking out a bare existence. Hon. members opposite may in their own particular walks of life always have their noses to the grindstone, and it seems to me that they are afraid that, if they give the farmer a little more land than they think he ought to have, they are giving him something he is not entitled to.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are giving them bigger areas. In the Clermont district they are wanting 1,280 acres to run sheep on. They say they can make a living on that.

Mr. MORGAN: How many sheep will the land carry?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A sheep to 2 acres.

Mr. MORGAN: That means 640 sheep. That will give them an existence, but not a good living. I referred previously to the fact that rainfall does not altogether count. Anyone who knows anything about evaporation will realise that 6 inches of rain will mean a great deal more in some parts than in others. For instance, 6 inches of rain in some parts of Queensland may only be equal to 2 inches in the Wimmera district, in Victoria.

Mr. CARTER: What about wind evaporation?

Mr. MORGAN: Wind and sun evaporation are the same.

Mr. CARTER: They are different altogether.

Mr. MORGAN: You cannot say that, because there is a record of 25 inches of rain a year in a particular district, the land there is suitable for agriculture; or that, because the rainfall in one district is 20 inches, the land must be better in a district where it is 25 inches.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Would you favour compelling cultivation on portion of the land?

Mr. MORGAN: I have no objection to compulsion in that direction, provided the land is suitable for cultivation and the railway is sufficiently near to enable them to cultivate. If you could grow certain crops and were 25 miles away from a railway, it might not be advisable to grow those crops. You could grow cotton 40 miles from a railway; it would fetch, say, £55 per ton, and would only cost £2 per ton to cart it to the railway. A ton of wheat would fetch, say, £5, and, if it took £2 to cart it to the railway station, it would leave £3. You can grow

wool 100 miles from a railway, because a ton of wool may be worth £100, and the carriage is as nothing compared with the value of the wool.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I know of successful farmers in the Roma district who advocate 640-acre holdings on Mount Abundance. Others want 1,280 acres.

Mr. MORGAN: Anyone who advocates 1,280-acre blocks at Roma is advocating something he does not know anything about. Such areas may be advocated by the storekeeper or the business man who wants to keep a big population round Roma.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are successful farmers.

Mr. MORGAN: That is what they are—farmers. The man who can educate his “kiddies” well and come down to Brisbane for a holiday now and then is probably a grazing farmer with 5,000 sheep. The man who puts the plough into the soil slaves from daylight till dark, and he never gets that chance.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I know a farmer on Cecil Plains who grew 400 acres of wheat on a 640-acre holding.

Mr. MORGAN: That is my point. The Minister is going to depend for success in this scheme on the class of men he gets.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Not on the area at all?

Mr. MORGAN: That has something to do with it; but I do not care who the individual is, if you put him on an area which is too small he will not be able to make a living. If a man in business in a large city is able to make a profit of £2,000 or £3,000, why should you debar the man in the country from making a similar profit? The Minister does not think that is too much for himself, and I do not think it is too much for me to make. Why endeavour to prevent the man on the land from making a comfortable income and participating in the prosperity of the State. A man cannot make a living on 5,000 acres of second-class cattle country in the area we are talking about, and, therefore, he is going to be financially a failure. The Government should not put the man on the land unless he has a fair chance of making a success.

No doubt certain amendments embodying principles with which we on this side agree will be moved in Committee, and I am going to vote for them. Generally speaking, I am going to do all I can to make the scheme a success. I do not want to say one thing to discourage people from coming here, but I do want to see them and our own people go on to this land with a fair fighting chance, and I say that this scheme is not going to give them that chance unless it is improved.

The least we can expect from a Government in connection with land settlement at any time is to give the individual every opportunity for coming out on top after he has done his best in utilising his ability and his experience in an endeavour to carry out his occupation as a man on the land.

Mr. CARTER (*Port Curtis*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

The resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at 10.15 p.m.

[*Mr. Morgan.*