

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 1923

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WEDNESDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER, 1923.

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

QUESTIONS.

COMPARISON OF EMPLOYEES AND TRAIN MILES, RAILWAY DEPARTMENT, 1913-1914 AND 1922-1923.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*), in the absence of Mr. Morgan (*Murilla*), asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. Has the information been compiled in respect to employees in the Railway Department, asked for on 24th July, 1923?”

“2. If so, will he supply same to the House?”

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

“1. Yes.

“2. 30th June, 1923—

Permanent employees	...	13,833
Temporary employees	...	3,005
Total	...	16,838
30th June, 1914—		
Permanent employees	...	11,763
Temporary employees	...	3,202
Total	...	14,965

“The principal reasons for the increase are the reduction of hours since the establishment of the Arbitration Court, and also the fact that 1,355 additional miles of railway are now in operation. The number of men per mile of line is as under, viz. :—

1922-23	...	2.85
1913-14	...	3.27

“TRAIN MILES.

1922-23	...	10,917,584
1913-14	...	11,346,334

“The reduction in train mileage is principally due to the introduction of heavy engines, lesser live-stock traffic, closure of the mines, revised time-tables, etc.”

“MINISTERIAL TRAVELLING EXPENSES.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*), in the absence of Mr. Morgan (*Murilla*), asked the Premier—

“1. Has his attention been drawn to the following motion, carried unanimously by members of the Legislative Assembly on 1st September, 1921—

That there should be laid upon the table of the House a return showing the amount paid or incurred by the State in respect to the travelling expenses of each individual member of the Ministry during the years ended 30th June, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921?”

“2. Is he aware that this question was asked on 19th October 1921—

When will the information be available in respect to the travelling expenses of Ministers, in accordance with the motion that was carried by the House some weeks ago?

“And replied to by him as follows:—

I cannot say positively when it will be available, but the information is being compiled, and I hope to have it tabled before the session closes.

“3. Is he also aware that on 6th July, 1922, in reply to a similar question, he stated—

The information will be supplied as early as possible.

“Also on 16th August, 1922, in reply to an inquiry as to when the information would be available, the Premier replied—

I will make inquiries and inform the hon. member.

“Likewise, on 28th September, 1922, in reply to this question—

Have the figures in respect to Ministerial travelling expenses, in accordance with the motion carried unanimously by this House, yet been prepared? If so, does the hon. gentleman intend to give the information to the House?”

“To which the Premier replied—

The information has not yet been supplied to me. When the motion was passed, instructions were given to the Auditor-General, and officers were put on to compile the information, but the figures have not been received.

“Also, in reply to the following question, without notice, on 4th October, 1922:—

Is it the intention of the Premier, before the House rises, to place on the table of the House the return asked for by the hon. member for Murilla in connection with Ministerial travelling expenses?”

“He replied—

The return has not yet been presented to me, and I am unable to table it. This will be the last opportunity of doing it this session. The matter has been in the hands of the department to collect the statistics, but, for some reason, it has not been completed.

“4. Will he inform the House if the information is now available; and if so, will he disclose it to the House?”

“5. If not available, will he censure the Audit Department for failing to carry out his instructions, and also inform the House why his instructions were ignored?”

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

“1. Yes.

“2. Yes.

“3. Yes.

“4. I suggest the hon. member raise the question when the Estimates are being discussed.

“5. See answer to No. 4.”

PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION REGARDING MARKET PRICES OF PRIMARY PRODUCTS.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

“To enable the primary producers to get the latest information concerning the market value of produce, will he cause steps to be taken, as was suggested by

me in the House this session, to have full information supplied and posted up from time to time at railway stations in country districts, thus giving farmers an opportunity to dispose of their produce at the highest market value?"

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

"The satisfactory marketing of primary produce is one of the main questions which the Council of Agriculture have on hand. It is the duty of district agents who are in constant communication with the Central Council to advise farmers in this matter. One of the chief functions of the official organ of the Local Producers' Association is dissemination of information on this subject, and it is expected that every farmer in Queensland reads the 'Queensland Producer.' The Bill forecasted in the Governor's Speech will enable the carrying out of a vigorous policy of co-operative marketing, a much more important matter than advising what prices are ruling."

CONSTRUCTION OF LIGHT RAILWAY FROM GOOMERI TO MANUMBAR.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"Owing to the Minister having information from the Director of State Forests that there is 120,000,000 feet of matured pine, in addition to a large quantity of hardwood, on Crown land at Manumbar, and the financial position of the Government is such that funds are not available at present to connect this rich and heavily timbered land by a light railway to Goomeri, will he give consideration to the recent offer made on behalf of the Timber Merchants' Association to construct the line; or, if not, is he prepared to allow the Forestry Department to enter into an agreement with the Timber Merchants' Association to do so, and thus keep the sawmills in the Wide Bay district supplied with timber and find employment for many workers?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*) replied—

"The Government consider that loan expenditure on railways now under construction is sufficiently heavy, and will not agree to any further commitments. The financial position has nothing to do with the matter. The policy of the Government is against the construction of private railways."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): Mr. Speaker,—I desire to make a personal explanation with reference to a paragraph which appeared in the "Courier" this morning.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member for Fitzroy be allowed to make a personal explanation?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HARTLEY: The paragraph referred to concerns the deputation from the Bookmakers' Association that came to the House last night to interview the Attorney-General regarding the proposed tax on betting. The part of the paragraph I wish to refer to is

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misleading, and I will just read the extract. It says—

"It was ascertained that members of the deputation had endeavoured to see a prominent Labour member and ex-alderman, who, however, successfully dodged them, so it was stated, by a rapid exit into an adjacent corridor."

Hon. J. G. APPEL: A wise man. (Laughter.)

Mr. HARTLEY: When the deputation came to the House a card was brought to me by Mr. Solomon, the secretary of the Bookmakers' Association. I went down to see him, and he said that he wished to see the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, but could not see him. I told him that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley was not in the House, but that I would make sure. I went and asked the Government "Whip" where the hon. member for Fortitude Valley was, and he assured me that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley was not in the House, as he had "paired" with the hon. member for Albert.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Hear, hear!

Mr. HARTLEY: The statement of the "Courier" would make it appear that, when I told Mr. Solomon the hon. member for Fortitude Valley was not in the House, I was lying to him. The lie was the other way. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley did not dodge into the corridor, and what I said to Mr. Solomon was absolutely correct.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. HARTLEY: The next part of the paragraph I want to refer to is this—

"The deputation retired into one of the committee-rooms and had a long conversation with two well-known Labour members behind closed doors."

(Opposition laughter.) I asked the deputation to be seated in one of the committee-rooms while I took their request to the Attorney-General. I subsequently returned and gave them the reply of the Attorney-General after having a conversation with him in relation to the matter on which they wished to interview the hon. gentleman.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! The hon. member is going outside the limits of a personal explanation.

Mr. HARTLEY: As I am entirely responsible for the incident on which the paragraph is founded, I ask for an extension of the indulgence of the Chair to make the explanation as it seems to me it ought to be made.

Mr. KERR: Did you take them in to have a drink? (Laughter.)

Mr. HARTLEY: The next portion of the paragraph I wish to refer to is this—

"The members of the deputation, who numbered under a dozen—after 8 o'clock—subsequently refreshed themselves at the parliamentary bar."

(Opposition laughter.) That is the mongrel type of journalism of this paper. It gives the impression that the bookmakers after 8 o'clock—after the ordinary closing hours of hotels—went to the refreshment bar and had what they wanted. That is entirely erroneous. They went to the visitors' room as my guests, at my request, under the ordinary rules of the refreshment-room.

Mr. KERR: What did they have to drink?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: They had tea.

Mr. HARTLEY: The statement made by the "Courier" that they went to the refreshment bar to have a drink is absolutely incorrect.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PAPERS.

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

Report of the Commissioner of Prices for the year ended 30th June, 1923.

Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1922.

Report upon the operations of the sub-departments of Aborigines, Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, Inebriates Institution (Dunwich), Jubilee Sanatorium for Consumptives (Dalby), Westwood Sanatorium, Government Relief, Home for Epileptics (Willowburn), Prisons, and Diamantina Hospital for Chronic Diseases (South Brisbane).

UPPER BURNETT AND CALLIDE LAND SETTLEMENT BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. CARTER (*Port Curtis*): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise to resume the debate, as I am very well acquainted with the area of land under discussion. Moreover, I have made myself familiar with the details of the Bill, which I think an excellent measure. I have gone to some trouble to read up old Bills, and to study the methods under which land was settled under past Governments, and I am satisfied that the present Bill is very complimentary with respect to the attention given by the Minister who is in charge of it. Under the old method of land settlement there was no inquiry into the character or finances of the person that was to be settled upon the land. Land was made available sometimes for the purpose of giving cheap land in large areas to the friends of those in power at 2s. 6d. an acre. This led to a great deal of land jobbing, and in many cases to corruption in the way of dummying. No attempt was made to supply the people with the requirements of an ordinary settler; they were dumped upon the land, sometimes miles from the railway. No attempt was made to get them in touch with railways or to give them roads, and they had to struggle on in the best way they could. I have in my mind the settlers in the Mount Larcom district, some of them as far as 15 and 16 miles back from the railway. No attempt was made to give them roads.

Mr. CORSER: I moved for a railway twice for them.

Mr. CARTER: They had to make their own roads to get their produce to market, and had to do their best under adverse circumstances. What applies to Mount Larcom applies to many other places. In this Bill provision is made, not only to choose the right settler—the person best suited for the land—but to give every opportunity to that settler to make a living upon the land. A very short time ago, and even at the present time, this area of country that we are proposing to make available for settlement was returning to the Government a rent of about 3d. per acre—land of first-class quality. I have seen land much

inferior to this sold in the Mount Gambier district, in South Australia, 300 miles away from a market, at £50 an acre.

Mr. KERR: That was profiteering.

Mr. CARTER: It may have been. The patriots of South Australia were selling it to the Government to sell to the soldiers at £50 an acre to grow barley upon. We are told by hon. members opposite that this land would be dear at £6 and £7 per acre! I am satisfied, with my knowledge of the Upper Burnett areas, that much of the land will require very little to prepare it for the plough. It is superior as arable land, and will produce a variety of crops that the land of South Australia will not produce; and then we are told that it is dear land. We have the spectacle of South Australian settlers coming up to the Gladstone district to buy the Littlemere estate, in the Boyne Valley, and giving £12 or £13 per acre for land that will require an expenditure of from £25 to £30 to prepare it for ploughing. That is heavily timbered river flats, which have in many cases been ringbarked, but which are still covered with heavy timber, mostly big trees. Anyone who is acquainted with the preparation of land for the settler will know that such an area as this cannot be prepared for less than £25 to £30 per acre. That means that it will cost £42 or £43 per acre before this land is ready for the plough. Yet we are told by hon. members on the other side of the Chamber that the land in the Upper Burnett at 1s. or 1s. 2d. per acre per annum will be dear land.

Not a great time ago I saw land sold on the Tweed River for £120 an acre for the purpose of growing a crop that the land is entirely unsuited for. Hon. members on the Opposition side tell us that the proper way would be to sell this land and allow it to get into the hands of land-jobbers—sell it at a low price, build a railway to it, and then let the land-jobbers charge the public an immense price for the use of it. That is what has happened in the past all along our railway lines. We find miles and miles of railway through land which the past Government alienated before the railway was built; so to-day people who are land hungry—who want land to cultivate—cannot obtain land along our railway lines at a suitable price. On the Blackall Range land was sold at 2s. 6d. an acre prior to the building of the railway line, and I have seen land in that district in a virgin state, with the standing scrub upon it, sold at £17 and £18 an acre. Then we are told by hon. members on the other side that the right way to settle land is to sell the land and build a railway afterwards. Such a system has two results—first, it keeps the land out of use, and, secondly, it prevents the people who desire to use it from using it. I listened with a good deal of attention to the statements of hon. members opposite, hoping—seeing that this is more or less a non-pari measure—that they would furnish some common-sense criticisms. The criticism was of a carping nature.

Mr. CORSER: I have always advocated the opening of this land.

Mr. CARTER: The hon. member for Burnett truly says he has always advocated the opening of this area for settlement. He desires to see the land settled, but his criticism of the Bill was of a carping nature. There was not one useful suggestion in the whole of his remarks.

Mr. CORSER: The Minister did not say so.

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Mr. CARTER: He started out condemning the provision for finding water for these people. If water is found for irrigation purposes, he thinks the settlers ought to pay for it, but if water is found for stock, then they ought not to pay for it. That is the attitude he takes up. If the Government perform some work upon an area and produce a value in it, it is only common sense that the people who use that land should pay for the value conferred upon it. It is true that, when we construct railways and roads, we add the value generally to the cost of the land, and we dispose of the land after adding these values at the enhanced price or enhanced rental. That is a common-sense thing to do. Personally, I agree with the hon. member for Murilla that it would not be an unwise thing to provide water in much the same way as we provide railways and roads, but something very similar to that is being done. The Government are taking the responsibility of finding water, and are not charging the failures but only charging the successes. So you see that the man who really gets water on his land will get what he requires, and will only be required to pay for what he gets. The hon. member, of course, wanted something else. The leader of the Country party opposed the opening of this land for closer settlement, and so did the hon. member for Murilla.

Mr. VOWLES: In those areas.

Mr. CARTER: They said this land is unsuitable. One hon. member of the Country party tells us that it is an ideal area for closer settlement, while other members of the Country party, who are entirely ignorant of the area, tell us the very reverse. It is no disgrace not to know an area of country, but hon. members should not talk about it unless they do know something about it. The leader of the Country party is not familiar with the whole of the Upper Burnett country, nor is the hon. member for Murilla. They discussed it more or less in the dark. They therefore were hostile to the opening of this area for closer settlement purposes.

Mr. VOWLES: They have been through the area.

Mr. CARTER: The Minister has been to the trouble of carefully travelling over that area and carefully inspecting it. He not only has paid a great deal of attention to a very useful Bill, but he has made himself entirely familiar with the features of the country that the Bill is intended to settle. I say that it is a very great compliment to the Minister, and he deserves a great deal of praise and credit for the scheme. The hon. member for Burnett was very much opposed to this settlement because the Government did not offer freehold to the people.

Mr. CORSER: I was not opposed to the settlement; I offered reasonable suggestions.

Mr. CARTER: One of the greatest curses in regard to land settlement has been the freehold tenure. As I have previously pointed out, land in the Boyne Valley which had only been improved by ring-barking, and which was sold for 2s. 6d. an acre originally, the other day fetched £12 or £13 an acre; and so it has been in other cases. There are scores of places in Queensland where you will see the spectacle of decaying selectors' houses, because the areas were sold at 2s. 6d. an acre, or some small sum, and then fell into the hands of bigger holders, who pushed the small men out and

gradually got possession of the areas. I know of townships in Queensland where there can be no settlement or progress because big landowners have got hold of the land all round the townships, and are keeping people out. The object of land settlement should be to put people on the land who will use it, and not abuse it. The land goes out of use in many cases where it has been sold as freehold, and we find it growing all kinds of vegetable pests and becoming the home of animal pests, because these people cannot devote the time to clearing it. Then, again, hon. members opposite object to the size of the areas which are to be given to settlers under this scheme. I am satisfied, from my knowledge of that very rich country, that if a man gets 160 acres of arable land, he is going to get more land than his family can use honestly. Many of the areas on the Darling Downs and other places which were opened in big blocks have taken up the lives of the people who got them in keeping down suckers and vegetable pests, and they have not been able to devote their time to make a decent living from the land. I am satisfied that the man who gets as much land as he can honestly use, and uses it, will do far better than the man who gets a large area of land and holds it out of use to his own detriment. Hon. members opposite talk about farming. How many of them have ever farmed in their lives? They may have tinkered with the land and muddled along in a hopeless fashion. (Opposition laughter.) The late leader of the Country party has farmed clients.

Mr. CORSER: What do you know about farming?

Mr. CARTER: I dare say that I know more about farming than any hon. member opposite. I was reared on a farm and spent years on it—not farming the way hon. members opposite do, but farming scientifically.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: You farmed the farmer.

Mr. CARTER: We were always producing something on the land, getting some crops out of it, instead of having to keep down undergrowth.

This land in the Upper Burnett area, during the whole of the years under past Governments, brought in a rental of 7d. per acre—land which is within 100 miles of the best deepwater port on the coast of Australia. Then members of the Opposition, who are the remnants of old past Tory Governments—

Mr. KIRWAN: The black labour party.

Mr. CARTER: The fag-ends of old Tory parties—tell us they have handled land in a sensible and common-sense way. This land, which is only 100 miles away from a good port, has a better rainfall than the Darling Downs, and is more fertile and productive, only brought in a rental of 7d. per acre.

Mr. VOWLES: Do you believe that?

Mr. CARTER: I know what I am talking about. It is proposed under this settlement scheme to give this land in useful areas on which people can make a good living. Hon. members opposite talk about a living area. The other day I was talking to a farmer who was grumbling about something, and I said, "What are you doing?" He said, "I am farming." I said, "How many people

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do you employ?" and he replied, "Two men and my son." I said, "What area of land do you farm?" and he said, "Twenty acres." This man was making a living off the land—employing his son and two other men on 20 acres—because he knew how to use it. Therefore, I say that this land, within 100 miles of a magnificent deepwater port, can be used to such advantage that a family can make an excellent living off 160 acres.

Hon. members on the other side have inquired as to the crops that can be grown. This land has given a proof of what crops can be grown on it. Excellent wheat has been grown on the Upper Burnett; excellent maize, excellent lucerne, excellent potatoes have been grown. It is also excellent cotton country. It is capable of being used in the best way for dairying purposes. It is capable of carrying sheep. Sheep have been grazed on it, and grazed successfully. I do not propose that it should be leased for sheep-grazing purposes, but I do believe in mixed farming. I believe that every farmer who has area enough to afford it should have a few sheep, and it is only because it is a dingo-infested area that it does not raise sheep now.

Mr. CORSER: It is not a dingo-infested area.

Mr. CARTER: The hon. member does not know much about it if he talks like that. It is a dingo-infested area.

Hon. members talk about the rainfall. The hon. member for Murilla, apparently in a scientific way, talked about evaporation caused by the sun. He did not appear to know that the evaporation caused by the wind is greater than the evaporation caused by the sun—that there is greater evaporation in areas where there is constant wind, such as in some of the Southern States, particularly in South Australia—where they get much more wind than we do—than there is in areas where there is not so much wind. So the hon. member thought he was talking good stuff when he spoke about 4 or 5 inches of evaporation caused by the sun. Evaporation caused by the sun would account for a good deal more than that in other parts of Australia, and the evaporation caused by the wind would be greater still. But we know that with proper tith and preparation a great deal of the rainfall we get can be conserved, and I am satisfied that very few localities in such areas as the Upper Burnett and prairie country will be injured by long droughts, because of the possibility of conserving the rainfall in the loose loamy soil of which it is composed.

Hon. members opposite have told us that the soil is of poor quality. I would like to draw their attention to the statements of people who have made a careful inspection of the area. For instance, we have Mr. Gullet, who was sent up there by the Commonwealth authorities to make a careful investigation. I have heard that Mr. Bourne made an inspection. I do not say that he is very much of an expert, but on one occasion he gave a very glowing account of it. It is true that since then he has made a statement quite contrary to the one he made previously, but a man who makes one

statement at one time and another statement later on is not very reliable. When, however, we find that his first statement is in favour of the area and is backed up by the opinions of more competent authorities, then we can believe that the land is what it is said to be.

At 4 p.m.,

The Chairman of Committees (Mr. Kirwan, *Brisbane*), relieved the Speaker in the chair.

Mr. CARTER: I am going to quote a few authorities who have passed opinions regarding this land. We have been told that the soil is not suited for certain purposes. Let me quote the report by Mr. J. C. Brünnich, the Agricultural Chemist of the Department of Agriculture. In his report, which appeared in the "Agricultural Journal" for November, 1910, he said—

"Towards the end of last year Crown Land Ranger A. E. Winterbottom, under instructions from the Under Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Stock, made a collection of soils from various parts of the Upper Burnett district.

"The analyses of these soils have just been completed.

"The great majority are found to be soils of exceptionally high fertility. . . . The amounts of lime, in which so many of our Queensland soils are deficient, are in nearly all the samples analysed remarkably high, and also in a very available form."

These samples were gathered from a very scattered area.

In the "Agricultural Journal for July, 1911, there is an article by Mr. J. C. Brünnich and Mr. G. R. Patten, in which the following appeared:—

"The analyses of the soils of the Upper Burnett district published in the November number of the Journal drew attention to the exceptional fertility of the district, and therefore the further samples which were collected and submitted by T. L. Bancroft are of particular interest, as they confirm the previous analyses, showing distinctly that the Upper Burnett should be one of the richest and most fertile agricultural districts not only of Queensland but of Australia."

I do not think that there is any hon. member who will not admit that Mr. Brünnich is an authority on the subject with which he is dealing and that he is quite reliable. I have also a statement from an article by the special correspondent of the "Telegraph," in its issue of 27th October, 1922. He says—

"Mr. Suter particularly drew attention to the rich first-class agricultural lands extending along the valleys of Callide, Bell's, Kroombit, Scoria, Gravillia, and Kariboe Creeks, over which the Cotton Delegation passed. These are all forest lands, generally ring-barked. The soil is of a dark-brown alluvial nature, very rich, and going down a considerable depth. These lands, with a fair rainfall, said Mr. Suter, will grow practically anything.

"It is strange that such beautiful lands should so long have lain idle from an agricultural point of view. Hundreds of families could be settled in the valleys of the creeks mentioned and on the scrub lands in their vicinity, provided that the

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farms have access to a railway line. Some of the higher second-class agricultural lands, and even the first-class grazing, could be utilised for fruitgrowing.

"The whole of the valley of the Callide is well watered by creeks and water courses, and in normal seasons there is an abundance of water throughout the valley. Numerous wells have been sunk in the creek valleys, and from Drumberle, in the south, to the Don River, in the north, water can easily be obtained by sinking to a depth not exceeding 55 feet."

Then we are told about the difficulties in obtaining water. I would like to mention the opinion of one of the members of the Cotton Delegation. Mr. Crompton Wood, a member of the British Cotton Delegation, is thus reported in the "Daily Mail" of 24th October, 1922—

"Mr. Crompton Wood, of the British Cotton Delegation, told the special representative of the 'Daily Mail,' on arrival at Mr. E. J. McConnel's home, Marshlands, in the South Burnett, yesterday, that the trip had been a revelation to him.

"It was, he said, a veritable Garden of Eden.

"Tens of thousands of acres were suitable for cotton. Australia, he added, was much better for the British subject desirous of making a home than Canada."

Still we have hon. members opposite telling us to go to Africa or Canada because they are better than Australia.

Mr. FRY: You know that is not true. You know that we stand up for Australia more than you do. That statement made by you is absolutely incorrect.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. CARTER: That is all right from a sanitary man's point of view. You should not monkey with dangerous men.

Mr. FRY: You are a sanitary man yourself.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member for Kurilpa to obey my call to order, or I shall have to deal with him under the Standing Orders.

Mr. NORR interjected.

Mr. CARTER: You take your money to Africa to exploit the blackfellow and grow sugar.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member for Port Curtis to confine his remarks to the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Port Curtis in order in saying that hon. members on this side do certain things when it has been denied by hon. members on this side?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order in the question raised by the hon. member for Cunningham.

Mr. CARTER: I am sorry that I was interrupted by hon. members opposite. It seems to me they do not like home truths. Hon. members opposite ask, "What did Mr. Bourne say?" In a statement to the Tax-payers' Association, Mr. Bourne is reported

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in the "Daily Mail" of 7th April, 1922, as saying—

"If I were Prime Minister, I would wipe the Upper Burnett scheme off my mind."

Mr. Bourne in his statement shows first what he would do, and then he shows the position that the Federal Government were taking up with regard to this land. Mr. Hughes had promised this Government that so much money would be made available for the opening up of the Upper Burnett district. Mr. Bourne confirms that. He says that Mr. Hughes should wipe the matter off his mind. It goes to show that Mr. Hughes was trying to slip out of keeping a promise to the Government of this State. We know that he did make that promise. He made all kinds of excuses afterwards, and Mr. Bourne was one of those who persisted in supplying him with excuses.

Mr. CORSER: Tell me fairly what was Mr. Hughes's excuse? You know.

Mr. CARTER: Mr. Bourne made another statement at another place at another time. Mr. J. S. P. Bourne was once Land Commissioner at Maryborough, and this is an extract from his departmental report in connection with this land—

"It is almost impossible to write about the possibilities of the Upper Burnett country without giving the impression that one is exaggerating."

Alluding to some of the ridges, he refers to them as rolling hills and slopes studded with happy and prosperous homes; gently sloping forest country, with sandy loam suitable for vines, pineapples, cereals, etc.

Reporting on the Cannindah Range he speaks of it as being very rich scrub, stony in parts, but will grow good Rhodes grass, and regards this whole scrub range as a very rich asset, rich vine and bottle-tree scrub, much decayed vegetable matter. The soil is rich volcanic, chocolate, and black, and this scrub, he says, I am told, extends southward along the range for a distance of about 30 miles.

That is quite true. That is the statement he made on that occasion. Hon. members opposite constantly refer to the later statement made by Mr. Bourne when that gentleman was counselling Mr. Hughes to do something he should not do.

Mr. CORSER: No one on this side listened to that.

Mr. CARTER: Last night hon. members opposite and particularly the hon. member for Nundah, were asking, "What did Mr. Bourne say?"

Mr. KELSO: What did he say in his second report?

Mr. CARTER: I am speaking of his report as Land Commissioner, and not as a disgruntled dismissed officer.

Mr. CORSER: He was not dismissed.

Mr. CARTER: He was acting in the interests of the Nationalist party in counselling Mr. Hughes not to do something that he should have done. I pointed out to this House that this is a magnificent area of rich country. We have the expert evidence, not of one person but of scores of people. We have the opinion of the surveyor who has been up there—a very competent man—and he has made the statement I have mentioned.

Mr. Gordon Graham, the late Under Secretary for Lands, has made statements of a similar kind. He has said that there are 2,000,000 acres of land there suitable for agricultural purposes. A former Secretary for Public Lands, Mr. Tolmie, made a similar statement.

Mr. CORSER: That there are 2,000,000 acres?

Mr. CARTER: Yes, 2,000,000 acres. Mr. Amos, who devoted a great deal of time to the area, made a report for the then Commissioner for Railways, Mr. Evans, and it was in terms almost equally glowing as the one made by Mr. Bourne, but he had a greater opportunity of inspecting the country than Mr. Bourne. Every expert who has been over this country has reported that it is suitable for the useful purposes that this Government now intend to set it apart for, and yet, despite all that, it has been only returning revenue to the Crown of 6d. per acre because it was in the hands of the people who were content to muddle along and made no attempt to be faithful to the duty they owed to the State by opening it up and giving it an outlet to the nearest port. The Opposition, when occupying the Treasury benches, opposed that land being opened to selection, and opposed the trade being diverted to its natural port, Gladstone, because it would rob some interests elsewhere. They wanted, as the hon. member for Burnett wanted, the whole of that traffic to be brought to Brisbane—a distance of nearly 400 miles. The Government are now opening up the land and have provided an outlet to the natural port—Gladstone, one of the finest and most natural ports on the coast—not 100 miles away.

Mr. CORSER: You are romancing.

Mr. CARTER: The first movement of this Government, eight years ago, was an attempt to get a railway into this country, but the anti-Labour section in this Chamber and the other Chamber kept the measure from going through the House for four consecutive years, and it was only in the fifth year that the Government were able to get the line through. Then an attempt was made to prevent the Government getting the requisite money to build it. First, Mr. Hughes went back on his promise, and then a delegation went to England to prevent the Government getting money. The object of the Government has been to adopt the shortest possible railway route to open up this area, and the route that would be best for the intending selectors. Yet we are told that we are not making an honest effort to open up the land. Since the Government came into power they have taken active steps to get this land opened up by the construction of railways, by arranging suitable crops, by taking people over the land to see it, by going to the trouble of making roads to give access to the railway, and by finding water for the people instead of dumping them on waterless tracts of land, which was the policy of past Governments. I know that was the policy of former Governments, because in the Mount Locom Scrub area I know of half a dozen cases where wells were sunk unsuccessfully in search of water, which involved the selector in debt. In this area water will be provided for the selector, and he will not only have railway communication, but excellent roads. He will also be given the opportunity to purchase stock, assistance to fence his area and build his

house. Everything within reason that can be done will be done to put these people on the land in such a way that they can earn a living from the soil. No Government in any State of Australia has ever attempted to give the people the same opportunities as the Government are doing in the Burnett and Palmerston areas. This Government deserve every commendation for opening up these lands for settlement and giving the people an opportunity of going on the land and winning from it a useful and satisfactory living.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*): I am sure that the House has, at all events, been amused and not altogether elevated by the speech of the hon. member for Port Curtis. He has been particularly amusing. He has not referred to the Bill much, but has been trying to accuse and attack to members on this side of the House statements they have never made.

Mr. CARTER: You were in the Chamber and knew they were made.

Mr. DEACON: You did not say who made them.

Mr. CARTER: I did.

Mr. DEACON: You did not mention the names.

Mr. WALKER: We recognise that the hon. gentleman is not much of an authority on land settlement, and, after listening to his speech, one can only come to the conclusion that he knows as much about land settlement as a cow knows about needles.

Mr. CARTER: Abuse is no argument.

Mr. WALKER: The hon. member should be the last to mention that word. The scheme is certainly a big one, and one must realise, after looking at the map of the area, what a gigantic scheme it is, and how it must command the best consideration from all sides in this Chamber. One must be struck by the amount of good soil in the area, if that map is a true reflection of the district, and one must also realise that there are similar areas of good, medium, and poor country in other parts of the State. It is similar country to what obtains in all the coastal districts of Queensland. In cutting up land of that mixed variety equally you must have certain discretionary power so that the people we are going to settle on the land can get the best results from it. I was particularly interested in the remarks of the Minister. He seemed to grasp the whole of his scheme very well. The tendency of the Bill, though, is to reduce the holdings to such a small area and to compel the selector to grow something on that land which might otherwise be used for grazing. If the Government are going to inflict such conditions upon the settlers, they naturally are not going to get the same results as if no conditions were attached to it. The farmer likes freedom of action in making a living just the same as anyone else, and he likes to judge for himself as to what are the best markets, and what article can be produced to give the best return. If the man is allowed to settle on the land without any such restrictive conditions, a much better result will be obtained from the soil.

I do not altogether like the Bill as it has been presented. It puts me in mind of the administration of the Lands Department for the last seven years. We know that for the last seven or eight years land settlement has been a downright failure, because land has not been thrown open to the people, and the conditions prevailing are not what did

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prevail, and are such as the intending selector will not accept. If the Government desire to get unoccupied land settled, they must make the conditions attractive. During the last seven years the present Government have settled half the number of acres of land that the previous Government settled in a similar period. If the Government are going to alter the conditions and impose restrictions similar to what are proposed in this Bill, they are not going to get that settlement which I would like to see. I would like hon. members to look into the Bill.

Mr. HARTLEY: You don't have the same amount of settlement with second-class land as first-class land. You settled the good land.

Mr. WALKER: We have areas all over Queensland similar in quality to the Burnett lands, and they only require railway communication to open them up for settlement.

Mr. HARTLEY: You don't call this good land?

Mr. WALKER: I call this very good average land, but the absence of rainfall makes it a secondary proposition. In this scheme you have something like 3,000,000 acres to settle. It is intended that the minimum area should be 150 acres approximately, and the maximum 5,000 acres. That minimum area is too small altogether. It does not allow the selector any scope or opportunity to produce the article he wishes. I was amused at the statement of the hon. member for Port Curtis that an area of 150 acres was a fair thing, and yet a few minutes later he wanted the selector to have greater scope in order to rear stock and that sort of thing.

We have settlers on the North Coast line—one of the most prosperous districts we have, with an average annual rainfall of about 48 inches—and they have something like 150 acres as an average for each selection. That shows you distinctly that the land is a fairly good proposition under good conditions. If you are going to settle those dry areas, you must double the area of the selection. If you take a farmer on the North Coast who is to-day rearing his stock up to a decent age before selling it, and compel him, after rearing high-class stock, to sell before it is at a profitable age, then you are not going to give him a chance. The same thing applies to horses or anything else, but more particularly to dairy stock. I would like to see that man rear his stock to a profitable age and not have to sacrifice it because of a little drought or a temporary depression that makes him short of money.

A great controversy has taken place with regard to tenure. I do not want to lose much time over that, because I recognise that leasehold is the fixed policy of the present Government. However, there seems to be a great misunderstanding on the part of my friends opposite. They really think that, because it is a lease in perpetuity, that ends the matter. At the present moment there is as much speculation in leasehold, and this since the present Government came into power, as there was before in freehold. There is nothing to stop you taking up two or three selections. You can comply with the residential conditions for five years and make a transfer to your wife or child, and then take up another block. This is going on repeatedly, and speculation is just as rife to-day in leasehold as in freehold. As a matter of fact, there is very little difference between a leasehold subject to reappraise-

ment and a freehold subject to a land tax. I know, as I had the pleasure of taking up a perpetual leasehold because I could not get a freehold, and I am also a freeholder. I quote this to show that the conditions which our friends on the Government side think restrict speculation do not do so at all.

Mr. DUNSTAN: The big factor is that the initial expenditure is not as great with perpetual leasehold as it is with freehold.

Mr. WALKER: Leasehold as applied to this scheme is not going to have the benefit that some people think it will. You should make the proposition very attractive. Every man has a right to a freehold, after working long hours with the assistance of his family. As soon as he complies with the residential conditions surely he has the right to turn his holding into cash if he wishes, and transfer his work into some other direction. If you are going to put men on these holdings, the same as you do on agricultural farms and grazing areas in that district, and make them live on it for the whole term—I think it is twenty years—there is little hope of the success of the scheme, and very few blocks will be taken up. This will necessitate an amendment of the Act later on because those people will want to sell.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They can sell after five years.

Mr. WALKER: Does that refer to grazing homesteads?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes; but the person taking it up must continue to fulfil the residential clause.

Mr. WALKER: I am pleased to hear that. The whole of this Bill seems to be a Minister's Bill; balloting has been done away with, and the selections are to be allotted by the Minister. Reading from the Bill, one can only come to the conclusion that the Lands Department are going to have an enormous amount of trouble in administering the Act. You are going to put responsibilities on their shoulders which they never had before, and you will need an army of inspectors to carry out the provisions of the Act. The Minister has only to take the administration of the State Advances Act to know the amount of inspection that is cast on officials to see that the little things stipulated are kept right up to the mark. Under this scheme you will have all this army of inspectors, and the farmer is going to have the cost put on him, although it may be indirectly.

I was very shocked to hear the Minister say that he is not going to give preference to returned soldiers. In the same speech he said that the old soldier settlement schemes had proved a failure and some had been disastrous. Surely to goodness he will give the good men an opportunity of coming under the scope of this Bill and of making good!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They will have an opportunity, but they will not get preference.

Mr. WALKER: They will have an opportunity, but that is at the will of the Minister. They will have to form themselves into a group and then will not even have the chance of balloting. I suggest that a reduction of the price of the land should be made to them. That would give them a chance to make good, the same as they did for us a few years ago.

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The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What would you do with regard to their indebtedness on their present blocks? Wipe it out?

Mr. WALKER: Considering that the land was recommended to the soldiers by the present Government. I would wipe it out completely, and give them a fresh kick off. It was not their mistake; it was the mistake of the Government. Had the Government looked further ahead and found markets for their produce before putting them on the land, these men would have made good to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You know that 50 per cent. of the men were not suitable.

Mr. WALKER: The same thing will apply to the present scheme. Do not think for one moment that you are going to get expert dairy farmers to go on a new area. You must get a fair percentage of men who do not know their work. But, when you see these men stick to their work as they did at Beerburum, road constructing, and improving their farms, we should stick to them and do what we can for them. We should have gone a little further and found markets in the old country, not altogether for pineapples and fruit, but for other products. When you start competing with black-grown pineapples, got up and tinned by black labour and produced nearer to London than we are, then one can only say that the men who recommended all this ought to have their heads read.

As I pointed out, the restrictions which are imposed in this Bill are great. First of all, you have to get water within six months, and the man is going to be subject to trial before ever the land is allotted to him. Just imagine if a man is proved after four, five, or six months to be unsuitable in the opinion of the Minister and passed out! Don't you see that you are going to have enormous troubles? Of course, the Minister may consider him to be the wrong man, but the Minister's word is not final and there may be a court appeal. It does not follow that he would not have made good later on. These conditions may be adverse to many a man who would be successful if given a further chance.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You know that no Government ever hunts a man off the land.

Mr. WALKER: I admit that, and also that the Minister has been very sympathetic and will offer every protection to the settlers. But a worse man may become Secretary for Public Lands, or the present Minister may want to go for a trip, and the man relieving him may hit these men to leg. The question of finding water is a very important one, and you are going to make certain water conservation or boring schemes on each of these holdings, probably on a co-operative scheme. If it proves a failure, the whole of that loss will be capitalised—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It will be charged against the State, not against the selector.

Mr. WALKER: This puts me in mind of the Inkerman irrigation scheme, which has proved a great failure.

At 4.30 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. WALKER: We are going to carry the baby in regard to this scheme and in

regard to the Inkerman scheme, where the Government are wiping out the capital cost.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This is not an irrigation scheme.

Mr. WALKER: The Minister referred to the question of building factories. The clause dealing with that matter wants completely wiping out. It should be wiped out for the safety of the Government and for the protection of the Minister, otherwise he will have all sorts of requests to build all sorts of factories. He will have no end of trouble. We know perfectly well that these factories will not be built in the interests of those who are going to supply them. The farmers have a practical knowledge, and, if it was left to them, factories would be built in the right centres. There is no body of men better able to decide where these factories should be built than the farmers themselves. There is only one way of providing for that—wipe out that particular clause and let the farmers co-operate the same as all other farmers have done and build their own factories, whether they be cheese factories, butter factories, or anything else.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Perhaps the factories already in existence will serve the area. I do not know.

Mr. COLLINS: I believe they will, but I want that clause wiped out altogether. The settlers may be fools in one sense in going on the land the same as many of us have done, but they are not fools when it comes to building factories.

Mr. COLLINS: You have not done too badly.

Mr. WALKER: I have done pretty well, and other farmers have done equally as well as myself. If we can produce men who can go out and build up these big centres in the wilderness in the way they have done, there will be plenty of men there with commercial training and ability to enable them to form and manage these co-operative concerns. As Queenslanders we ought to be proud of the way in which these co-operative concerns are run.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Provision is made for the settlers to take over the factories as soon as they are ready to do so.

Mr. WALKER: We know perfectly well that in ten years or so all these factories will want remodelling and bringing right up to date, just as your own home requires additions occasionally to keep up with the fashion. New methods are introduced. Nobody knows better than the man in the district—that is the farmer—what is necessary, and, if you leave it to him, you will find he will work out his own salvation far better than if there is any interference by the Government.

There is another matter which I would like to speak about, and that is the group system. I notice there is a clause in the Bill in regard to a joint and several bond. If there is a loss on any particular group and five or six of the members of that group clear out—they have all signed that joint and several bond—the whole of the liability will fall on those that are left. That is one of the most pernicious proposals that I ever heard of. We had to do that in the early days in regard to the co-operative movement. Take the Murarrie Bacon Factory directorate. They signed a joint and

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several bond for £16,000. A drought followed, and look at the responsibility these men had to accept. Was it a fair thing to ask them to carry it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Who carries it?

Mr. WALKER: The selectors will carry it as soon as any liability attaches to that particular land. You are going to ask four or five men or twenty men in a group—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Not in a group—in a trust. It is different to a group settlement.

Mr. WALKER: It applies to a group too.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It must be a trust bore.

Mr. WALKER: Say there are fifty in it, in a period of drought they will leave a few to carry the responsibility. It would be far better for all to sign the bond, but not a joint and several one, and let each one carry his proportion of the liability.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is in operation now in regard to trust bores.

Mr. WALKER: All I can say is that it is time such a provision was wiped off the statute-book. In connection with the group system, I wish to take hon. members back to some sixteen years ago, when the group system was the popular method of settling land and was the one used by the Government of the day in the settling of land right along the North Coast. I was a member of the House at that time, and I do not know that there were then very many members who knew the inner working of the group system. I say it is the worst system ever inaugurated in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why?

Mr. WALKER: I will prove it. We know perfectly well that some groups which were formed could be worked well provided everyone was fair and square, but we are not all so constituted. At the time the late Hon. J. T. Bell was Secretary for Public Lands, and afterwards when Hon. Digby Denham was in charge of the Lands Department, corruption crept in in connection with these groups, and the system was eventually wiped out. We all know that to be the case.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That was not the fault of the group system. It was the fault of the administration.

Mr. WALKER: It does not matter how you put it. In the North Coast we had a Protestant united group, then we had a Catholic group, and then we had a brother-in-law group. All these things were done, and they are bad for the State. We want to wipe out that feeling. If all these groups were founded on sound lines and every man administering them was an honest man, there would be a good deal to say in favour of the system.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Once the selections are allotted the selectors are on their own.

Mr. WALKER: I will tell you how it was done. I am not referring to the private agent, because I think we all admit that the private agent—sending a man out to get men at so much a head—was a menace to the country.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: At £5 a head.

[*Mr. Walker.*

Mr. WALKER: I had one case brought under my notice which I reported to the then Minister and to the late Under Secretary, Mr. Scott. We will say Jones was an agent belonging to the Lands Department. He formed a group of twenty, called, we will say, "The McCormack Group." He was a favourite, and he got a particularly fine block of land consisting of twenty selections. He would go round amongst 100 selectors and point out the advantages of the land, and then say, "It is pretty well full. As a matter of fact, it is quite full, but I think we can get Walker out. He is not too keen, and I think I can get him out for a 'tenner.'" The result was that the highest bidder actually became the holder of the land in that group. That system was carried out. I brought a concrete case before the department, and a document is in the office to-day showing that a man received a certain amount of money which he should not have received. As a matter of fact, the receipt is there for the money paid. I have spoken to the gentlemen who came from New South Wales and settled in many of the groups on the North Coast, and they are all of the one opinion—that the group system is a good system provided everything is above-board, but a lot of them had to pay secretly to become members of a group. If you want honesty in the administration of the Lands Department, let the selections be allotted by ballot. There is no one knows better than the individual himself how he wishes to select land, and he knows his own business. If he fails, that is his business also. Some are bound to fail.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is our business, too.

Mr. WALKER: If the hon. gentleman will get in touch with the old officers of the Lands Department, they will back up what I say. It is a wrong system, so let it be abolished, and let the selections be allotted by ballot. That is the clean way and the fair way, as there is no favour to any one.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That presupposes corruption amongst our own officers.

Mr. WALKER: It will come in amongst your own officers, too. If you are going to keep on with the group system, then for goodness' sake do everything in Brisbane. If a temporary lands office is opened in the Upper Burnett district, have a trusted officer in charge, but I know corruption will creep in, because it crept in before when we had men whom we thought we could trust.

Personally, I am a great believer in the old homestead system, with the ballot, and cheaper land. There has been a lot of talk about cheap land and dear land, and I venture to say that the old homestead system is by far the best. Under that system a man made certain improvements. He paid a survey fee of 2s. 6d. an acre, and the land ultimately became his own.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And he abandons or sells it, ultimately.

Mr. WALKER: Surely he has a right to do that if he complies with the law in putting up his improvements! Take the Mary Valley, for instance, which has been selected under that system. You cannot say they have sold out there, because the pioneers and their sons are still there and are very successful. The same thing applies to the Rose-

wood, Logan, and Albert districts, where the people selected land under similar conditions. Where could you get a better example of successful settlement than in those districts? Why not follow the good old method which has been in force for fifty years in Queensland and has proved a success? Since the Labour party came into power we have not had the same successful land settlement.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In the Cairns district the land was selected and made freehold, and the small people have been forced off by the big holders who have got the whole of it. Take the Babinda area, for instance.

Mr. WALKER: That is easily answered, for the simple reason that it is a new district. There are practically no factories and no markets for the produce; it is purely a timber proposition.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In the Babinda area the big holders got the whole of the land.

Mr. WALKER: Those blocks were originally taken up for timber purposes. They were sold because the Government of the day were short of money—as the Government are to-day—and, instead of going to America for a loan, they sold the timber.

I would like the Minister to give great consideration to the Bill in Committee, because I really think it requires drastic amendment. I would sooner go off the land than attempt to go on the Burnett lands under the scheme proposed in this Bill. I do not think the Bill, as framed, will promote good settlement, and you are also going to have a state of turmoil in the Lands Department in connection with it. The Bill will have to be greatly altered in Committee, or else an amending measure will have to be brought in later on.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): The Minister has asked for criticism and for the experience which hon. members have had to be given to the House. We can only go on the provisions contained in the Bill and the evidence we have heard from the Minister and other hon. members who know the district, and compare that with the results of settlement in our own districts. I can quite understand that the Minister is looking to the Country party for criticism to help him, as he knows very well that he cannot get it from his own side of the House. Hon. members opposite have not the experience or the practical knowledge to guide them in the consideration of a Bill of this kind.

Mr. COLLINS: We have not Jeremiahs on this side.

Mr. DEACON: As soon as hon. members opposite have anything placed before them they approve of it. If they hear anything which casts the least doubt on their knowledge they talk about Jeremiahs. It would be better for them to listen to those who have had experience, as they have not got it themselves. I do not wish to say anything which will hamper the Government in assisting farm settlement. If they can bring forward a scheme to do better than has been done before, I say good luck to them, because nothing is too good in order that the man going on the land may have a fair start. Anything which I say is not against the measure, but to assist the Minister in giving the settlers a good start. I can see mistakes in the Bill, judging from the

experience we have had previously in Queensland. Take the matter of the selection of settlers to start with. It seems to me that the Minister is going to take a big responsibility in this matter. In selecting a settler the department will not have personal knowledge of the applicant, and will have to take a reference from someone. They have to go by the appearance of the man and his banking account. It does not matter what a settler may look like, it is not certain at first whether he will be a success, and the Government are going to finance him to a large amount once he is selected.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We did not have any selection with regard to soldier settlements.

Mr. TAYLOR: We did—similar to what you mentioned yesterday.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The supervisors say we picked them all indiscriminately.

Mr. TAYLOR: I was on the committee myself.

Mr. DEACON: In connection with all land settlement, there have always been a lot of men who, to all appearance and as far as one's knowledge of them went, ought to have been a success, yet a big percentage have not been a success. I know districts where only 50 per cent. of the original settlers have remained on the land. When they went there, so far as one could tell, they were all likely to make good settlers, yet the conditions did not suit them, and they either sold out or abandoned their farms. That has been the experience in connection with every settlement in Queensland up to date. If I liked to be as nasty in imputing motives as the hon. member for Port Curtis was when speaking, I should say that this is a Bill to establish a good Labour constituency. I do not think for one moment that the Minister has that in his mind, or that the Government intend it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I would not like to be the representative.

Mr. DEACON: One of the difficulties which the settlers will have to face under the Bill is the requirement that they must start work within three months and get going to the satisfaction of the Minister. It does not always suit a new settler to get going in that time. There may be other difficulties. He has to get a certain amount of work done within three months to the satisfaction of the supervisor. If he does not do that, he may be fired out. I think we need a little more latitude in regard to that. If, for instance, things go wrong with the settler, and he has bad luck and does not get his work completed in time, he will be subject to the annoyance of having the Minister and the department on the top of him, besides the loss of his own time and labour. It is too much to expect a settler to get fairly started inside six months.

A settler might be going to this area from some other district, and it would take him time, perhaps, to sell out and get rid of all his liabilities in other ways. Then, again, at any time during his tenure of the land—so far as I understand the Bill—the department can step in and say that he has to make certain improvements. He has that possibility hanging over his head all the time. Unless he satisfies the department that he has made the improvements which are deemed necessary, he is turned out and

his selection is forfeited, without any provision for compensation for the work he has done. Not only does the settler in this area not get the favoured treatment that he has had in the past, but more is expected of him. He may be called upon to make any improvement the department likes, there is no right to compensation, and he is living under orders. So far as I can see, he gets a small area of land, and he is expected to do all the work himself.

Now I come to the question of the areas in which this land is to be opened for selection. The Minister said that the rainfall was no worse than that of the Darling Downs—that it was about the same. He said, though, that the land was worse than that of the Darling Downs, because in every area of 160 acres an average of 50 acres would be suitable for cultivation. There is not much chance of a man making a living at mixed farming on 160 acres, as I understand it, with only 50 acres suitable for cultivation.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I know a man who bought 40 acres and put the whole of it under lucerne, and is making a good living. We do not know what intense cultivation is.

MR. DEACON: The hon. member has in his mind a market garden, and he is comparing it with mixed farming.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Fifty acres of good land will keep any man going.

MR. DEACON: Certainly, the hon. gentleman cannot say that the land is as good as the Downs country, in view of that statement which I have quoted.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Men are making £100 off half an acre round Wynnum.

MR. CARTER: They are farmers; they know how to work the land.

MR. DEACON: We are talking about mixed farming a long way from water, of wheatgrowing, dairying, and growing cotton. I am speaking with the knowledge I have gained in my own district. Can a man work 50 acres under crop and go in for dairying as well? He could not be expected to keep on a place like that more than about fifteen or sixteen cows, because he has to allow for bad seasons. They have droughts in this Upper Burnett and Callide country, according to the evidence we have heard in this Chamber, and the droughts are just as bad there as they are anywhere else. At least, the conditions are not better, and every man would have to provide for bad times, and, taking an average, he could not expect to get more than a profit of £10 a cow a year.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He would not have to depend solely on cows.

MR. DEACON: If he had fifteen cows, it would take the whole of his time.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you say that fifteen cows would keep a man fully engaged in that area?

MR. DEACON: Yes, if he makes provision for bad times. He will have to work his farm, and if he does that, he will have his time cut out. I am only trying to show the Minister the possibilities of failure. I am only trying to protect him. He asked for help, but when we offer it, we get no return except the statement that we want to oppose the Government. I say that you can give one man too much land and another one not

half enough. So we should let the settlers please themselves as to what they can work. If a man thinks 160 acres is too small, if he can use more, he should have it. It would be much better to give him a chance of taking more, and make that a minimum area.

MR. BULCOCK: They can grow cotton and other crops.

MR. DEACON: It may be so, but we are not certain of that. We have had only one year's experience of growing cotton in a large way, and we do not yet know what the result of cotton-growing is going to be. At any rate, cotton-growing takes a lot of labour, and these men are not going to have a lot of labour at their disposal.

MR. BULCOCK: There will be an influx of labour into the district.

MR. DEACON: That will be one of the difficulties that the settlers will have to face. The hon. member must know that in future that labour is going to be covered by an award of the Court of Industrial Arbitration, and if there is an influx of labour there, that fact will stop its employment, as we have told him before.

Then there is the tenure—perpetual leasehold only. In almost every speech from members on the other side of the House we hear statements to the effect that the settlers prefer perpetual leasehold to freehold, but the Government are not game to give the settlers a chance of showing their preference. Perhaps a leasehold may be preferable in the early stages of settlement. A man going on to a selection may like to have the advantage of a low rent for a certain time; but the disadvantage comes later on, and I venture to say that over a period of thirty-five years he will pay far more in rent on a perpetual leasehold than he would have to pay to make the land freehold. At any rate, give him the option. A man may be willing to pay rent for the first few years, but later on he will want to secure himself, and if he wants a title in fee-simple, he should have the option of getting it. Hon. members opposite say that if the land of the State had not been alienated in the past, the Government would be getting far more out of the public estate.

Really what they regret is the little that has been made by the settlers who took up the land in years gone by. It is not that

[5 p.m.] they want to help the settler, but they want to wring something out of him as time goes on. That is where the advantage of the perpetual leasehold system comes in.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Your vision is very limited.

MR. DEACON: It is not. I am viewing the question as set forth by hon. members opposite. Hon. members have made a comparison between the two systems. The Minister said that, if the land in Sydney had not been alienated, the Government of New South Wales would have been able to run the railways free. By that he infers that if the farms had not been alienated the farmers would have been paying a great deal more rent. He sees in the future an opportunity of rack-renting them. The farmer should be given the option of saying what tenure he desires.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He has been under the domination of a lot of corn-dealers from time immemorial.

[*Mr. Deacon.*]

Mr. DEACON: I am surprised that the Minister should allow his imagination to carry him so far as to say that the farmers are in the hands of the corn-dealers. Under the system of freehold, the man who desires to get out has the means in his own hands of determining the market value of his land. He has a perfect right to the market value of that place.

Mr. BULCOCK: Are you standing for the land-jobber?

Mr. DEACON: If hon. members are afraid of the land-jobbers, they ought not to forget that the advantage of the perpetual leasehold system only belongs to the first selector. If you give a man a piece of land on long terms at a low rent, that is worth something on the market. After five years he can sell his leasehold.

Mr. CARTER: All you think about is land-jobbing. You do not think about using the land.

Mr. DEACON: Let me tell the hon. member that there will be land-jobbing even under the perpetual lease system. There is nothing to prevent anybody from selling the leasehold. I will give an instance of the difference in value. A farm on the Downs was put up for auction and sold at £8 10s. per acre freehold. Within a chain of this land a Government reserve was put up for auction, and it carried perpetual lease conditions. The price to be realised by auction was to be the capital value, carrying a rent of 1½ per cent. for the first two years. Within two days of the freehold land being sold at £8 10s. per acre, the perpetual lease land brought a capital value of £27. If you work those figures out, you will find that it all comes back to exactly the same thing. That is what will happen in this case. Land on long terms with a low rent is worth something. In grazing areas that land with a long lease with a low rent is worth something on the market. It is worth more than selections carrying a high rent. We know what is going on every day, so what is the use of shamming about it? I heard the Minister say that 5,000 acres would be the maximum area for grazing homesteads. That will also apply to poor land. I have heard the hon. member for Bowen say that 10,000 acres in the best country are only a living grazing area.

Mr. BULCOCK: You must not overlook the fact that they will have the right of cultivation.

Mr. DEACON: I understood the Minister to say that this grazing land is mountain land. What is the good of cultivation on mountain land—amongst rocks and gullies? The holder will have the right to turn over the rocks in his process of cultivation. What is the good of that?

Mr. FOLEY: The Minister never said that.

Mr. DEACON: The Minister said it was poor land.

Mr. BULCOCK: He said some of it was.

Mr. DEACON: I understood him to say that the poor land in the backblocks was to be thrown open in large areas.

Mr. BULCOCK: Do you think it is right to give them the right of cultivation?

Mr. DEACON: It is said that 10,000 acres are only a living area in the best of this grazing country. Why should not the people who go there have a living area, and why

should not the person who goes in for farming also have a living area? Why are the Government so afraid that these settlers will make something out of their labour? Hon. members opposite seem to be mortally afraid that the selector is going to make a profit by his labour. They are afraid he will be successful. All these settlers should be given a fair chance of succeeding. The Government are going to advance sums amounting up to £1,200 to practically all untried men, with no security except the man's labour. If the money is lent on the land as it is now and the man goes out, that is only loading the land for the next man.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What do you suggest?

Mr. DEACON: It is no use suggesting anything to hon. members opposite. Hon. members have said that in other districts there is over-capitalisation of the land. If the Government make a bad deal, and lend a man money on his land and that man fails, then the Government have no right whatever to load the man who comes afterwards with the whole of that capital value. Losses will be made. It is impossible for anyone to say that they are going to make a success of all the blocks. There is going to be a loss, and the man who comes after will take the burden off the man who has gone before. There is going to be a certain proportion of failures. If the State Advances Corporation is going to lend the money, it should be on the understanding that there will be a certain percentage of losses. The money should be lent on the understanding that the financial losses are to be borne by the whole settlement. That would be fairer than leaving one settler overloaded with a debt that cannot possibly be repaid. One clause in the Bill directs that mortgages and bills of sale in favour of the State Advances Corporation or the Minister are not to be registered. That is giving a premium to the biggest liar on the settlement when he seeks credit from anybody. No one will have an opportunity of finding out the financial standing of a settler. It is only fair that everybody should be on the same footing. The honest man should be able to say, "You know all about me," and you ought to be able to know all about the other fellow. These settlers will have to be trusted by the business people in the same way as settlers have had to be trusted in other districts. If you do not give people an opportunity of finding out the financial standing of the settlers, as they will assume that some of them will be "bad marks," they will probably treat them all on that basis.

The non-registration of any mortgage between the Minister and the State Advances Corporation is no protection to the man who is going to register subsequently. It is going to act to the detriment of his credit. It would be better to place these settlers on the same footing as any one else in the State. I wish the Minister good luck in his endeavour to settle this area.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is not my Bill; it is your measure.

Mr. DEACON: I can understand the Minister has quite a lot of these things forced on him. I quite understand how he feels. I am sure that if he had had an opportunity he would have introduced a very different measure. I hope, when we come to the Committee stage, that he will

Mr. Deacon.]

have a freer hand in accepting suggestions from this side, and not be bound down by the ideas of faddists.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): I congratulate the Government on doing something to settle the rich agricultural lands which we have in Queensland. This land has never been used for agricultural purposes in the past, and it is only right, as every member of the Country party has always advocated primary production and the settling of people on the land, and the giving by the Government of opportunities to people who wish to settle, that this land should be utilised for closer settlement. The method of settlement is not altogether what hon. members on this side desire: but it is gratifying to learn that the Minister has invited criticism concerning this method. The Minister invited criticism from this side of the House, and he has had the views of men with practical experience. Those views should go a long way to assist him to improve the Bill, and this improvement can be effected by his acceptance of amendments which will be moved from this side when we get into Committee. I regret that the method of settlement is to be on the perpetual leasehold tenure. I would urge the Government even at this stage to allow the tenure to be optional—leasehold or freehold. The settlers should have the opportunity of selecting the land on whichever tenure they wish. I can assure the people who intend to settle there that, should the Country party or members on this side ever attain the Government benches, they will be given the opportunity, if they so desire, to convert their leasehold tenure into freehold. We have been told by the hon. member for Bowen that in doing so we shall be going back into the dark ages. The system in vogue in the so-called dark ages was a very good one, and it enabled many men who are now prosperous to take up lands on more attractive conditions than are offered now. Opportunities were given under the old Homestead Selection Act to select land and turn that land into homes. The men of the day made a great success of that Act. I hope that success will accrue from the efforts of the Government in connection with this Burnett scheme. The Government have adopted the group system, but the hon. member for Cooroola has given some evidence of the failure of that system, and why the ballot system should be adopted as more equitable and fairer. The Bill enacts that if a number of settlers wish to form a group, the Minister shall decide which block of land shall be given to each of those settlers. The ballot system can be brought into force there, and if the men cannot agree amongst themselves, it would be a fairer way for them to ballot. The Minister is also going to take upon himself the power to compel the settlers to comply with the Act by making such improvements as he directs. It seems rather harsh that this state of affairs should exist, and I do not think compulsory improvements should be imposed on the settler until he is in actual possession of the land. He may have to perform certain improvements, and in the end the Minister may not approve of him taking up that block of land. We should have more information in connection with the areas that this land is to be cut up into. We have been told that the areas are going to range from 160 acres upwards. An area of 160 acres in a district where the rainfall is only from

23 to 30 inches yearly is not a living area. That has been proved over and over again. As proof of that, I only have to refer to the soldier settlement in my electorate. We have men there who have worked long hours and done everything possible to make a success of the land; but owing to the inadequate rainfall they have not succeeded. I admit that in many of the soldier settlements there are men who are not adapted for farming, and the same might apply to this settlement. I am basing my remarks on the experiences of men I know personally, and who have tried to conduct their farms in a fit and proper manner, but, owing to the periodical droughts that occur in Queensland, they have not been able to make the success that they otherwise would have made. When a man on an area of 160 acres is going through a drought period he has to leave his farm in order to make a living. That has occurred in many cases, and will occur again. A man with 160 acres will want to go in for mixed farming. I ask any hon. member, if this man is going to place 20 acres under cultivation, what sized dairy herd can he have? It is absolutely impossible for him to engage in dairying and make a living on such a small area. In the soldier settlements in my electorate a man with an area of 160 acres had twenty head of cattle. He wanted to rear the natural increase of that stock, and asked me to interview the Lands Department with a view to his securing an additional area, or to be allowed to take up some land adjacent to the living area he had, in order to run his dry stock on it. I was informed by the Lands Department that, as this selector had a living area—that is the area allotted to him—he could not take up any other land. The result was that he had to dispose of his stock increase. A man who is going in for the best class of stock considers his young stock a very fine asset. It is, therefore, very hard upon these settlers if they are not allowed to take up additional land, or get the lease of some additional land from the Government, in order to increase their dairy herds and make a success of dairying. If a man is going in for mixed farming on these 160-acre blocks as well as dairying, it will be necessary for him to employ labour. We all know that in the very near future the wages to be paid to the farmer's employee will be fixed by the Arbitration Court.

Mr. WRIGHT: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLAYTON: He may be compelled to produce from his farm and sell on a very low market, thereby not getting nearly the return for his products, with a low market and dry season, that he will be called upon to pay the men whom he has to employ.

Mr. BURCOCK: There will be no employment in this area outside the farmer and his family.

Mr. CLAYTON: There will be employment in this area, and, as I proceed, I will show how that employment is brought about, not only on the farm, but in other directions. The thing that is going to trouble the men who take up this land is the low rainfall. Any person who has been engaged all his life in farming, as I have been, knows perfectly well that even with the best land you will not get a fair return for the hours you put in if you do not get an adequate rainfall. If I were going to invest in land, the first thing I would require to know would be

[Mr. Deacon.]

the rainfall in the area, because rainfall is everything in connection with farming.

Last night the hon. member for Barcoo, talking about the small areas that are to be given in connection with this scheme, said that we are now profiting by the failure of the soldier settlements. A very proud thing for any Government member to say!

Mr. BULLOCK: That is not what I said at all.

Mr. CLAYTON: The Government will profit if they take the advice of hon. members on this side and increase the areas. We should not have an area of less than 320 acres. If a man is engaged in mixed farming and fails to make a success in one direction, then he has another opportunity in another direction. It is pleasing to me, as the representative of an electorate adjoining this area, to know that even the hon. member for Port Curtis recognises that we have a very fine deepwater port there. I am pleased to see that he recognises at last that Urangan is a fine deepwater port.

Mr. CARTER: I did not know that you had a deepwater port at Urangan.

Mr. CLAYTON: It is the duty of the Government to allow us to make the very best use of that port. Clause 5 of the Bill reads—

“The Minister shall have power, in such manner as he may deem fit, to clear and form such of the roads serving lands of the area as he may desire, and to construct bridges, causeways, culverts, or crossings in or on such roads.”

The Minister takes power to perform this work, and we know that last session we put through what was known as the Unemployed Workers' Insurance Act. Under that Act a board was formed, and on the recommendation of this board, if unemployment exists in any district, the Government may perform certain works in that area. This Bill goes on to say—

“During the execution of such works the provisions of the Local Authorities Acts shall be suspended with regard to the same. Upon the completion of any such work, however, the Minister may notify the local authority concerned, whereupon the provisions of the said Acts shall apply.”

Is that a loophole to allow the Government to spend money in these districts and make it a charge on this scheme in order to find work for the unemployed? The opportunity is given there, but I sincerely hope that in any construction of roads, bridges, or anything else of that type in this area, the Government will do everything in their power to allow the men settled on these farms to participate in the work going on—particularly if they are subject to dry seasons and the conditions of farming are such as to prevent them making an adequate living.

In connection with this huge scheme and the prospect of 1,500 men being settled there somewhere about next month, I would appeal to the Secretary for Public Instruction to go into the matter immediately and see that sufficient money is placed on the Estimates, so that the member for the district will be able to approach the Department of Public Instruction and see that schools are constructed when this settlement takes place. This should be done so that the children of

the settlers may have the education they deserve, and which is an asset to the people of our country. I hope the Secretary for Public Instruction will give attention to this, and will move immediately—that it will not be a case similar to others that have occurred during the last year, where practically all the work of that department had to hang up owing to funds not being available.

I am not going to make a lengthy speech. I congratulate the Government on their land settlement scheme, and I hope that the Minister will accept amendments coming from this side of the House and thus improve the Bill. It will be more in the interests of Queensland if he listens to practical suggestions coming from hon. members on this side.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): I wish to say a few words in connection with this all-important matter, because I think that everyone in this Chamber will admit that land settlement is the greatest question that Queensland has to deal with.

Mr. BULLOCK: More important than the railways?

Mr. EDWARDS: Yes. Had greater attention been given to land settlement years ago, the State would be in a very much more prosperous condition than it is at the present time.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. EDWARDS: Time and again it has been advocated that Governments should take more notice of men who have had practical experience.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Are they too small in your district?

Mr. EDWARDS: Without any doubt in my opinion, the Government should call in three practical men who have had experience in a similar capacity in other States. After all, it is hard to make a comparison in land when you are hundreds of miles away. If you take the practical experience and advice of men settled in the Upper and Southern Burnett, I am satisfied that they would state that at least 320 acres are necessary in most of these areas. I want to emphasise the point, because, in days gone by, we had instances, even when the Denham Government were settling many portions of the Downs, where large estates were repurchased and settled—

Mr. CARTER: They did settle them.

Mr. EDWARDS: Yes, the same as the Labour Government of Queensland settled the soldier settlements. That was the worst advertisement that Queensland could possibly get from a land settlement point of view. We all realise that one settler going away from Queensland to other parts of Australia or other parts of the world with a bad impression as to the way he has been dealt with as a land settler will turn away many another prospective settler from our State. The method upon which the soldiers were settled was wrong, and the Government were told time and time again that the areas were too small—as they are now being told. They took no notice of our advice. The Secretary for Public Lands has awakened to the fact that it is impossible for those men to go on under the conditions that those allotments were giving.

Therefore, it has been decided in many instances not only to increase the areas held by the soldier settlers but to give better

Mr. Edwards.]

conditions in the way of decreased rents. With the knowledge that the Government have before them, I say without [5.30 p.m.] any hesitation that they should go very steady and see that they do the right thing in the cutting up of these lands. As I have said, the difficulties that beset a settler when he first goes on the land in Queensland are something tremendous. No one can possibly realise what they are except a man who has been through the mill. All these things should be taken into consideration. I have heard hon. members on the other side comparing the value of land in the Southern States with the value of land in Queensland, and also comparing the growing of crops in the South with a certain rainfall with the growing of crops in Queensland. It is almost impossible to make any kind of comparison whatever in these matters. In the first place some of the finest wheat grown in Australia—I might say in the world—is grown on areas where they get a 15-inch rainfall, but under quite different conditions to those that exist in Queensland. Many of the settlers who came from those wheat areas in Victoria and settled on small areas in Queensland have failed through their want of knowledge of the difficulties we have to contend with. The reason for that is quite apparent to the man who has been through the mill in both States, as I have been. In the first place, in those districts where they grow that fine wheat on a small rainfall the clay is only 6 or 8 inches under the surface. Here in Queensland we have very deep soils, and, if we had a 12 or 15-inch rainfall, we could not do anything on the land. In the Southern Burnett some of the land compares favourably with the rich scrub soils, and all the work in the world will not keep the moisture near the surface if we do not get a decent rainfall. That question should be given very careful consideration by the Minister.

It is, after all, a short-sighted policy for any Government to think that placing settlers on the smallest areas they can make a living on is the best system to adopt in the interests of the State and in the interests of settlement. When you get a closely-settled area and the farms become overstocked, as other members on this side of the House have pointed out, the settler cannot go to a neighbour and get a little bit of grass to carry him over a dry time, because everybody is in the same position, and, therefore, he has to take his stock many miles away. The result is that, when they are cornered two or three times like that, they eventually look for country in the backblocks. That is what is happening in my district. Many a small settler has been driven to take up land 50 or 60 miles away from his home. If he could have secured another 160-acre block alongside him, he would be able to improve that area, improve the breed of his stock, and also to improve his home. I am one of those who believe that one prosperous settler is worth at least ten struggling along. After all, the prosperous settler is the best advertisement we can possibly get. All the advertising in papers and all the putting up of beautiful maps will not do as much good as a prosperous settler does when he writes home to his friends. Therefore, I ask the Minister to consider this matter very carefully.

So far as the Bill itself is concerned, it could have been carried out in one clause.

[*Mr. Edwards.*]

The Minister seems to be all-powerful, and the selector has no say whatever. For instance, the second paragraph of clause 13 reads—

“For the purposes of this Act any person duly authorised by the Minister shall have the right at all times of free and unrestricted access to such water facility and the land on which it is situated, and the selector shall not obstruct the said person.”

The whole of the clauses are somewhat similar to that. What I want to know is, where are the rights of the settler? It seems to me that the Minister and his officers right through the piece have full control in every shape and form. The Minister is actually able to tell the settler what class of crops he must grow and where he must grow them, what improvements he must put on the land, and also he has the power to make roads and bridges at his own discretion and add the price to the cost of the land. Therefore, the unfortunate selector, when he is asked to go on the land, has no idea what the price will be, and all these expenses added to the price of the land will make it impossible for him to continue on his selection. It would be much better if the Government gave the settler a great deal more freedom. The best settlements that we have in Australia have come about through the settler not only knowing what price he was going to pay for his land, but also being able to decide what area he should work. He should receive encouragement in every shape and form to carry out what improvements he desires. The selector should be given the greatest possible freedom, and he should know that he is building a home that some day will be his own. If we take the experience in connection with settlement on the Downs and in the Burnett, as well as in connection with soldier settlements, we realise at once that it is necessary to give the settlers the greatest freedom and give them every assistance that it is possible to give in the way of securing markets and providing water facilities without hindering them in the working of their areas.

In connection with the remarks of hon. members on the other side regarding Victorian settlement, I would point out that in the districts of Victoria where the rainfall is light the settlers did have a struggle in the mallee country and other districts for some years, although the Government did all that was possible in the way of providing water, cheap railway freights, and supplying them with artificial manure, and also providing every facility in the way of education for their children. Anyone who goes into those areas to-day cannot but be struck, first of all, with the poorness of the soil in comparison with the soil in many of the areas in Queensland.

Mr. COLLINS: Do you say the poorness of the soil? There are miles of scrub land there.

Mr. EDWARDS: I say the poorness of the soil. I could take the hon. member there and show him that the scrub land he speaks of is mallee bush. It is in many instances a sandy desert.

Mr. COLLINS: I have seen it.

Mr. EDWARDS: In many instances the selectors have made good on that country although the soil is so poor, simply because the Government have come to their rescue

with water facilities. They have conveyed water for hundreds of miles in some cases from big storage reservoirs up country. They have provided the settlers with cheap railway freights, and in the early stages with artificial manure. You will see prosperous settlers there on soil not half as good as that which we have to offer in Queensland, which proves that there is something radically wrong with settlement facilities in our own State. The Government have had sufficient experience to be able to come forward with a land settlement scheme under which the settler will have his freedom, and under which his home will some day become his own. That is a bugbear at present in connection with land settlement in Queensland. The present tenure of land settlement in Queensland is not in the best interests of the settler. If the Government were prepared to abolish the perpetual lease tenure and offer the selector a freehold tenure, we would have a much better class of settler in Queensland, and there would be a great deal more contentment than there is at present. I know that the Minister does not believe in the perpetual lease tenure. I know that the Secretary for Agriculture does not believe in it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why?

Mr. EDWARDS: Did he not step in at Beerburum and get 640 acres of freehold just before the Government decided on the leasehold tenure? Does not that prove beyond doubt that hon. members opposite who are imposing this system of tenure on the settlers do not believe in it themselves?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I have got a perpetual lease.

Mr. EDWARDS: Yes, I dare say the hon. gentleman is grabbing all he can get. (Laughter.) The hon. gentleman knows that some day the Country party will come into power and give him the opportunity of acquiring a freehold, and that is the reason why he is getting hold of that country.

These are questions in connection with land settlement which I hope the Minister will take to heart. If the Minister is well advised he will let the contract to obtain water on these blocks before the settlers go on the land or when the land is allotted. I hope that the Minister will accept an amendment with regard to the allotting of the areas. First of all, he has to decide as to who the selector shall be—whether an applicant has had sufficient experience to justify his selection.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That system has been in operation in New South Wales for many years, and it is a very fine system.

Mr. EDWARDS: The Minister has to decide.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Somebody has to decide.

Mr. EDWARDS: I am not saying anything against the heads of the department—I have the greatest respect for them—but they are not capable of deciding this matter. It is all very well to question a man as to whether he has had practical experience, but a good old farmer will tell quick and lively whether a man will make a success on the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If that system had been adopted in your case, you would never have got on the land

Mr. EDWARDS: The Government will be compelled to adopt that system, and call in men who have had practical experience.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why do they ask the officers of the Department of Agriculture to help them in their difficulties—in the analysis of soils, for instance?

Mr. EDWARDS: That is what they are there for, and it is a different matter altogether. It is a pity the hon. gentleman did not think of that before the soldiers were settled at Coominya, and get the soil analysed instead of putting the soldiers on the poorest soil he could possibly get. I hope the questions I have raised will be carefully considered by the Minister, because land settlement is the key of the position in the State. Everyone in the State is interested in the success of our land settlement. I hope that the Government will not treat this Bill as a party measure. Let us discuss it in the best interests of the people and of those who are going on these areas when they are cut up. The Minister will be well advised in seeing that the areas are made large enough for successful settlement. If settlers are jammed up in small areas, as they are in many places in Queensland to-day, it will be quite impossible to make a success of the settlement.

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): I am particularly glad to see this Bill brought before the House, because it illustrates the fact that the Government are seized with the importance of settlement on the land in Queensland. They have brought forward this Bill to make better provision for the settlement and development of lands in Upper Burnett and Callide districts. The Bill, although it only deals with one portion of the State, may be very far-reaching, and I hope that the Minister in the administration of the measure will be careful to guard against failure, because, if the scheme is a success, it will give chances for further development. To my mind, the Government have had a tremendous number of chances of developing Queensland; but, unfortunately, they have failed in a great many of their efforts.

There are a number of features in the Bill which commend themselves to me—those in regard to railway construction, road making, and water provision. I am pleased that it is recognised that these three factors should be given paramount consideration, as they will go a long way towards getting settlers in the area. But, on the other hand, some provisions of the Bill are likely to act as deterrents, especially the clause which says that the selector will be practically on probation for six months. If the Government are going to get experienced men, the probation may be of some use or of no use whatever; but, in any case, it will depend a good deal on what chance they have of doing anything on their farms. If the weather conditions are against them, probation for six months is not likely to show what the qualities of the men would be if they had a chance of doing something, because these farms will be undeveloped at the start. Take my own case. I have for many years practised what is very often termed dry farming, and in a good season, after you have got your farm in going order, quite a lot can be done by it; but the difficulty arises in the developmental stages, when the man has not learned the idiosyncrasies of his block. For that reason I

Mr. Nott.]

consider that the six months' probatory period is totally inadequate.

A good deal has been said by hon. members on both sides of the House as to the areas proposed to be given, and hon. members opposite have quoted farmers who were making a living on small areas. I have known £430 to be taken off half an acre of land in growing tomatoes. I have also known 95 tons of cane for plants and twenty-two dray loads for milling to be taken off four-fifths of an acre in the Bundaberg district. But it would be foolish for me to say that it is possible to get those returns at any time. Those are exceptions, and I think it is wrong for members to quote exceptions. Or, if you are growing ginseng for the Chinese market, it is possible to make a living off a very small area, but it would be foolish to quote that as an industry in which we could all embark. Then some hon. member said that it would not be one particular class of farming which would be undertaken, but mixed farming. One hon. member on this side mentioned the number of cows which he thought would be sufficient to occupy the attention of a farmer, and there were interjections that there would be other things, such as cotton-growing. I am hoping great things from cotton, and I would like to give a little illustration of my experience this year. I have just harvested 5 acres out of a little over 30 acres, the rest having been fed to the cows. So far I have taken off a little over £100 worth of cotton. At the same time, maize and sorghum were planted, but failed absolutely. The man on that farm did not intend to plant any more cotton, notwithstanding that result, but I have asked them specially to do so. For some reason or other they do not like the harvesting, although they do not mind pulling corn or doing anything else.

I hope that in the development of this Burnett scheme the Minister or the officers who are likely to be controlling it will travel to other parts of Australia to see how some other settlements are being worked and to inquire into the reasons for some of the failures or troubles experienced at the commencement of similar communal settlements, so that, to the best of our ability, we may provide against failure from the same causes. I hope that amongst other places the Yanco irrigation area will be visited, and very careful inquiries made in regard to its administration and working, because the Minister will find any amount of food for thought in the reasons for the failures and huge losses experienced in the establishment of the cannery and butter factory, for instance, because the difficulties which obtained in the Yanco case will obtain to a very great degree in this Burnett area. Indeed, the part of the scheme which I fear more than any other is its administration. I know the Burnett district fairly well—I have been over a good deal of it—and there is good land there, just as there is land of second and third class quality as well as land which is worth very little, and it will not be because the quality of the land in the Burnett is not there that failure will occur. If there is going to be a failure, it will be because of the administration. The thing which makes me most concerned about its administration by the Department of Public Lands is the management by the Government of what I might term businesses. We have seen what has happened in the various State enterprises they have controlled. It is no use occupying the time of the House

[*Mr. Nott.*]

in mentioning them individually—we know the general result. Then, again, we have seen the report of the Auditor-General and noticed the tremendous deficit on the railways. The other night we heard the hon. member for Bremer explaining the methods of working in the Ipswich Railway Workshops. To my mind, what he described as happening there exactly explains to us that deficit. Then we have the soldier settlements. It is all very well for the Government to say that they are not altogether responsible for the failure of some of them. To my mind, they are absolutely responsible.

We have also an instance in the Coominya soldier settlement. When the hon. member for Cunningham was speaking, someone interjected that the soldiers had to be helped a good deal, and someone made a remark about the soil having to be [7 p.m.] analysed. I agree with the hon. member for Port Curtis that the present Agricultural Chemist is a very able man, who knows his business thoroughly in relation to soil analysis. But I would like to point out that the soldiers were on the settlement at Coominya for years before the Government took the trouble to analyse the soil in that locality, notwithstanding that the present Agricultural Chemist was in the department all the time. When you look at what has happened in the various spheres that I have mentioned, one views with a great deal of trepidation the mess the Government are likely to make of this settlement.

Mr. KIRWAN: They cannot make a bigger mess than was made with Jimbour.

Mr. NOTT: There has been a good deal said about the quality of the land in Queensland. The quality of the land in Queensland is particularly good. In face of that, why have we not had more settlers? Up to the time that this Government took office land settlement was going ahead fairly well, but since they have been administering the affairs of the State there has certainly been a very big decrease in land settlement. I heard one Government member some time ago remark that the reason for the decrease in settlement of recent years was because a lot of the best land had been settled in the old days, and the present Government had not such good land to offer for selection. I think there is any quantity of land in Queensland practically as good as any that was settled in days gone by. If people are anxious to go on the land, they can get a good deal of particularly good freehold land not, as the hon. member for Port Curtis says, 100 miles from a harbour, but within 40 or 50 miles of Brisbane. There is any amount of it to be got, but it is there lying idle with the virgin scrub still standing on it.

Mr. CARTER: Due to private enterprise.

Mr. NOTT: If there was a demand for land for settlement, that land would have been settled. There has been a very great decrease in land settlement since the Government came into power.

Mr. CARTER: You would rather settle in Africa.

Mr. NOTT: In reply to that interjection, let me say that I consider the land in Queensland from top to bottom is as good land and even better land than you can get in most parts of the world. There are other men of the same opinion as myself. I know of some men with a large amount of

capital who have gone to other countries, not because there is a dearth of good land, or that the natural resources of Queensland are in any way inferior to the country where they have gone, but simply because they did not expect to receive either justice or fair treatment from the Labour Government of Queensland. (Government dissent.)

Mr. CARTER: They wanted black labour.

Mr. PEASE: Mr. Mayers, who went to Kenya, was a poor man when your party was in power, but became a rich man under Labour Administration.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. NOTT: I know of a man who took over £40,000 capital out of Queensland, and he and others who have invested in other countries did so because of the interference that they received and expected to receive at the hands of the present regime. Another factor which has had an important bearing on land settlement in this State—and it also has had a detrimental effect in inducing the type of settlers that the Government are desirous of securing for the Burnett lands—dairy farmers with capital ranging from £800 to £3,000—is the policy of fixation of prices by the present Government. At the time of the butter crisis, I saw quite a number of farmers from New South Wales who had come to Queensland, and they asked if it was correct that the Government had commandeered butter and appointed a Commissioner of Prices. They liked our land and climate, but they did not like the conditions existing under the Labour Government.

Mr. CARTER: They still come here.

Mr. NOTT: According to the figures in connection with land settlement, they are not all coming here. When we consider the quality of our natural resources, it is obvious that we are not receiving anything like the number of people we should. We ought to have new settlers coming here in thousands of their own free will. We have got room for hundreds of thousands.

Mr. CARTER: We would need to have black labour here for some of them.

Mr. NOTT: Another factor operating against the successful settlement of our lands is the adoption by the Government of the policy of perpetual leasehold as against the freehold tenure. If the Government were to adopt the policy of the Country party, and allow new settlers a perpetual leasehold with the opportunity of converting it into freehold if they desire at a later date, it would help considerably to solve the question of land settlement. There has been a good deal said on this subject. The hon. member for Aubigny quoted some figures last night illustrating the difference in the price of land of the same quality under the two tenures. I have taken the trouble to work out the figures in this regard for a 150-acre farm in the Nanango district. The rental of such a farm under freehold tenure for a period of twenty years works out at 8d. an acre. After that period there is a further payment. In the first twenty years the selector would pay £105, and during the succeeding ten years a further £105, making a total of £212 for his freehold. If we take the same area under perpetual leasehold at the price that has been put on some of the lands in the same locality, we find that at the end of twenty years the selector would

have paid £190 15s., even if he did not have a reappraisal of his rent, and he would have no opportunity of continuing to hold the farm without a reappraisal with a Labour Government in power—a Government that goes in for socialistic enterprises. The rental for this farm for the subsequent ten-year period under perpetual lease, without any reappraisal, would bring the total rental up to £296 2s. 6d., as against £212 for the same agricultural farm under freehold tenure. The difference to the selector at the end of that period is that, whilst in the first case the farm would become his property at the end of thirty years after the payment of £212, under the perpetual leasehold system, notwithstanding that he would have paid over £90 more in the same period and that he would be subject to reappraisal at certain periods, the land would not be his own. Is it likely, when the present Government have the power of reassessing land, that they are going to refrain from doing so? If we look back a little, we find that they took the opportunity of reassessing and putting up the rents of the pastoralists. Are they likely to stop with the smaller man? They will reassess the land of the small farmer just as ardently as they reassessed the pastoralists' rents when the late Premier, the Hon. T. J. Ryan, stated that he would make the pastoralists squeal. Sooner or later the Government, who are now making promises to the small man, will turn round and make that small man squeal, or they will milk him of any amount of money in order to go in for socialistic State enterprises.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

Mr. NOTT: As the hon. member for Albert has said on more than one occasion, "Can the leopard change his spots?"

Mr. COLLINS: Some of the hon. members on that side change their spots very often when they shift from one party to another.

Mr. NOTT: I hope that a good many of the smaller farmers will not be disappointed. I said at the outset that I was particularly glad that the Labour Government had recognised the fact that, in the interests of the future progress of Queensland and of every section of the community, primary development must be encouraged.

Mr. KIRWAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. NOTT: For that reason, I hope that the Government will be particularly careful, and that when they come to administer this measure, they will do all in their power, and will not spoil the ship for the sake of a coat of paint, and that whoever is going to administer the Act will go down to the Yanco and other irrigation areas, and inquire as to why the factories that were put up lost such a lot of money at the beginning, and why they were not successful. He should ascertain why they were failures, so as to guard himself against similar failures creeping into the Burnett-Callide system.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. NOTT: I am satisfied that if failure occurs at all, it will not be because of the quality of the land, or because of the men taking up the land—

Mr. FOLEY: You should include "or the conditions, either."

Mr. Nott.]

Mr. NOTT: I believe that if there is a failure at all, the reason for it will be the failure of the administration, and nothing else.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): This is a Bill to make better provision for the settlement and development of lands in "the Upper Burnett and Callide," and considering the principles which are contained in it, I submit that we have to remember that this is part and parcel of one of the biggest schemes that Queensland has been engaged in for many years. The justification for the expenditure of a lot of money in railway development and the future schemes for water conservations which are to be indulged in in this and adjoining localities are all dependent upon the resourcefulness of the land which is under review. In entering into a scheme for the development of that land, I say that we should deal with it in a non-party spirit—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: And see that the amending law is made such that the land will be made as attractive as possible so that we shall get the best class of selector. There is an old saying, "Good wine needs no bush." If that saying is a truism, why is it necessary for the Government to go in for a system of boosting and propaganda in connection with this country, which is represented or misrepresented, as the case may be, through the medium of the Labour Press? If this land is all that it is supposed to be it does not need the cheap advertisements which have been circulated in the "Standard," the "Worker," and the "Alert," which, after the exposure which has recently been made that the advertisements in the Press as to the value of this land have been paid for by the Government, are not going to do the settlement any good. It may be a coincidence that these advertisements appeared just prior to an election.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Does that apply to all advertisements?

Mr. VOWLES: It does not apply to all advertisements. If it were necessary to advertise this land, then I should say the advertisement was cheap and nasty. If it is what it is supposed to be, then there should be no occasion to advertise it in the way it was advertised, and more particularly through the mediums through which it was advertised.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Are all the goods of the merchants in Brisbane bad because they are advertised?

Mr. VOWLES: No; they are not advertised in partisan papers just prior to an election. There are other newspapers, such as the Gayndah "Gazette," which is the recognised mouthpiece of public opinion in the district, and circulates in the midst of this area, and the scheme was not advertised in that paper. It was left to the little "Alert" newspaper in Maryborough. I have only on one occasion seen a copy of that paper. There has been a heated discussion and congratulations to the editor for his patriotism in boosting this land, and then we find, in answer to a question in this House, that the editor of the "Alert" for his patriotism received a sum of £40 6s., while the "Worker" received £51 3s., and the "Standard" £37 10s.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What for? That is for the whole of the advertisement.

Mr. CORSER: For advertising this scheme.

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The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Wrong.

Mr. VOWLES: These figures have been taken from the answer to a question which appeared on the business-paper on Tuesday last. It is very regrettable that the Government should have to advertise through such sources in order to boost these lands, because their action gives credence to a good deal of the hostile criticisms which have been levelled at the lands and the merits of the scheme generally. I am one of those who come to this matter with a free mind, but I cannot overlook the fact that the departmental reports from time to time, which were quoted by the leader of the Country party, go to show that this is a district which is not all that it is represented to be. It is like many other unfortunate districts in Queensland, where the soil has all the necessary qualifications, but it is most misleading to the settlers who go there, as it has what is known as an average rainfall, which, unfortunately, is not evenly distributed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What do you suggest we should do?

Mr. VOWLES: If the hon. gentleman was to settle the lands adjacent to existing railway lines, he would be doing better business. We have got to this stage in connection with this scheme that so much public money has been spent that we have to go ahead. We have to carry the scheme on for good or bad. It is the Government's proposal. It is their burden, and all I can hope is that it will be successful, not from their point of view, but from a Queensland point of view on account of the big sums of money that are invested in it. In starting out on ventures such as this, would it not be better for the Government to make the scheme as attractive as possible? What is the proposal here? The Government offer merely two forms of tenure—perpetual leasehold and grazing homestead. We are told that this area—of course, I know that only a portion of it is intended to be opened at present—will be capable of carrying 15,000 selectors—the Premier made that statement. The figures are now reduced to 5,000, and we are told that it is proposed to settle about 1,500 settlers immediately.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, I said there are 1,500 selections ready.

Mr. VOWLES: I would like to know if my statement is wrong that the Premier told us originally that the scheme was capable of absorbing 15,000 selectors, and now it has been reduced to 5,000.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You get some intelligence, and I will reply to you.

Mr. VOWLES: I would ask the hon. gentleman if that is not so. Why has there been a falling off in the anticipated settlement from 15,000 selectors to 5,000 selectors?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The rest of the land is not designed.

Mr. VOWLES: We have to profit by the experience of the past. The hon. member for Brisbane interjected a few moments ago—and this is one of the things which brought me to my feet—something about the experience in connection with the Jimbour settlement. It should not be forgotten that the Jimbour settlement is plain country, and that the land is capable of producing anything. A lot of the land we are dealing with now has to be cleared, and it will cost anything from 25s. to 30s. an acre to clear it.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: More than that.

Mr. VOWLES: We have just as good an average rainfall on the Darling Downs as there is in the Burnett. Probably the soil is better—I believe it is—but I am putting it on even terms. What was the trouble in connection with Jimbour? It was over-capitalisation. I ask if we are not doing that here. Secondly, the Jimbour Commission found that the areas were too restricted—that they were not living areas. Are we not warning the hon. gentleman that he is going to perpetuate that mistake? A third reason in connection with the non-success of the Jimbour settlement was the unsympathetic treatment by the State Advances Corporation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: On Cecil Plains one settler last year, with 640 acres, had 400 acres under wheat.

Mr. VOWLES: I know the settlers there, as it is in my electorate, and they are trying to grow wheat.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This man got £1,000 last year from wheat, and he is on a small area.

Mr. VOWLES: I know all about that selector. He is an experienced farmer, and if you average his returns for the time he has been on Cecil Plains, you will find that he has not been too successful, although he is a man who does not work eight hours a day—he works eighteen hours a day. We warned the Government, when they were dealing with Mount Huton, that they were perpetuating mistakes and giving insufficient areas where they should have been giving living areas. What has been the result there? Half of the land has gone out of occupation. What is the clamour on Cecil Plains about? It is claimed that, if the land is to be put to its best use—it is mixed farming land, agricultural and dairying—the areas are too restricted. I have introduced deputations to the Secretary for Public Lands, who has been invited up to the settlement to discuss the subject with the settlers, and to see if some scheme cannot be evolved whereby the areas can be increased, so that the settlers can make a decent living. What is the good of talking about the quality of soil? Look at the history of the Coominya soldier settlement, referred to a few moments ago. The Government put settlers there on a limited area of land, which, after analysis, was proved to be unsuitable for the purpose for which the settlers were put there. I heard the Minister ask this afternoon why farmers go to the Department of Agriculture when they are in trouble. Do they not go there for the purpose of getting what the department was established to give—that is, scientific assistance? If you are going to put men on country such as we are talking about to-day, it would be better to give them analyses of the soil in the first place, so that they may know the purpose for which it is best suited.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is impossible to do all that with the staff available.

Mr. VOWLES: Then how are they going to get it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Whom would you expect to get it from?

Mr. VOWLES: I would expect to get it from the Department of Agriculture, if I were a prospective settler. I want to know whether the information is at hand. It has not been at hand on other occasions,

and where we are dealing with the investment of trust funds for the improvement of land I say that we should give them a proper start and tell them what the land is capable of producing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We cannot do that; they will have to wait.

Mr. VOWLES: With respect to the areas of the blocks, I was astonished last night to find that in the designing of this land, down to blocks of 160 acres each in some cases, half the land is available and half is not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: More than half is available.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman spoke of 59 acres out of 160.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I said there would be 59 acres of first-class land.

Mr. VOWLES: If that is all the first-class land in a 160-acre block, you are going to keep that man's nose to the grindstone, and you are not going to give him an opportunity. I have warned the Government beforehand on other occasions, and I am issuing a note of warning now. I ask them to be careful and see that they do not do in the future what they have done in the past.

Now I would like to refer to one or two minor matters. I notice that a new principle is imported into this measure in paragraph (c) of subclause (2) of clause 4, which reads—

“The opening prices of the perpetual lease selections and the annual rental during the first period of grazing homesteads shall be so determined as to include any enhancement which in the opinion of the Minister is or will be conferred on such lands by the provision of cleared and formed roads, bridges, culverts, causeways, or crossing and of public water facilities under the powers hereinafter conferred upon the Minister.”

That is all right. That is going back to the old principle which was contained in the Public Estate Improvement Fund; but, whilst you are dealing with that, would it not be proper for the Minister to consider the capitalisation of the cost of putting water on the land in the first instance?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is not intended to do that.

Mr. VOWLES: It should be done, because it is a most vital thing. What is the use of worrying about crossings and bridges and roads if you are not going to give the selector that which is vital to his prosperity—that is, if you are not going to put the water on the individual holding?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is what we are doing.

Mr. VOWLES: The Government are going to lend him the money with fifteen years in which to pay the interest and redemption, except that no redemption is to be paid in the first two years, and they are going to lend him the money to provide the plant on seven years' terms. I say that that expenditure should be capitalised. The improvement is always there in the form of a dam or a windmill, and sufficient money would be paid on the capital basis to allow for depreciation of the plant if another selector takes it over. The Minister has to realise that the settler has to pay his rent and make his living. There are a hundred and one things he has to do with a limited area of land, and

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everybody knows that it is the small irritating payments which a man is compelled to make during the early part of his period on the land before he gets properly on his legs which keep him from advancing. If you can give men the opportunity to advance right from the word "go," you are likely to get better settlers than otherwise.

Previous speakers have referred to the question of tenure, and I would like to emphasise points which they have made. We are all out, not to try to put into effect any particular plank or platform or crankiness—however you like to describe it—but to frame a scheme which will secure the best protection for the public funds which are being invested.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are all actuated by the best motives.

Mr. VOWLES: We are all actuated by one motive. The time has arrived when the Minister should take advantage of another plank of the Country party's platform—he has taken advantage of some of [7.30 p.m.] them in this Bill. He should make it optional with the selector whether he will continue under a perpetual leasehold tenure or acquire the freehold of the land. If that is done, it is possible that you might get a better class of settler than you otherwise would get: and you would then have a man who would be prepared to stand on his own resources, and not look to the Government to be spoonfed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If the capitalising of the machinery over a number of years is not spoonfeeding, I do not know what is.

Mr. VOWLES: There is the capitalising of bridges, crossings, and culverts—they are not permanent.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are more permanent than machinery.

Mr. VOWLES: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They have a definite life.

Mr. VOWLES: If we get the rain that occurs in some seasons, it is quite possible that the life of those bridges, crossings, and culverts will not be very long.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are a Jeremiah, all right.

Mr. VOWLES: I would like to point out to the hon. gentleman that we are departing from very old established principles of selection. Under the previous methods of selection a man applied after a proclamation, and either his application was accepted or he was compelled to ballot for the area. Now it is proposed to put him on some sort of probation. He has to go through a preliminary process, and during that process he is to be subject to the direction of the Minister, more particularly as to the class of work he shall do, and how he shall continue to do that work. I would point out to the Minister that the Bill, in dealing with this new form of selection, says—

"If an allottee fails to occupy his portion within the specified time or to the satisfaction of the Minister to improve the portion allotted to him, or maintain all improvements, he may be called upon by the Minister, at any time prior to the date of the issue to him of a license to occupy, to show cause . . ."

I would like to ask the hon. gentleman at

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this stage if there is any provision in the Bill which tells the man when he shall be entitled to his license to occupy. He goes there on probation, and he has got to prove his bona fides by going into occupation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You know the land laws.

Mr. VOWLES: I know them quite well. He has to do such work as the Minister directs him to do, and in a way in which the Minister directs him. If he fails to occupy or to improve the portion allotted to him, or make the necessary improvements prior to the issue of his license to occupy, he can be called upon to show cause. When does he get his license to occupy?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You know the sections of the principal Act. The principal Act also applies in relation to this matter. This Bill will not be the only law.

Mr. VOWLES: He has got to make certain improvements, which amount to a ring fence or an equivalent improvement.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He has to keep the fence in repair, and he has to reside on the holding, which means that he has to have a house.

Mr. VOWLES: He could have a house without having a ring fence.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: By residence is meant that he shall have a house.

Mr. VOWLES: There is no necessity for the Minister to tell me what the clause means. It says "any equivalent improvement."

Mr. MORGAN: He could live in a tent.

Mr. VOWLES: He could live in a hut.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The conditions are not very onerous, are they?

Mr. VOWLES: They are an innovation, and they open up a new order of things altogether. They open up the important question of group settlement. My experience of group settlement—a good deal of it took place in my electorate some time ago—is that there has been no bigger abuse of the land laws of Queensland than there was under the group settlement system. There were all sorts of frauds perpetrated; men were exploited, bogus members of groups were put up, and rights were sold to every class of people who came along. I hope that that sort of thing will be prevented in the future.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you not think that the officers of the department will be able to control that?

Mr. VOWLES: We are told that the Minister is going to do all these things, but we realise that, no matter how desirous he is of doing the right thing, he will be in Brisbane, and the selections will be a considerable distance away. There is the right of discrimination as regards individuals who are entitled to land. Is the Minister personally going to decide these matters?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There will be an appeal to me.

Mr. VOWLES: How is the hon. gentleman going to decide that appeal? Are men going to line up and show their horny hands, or are they going to be judged on their physical capacity to plough against men who have not that qualification? What are to be their qualifications?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am going to decide in the same way as your profession decides—on the evidence. Your profession gives important decisions on evidence.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman tells us that he is going to decide on evidence that will be taken some distance away.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is the only way that I can decide.

Mr. VOWLES: At the same time he tells us that there are certain men on the land whom nature never intended should be placed on the land. How are you going to decide these factors on evidence if you do not see the individual?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How could you deal with the matter by ballot?

Mr. VOWLES: I am only opening up the argument. What are the principles of determination going to be? I agree with the hon. gentleman that many men go on the land who have no right to be there.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: You see there is a time for probation before the license to occupy is granted.

Mr. VOWLES: Yes. The giving of the land is in the hands of the agents of the department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The officers of the department.

Mr. VOWLES: Has the individual to present himself personally to the Minister or somebody else and say, "I am one applicant; this man is the other applicant; now decide which is the more suitable?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You set up an Aunt Sally and then proceed to knock it over.

Mr. VOWLES: No. I hope the Bill will work out well. It is very noticeable—more particularly on soldier settlements than any where else—that, if some of those individuals on the land there had been placed in some other industry than on the land, they would have been much happier and would have had a much better chance of carrying on.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: The supervisors of the settlements realise that, and they are gradually weeding out those unsuitable selectors. You find discontented individuals who were never intended for that work. As soon as you can get 90 per cent. of the men who are congenial to one another and are there for the purpose of assisting one another in the settlement, then it is going to prosper.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Every soldier made good at Maria Creek.

Mr. VOWLES: I can say that 90 per cent. of the settlers succeeded on Cecil Plains, but they were crippled by the seasons. They have been compelled to stand up to the seasons. I hope that we shall have the same luck with this settlement, so that we can have 90 per cent. of the settlers successful.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Do you blame the Government for the trouble in Japan today?

Mr. VOWLES: Perhaps the hon. gentleman should have been there to explain matters. It is provided in the Bill that a person can borrow money under a bill of sale or stock mortgage on the settlement, and

that those securities need not be registered. The Bills of Sale Act and the Mercantile Act are on our statute-book for one purpose, and that is to protect the mercantile public against frauds.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: The Criminal Code is there too.

Mr. VOWLES: The Criminal Code is there if a man commits a fraud after executing one of these documents. Unless the documents are registered, they do not carry any weight.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you not see that that is a concession?

Mr. VOWLES: If a man is going to deal with another by giving him credit in anticipation of crops he is not in a position to find out what is the financial position of the settler unless there is some form of registration. Prima facie any man who has stock upon a settlement like this is mortgaged to a fund or to the department, whichever it may be. You are going to cripple the settlers' borrowing power and the ordinary commercial power of individuals unless you put the mercantile people in a position to protect themselves against people who are out to defraud them. I offer that as a suggestion to the Minister. I am talking about the man who in the ordinary course of events, if the seasons are good, would become an affluent individual; but the time may come when that man may have no funds. He then goes to the storekeeper, who takes him on trust, but when the harvest comes round he may have £100. The storekeeper under this Bill would be at a disadvantage, because a secret security may have been signed by the settler to the department—a bill of sale or a stock mortgage—which would operate against the storekeeper.

Mr. W. COOPER: Would not the same thing happen to him if the selector gave a mortgage to a bank?

Mr. VOWLES: No, because that mortgage would be registered.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Are you inferring that the men will be dishonest?

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman has sufficient business experience to know that, when he is dealing with business men, they like to have a business security. I know of hundreds of cases where farmers are given credit in respect of fencing wire and other merchandise on the security of their future crops.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: On a lien over the crops?

Mr. VOWLES: No, I do not know that they expect a lien over the crops.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Of course they do.

Mr. VOWLES: They do in some cases, but they do not make a practice of it.

Mr. W. COOPER: The big commercial institutions do it.

Mr. VOWLES: I know that commercial institutions do it. They would take liens over the souls and families of the selectors. I am talking of a business man who takes a client on his face value, and gives him, his wife, and family food in anticipation of being paid for it when the crops are harvested.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What does that mean?

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Mr. VOWLES: If a stock mortgage is not registered, he has no possible chance of finding out its existence by a search.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I see—this trust you are speaking about is given after he is searched?

Mr. VOWLES: No. The cost of registering a stock mortgage is 3s. 6d., and the cost of registering a bill of sale 2s. 6d. The department has its printed forms, and by that expenditure the commercial man is put in the position of knowing whether his client is a man of straw or not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What is the legal cost?

Mr. VOWLES: I understand the Public Curator does the legal work for nothing until the client gets the bill. (Opposition laughter.) The possibility is that the Public Curator will charge a lot more than the legal man. I have seen a bill from the Public Curator which proves that.

Mr. KING: So have I. (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: There are many big principles involved in this Bill. I hope the Minister will look at the Bill, as I have done, from a non-party point of view, and not for the purpose of making capital out of it, but for the purpose of placing the best possible measure on the statute book. The Minister has been gracious enough, and the Premier himself has also been gracious enough, during this session to accept at least three of the principles which were embodied in the platform of the Country party.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: Let him go a little further in this particular measure and give an option to the selectors whether they will have perpetual leasehold or freehold. If he does so, he will be going the right way about creating a contented settlement. The Minister must realise that in this case he is not dealing with Crown lands, but with lands some of which have had to be resumed at a pretty big cost and with big developmental schemes which are a charge upon public funds. It is for the protection of the public at large that whatever scheme we put into operation will be the most attractive for the purpose.

Mr. FOLEY (*Leichhardt*): I did not intend to have anything to say on this particular measure, but owing to much of the adverse criticism levelled at the Government from the Opposition benches, I thought it advisable to bring one or two points before the House which have been kept strictly in the background by most of the hon. members who have taken part in the debate. Before doing so, I would like to say that the congratulations of the landless men of Australia are due to the Government for the manner they have opened up that area of country, and also for the manner in which they have launched out on a developmental policy in regard to the construction of railways so that, when selectors are placed upon the land, every facility will be at their disposal to see that they have access to markets for what they may produce from the land. (Hear, hear!) A great deal has been said by the members of the Opposition in favour of the freehold tenure against the perpetual lease system. While several members were discussing the Bill, they departed from the principles of it, and pointed to the benefits of previous land legislation, and to the deficiencies of the land legislation passed by

the Labour Government. I have made it my business to make a few comparisons of the position as it existed with regard to our land laws prior to 1915 and the position as it exists since Labour came into power.

Take, for instance, land opened for pastoral lease. Before 1915 every block of land opened for pastoral lease, in the event of there being one or more applications, was submitted to auction. There was no limitation or restriction of any kind as to the area that could be held under pastoral lease. Therefore it must be apparent that the wealthy pastoralists of this State had an advantage inasmuch as they could outbid the smaller land seeker. The position since Labour came into power has been changed considerably. The Land Act Amendment Act of 1916, which removed this injustice to the small man, provided for what is known as the preferential pastoral holding. Under this Act pastoral tenants and grazing tenants are disqualified from applying for a holding thrown open for selection, thereby giving the landless man an opportunity of securing land. Priority of selection could be secured by an applicant undertaking personal residence for the first seven years, and in the event of simultaneous applications the matter was decided by lot, and not by auction, as was the case under the old system. The old system has not been repealed, and the Secretary for Public Lands can, if he considers it advisable, throw open land and put it up to auction under the old system. Before 1915 there was no provision in the laws to prevent a pastoral lessee, whose lease was becoming due for resumption, from putting expensive improvements on the land with the object of preventing selection. There are many glaring instances right throughout Queensland of wealthy pastoralists improving their land to such an extent that, when the land was resumed, it was impossible for a new selector, particularly if he was a small man, to apply for it. The Land Act Amendment Act of 1916 altered that position and made provision that pastoral lessees, whose holdings were becoming due for resumption, must not within two years prior to the due date for resumption put improvements on the land unless the permission of the Minister was first obtained. It is apparent that this legislation, to a large extent, has protected the landless men and the small man against the tricks of the wealthy pastoralist.

I am mentioning these few points on account of the adverse criticism that has been levelled by members of the Opposition against land legislation passed by this Government. Before 1915 land could be acquired as agricultural selections—land held subject to the performance of certain conditions and for which the freehold was eventually obtained—or as unconditional selections, for which the freehold was also obtained, the purchasing price being paid in twenty annual instalments without interest.

The danger from this system was apparent in that the land could be taken up by men *hohus bolus* throughout the State of Queensland, and they could leave it without settling on it or improving it. I took advantage of this privilege on one occasion in the North, and obtained a piece of beautiful land on the unconditional system. Had I desired, that land could have been held until to-day and no improvements need have been carried out by me. That was the position before 1915. The hon. member for

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Stanley went so far as to point out the beauty of acquiring land under the agricultural selection system as compared with perpetual leasehold. Since the Labour Government have been in power they have passed legislation giving assistance to those holding agricultural selections, and have abolished such a thing as taking up land under the unconditional selection scheme. The Land Act of 1916 provided that agricultural land could only be acquired as perpetual lease selections. The lease is a lease in perpetuity, divided into periods of fifteen years, and the annual rent for the first period is $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the capital value of the land, and for each succeeding period of fifteen years it is determined by the Land Court on the unimproved value of the land.

A good deal has been said against the reappraisal of land under the perpetual leasehold system. I cannot see anything unfair about it. The land is one of the assets held by the Crown, and, if the Crown has not power periodically to reassess on the unimproved value of the land, the enhanced value as it accrues from time to time or the benefits from it are going into the pockets of the individual who owns the land, and who probably has done nothing towards increasing its value. For instance, a railway or some other big improvement might be put through the land held under freehold tenure. That naturally enhances the value of the land, but the individual has done nothing to help towards that enhancement of value, and he reaps the benefit and the State loses. Under the perpetual leasehold system the State gets the enhanced value that takes place from period to period on a decision of a Land Court judge. Due allowance is made for any improvements placed on the land by the lessee when the Land Court is reassessing, and a reduction is made according to the cost of those improvements. The system is an equitable one, and I think that most of the hon. members opposite who have taken part in this debate and who have referred to perpetual leasehold do not really believe what they are saying. Any of the Lands Department officers will tell you that it is generally realised throughout Queensland that the perpetual leasehold system is a much better one than the old system of freehold.

Before 1915, if a selector met with misfortune during the period when he should be performing the conditions of personal residence on his selection, there was no adequate provision to assist him, and his holding was forfeitable in law if residence was not performed. Selections subject to personal residence conditions could not be transferred during the first five years of the term except in case of the death or insanity of the selector. That was all altered by the Land Act of 1916, which provided that, if a selector became incapacitated by reason of serious illness or misfortune and was prevented from complying with the prescribed conditions of personal residence on his selection, he might apply to the Minister to transfer his selection to some eligible person, and after due inquiry had been made such provision might be granted. There is another concession to the selectors of Queensland which was not given prior to 1915. It was provided before 1915 under the Land Act as it then existed that if an agricultural selector did not within twelve months after the expiration of the twenty

years' term of his lease exercise his option to freehold the land, his right of option was barred, and the selection and all previous payments forfeited to the Crown. The Labour Government removed this inequitable provision, and the Land Act of 1918 provided that at the expiration of his agricultural farm lease the selector is given the option of extending his lease as an agricultural farm for a further period of ten years and of paying the purchase money still owing in ten equal instalments, or of converting his tenure to a perpetual lease, in which event his annual rent is $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the original purchasing price of the farm.

Many men who had previously taken up land under the agricultural farm system that we heard boosted by the hon. member for Stanley have seen fit to convert their holdings into perpetual leaseholds because of the much better conditions under the perpetual leasehold system.

Dealing with auction sales, and taking the position as it existed before 1915, we find that town, suburban, and country lots were submitted to auction, and the purchase money was paid over a period not exceeding ten years. Freehold titles were then issued, and there was no restriction as to the number of lots that each person could hold. Under the Land Act Amendment Act of 1916, town, suburban, and country lots were submitted to auction as perpetual leases only. The rent for the first period of fifteen years is 3 per cent. on the capital value bid at auction. For each succeeding period of fifteen years the rent is determined by the Land Court at 3 per cent. on the capital value of similar land in the same neighbourhood. By the Land Act Amendment Act of 1918 no person was allowed to apply for or hold more than six areas in the same locality as town or suburban leases, and improvement conditions were also imposed. These conditions have had a big effect in preventing land speculation and jobbing in Queensland.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must get back to the Bill.

Mr. FOLEY: I will. I was particularly concerned about dealing with the allegations of the members of the Opposition. Those hon. members had a free "go" while I was sitting in the Chamber, and, although here and there they did apply their remarks to the Bill, they were given a fair amount of liberty in getting right away from the Bill altogether. I thought on that account that I should have the privilege of replying to some of their allegations against Labour legislation during our term of office.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member had that opportunity.

Mr. FOLEY: Quite so, and I appreciate your patience, Mr. Speaker. I consider that the Government need have no fear of the success of these selectors once they are allotted their portions, provided the Land Settlement Committee which has been foreshadowed is judicious in selecting the right type of men. I would strongly urge that once settlers are placed on the Burnett area in connection with this scheme, which is the largest ever launched in Queensland, efforts be made in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture to establish right throughout the area some system of agricultural schools

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where not only the rising generation, but also the adults settled on the [8 p.m.] land, will receive the necessary education in the A B C of agriculture. Many of them will have had no previous experience in agriculture, and I venture to say that 90 per cent. of them will have no technical experience, and provision should be made for them to receive all the technical education that our instructors can give them. If you travel right throughout Queensland, you will find that the bulk of the farmers, although they may be good practical farmers, have not got the technical agricultural education, which is most essential. The hon. member for Barcoo, who is a student in agriculture, in a previous debate in this House pointed out that he had seen men who could be classed as practical farmers using two different manures on their land which gave a negative result. When we get instances such as that, we see the need for some attention on the part of the Government to agricultural education, not only amongst the rising generation but among the adult farmers in the State, and particularly in connection with those who will be settled on this area. The benefits resulting from agricultural education have been most marked in Denmark, which is a much older country agriculturally than Queensland. Right throughout Denmark agricultural schools have been established to provide technical instruction for the farmer, and as a result the farmer on a small area of land in Denmark is in a much better position to make a "do" of it than he otherwise would be.

The provision in the Bill for the providing of water facilities to the new selector is a departure from the practice adopted in the past, and I have every confidence that it will be appreciated by every selector on that area. This system will work much more satisfactorily than if the settlers were compelled to get advances through the State Advances Corporation for the purpose of locating water. The Minister has the power to provide water on each selection, and, if any bore or well is a failure, the cost will be charged to the whole scheme. This will mean that the new selectors will be freed from the cost of sinking bore after bore and then have failure at the end. I have known instances in my own electorate where men have sunk up to six bores on an area of country in an endeavour to locate water and they have had to bear the whole of the cost. Such a condition of affairs will not be possible in connection with the settlement of the Upper Burnett lands.

I have every confidence that the scheme will turn out a huge success and will be a monument to the Labour Government. Much of the criticism of hon. members opposite has not been against the Burnett scheme but against the legislation the Labour Government have passed, and many of those hon. members must be aware that they were not strictly adhering to the truth in some of the allegations made.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I listened very carefully to the speech of the Secretary for Public Lands, and it impressed me very much. It appeared to me to be a very carefully prepared speech. It was an optimistic speech, and certainly it was very informative. The hon. gentleman dealt as far as possible with the principles of the Bill, and he gave many details which will

assist the House, and I can only hope that the result from the scheme will justify his anticipations. I was also pleased to know that the Minister gave credit to members of the Opposition for the information supplied to him in connection with the Upper Burnett country. He told the House that he had perused the speeches of hon. members and that they had been very helpful to him. That was very refreshing coming from the Minister, for it is a long time since a member on the front Government bench or those sitting behind, has given credit to the Opposition for anything at all. We have heard many speeches on this question. Some have been full of spleen, while others have been full of information and have been very instructive. Those which have been full of spleen came chiefly from the Government side. Why that should be I fail to see, in view of the fact that no hon. member who has spoken on this Bill has expressed any views antagonistic to the Bill. They have considered the Bill on its merits, and have offered criticism. Although that criticism may not have coincided with the opinions of the Minister, at the same time it was very helpful, indeed. Frequently the criticism that is levelled at Government measures by members of the Opposition should bring to the mind of the Minister new avenues of thought which would make for an improved Bill. We know from experience that Bills have been introduced into this House, passed through hurriedly, abuse levelled at the Opposition for their criticisms, and then at a later period the same Bills have had to be amended in precisely the direction suggested by the Opposition. The hon. member for Leichhardt points out that it is a departure for the Government to make provision for water on new selections. Whether that is so or not is immaterial at this juncture. We must remember that the Government are elected by the people to make laws for the good government and management of the State and for the well-being of the people as a whole. No one is in a better position than the Government to provide a big water scheme, especially in connection with a scheme such as this.

Water schemes are carried out by local authorities and water boards in the cities, and we are adopting the same idea here on a larger scale. It is to be hoped that when the Minister is dealing with the question of water he will also consider whether it is possible to find a catchment area in the ranges which will hold water to give sufficient power for the generation of electric power and lighting. The water stored in the catchment area could be allowed to flow through the hydraulic machinery and generate the necessary lighting power for the district, after which it could be used for irrigation purposes. This is admitted to be one of the greatest schemes which has been undertaken by any Government in Queensland. The results we are aiming at are chiefly to populate the State. The desire is to settle men on the land and enable them to produce the raw materials for the establishment of secondary industries, and thus provide employment in factories for the people in the cities. That is certainly a work which the Government should undertake. I was disappointed in the Minister's reply to my interjection as to whether preference would be given to returned soldiers. The hon. gentleman said distinctly "No." I

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thought he would have made some provision for the men who have returned from the front. These men were enticed to settle on the land by alluring advertisements and promises. They have spent their deferred pay, their gratuity bond money, and also their savings, and many of them have had to leave the land they took up on account of the poor quality of the soil and the impossible conditions they have had to put up with. I thought that some provision would have been made by the Minister for these men.

Mr. COLLINS: What soldiers do you refer to?

Mr. FRY: I am referring to the soldier settlers who have met with failure on the land, not through their own fault but because, as the Minister admitted, the land, in many instances, was not suitable. When the Beerburum Soldier Settlement was established the hon. member for Murrumba adversely criticised it, and the hon. member for Bowen and other Government members said that it was the best land in the State. These men have been induced to go on the land by alluring advertisements and by speeches made during the elections, and the Government should now turn round and tell them, "We have wronged you. You have put your time and money into these settlements, and you shall be given favourable consideration under this scheme." These men are industrious and hard-working, but the land they have been given is so poor that it requires a fortune to fertilise it. I hope that before the Bill goes through the Minister will give some indication that these men will be provided for. I would point out that, when men are selected for this settlement, the Government should not make money the paramount factor. We know that on the form which will be given to a man to fill in he will have to state his age, the amount of money he has in the bank, and the size of his family. It is quite possible that the man who has £200, £500, or £400 will get preference over the man who has only £20, although the latter may have three or four children. Probably the man with the most money will get the best opportunity. If the Government adopt the policy of choosing a man because of the size of his purse, they will make a big mistake. There are many men with families who have never been able to save sufficient money to accumulate a banking account, but they have reared families which in time to come will be of more value to the State. These men should be given favourable consideration.

The question of freehold and leasehold has been touched upon, and hon. members on this side have been accused of abusing the principle of leasehold. I listened attentively to the hon. member for Cooroora, who spoke favourably of the leasehold tenure, so that it cannot be urged that the Opposition are opposed entirely to the principle. The Secretary for Agriculture himself—the specialist, the deputy leader of the Government, and the man who should lead the way—is a man who bought freehold when he could have had leasehold. Let hon. members opposite cast their eyes on members of their own party before they hurl charges at hon. members on this side. When we get on to the Government benches these settlers will have the right to choose whether they will have freehold or leasehold. The leasehold tenure has not been in operation long enough to be judged. We are broad-minded enough to listen to the arguments of hon. members opposite and give

them their due weight, but we are not going to listen to the abuse of Government members without retaliating in some form or other.

Mr. FOLEY: How do you account for agricultural farm holders converting into perpetual leasehold?

Mr. FRY: I might point to hundreds of men who are now on leasehold who want freehold.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Why?

Mr. FRY: There is no reason why you should not give it to them. You cannot give a reason for the one thing or the other, any more than you can answer the question, "When did you stop beating your wife?" (Laughter.) I listened very carefully to the hon. member for Port Curtis, and I was astonished to hear him make condemnatory and splenetic references to the Opposition—particularly his reference to the Bracewell Settlement.

Mr. CARTER: There was no proposal to build a railway to Bracewell.

Mr. FRY: The Bracewell Settlement, we all know, is one which should be given a railway; but we also know that the hon. member voted against a railway from Mount Larcom to Bracewell.

Mr. CARTER: There was no railway proposal from Mount Larcom to Bracewell.

Mr. FRY: I have come prepared to give the exact position. When the Many Peaks to New Cannindah railway extension was before the House in 1917—and that is one of the railways in connection with this scheme—the hon. member for Burnett moved an amendment, and it is reported, on page 1862 of volume cxxvii. of "Hansard," as follows:—

"Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): Before you leave the chair, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move an amendment to omit all the words after the word 'that,' with a view of inserting the following:—

the consideration of the plan, section, and book of reference of the 27-mile Many Peaks to New Cannindah Railway, at a cost of £470,000, be postponed with the object of full inquiry being made by a non-political tribunal into the question whether the interests of the State and Upper Burnett would not be better served by the construction of the 32-mile Mundubbera through Eidsvold railway, passed in 1914, at a cost of £146,000, and the interests of the State and Port Curtis by the construction of the 10-mile Mount Larcom to Bracewell Scrub line at under £35,000, and other agricultural lines."

Upon perusing the course of that debate I found, on page 1867 of the same volume, that Mr. Carter, hon. member for Port Curtis, said—

"In rising to oppose this amendment, I am not concerned with how this railway may affect any particular spot."

On page 2088, we find the division on the amendment, which will show that the hon. member for Port Curtis is not right in saying that members of this party were against this proposal.

Mr. CARTER: Of course, you were against it.

The HOME SECRETARY: Mr. Corser's amendment was merely a sidetracking amendment.

Mr. CARTER: Go on—who were the men?

Mr. Fry.]

Mr. FRY: You are afraid of the truth. Be a man for once. The hon. member seems to me like a loose string on a violin. These are the men who voted for the amendment of the hon. member for Burnett for the railway from Mount Lacom to Bracewell—

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Murphy
„ Bebbington	„ Petrie
„ Corser	„ Roberts
„ Gunn	„ Somerset
„ Hodge	„ Stevens
„ Macartney	„ Stodart
„ Moore	„ Tolmie
„ Morgan	„ Vowles

Tellers: Mr. Gunn and Mr. Roberts.

Those who voted against the amendment of the hon. member for Burnett were—

Mr. Armfield	Mr. May
„ Carter	„ McLachlan
„ Collins	„ McPhail
„ Cooper	„ O'Sullivan
„ Coyne	„ Payne
„ Foley	„ Pollock
„ Forde	„ Ryan, D.
„ Gilday	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Gillies	„ Ryan, T. J.
„ Gledson	„ Smith
„ Hardacre	„ Stopford
„ Hartley, H. L.	„ Weir
„ Hunter	„ Wellington
„ Kirwan	„ Winstanley
„ Lloyd	

Tellers: Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Weir.

I have given these names because I expected that, when I stated a question of fact in connection with this Bill, the hon. member for Port Curtis would deny it. The whole of his conduct during his term in Parliament has been splenetic towards the members of the Opposition. I hope the facts will speak for themselves. The Opposition support the principles of the Bill, but we differ on many points in it. If we considered ourselves compelled to sit in this Chamber and listen to the speeches of the Minister and his supporters, and then get up and say we are satisfied, we would not be worthy of seats in the House. We are sent here to use our intelligence and help to frame such Bills as will make for the general welfare of the community. The hon. member for Port Curtis may interject as much as he likes. We know that he supported the Many Peaks to New Cannindah railway, but we also know that he had shares in the New Cannindah mine. He had no interest in Bracewell, but he was a shareholder in the Cannindah Copper Mine. He cannot deny it, because I have seen a copy of the share list registered at the Supreme Court, Brisbane.

Mr. CARTER: Where is New Cannindah? I have no interest in New Cannindah whatever.

Mr. FRY: I have here the official report of a Select Committee of the Upper House, before which the hon. member boosted the New Cannindah railway. Why? Let him answer that. I cannot answer it. When a man gets on his feet and starts to throw splenetic references to the Chamber, I must stand up to him. We know very well that the shares of the mine are owned to a very great extent by Government supporters.

Mr. CARTER: There is no mine at New Cannindah.

Mr. FRY: There is a mine in which the hon. member owns shares or in which he did own shares, and of which I have the official report.

[Mr. Fry.]

Mr. CARTER: There is no mine within 10 miles of New Cannindah.

Mr. FRY: There is the Cannindah Copper Mine, in which the hon. member is or was a shareholder. I ask the hon. member why he should say that we were opposed to Bracewell getting a line and then hold himself out as the apostle and advocate of the line? It is not conduct worthy of a man—but I shall withdraw the term before I state it, because if I did state it you, Mr. Speaker, would make me withdraw. (Government laughter.)

Mr. CARTER: You are monkeying with something you do not understand.

Mr. FRY: The hon. member says that I am monkeying with something I do not understand. I am monkeying with a dangerous man when I am monkeying with him. (Loud laughter.) If a man whose principle and pocket come into conflict gives his vote in accordance with his pocket what are we to understand?

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in imputing improper motives to another hon. member.

Mr. FRY: I withdraw any imputation of improper motives. I only ask why the hon. member gave his vote against the line to Bracewell and in favour of the line to New Cannindah?

Mr. CARTER: There was no proposal for a railway from Mount Lacom to Bracewell. I voted against a side-tracking amendment.

Mr. FRY: I present to this House a copy of its own record, and ask the House to peruse it, see the division list, and judge for itself. If the hon. member will deny the division list, he will deny anything.

Mr. CARTER: I am not denying anything at all.

Mr. FRY: If he does not deny the division list, then he must admit that he voted against the amendment moved by the hon. member for Burnett, which, if carried, would have signified Parliament's approval of a railway to Bracewell.

Mr. CARTER: There was no Bracewell line proposed. I voted against the amendment.

Mr. FRY: And it all affected this Bill and the principle. The line under discussion was the line shown on that map. I also heard the hon. member for Port Curtis attacking Mr. Hughes for not advancing money for this scheme. I am not here to advocate the cause of Mr. Hughes or anybody else.

Mr. CARTER: I am sure he does not require your advocacy.

Mr. FRY: With men of the calibre of the hon. member for Port Curtis running about Queensland he can do without it.

Mr. CARTER: The hon. member is only fit to look after sanitary matters.

[8.50 p.m.]

Mr. FRY: If I am only fit to look after sanitary matters, the hon. member is not fit to associate with sanitary men.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CARTER: The hon. member has associated with sanitary men.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member for Kurilpa to withdraw his statement.

Mr. FRY: I withdraw the statement that the hon. member is not fit to associate with sanitary men, and say that he is fit. (Laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is now aggravating his offence. I ask him to withdraw his statement.

Mr. FRY: I withdraw. The hon. member for Port Curtis said that the Commonwealth Government refused to advance this money. It was well known that the money which Mr. Hughes had offered for settlement was money subscribed to a great extent in Great Britain for settling overseas people here. I shall quote Mr. Hughes's remarks at a conference of the New Settlers' League of Australia at the closing of the morning's addresses—

"It was because Mr. Theodore was unable to and declined to give an assurance that the money advanced would be used for immigration and not used for the settlement of his own political friends that I felt compelled to refrain from entering into an agreement with him. It is the business of the State to settle its own citizens upon the land. We supplement them. We have to find the money. They cannot use our money for their purposes, and we only ask for that authority and those assurances which will enable us to give a guarantee to the Commonwealth and the British Government and the investor that these moneys are to be used for a definite purpose, and that the immigrant will get employment and will get a block of land. So that involves an agreement entered into between us and the State Governments guaranteeing those very things."

Mr. HYNES: Do you approve of Mr. Hughes's action?

Mr. FRY: I think that our own people who have been acclimatised and know the conditions should be settled on the land first. I have voiced those sentiments ever since I have been in this House. We should settle those people here who are requiring land—the farmer's son—the man who has been brought up in the State and has a close knowledge of the affairs of the land and farming—and then we can settle those who come from other States or from outside Australia. The statements made by hon. members opposite with regard to Mr. Hughes were quite misleading.

Mr. CARTER: That is not the truth.

Mr. HYNES: Tell us what the Commonwealth Government have done for immigration settlement

Mr. FRY: It hurts hon. members opposite to hear the truth.

Mr. CARTER: It does not.

Mr. FRY: I hope for the success of this scheme. There have been criticisms from hon. members on this side, and they have touched on many points concerning the principles involved, but they are all at one in hoping for the success of this scheme, which is of considerable importance to the State. If the scheme fails, it is going to be a very bad advertisement for the State; if it succeeds, the State is going to prosper. We shall then have the ideal State that we are looking for, not the State which provides money without work, but the State which provides an opportunity to work and produce and earn and make a profit, where the working man and everyone associated with him will have an income equal to his requirements to enable him to have a house and be well fed and well clothed, thus causing the

State to be animated by the desire for happiness and not a desire for wealth. If those conditions come about as the result of this scheme being a success, we shall be getting near to our goal. I hope the scheme will be a success, and I hope the Premier will be successful in his mission to London.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I heard the Secretary for Public Lands state that the soldier settlements had not been criticised enough. This scheme is a sort of a glorified soldier settlement scheme. There is not very much new in it. There are a few harassing restrictions which I think the Minister would be well advised to consider seriously. The perpetual lease system does not appeal to me very much. Since the Government have become the friend of the publican and the sinner, it is just a case of hanging on to office. Any other Government that came along could rectify some of these obnoxious clauses. I think the Minister would do well to accept an amendment in Committee dealing with the perpetual lease system. At present the Land Act is rather defective from a selector's point of view. He could be rack-rented out of his land. The only place that I know of where the perpetual lease system is carried out to any extent is in New South Wales. The Act in that State specifies the scale of increases for the different reappraisements.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: There might be a reduction on any reappraisal in Queensland.

Mr. WARREN: That is not likely to happen. We happen to know the hon. members opposite too well for that. We know that they are a sort of Shylock both in dealings with the land and in their excessive taxation. I do not think Shylock is in it at all with them. He is only a second-hand fool compared to them. (Laughter.) There is no chance of a reduction on reappraisal. The provision for reappraisal would not be there at all only that it enables the Government to get a little more of the plums of settlement. I do not profess to know too much about this land, though I have been through it.

Mr. CARTER: You do not know too much about anything.

Mr. WARREN: I do not wish to talk to the sanitary member for Port Curtis. I think it is a disgrace to hang up that map dealing with this settlement in this Chamber. It does not present a very enticing picture. There is quite as good country on the Northern Downs, and that place is in a better position, being situated hundreds of miles nearer to the Southern markets. If you had a map of the Southern Downs, the Northern Downs, and the Central Downs, you would have instead of that small blue portion on the map in this Chamber, a very much larger portion in blue; in fact, at least 90 per cent. of it would be marked in blue. Land on the Darling Downs and the Northern Downs is practically going begging at the present time, and people are going off it. We know that the drought exists in this beautiful country, but drought is also prevailing in this very country we have under consideration. The drought is just as severe in the Burnett as on the Northern Downs or at Tara. We have lands within 4 or 5 miles of the railway line being over-run with

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prickly-pear, and yet we are going to launch out on a scheme of settlement unprecedented in Australia in magnitude. The schemes of land settlement that have been handled by the Government have all been failures. Any business man will admit that. These schemes have been a happy hunting ground for "bosses" and men who have not been able to make a living out of the land. I am very much afraid that this is one of the objectionable features of the scheme. It has been said during the debate that men can take up land and make a start without money. You cannot go on the land without money. To farm successfully under modern conditions it is absolutely essential to have some liberal scheme of advance. If we have men at the present time going off our settled lands, whether because of drought or from whatever cause, it is far more important to consider measures to keep these men on the land than to initiate a gigantic scheme of this description. I think it was the Premier who said that this scheme is going to create a new province. We want a new province in Queensland, and an extension of settlement. If this scheme is going to bring about that desired end, it should have the blessing of every honest Queenslander. The enormous cost that it is going to be to the taxpayer is an aspect we have to consider. Will the cost be a charge on the selectors? The principal trouble with the man on the land today is over-capitalisation, and it makes any man with practical experience pause when he hears such a statement as has been made during the course of this debate that it will take 15 acres to keep a beast on this country when, on the North Coast, adjacent to Brisbane, there is any amount of land available which will carry a beast to the acre.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Hear, hear!

Mr. WARREN: A glance at the map of the area under consideration discloses the fact that it offers no great scope to the farmer, consequently its chief characteristic must be dairying and grazing. If that is correct, we must also look at the distance that the settlement is from the markets. When we are going to make a new province, situated, as it is, right away from the large centres of population, the carriage of the products hundreds of miles over unoccupied country will be a serious handicap, especially when you have thousands of beautiful acres of land available adjacent to those centres of population.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Where is it?

Mr. WARREN: Everywhere; on the Northern Downs and in all the districts I am speaking of. There are millions of acres practically within reach of the North Coast line.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Tell me where it is.

Mr. WARREN: Beyond Maleny there is good country. The hon. gentleman had that country brought under his notice only a few days ago.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They only wanted to destroy the timber.

Mr. WARREN: The timber in the Burnett will be destroyed, too. The land I am bringing under the hon. gentleman's notice is not land that is required for the destruction of the timber.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What area is in it?

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Mr. WARREN: You could have asked those gentlemen I introduced to you the question.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You know all about it; tell me about it? You said millions of acres.

Mr. WARREN: There is this land, and land in other places such as the Northern Downs.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: About 50 acres.

Mr. WARREN: You know there are more than 50 acres. What is the use of the Minister making misstatements?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Tell me the acreage?

Mr. WARREN: You are not going to lead me on.

Mr. FOLEY: We will disbelieve your statement if you do not tell us.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Well cut it down to 100 acres?

Mr. WARREN: I am trying to convey to the Minister that there are tens of thousands of acres.

Mr. CARTER: You said millions just now.

Mr. WARREN: That land is within reach of our railways, and nearer a port of call than the Burnett lands.

Mr. CARTER: Where is this land?

Mr. WARREN: I do not want to criticise this scheme in a destructive sense. As a settler who has gone through the group settlement scheme—

Mr. CARTER: You are only a share farmer.

Mr. WARREN: I would not share a farm with the hon. member for Port Curtis at any rate. (Laughter.) The Minister has been taking too much notice of the wrong sort of people. If he had obtained the opinion of some of the people who came to this State when the late Hon. J. T. Bell was Secretary for Lands, he would learn some of the defects of group settlement, and he would have been in a better position to handle this huge scheme than he is. The group system of settlement is good up to a certain point, but you can get too much of the group system, as you can get too much of something else.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The settlement under this scheme is not all group settlement.

Mr. WARREN: I am glad to hear that. We do not want to create all farmers on the same pattern. That is one of the causes that helped to destroy the soldier settlement at Beerburum. There we had too much of the one type about the settler. They even had their houses made with the same number of boards in them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What effect would that have?

Mr. WARREN: We want to create an individualism in farmers. If the Minister has ever been on the land, he would know that, if we get a lot of men holding the same ideas settled, there would not be much progress in the district. If you obtain men with different ideas, you will have progress.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The number of boards in a house is not ideas.

Mr. WARREN: I mentioned that fact merely to show that they tried to create

even a sameness in the houses on the settlement. The hon. gentleman knows what a disastrous failure that settlement has been. I candidly admit that one of the principal causes of failure was over-production, which very few people had thought of. At the same time there were other causes contributing to the failure.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The wrong type of settler was a contributing cause.

MR. WARREN: I will not go so far as to say that it was the wrong type of settler, because the hon. gentleman is going to pick a type of settler for the Burnett scheme exactly the same as the soldier type.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No.

MR. WARREN: Yes. The Land Settlement Committee that had charge of the soldier settlements did their very best to sift the applications. There were good men on that committee, but, whatever the reason was, the Beerburum settlement has been a failure. I do not wish to cast any reflection on the people composing that committee, because they did their best without any reward or thanks.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The supervisors went there without the slightest knowledge of their jobs.

MR. WARREN: The Secretary for Public Lands has mentioned another very sore spot in connection with the settlement scheme. This great scheme is going to do the same thing; we are going to have a number of "bosses," and who has ever said that the "bosses" have been a credit to Beerburum? Who is going to say that the Minister in his wisdom is going to pick better "bosses"? That will be a contributing cause to the success or failure of the scheme.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Where will the "bosses" come in?

MR. WARREN: There will be any amount of room for "bosses." I can see it sticking out as plain as possible. If the mistakes of Beerburum, Pikedale, and other soldier settlements are taken as landmarks, and if the Minister, who is a business man and is able to act strongly on occasions, is willing to act up to his knowledge and carry out this settlement accordingly, there is no reason why it should be a failure. The Minister has put a great deal on himself, and he will find that the burden will not be very easy to bear. So far as picking his men is concerned, he will find that in New South Wales the system is totally different. There they have Land Courts that pick the men. I think that a very great error comes in in connection with these boards. It is the bank roll that is to say whether a man is to be a settler or to have preference over others or not. We must admit that under modern conditions it is necessary to have some capital, and so not become a burden altogether on the State, yet it should not be the first and last principle in putting a man on the land. We know that sometimes a man who has health and strength and the mind to apply himself to his occupation, if he gets a chance to go on to good land, will make a success. Often the difference between the successful and unsuccessful man is due to whether he has good or bad land. Very few men under modern conditions can make a living out of bad land. It is the duty of hon. members in this House and of everyone

in Queensland who has a care for the State to do all they can to increase the population on the land in Queensland.

MR. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): I desire to say a few words before this Bill goes through, notwithstanding any sneers that may come from the self-appointed authorities on farming who sit opposite. I got up purposely to correct one or two remarks made by them. They continually take advantage of their position in this House to slander the State of Queensland, to make either deliberate mis-statements about it or statements which show that they have a very poor knowledge of the general progress of Queensland. At the outset I desire to say that the Secretary for Public Lands is to be heartily and sincerely congratulated for having introduced one of the largest developmental schemes that has ever been put before a Parliament in Australia. When I see the attitude of hon. members opposite towards this scheme, I take it as an illustration that the magnitude of the thing is something that their minds cannot comprehend. They, therefore, proceed to damn it with faint praise. All the speeches that have been delivered have been delivered with the object of allowing them to say one day, "I told you so." The hon. member for Kurilpa made reference to the attitude of Mr. Hughes regarding the first proposals that were suggested by the Premier of Queensland in connection with the opening up of this land. We know that, notwithstanding the declaration of the late Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, his Government were out to assist any State in the Commonwealth who were prepared to open up land to oversea settlers, that the influence of the Nationalist members of the Commonwealth and State Parliaments was directed for the specific purpose of blocking the suggested scheme.

MR. CORSER: Because you would not open the land up as freehold.

MR. KIRWAN: We heard the reasons given by the hon. member for Kurilpa. I am now going to take a few reasons given by the "Daily Mail," and nobody can say that the "Daily Mail" is a supporter of the Labour party.

MR. CORSER: They were worse on that matter.

MR. KIRWAN: At any rate, they rose to the occasion so far as the Burnett scheme is concerned, and let the people know the attitude of the Federal Government and, generally speaking, the attitude of their supporters. The extract is dated 18th June, 1921, and reads—

"THE END OF A COSTLY FARCE.

" But while it is nice to know that our fertile virgin lands could carry 'a population sufficient to garrison the whole of the North,' it would be more to the point if some of these plausible flatterers would back their amiable protestations with a little practical aid in the direction of settling immigrants on the much-praised Burnett lands. But apparently Sir Joseph Cook has decided to repudiate that particular scheme which, only a little while ago, was so enthusiastically announced by Mr. Hughes. The Acting Prime Minister's efforts to explain this repudiation are anything but commendable. Having first raised objections to the Queensland

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system of land tenure, and to the limitations of house valuation, he then bluntly remarked that the Federal Government had no funds available for any developmental immigration work in any State, in spite of the fact that when Senator Millen applied for his big immigration loan in London it was specifically stated that the money so obtained was 'to enable considerable extensions of railways and roads for the opening up of fresh lands.' Moreover, the investigation of the Burnett lands by the Federal Superintendent of Immigration was the direct outcome of Mr. Theodore's request for a £2,000,000 loan to develop that district. If no Federal funds were forthcoming for development work in any of the States, that investigation by Mr. Gullet was a costly farce. Apart altogether from the conditional promise that Mr. Fihelly, declares the Minister for Repatriation, made concerning the Burnett railways, it is evident that, for all their blarney about 'Queensland's wonderful heritage,' the Federal Government has turned down its previous plan to increase the Commonwealth's industrial and defensive strength by peopling its rich Northern solitudes with suitable settlers."

Mr. CORSER: Does not that refer to immigration?

Mr. KIRWAN: That is so.

Mr. CORSER: Yet the Premier of this State says the scheme is not for immigrants.

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. member shows that his knowledge about important developmental schemes is very slight. Every hon. member in this House who takes any interest in the settlement of the land in Queensland knows that the first proposal put before the Federal Government by the Government of this State was to take advantage of the money offered by the Federal Government for the development of land by placing over-sea settlers on it. It was only when the present Premier was told by the Federal Government that they would not give him any money or assist him that he went to America and got the money and started the development scheme on his own initiative. When we learn that this scheme is a success we shall hear hon. members opposite getting up on public platforms and saying, "We did it; we were the party that suggested the Burnett land scheme. We advocated it, and compelled the Secretary for Public Lands and the Theodore Government to bring in a Bill. We helped to put the Bill through the House, and are the party responsible for the development of the Burnett lands." I have heard a number of speeches delivered on the second reading of the Bill, every one of which has been condemnatory. The hon. member for Burnett maintained a silence that might have been cut with a knife when the Federal Government turned the first proposal down and put the boot into this Government. Did the hon. gentleman stand up for the

[9 p.m.] expansion of the Burnett scheme?

He said nothing, notwithstanding that a particularly near relative of his is in the Federal Parliament, and helped to put the boot into Queensland at the same time.

Mr. CORSER: You ask what I said to him. (Laughter.)

Mr. KIRWAN: At any rate, the hon. gentleman was not game to come out and

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oppose his candidature at the last Federal election. He certainly is not proud of him. The hon. member for Stanley, when dealing with the position in Queensland, stated that this scheme would not be a success because he was of the opinion that settlers would not be attracted to Queensland because of the attitude of this Government towards settlers and towards the farming community in general. He mentioned that he knew quite a number of people who had passed by the State of Queensland and gone to other States of the Commonwealth. Does the hon. gentleman not know that in Victoria—a State which has never enjoyed the privilege of a Labour Government, a State which has always been governed according to the ideas which hon. gentlemen opposite stand for—agriculture has gone back, while it has progressed in Queensland under a Labour Government?

Mr. COSTELLO: That is not true.

Mr. KIRWAN: With all humility, I suggest to hon. members opposite the necessity of giving immediate and serious attention to their political education, because it is an essential requirement that hon. gentlemen, when they rise in this Chamber, should make statements that cannot be knocked sky high. What are the facts? I am quoting from Knibbs's "Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia," page 240, where there is a table showing the area under cultivation. At the end of the table there is a paragraph which, dealing with the last nine-year period, says—

"The percentage of increase was particularly high in Western Australia—viz., 63 per cent. Queensland comes next with 48 per cent., and the average position of the remaining States was as follows:—Victoria 23 per cent., New South Wales 23 per cent., Tasmania 10 per cent., and South Australia 9 per cent."

What have hon. members to say to that? Mr. MORGAN: You do not know what you are talking about. (Interruption.)

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. KIRWAN: Hon. members opposite may squeal as much as they like. They are continually asserting in this Chamber, it is one of their common statements on the public platform when they appeal to the electors, that under a Labour Government in Queensland agriculture is decreasing and settlement is not progressing. I have quoted "Knibbs," in refutation of that lying slander on Queensland.

Mr. CORSER: Read the report of the Lands Department.

Mr. MORGAN: If their land is already all under cultivation, how can they increase it?

Mr. KIRWAN: Why did the hon. member leave Victoria and come to Queensland?

Mr. COSTELLO: There was no Labour Government in Queensland then.

Mr. KIRWAN: Why is it that in Victoria, under a Liberal or Nationalist Government, or whatever name you choose to call them, they lost population to such an extent that they lost a seat in the redistribution in connection with the Federal Parliament quite recently? Is that the position in Queensland under a Labour Government? Yet hon. members get up and slander their own State.

Mr. CARTER: The "Stinking Fish Party." (Interruption.)

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. KIRWAN: We have heard something about the old proverb which says, "It is a dirty bird that fouls its own nest." What is the progress in Queensland in regard to agriculture generally? In 1917 the amount of butter produced in Queensland was 33,000,000 lb., while in 1921 the amount produced was 60,000,000 lb. The amount of cheese produced in 1917, was 11,000,000 lb., and in 1921 the amount produced was 15,000,000 lb. If the statements of hon. members opposite that settlement is not increasing, that farming is not prosperous, are correct, how do they account for those figures?

Mr. MORGAN: How do you account for the Secretary for Agriculture stopping relief to the farmers?

Mr. KIRWAN: I want to quote from the Victorian "Year Book" to show the condition of affairs in that beautiful State.

The SPEAKER: Order! I trust the hon. member will connect his remarks with the Bill.

Mr. KIRWAN: I am connecting my remarks to this extent: Hon. members opposite stood up and doubted the success of this scheme because of the methods of administration of the Labour Government. I am showing that in Victoria—where Liberal ideas prevail, and which has a Government that hon. members opposite would support if they were there—the position is much worse than it is in Queensland. I find that the value of produce per head in Victoria, dairying and pastoral, in 1917-1918 was £16 14s. 8d., and in 1921-1922 it was only £13 5s. 10d. Yet we find, if we take the statistics for Queensland, that there has been an increase.

I trust that the scheme will be a success, and I cannot understand any Queenslander, irrespective of what particular party he may belong to, not sincerely desiring that the scheme may be a success.

Mr. CORSER: Everyone hopes it will be a success.

Mr. KIRWAN: The speeches of hon. members opposite will stand in "Hansard" against them for all time. At any rate, I have sufficient faith in my own State, and I have sufficient faith in the Government of which I am a supporter, to believe that they have introduced the largest scheme of settlement ever introduced in Queensland; that it will be a huge success, and that it will confound the critics who are to a certain extent sneering at the Government to-day, as its magnitude has never hitherto been approached in Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I cannot allow the statements of the hon. member for Brisbane to go unchallenged.

Mr. KIRWAN: I challenge you to prove them to be wrong.

Mr. TAYLOR: I have the Commonwealth "Statistics" for 1922, No. 15. The hon. member stated a few moments ago that agriculture was decreasing in Victoria. This is what the Commonwealth Statistician says—

"The increase in the area under crop during the past nine years has been most marked in the case of Victoria, New South Wales, and Western Australia."

(Opposition laughter.)

Mr. KIRWAN: What page is that? (Renewed laughter.)

Mr. TAYLOR: I think that is on the same page that you quoted from. (Further laughter.)

Mr. MORGAN: That flattens you.

Mr. KIRWAN: I challenge him to prove that I was wrong. I quoted the percentage increases. (Laughter.)

Mr. TAYLOR: We have been discussing a very important measure during the last two days. It has been stated by the Minister in charge of the Bill and by various speakers that probably nowhere in Australia has there been a land settlement scheme of such magnitude placed before any Parliament. Having that knowledge, and also having the knowledge that we have of the difficulties which have been attending our agriculturists in Queensland for quite a number of years, this Bill requires the greatest possible discussion, so that we may endeavour to avoid making any mistakes or getting into any pitfalls which may mean the loss of considerable sums of money. The Minister and the Government are the custodians of the people's money.

The Ministry are the custodians of the public funds of the State, and in spending those funds it is absolutely necessary for them to take every possible precaution to see that a fair return is received for all the money expended. We are all out on both sides of the House to do the best we can for Queensland, notwithstanding what the hon. member for Brisbane said about slandering our State. We repudiate that charge absolutely. We are not men who are out to slander the State of Queensland. We would be false to our trust as members of Parliament and false as Australians if we did anything of the kind. Because we choose to criticise the Bill before us, I do not think it is fair to accuse us of being slanderers of the State. Immense sums of money are involved in this particular scheme. As the Minister said when introducing the measure, there are quite a number of novel ideas imported into the scheme, and we have to consider how far it is possible for the men who are going to take up the land in this district to be successful. The Minister stated by way of interjection that the method adopted in settling soldiers on the land was indiscriminate, and that there was no definite method carried out by the Land Settlement Committee. I replied to that, and said that the statement was incorrect. We had a system of selecting men for the various soldier settlements in Queensland. We had an examination as to their qualification, and as to whether they were suitable settlers to place on the various areas; we had a system of marks which we gave to every man who came before the committee. As a member of the Land Settlement Committee I am prepared to shoulder my full share of responsibility in connection with the failure of the soldier settlements. We had a system much the same as the Minister outlined yesterday afternoon with regard to the selection of settlers under this scheme, and the books with the names of all the men who passed before that committee should be in the hon. gentleman's department. If he looks into the books, he will find the names and addresses, what capital they possessed, and whether they were married men with any experience, and the same with regard to single men. They were awarded points on the evidence given before the Land Selection Committee before they were placed on the

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land. Quite a number of the men who came before the committee were rejected because the committee did not think they were suitable. We have not been peculiar in Queensland with regard to the failure of soldier settlements—it has been the same in other States of the Commonwealth—but, at the same time, every possible care was exercised to see that suitable men were placed on those areas.

A fair amount of discussion has arisen as to whether leasehold or freehold is preferable. Personally, I have always held the opinion that an option should be given. If a man knows when he goes on to a selection or takes up land that there is a possibility that in the near future, if he chooses to work hard, it will become his own, I believe he will put more money and greater energy into it and have a better chance of success. However, it is no use discussing that matter, because the Government have clearly said that they will only recognise the leasehold tenure, therefore the settlers will have to agree to that policy and accept the terms of the Bill.

Reference has been made with regard to water facilities which are to be provided. We all realise the necessity for water facility. We find that the water facilities, other than the water facilities which the Bill provides for, are only to be provided on the application of the settler. If the settler does not choose to make application to the Minister for a water facility to be placed upon his holding, it is not going to be placed there. I understand that under clause 13 of the Bill, if a settler has not secured a water facility under the prescribed conditions and his neighbour has a water facility, the Minister has the right to allow him, although he has not expended anything in providing water, to have unrestricted and free access to the water facility of his neighbour. He can go on the selection of the man who has paid for the cost of the installation of water on his selection and have free and unrestricted access to the water there.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is necessary to see that water facility is given. The Irrigation Department will do that.

MR. TAYLOR: If, for instance, I have a selection and provide water and comply with the conditions of the Act while my neighbour does not bother about a water facility at all, he has the right to come on to my selection and get all the water he likes.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Oh, no!

MR. TAYLOR: That is my reading of the clause, though I may be wrong.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In the case of a community or trust board there may be only one water facility, and the water will be carried to other selections from that facility. In relation to the individual, that man owns and has to pay for his own facility.

MR. ROBERTS: He pays part of the cost.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is his private property.

MR. TAYLOR: So far as the scheme is concerned, we are all anxious to see land settlement in Queensland increase, and that the men who are settled on the land should make a success of it and that the land should

not settle them. There are a number of restrictions in the Bill placed on the settler which will have a tendency to cramp his operations, and he will not have that free scope which is necessary to work out his own salvation and destiny.

MR. W. COOPER: Just like previous Governments gave him the opportunities to work out his own salvation, and they were failures.

MR. TAYLOR: I am not prepared to accept what the hon. member has said, and in his own district there is a contradiction of it. The men who went and settled in that district have worked out their own salvation. You will not find a better class of settler than there are there.

MR. W. COOPER: It is no thanks to your Government.

MR. TAYLOR: I think that the fewer the restrictions which are placed on the settlers the better it will be for the success of the scheme. The Minister spoke about the mortgages which will be secured by the Government in connection with water facilities and improvements of that kind, and reference was made to the fact that the mortgages would not be registered. I certainly think that all mortgages should be registered. The hon. member for Dalby was perfectly correct when he said that there were hundreds of storekeepers in Queensland who, on the face value of the land, have given settlers unsecured credit amounting in the aggregate to hundreds of thousands of pounds, and they have been largely responsible for those men making a success of their agricultural operations. It is right that they should have some kind of protection. They have not asked for it, but, when it becomes known that the Government have the sole mortgage over everything on a man's farm, and there is no registration by which they can ascertain whether there is a mortgage or not, the probabilities are that the farmers will not get that credit which they deserve and would otherwise receive.

There is another matter with regard to agriculture generally upon which I wish to touch. A few days ago I asked a question as to the amount of agricultural produce, specifying chaff, hay, and potatoes, which had been imported into Queensland via Wallangarra for the three six-monthly periods ended 30th June, 1922, 31st December, 1922, and 30th June, 1923. The Secretary for Railways yesterday gave me the figures, which showed that for the twelve months of 1922 the importations were about 23,000 tons, and that for the six months ended 30th June, 1923, they were 24,000 tons. That shows clearly and definitely that during the last eighteen months there has been a terrific shortage of produce in Queensland, or we would not have had to import that immense quantity of fodder. And in those figures we do not get what came by boat from Tasmania, South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales, which would probably amount to nearly the same bulk. Now, the success of this settlement scheme and of the men who settle there will largely depend upon the increase of agriculture in Queensland. We have heard lately a good deal about fodder conservation. I believe in fodder conservation, but, as I stated on the Address in Reply, I think that before we can start any scheme of fodder conservation we must increase our cultivated area to provide the necessary

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material. To-day we are not growing sufficient for our requirements by thousands of tons, and we have to remember that these Burnett settlers may strike a dry period. The Department of Agriculture tell us that they have distributed some thousands of tons of fodder to assist the farmers who are in dire straits in the feeding of their stock. We may have to do that again, and therefore we want to be exceptionally careful in this scheme to remove all disabilities which would hamper the operations of the settlers. A number of amendments have been prepared and will be circulated, and the Minister and other hon. members will have an opportunity of seeing whether they are worthy of incorporation in the Bill and will tend to improve it. We think that quite a number of them will tend to improve the measure and make it the success which we all hope it will be.

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

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

PALMERSTON LAND SETTLEMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): This Bill is on similar lines to the measure we have been discussing. It makes provision for the settlement of scrub country in that portion of the Atherton Tableland from the Beatrice River towards the South Johnstone River and Innisfail. This proposal is receiving very hostile receptions in some quarters. The Brisbane Press, of course, adopt their usual attitude of disparaging everything in North Queensland—nothing that emanates from or has its being in the northern part of the State is any good to Brisbane. We have had criticism from persons who had not the slightest knowledge of the land or of its possibilities when they wrote it. It is true that the land is probably not as well explored as it might have been, but it is very difficult in dense jungle in North Queensland for even the surveyors to get a thorough knowledge of the features of the land they are surveying. To understand that one has only to go over the surface of the sugar fields to-day and notice how the roads have been located so that a crow could hardly follow them. It is the general experience in very dense jungle. The charge was made by the Opposition on the introductory stages that we had not sufficient knowledge of the land we proposed to settle. I remember quite well at one time introducing a deputation to Mr. Denham, the then Premier, for the purpose of securing money to establish a sugar-mill at Babinda. We took the Premier to Babinda, and he asked us to show him the land. Babinda in those days was dense jungle. The whole of the area was practically uninhabited, and it was most difficult for anyone—even the experts in the Sugar Bureau—to give any idea of the extent of the sugar land. The Government of the day, of which the hon. member for Weyburn was Treasurer, refused to proceed with the erection of a mill. They said that there was not sufficient land, that it was not good enough for sugar cultivation, and that the settlers would not be able to make a living. No doubt it was difficult to get a definite knowledge of the area.

Mr. Easterby was sent up there, and, after spending some weeks in the district, he finally gave a favourable report. I lived in that district myself, and I know many people who lived there for years and had little idea that the area would be developed as it has developed. To-day who would say that Babinda has been a failure? Why, it is one of the most prolific districts in the Commonwealth. There has been land opened up amongst those ranges which is the most fertile land in the world. When you travel round by the tramway system that covers the whole area you see more intensive cultivation than in any part of the Southern States. That has all happened since 1912. We know that 150,000 to 160,000 tons of cane are produced annually in that area. There is a first-class township, splendid homes in the district, good wages paid, and immense wealth accruing, yet at the time that the proposal was before the Government of the day they hesitated because the jungle lands had not been properly explored. The same position exists to-day in regard to the Palmerston area, and existed in regard to the Atherton Tableland. I was in Atherton before there was any suggestion of a railway being constructed to that centre. There was no settlement there. You could get through the jungle by pack team. There

were some Chinamen growing [9.30 p.m.] corn on some of the land. The railway was constructed, and settlement took place. Unfortunately a lot of the settlement took place years ahead of the railway. What has been the result? The Government of those days hesitated before going on with railway construction because of the nature of the country. Who would say to-day that that railway construction has not been justified? Why to-day the Atherton Tableland ranks with the Gympie district as one of the best dairying districts in Australia. There is good soil, good rainfall, good conditions of life, and everything that makes human habitation successful existing on the Tableland; yet men went into that country years ago and were left there with 160 acres or 320 acres miles from any railway. They had valuable timber on their holdings, but they had no means of getting it to market, and they had no means of getting any of their produce to market after they had grown it. I use those arguments because it will be asserted again in this Parliament, and has already been asserted, that because this land has not been properly explored and investigated this settlement scheme is bound to be a failure. I have been over this land myself, so has the Premier, and so, I think, has the Secretary for Agriculture. On the eastern side of the Beatrice River there is some of the finest land in North Queensland in this particular area. The area comprised in what is known as the Palmerston area is on the eastern slope of the Atherton Tableland, and it is a continuity of the land to-day being settled and which has been settled on the Tableland. As a matter of fact, the existing farms go right up to the Beatrice River on the northern side. No land has been thrown open on the southern side because there are no means of taking cream to the factory. The range coming down on the eastern side of the Beatrice River towards the coast is rather steep just about the Beatrice River, and the land to be settled is the tableland next to that river, which has an access to

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the outside world through Innisfail. It is proposed to construct a tramway from Nerada to what is known as the Goldfield. I admit that that is a fairly heavy job, but there are no other means of opening up that land, and for the Opposition and the Brisbane newspapers to deride a scheme like this simply because we have not the whole place cut into sections is ridiculous. In my opinion, although the land is limited in area, it is far and away better land than any other land that we propose to settle. The rainfall there is from 90 inches to 120 inches per annum. The adjacent land has been proved to be some of the best dairying land in the State. The market for butter is good. It is one of the products that we are going to produce and sell. My opinion of land settlement is that, if the basis of production is luxuries, then the success of the settlement is doubtful. One of the troubles in connection with soldier settlement is over-production of fruit. Fruit is not a stable industry.

Mr. WARREN: Is fruit a luxury?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Fruit is a luxury.

Mr. MORGAN: And a necessity.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A necessity and a luxury. All great industries are not established for the production of luxuries. Any business man knows that a great organisation is built up by producing articles that everybody in the community must have—necessities. So far as it will lie in my power, both under this scheme and in the Burnett and Dawson irrigation schemes, we are going to try and get the people to produce things for which a market always exists. In this district the main industry will be dairying, and the settlement will meet with success. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. MORGAN: Will the land grow sugar-cane?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, it will not grow cane. Another argument against the proposal is that it is a cyclone area. I think it was the hon. member for Aubigny who mentioned that he came across a statement made by Mr. Callaghan, of the Lands Department, that this area is a cyclone devastated area. That is quite true. The cyclone of 1918 ravaged the whole of the Cairns, Innisfail, and Cardwell districts.

Mr. POLLOCK: It is an earthquake area, too.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If that is an argument against this scheme, then the Cairns, Port Douglas, Mossman, and Innisfail districts—in fact, all that rich area of the State from Mackay north to Cooktown—is also in the cyclone devastated area. That is no argument against settlement at all. While occasionally these cyclones do immense damage to crops, the damage done in the dairying industry is not so great. The damage done on the Atherton Tableland by cyclones has not been nearly so great as in the sugar districts.

Mr. WARREN: It is not so bad as a drought.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A drought is equal to a bad cyclone every year. (Hear, hear!) I was in the Babinda and Innisfail districts when the cyclone

occurred in 1918. People who have not been in a cyclone have no idea of what happens. Even in that year Babinda crushed 80,000 tons of cane, and the next year being a good year the canegrowers and selectors were on their feet again.

Mr. WALKER: It only knocked the State "dub" down.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, the State hotel was one of the few buildings which was not blown over. As a matter of fact, it is a tribute to the Works Department that in the Innisfail and Babinda districts the only buildings that withstood the cyclone were the buildings designed and built by the late Under Secretary for Works, Mr. A. B. Brady.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: And under day labour.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I think I have said sufficient in connection with this area to disabuse the minds of hon. members that, because we have not the area properly designed, we should not proceed with its settlement. Only a few days ago I received a report from the surveyor sent to the head of the Tully River to explore a new tableland adjoining the Atherton Tableland above the Tully River Falls. Prospectors told us of the beautiful land that existed there. It was inaccessible, and no one knew anything about it. We find to-day that it is some of the finest country in North Queensland, and the report of the surveyor says it is better country than the Atherton Tableland. It is not red volcanic soil, such as exists on the Tableland, and the soil is not so deep, but we have it that there exists there some of the finest land in the Commonwealth.

Mr. WARREN: Quite a find.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, quite a find.

Mr. MORGAN: How do you know that it is all good land?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This surveyor has been over it during the last two months. He has done his best to explore it. There may be a lot more land running into the gorges. Any hon. member who has been in that district knows that there are mountain ranges rising to a height of 5,000 feet. On the Tableland these gorges in places have opened out into a great big area, though at first sight, owing to the thickness of the scrub, it apparently was the side of the mountain. That has happened at Babinda. In one gorge at Babinda, where the hon. member for Stanley's partner, Mr. Meyers, had a farm, there is one man who has 375 acres of land, 374 of which are under sugar-cane growing from 50 to 60 tons per acre. To-day the owner, Mr. Larsen, is asking £45,000 for his farm. That is in the country with which we are dealing. This country, of course, is not sugar country, and I am not urging that its value is equal to that of the land I have just quoted. That is sugar country with a mill and market available and with a protected industry. Hon. members opposite have said that the land at Nerada is not being used for sugar-cane. To discuss these matters you must have a knowledge of local conditions and know the circumstances governing the case. In the sugar area it is no use having even the very best of land

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unless you are in the mill area, and even within the mill area at Babinda to-day people cannot get permits to grow cane, because the mill will only crush a certain amount of cane. The capacity of the mill is limited. Consequently, in the sugar areas we have first-class land that cannot be used because the capacity of the mill will not allow it to deal with further cane.

Mr. MORGAN: Is there any fear of over-production?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am not dealing with that now. Each year we should require an additional 10,000 tons of sugar. At El Arish, in the Innisfail district, a soldier settlement was established. It was all first-class land, as the hon. member for the district can tell you. To-day we have been able to say to those settlers, "We have finished with you; you are on your feet; you do not want the supervisors any longer, and there is no need for the Government to interfere any further." That is because they were given fairly good land and a market for their produce. That is one reason why we should endeavour to settle these first-class areas where there is a good rainfall. I agree with much that has been said with regard to rainfall, and I recognise that the success of the Burnett scheme depends on three things—the right area, the rainfall, and the markets.

Mr. MORGAN: I think you should add the right type of man.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Those are the three outstanding features. The quality of the settler is another important question. In the Palmerston area we have none of the dangers attaching to southern areas. There is a good rainfall, good soil, and adjacent lands are successfully settled by dairymen who are carrying on and have markets for their products.

Mr. MORGAN: Have they got markets?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes; as a matter of fact, we have an increasing market for our butter in North Queensland. As the North expands it is not necessary for us to go outside of our own districts to sell our butter. There is a remarkable market, and I do not think that any butter is exported out of North Queensland—that is, below Mackay. There is a big population in the coastal areas of North Queensland and around Chillagoe and the mining districts who consume great quantities of Atherton butter.

Mr. MORGAN: But we want the butter to export.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I hope we shall have it later. It is a very good thing to have a good local market. All the great manufacturing countries of the world have built up their industries on their local consumption. We want plenty of people in the country to enable us to undersell other countries. That is the secret of Germany's success—high protection, a good home market, and dump your surplus goods in the other man's country.

Mr. MORGAN: That does not apply to agricultural produce.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It does not apply to agricultural produce. But, as a matter of fact, our meat industry is based on local consumption.

Mr. MORGAN: No; our meat industry is based on the price in the home market.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It depends on the local consumption. The hon. member knows perfectly well that Australia is not a big meat-producing country. This fetish that we are a big meat-producing country is not correct. Eighty per cent. of our product is sold in our own market.

Mr. MORGAN: And local prices are regulated by the 20 per cent. that goes away.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have not noticed any regulation.

Mr. MORGAN: It is a fact, though.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Our meat has been sold in London for 2d. a lb., and you could not get it in Australia for less than 4d. a lb. The hon. gentleman has led me a little away from the Bill. I do not want particularly to deal with the Bill in detail to-night, because I gave a fair outline of it during the opening stages. The Bill really is based on the same principles as the Upper Burnett and Callide Land Settlement Bill. One departure is the appointment of a supervisor. Perhaps it may be asked why we should have a supervisor in this case, and not in connection with the Upper Burnett scheme. The reason is that it is necessary to have somebody to supervise the settlement. It will be 1,000 miles north of the controlling department, and we must have some officer there clothed with powers to act on behalf of the department. That is the idea of a supervisor. The supervisor will be the land agent in that district. He will also be the officer who will work between the Department of Public Lands, the Minister, and the settler on the land. As I explain my case hon. members will see that it is necessary to have somebody there, because we propose a new method of dealing with finance for the area. In the Burnett scheme the Department of Public Lands will deal only with water facilities. Under this Bill we propose to advance to the settler, through the Department of Public Lands, up to £1,000. We hope to get away from the delays connected with the State Advances Corporation. In connection with that matter, much as was made of it in the debate to-night, it would be unwise to build up two organisations. We have a State Advances Corporation. If there is anything wrong with that system, let us mend it; let us make it efficient, not create another organisation and have duplication. There is nothing wrong with the system of advances to settlers under a Government scheme; and, if the delays and difficulties are harassing the settler—and they are—then we should mend the system. But in this area we are proposing to give a trial to a system of the Department of Public Lands dealing with finance. We are making the settler do certain things, and our supervisor will really be the bank officer in the area, who will advise us as to the selector, his needs, and the safety in advancing money. We are compelling the clearing of 50 acres of land. It is recognised that in that area 50 acres of land will keep a sufficient number of dairy stock to enable a man to make a decent living. I think they are running a cow to 2 acres. In lots of places, of course, they could run a cow to the acre.

Mr. MORGAN: Is that after they plant artificial grasses?

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The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: After they plant artificial grasses. We are making the selector clear 50 acres and plant it with grass. That is one of the conditions of selection. That is advantageous because it secures to the selector enough grass to run sufficient stock to earn a livelihood. We propose, too, to reserve the timber to the State. The getting of timber out of this area is a fairly tough contract. The most prolific timber is walnut. There are maple, silky oak, bean-tree, and the soft wood timbers which grow on the Atherton Tableland, but there is not the same quantity of maple on this area that there is on the western side of the Tableland range. Walnut is a very useful timber, but the public will not buy it at present. While we have maple the public will not buy some of the other timbers. I propose to send a first-class exhibit of some of our less known timbers to the British Empire Exhibition. (Hear, hear!) I have got £500 from the Treasury to prepare a first-class exhibit for London, where we are going to endeavour to get orders for the timber. Mr. Russell, who is now on the Tramway Trust, informed me that towards the end of the war he was in London, and got orders for quite a lot of timber. He said that all our cabinet woods would sell well in London, but the difficulty was that he took orders for a lot of timber but could not get bottoms to carry the timber to England after the armistice, and no business resulted. He says that we should have somebody at the Empire Exhibition with samples of our timbers—especially the lesser known timbers—to secure orders and get a trade for our timbers overseas, instead of destroying them by fire, as is done to-day. There are millions of feet of walnut in this area. There is a lot of silky oak, which is a timber little known outside of Queensland. Southern people will not have anything but maple to-day. Silky oak is a first-class timber for cabinet purposes, but, while maple is available, everybody wants it. We should try to find a market for these products, because unlimited wealth is being burnt to-day by selectors because there is no market for that timber. We propose to allow a certain amount of what is to-day called stumpage—hon. members on both sides call it royalty, but it is a profit made on the timber—

Mr. MORGAN: It is a tax.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is not a tax; it is a rightful profit from the timber, which is being used to replant trees in Queensland. We are providing that a certain proportion of that money shall go into a fund to help the selector. I do not admit that the selectors have any right to the timber, but I believe that it will encourage them to take more interest in and care of the valuable timber on their holdings if we give them some portion of the royalty in the form of grants to help them to purchase stock or for improvements. A portion of the royalty will be set aside, and grants will be given to individual selectors to help them, outside the money lent under the £1,000 clause.

Mr. TAYLOR: Over and above the £1,000?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes. It is intended to encourage them to take an interest in the timber. They will not take an interest in it to-day; all they

are concerned about is burning it off and getting the country under grass.

Mr. MORGAN: If there is no market for it and it does not pay, that is the only thing they can do.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is the only thing they can do. Most of the clauses of the Bill are the same as those in the Upper Burnett and Callide Land Settlement Bill. Hon. members will not desire me to go over the method of settlement. I can assure the House that this is a first-class piece of land.

Mr. MORGAN: What is the total area of it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: About 180,000 acres. There is another small block shown on the map which is also very good land, but it is not explored properly, and it is not included. We have officers designing this land and cutting it up into selections, but it will be some considerable time before selection takes place. It is not like the Burnett land; it will take twelve months before we can do any real settlement work in this area. It is an area which ought not to be neglected—it ought to be settled. We want people in North Queensland even more than in the Burnett. We have the land there, and in this particular area we have the climate; we have the rainfall; we have nearly all the requirements for successful settlement in this district, and I think we should make some effort to put people on the land. Since it has been spoken about, we have received far more inquiry locally for it than for the Burnett lands, and many people in North Queensland are eager to get selections.

Mr. MORGAN: If what you say is true, it seems a much better proposition than the Burnett scheme.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not want to decry the Burnett, but, personally, I believe it is. It is further from markets certainly, but I do not think there is the same risk. One has only to go over the settlement at Atherton to realise that. Any hon. member who has been there will recognise that it is one of the finest parts of Queensland.

Much was made on the previous Bill of the power taken by the Minister. I do not want to criticise the Land Settlement Board or previous Ministers, but I say that the Minister should always have been responsible in connection with land settlement schemes. Many of the things which are cropping up from day to day are due to the fact that there was not sufficient criticism of those schemes: that there was a desire on the part of the Minister, perhaps, to say, "Oh, well, the Opposition and all of us are responsible." That to some extent prevented criticism. I hold that there should be Ministerial responsibility. Of course the Minister is not going to carry out the detail work; but, if he has any ability at all and if he is keen on his job, he should be able to supervise the whole of the operations. There are great industrial undertakings whose turnover is greater than the whole of the operations of the Government, and they are supervised by one man. In the last analysis the decision rests with him, and he has to come to his decisions on evidence put before him, and, if he can select the right men—putting the work on

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the right shoulders—not attempting to do it all himself—and in the event of failure to carry out his instructions get rid of those men and put others in their places, he can control a very large organisation. Organisation, after all, is not doing the work yourself; it is getting the best possible men, putting responsibility on them, and getting rid of them if they fail. That is the Minister's job, as I understand it, and, whilst the task ahead of me is difficult, I think that with proper attention we can make a success of these schemes.

The group settlement system has been criticised, but the criticism comes from men who had experience of it under the old conditions, when land agents were allowed to organise the groups and sell them

[10 p.m.] the land. There are not going to be any land agents in this scheme.

We can have officers of the department who will sell blocks to individuals in groups. The prospective settlers will be taken through the area. They will form groups amongst themselves, and then come before the Land Settlement Board either here or up there—there will be offices up there so that we can deal with them on the spot—and there will be no room for any of the practices which prevailed in the old days. I am not one of those who believe that everybody can be bribed. I think we have very good officers, and they ought to be encouraged in their work. In the last analysis, under our system of government the permanent officials carry out the policy of the Government, whether we like it or not. Our chief aim should be to secure the right men and place the responsibility on their shoulders, and, if they fail in that responsibility, to remove them and get some other men to take their places.

Mr. SIZER: Have you got any idea of the total cost of the scheme?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No. It is Crown land; it is only a matter of settlement. The only real cost will be the construction of the tramline from Nerada towards the Beatrice River.

Mr. SIZER: What will that tramline cost?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not know; we have not yet got our surveys or estimates. That proposal will be introduced by the Secretary for Railways, who will give the fullest information, and perhaps at that stage I shall be able to give the House a good deal more information from the group of officers that I have working in the area now. The area is opening up better than we expected. The conditions that I stated at the outset of my speech do exist and are difficult to overcome. Nothing will give a proper idea of the area except settlement, and until then we shall not know exactly how much land we have and how many people we can settle on the area.

Mr. KERR: Do you think that £1,000 is sufficient to establish a man?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I think so. I am inclined to agree with hon. members who say that we should be careful not to lend too much money. A selector should only get sufficient for his needs. He has to pay it back. It is like giving a man on a low wage too much money to build a home; it is bad policy. People will go in for a flash house if they get the opportunity,

without thinking of the day when they will have to pay for it. The same applies to land settlement. We want to keep settlement within the man's means, but we do not want to skimp him in any way.

Mr. KERR: Do you not think that an extra £200 might stabilise the position and put a man on his feet?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It might.

Mr. KERR: Then why do you not give it to the soldier settlers? It is time you thought about it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I knew the hon. gentleman was coming to that. For his information, let me tell him that I am limited to the amount of £625.

Mr. KERR: You are discriminating.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am quite willing, after the revaluation takes place, to allow the settler to borrow again up to his amount.

Mr. KERR: That will be £625?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It will exceed the amount laid down by the Commonwealth Government. Perhaps it would be a good thing for the Government to face the soldier settlements and wipe off the liability.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR: Your answer the other day did not go to that extent.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am not dealing with that. Any action to be taken in that direction must be the result of a considered policy, and not merely stated in answer to an interjection across this Chamber. The hon. gentleman will not get me to do anything or trap me into doing something that I cannot carry out. I do not believe in making a promise that I cannot carry out. A matter like that has to be a matter for much consideration, and, if anything is done, we should bring down the advance to a point where settlers can make a living. I commend the Bill to hon. members. I suggest that they be not actuated with a desire to oppose the Bill merely because the area is not open country where everybody can see the land. I ask them not to regard the scheme as anathema because the Brisbane newspapers are opposed to it. Nearly the whole of the settlements in North Queensland have been successful. There is no settlement there that has not been successful. The land is either very good or very bad, and in the very bad areas in the mining districts no settlement has been attempted.

Mr. MORGAN: The rainfall is very large.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In those districts where there has been a large rainfall and high mountains every settlement has been successful. I urge, in moving the second reading of the Bill, that it be given fair consideration, and if that is done I feel sure that in a few years this settlement will justify itself. I beg to move—

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

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I wish to assure the Minister that the whole of the members on this side of the House are quite satisfied

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with regard to the quality of the land that this Bill proposes to open up. The men who gave evidence before the Public Works Commission spoke in the highest possible terms of the quality of the land. Those members on this side of the House who have not had the local knowledge which the Minister spoke of would have no justification in decrying the quality of the land. There is one provision in particular in the Bill which gives the Minister the right to call upon the selector to supply a factory and whatever the Minister chooses to direct in the way of stock or cream supplies. I do not think this is a wise provision to have in the Bill. The very fact of that provision being there will prejudice some men from taking up land in this area. As I said on the second reading of the Burnett scheme, we want to give as much freedom as possible to the selector, and at the same time conserve the best interests of the State by seeing that the money advanced by the State is spent in the proper way. Provision is made in the Bill for a supervisor. Certain reasons have been given why a supervisor should be appointed. If the appointment is to be given to an officer of the department whose duty it will be to collect the money which will come his way, we cannot have much to say against it, because, as the Minister said, the area is a considerable distance from the metropolis and the head centre which directs the activities of the settlement. It is therefore necessary to have some officer to attend to the financial operations of the settler. But, if this officer is going to be in the position of a dictator to dictate to the settler just exactly what he shall do and when he shall do it, and in every possible way hamper his movements, I do not think it will be a good thing at all. I have the greatest possible faith in the possibilities of North Queensland. I have not had much opportunity of visiting that portion of the State, but, when I did so, I was very much impressed with the future in store for it. We should therefore do our best to develop that particular area with our own people and with our own kith and kin.

This is no doubt an attempt in that direction. One matter which I particularly want to draw attention to—so far as I understand the proposal—is that it is intended to extend the existing tramway from Nerada, which I think is somewhere about 21 miles from Innisfail, for another 21 miles. The whole of the evidence of the Royal Commission condemns the present 2-foot tramway. Everyone says that it would be a mistake to continue the tramway 2 feet wide from the present terminus to the area with which we are now dealing. We have the evidence of Mr. Crowther and other railwaymen and also of local men to the effect that it would be a mistake to build a 2-foot wide line to carry the traffic. The present tramway, which is running from Innisfail to Nerada, has lost to the State during the last three years £15,240—that is, from 1919-20. In 1919-20 the net deficit was £2,296; in 1920-21, £3,805; and in 1921-22, £9,147. Mr. Crowther in his evidence condemns this tramway absolutely, yet the Government propose to continue the 2-foot tramway into the area we are considering, meaning that the loss on the present line will be considerably increased. Mr. Crowther says that it can only carry loads of 35 tons. Why you can carry that on a wheelbarrow! We are going

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to open up 180,000 acres of land in this area and have a larger amount of traffic on the tramway than at present exists, yet the Government, as I understand the position, intend to go on with the construction of the tramway, making it about 50 miles long altogether. I forget how many curves exist on the present tramway, but I think that in a short distance there are ninety-nine. They will have to be straightened out and the line will have to be regraded to carry the extra traffic. The officers of the department who have given evidence before the Public Works Commission recommend that, if the 2-foot tramway is to be gone on with, at least the roadbed should be made 3 feet 6 inches wide, so that, when an alteration is made to 3 feet 6 inches, the roadbed will be constructed.

Mr. Crowther, in giving evidence before the Public Works Commission, said—

“I really do not know much about that country. I can only give evidence as to an extension of the line from Nerada in one regard. The maximum load I can hold with a 2-foot engine is 35 tons, as the grades are too steep, and with an increase of traffic I will not be able to hold greater loads. I want a better line so far as grades are concerned. The present line is far too costly to work.

“By Mr. Payne: Can you give the Commission a rough estimate as to the cost of construction?—I do not know the nature of the country to be traversed.

“By the Chairman: The present line to Nerada is not satisfactory owing to the grades, and it would be necessary to alter those grades to make a success of the extension?—Yes, and I believe a better grade could be obtained.

“We have been told that there are about ninety-nine curves on that line. Is that so?—I could not answer that.

“By Mr. Payne: What is the difference in cost of putting down a 2-foot tramway and a 3-foot 6-inches line?—The ratio is about three to five on the level, but that could be lessened on a 3-foot 6-inches gauge, according to weight of rails. That is building both lines well.

“By Mr. Collins: Is the present tramway from Innisfail to Nerada a profitable undertaking?—No.

“Would it be more economical to convert the present 2-foot line into a 3-foot 6-inches line, connecting with the nearest point on the North Coast line?—No, for the present traffic on the line from Nerada to Currajah is principally cane for the South Johnstone Mill, although worked by the Government.”

The Minister referred to the timber. This is what Mr. Swain has to say with regard to the timber in answer to the chairman—

“Have you got any statement prepared showing the timber resources?—I would like to explain that the ordinary procedure in timber estimating by the Forestry Department is to establish a series of survey camps over the area and actually make a local estimate. That estimate is now in the course of preparation, and the evidence that I can give on the timber resources is only approximate. The area affected by the tramway, so far as the timber resources are concerned, is

between the North and South Johnstone Rivers. That is an area of jungle country which was more or less knocked about by the 1918 cyclone. There is on that land maple, silky oak, white beach, black bean, red bean, walnut, brown oak, silver beech, water gum, and many other odds and ends of so-called scrub timbers, some of which may or may not have a marketable value. The proportion of maple and silky oak is rather low in relation to the ordinary jungle country of the North, and consequently from a timber point of view it has a lower value than most other areas. So far as we can estimate there are probably 4,000 superficial feet of timber per acre, and probably 160,000,000 superficial feet on the whole area between the two rivers. The value of the timber or the possibility of marketing it depends on the price obtainable in the market as against the cost of cutting, hauling, loading, and freighting. So far as I can calculate there are only three kinds that we can market profitably—maple, silky oak, and white beech. At present the entire quantity of 160,000,000 superficial feet is utterly valueless because it has no market value.

"What class of timber is at present of no value?—I have with me some samples of timber to illustrate the class of timber that is growing in that area. They will convey a better impression to the Commission than mere names. The first sample is walnut or black mahogany, which is one of the most abundant timbers on that area. We estimate that there are about 30,000,000 superficial feet of walnut."

This is the point I want hon. members to note—

"With a 2-feet tramway the cost of marketing per 100 superficial feet f.o.b. would be approximately 17s. 2d., and the estimated market value per 100 superficial feet f.o.b. is 16s., showing a loss of 1s. 2d. by marketing."

That is by extending the existing 2-feet tramline. He continues—

"We may look forward to an increase in the value of this timber when it becomes more widely known or when the population increases so that there will be a bigger demand for it. The present position is that we may have to destroy it. I have a sample of brown oak or crowsfoot elm. That is regarded as a useless timber at the present time, because there is no market for it owing to the small population. I have a sample of perda, which is of the hardwood variety. There is quite a lot of black bean on the area. I have samples of red bean, Atherton red oak, satin wood, silky oak, red cedar, Putts pine or silver maple. Putts pine is not a pine. It is really a maple. I have also samples of milkwood, white ash, silkwood, and others."

"Do the whole of those timbers grow in that area?—Yes, with a great many more varieties. There are probably a hundred different species per acre, all of various values."

Later on the Chairman asked him—

"Was it not stated at the last Associated Chambers of Commerce Congress

that there were about 800 varieties of timber in that particular district?—I do not know. I was away from Brisbane at the time

"You estimate the cost of marketing the timber, over a 2-ft. gauge tramline, at 17s. 2d., and the market value at 16s. per 100 superficial feet?—Yes.

"Assuming that there was a 3-ft. 6-in. gauge line, would the cost of marketing the timber be reduced?—Yes. There would be a reduction of 2s. per 100 superficial feet."

In the face of evidence such as that with regard to the 2-feet tramline, it certainly seems to me strange that the Commission should recommend the construction of the line. I take the statements made by men who gave evidence before the Commission as coming from men who understand and know something of what they are talking about. By carrying the timber on this 2-feet tramway a loss of 1s. 2d. per 100 feet will be shown on the present selling price, while if the 3-feet 6-inch gauge is constructed, the cost of carriage will be considerably reduced. I know that the difficulty is in connection with the existing tramline from Innisfail to Nerada, which would have to be altered to the 3-feet 6-inch gauge if the extension was made on that gauge, and it would require a big expenditure. One of the witnesses before the Public Works Commission calculated that the value of the timber would be sufficient to pay for the cost of the line. He is a man who has lived in the district a long time, and has a good local knowledge of affairs. I cannot understand the reason why the Commission recommended the 2-feet tramline in the face of the evidence. One or two men qualified their evidence with regard to the 2-feet tramline by saying that a line on the 3-feet 6-inch gauge would be much more economical and useful.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A wonderful development has taken place in the Innisfail district with the 2-feet gauge.

MR. TAYLOR: I admit that, but you are going to extend the line another 21 miles, which will mean increased traffic, and Mr. Crowther says that on the present tramway, which is being run on an economical basis, the loss last year was £9,000. I quite admit that a lot of country has been opened up by the 2-feet tramway, but I think it has now outlived its usefulness. The evidence shows that the land is fertile, with an eastern slope, and it does not get the cold winds which some parts of North Queensland get, and settlement would be largely increased in the area if it could be opened up. I hope that the clause giving the Minister power to say what quantity of his products a man shall deliver to the factory will be altered. The Minister also has power to establish meat-works.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is only intended to establish butter factories.

MR. TAYLOR: But the power is in the Bill to enable the Minister to establish meat-works.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We will not exercise the power if co-operative factories are established.

MR. TAYLOR: It was stated in evidence that it was intended to establish a factory there, and a certain amount of money was contributed and applications for shares were

Mr. Taylor.]

received; but, when the promoters of the proposed company got word that the Government proposed to open up this particular area, they dropped the scheme. If this Bill is passed, the probabilities are that the men who are going to take up these areas may establish a butter factory co-operatively. I think that it would be a great mistake to open up the area by an extension of the existing 2-foot tramline in the face of the evidence, and I hope that the Minister will consider that matter. We hope that the scheme will be a success. We have been considering two big schemes to-day, but we should not be afraid to tackle big things in Queensland. This is the time for big things. As the Minister said a few moments ago, if we can get the right man to control and work out this scheme, we should pay him well and give him his head, and not tie him up with red tape and hamper him in his operations.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): 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 10.25 p.m.