

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 1923

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amount of £17,004 2s., paid for endowment to Grammar Schools during the year 1922, was distributed, furnishing the names of the schools, with their respective amounts, that participated in the distribution?

"2. Will he inform the House how the amount of £12,479 13s. 9d., paid to secondary schools during the year 1922, was distributed, furnishing the names of the schools, with their respective amounts, that participated in the distribution?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*), in the absence of the Secretary for Public Instruction (Hon. J. Huxham, *Buranda*), replied—

		£	s.	d.
"1.—				
Brisbane Boys' Grammar School	...	2,400	0	0
Brisbane Girls' Grammar School	...	2,604	2	0
Ipswich Boys' Grammar School	...	1,500	0	0
Ipswich Girls' Grammar School	...	1,500	0	0
Maryborough Boys' Grammar School	...	1,500	0	0
Maryborough Girls' Grammar School	...	1,500	0	0
Rockhampton Boys' Grammar School	...	1,500	0	0
Rockhampton Girls' Grammar School	...	1,500	0	0
Toowoomba Grammar School	...	1,500	0	0
Townsville Grammar School	...	1,500	0	0
		£17,004	2	0

WEDNESDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER, 1923.

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

MEMBER SWORN.

MR. ANDREW LANG PETRIE.

Mr. A. L. Petrie, having taken the oath and subscribed the roll, took his seat as member for the electoral district of Toombul.

QUESTIONS.

ALLOTMENT OF STATE STALLIONS.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"1. On about what date will the State stallions be sent to the districts allotted to them and commence the season?"

"2. Will any of these stallions be sent to their respective districts on view before closing the list of mares—following the usual practice of private owners?"

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

"1. About the middle of October next.

"2. No, this is not practicable this year. The mares will be inspected first, which is now being done, and after this has been completed the stallion most suitable for the majority of mares will be allotted to each district."

GRAMMAR SCHOOL ENDOWMENT AND PAYMENTS TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"1. Will he inform the House how the

		£	s.	d.
"2.—				
Bundaberg Technical College	...	6	6	0
Bowen Technical College	...	50	8	0
Townsville Technical College	...	148	11	6
Townsville Technical College (Ayr Branch)	...	10	10	0
Ipswich Technical College	...	387	13	0
Glennie Memorial School, Toowoomba	...	511	17	6
St. Anne's (Church of England), Townsville	...	204	13	0
St. Catharine's (Church of England), Stanthorpe	...	21	0	0
St. Hilda's (Church of England), Southport	...	34	13	0
St. Margaret's (Church of England), Albion	...	262	10	0
St. Mary's (Church of England), Herberton	...	139	13	0
Church of England School, Warwick	...	14	14	0
The Southport School	...	68	5	0
All Souls' School, Charters Towers	...	213	13	6
Church of England Grammar School, Brisbane	...	144	18	0
Brisbane High School for Girls	...	471	19	6
Presbyterian Ladies' College, Toowoomba	...	163	0	0
Presbyterian Girls' College, Warwick	...	123	2	0
Thornborough College, Charters Towers	...	201	12	0
Brisbane Boys' College, Clayfield	...	239	16	0
Scots' College, Warwick	...	280	17	6
Moreton Bay High School, Wynnum	...	42	0	0

Christian Brothers—		
Bundaberg	97	13 0
Charters Towers	541	16 0
Gregory Terrace	1,299	18 0
Gympie	232	1 0
Ipswich	219	6 0
Maryborough	131	15 6
Nudgee	1,365	0 0
Rockhampton	550	14 6
South Brisbane	381	13 6
Toowoomba	232	12 0
Townsville	160	13 0
Warwick	219	19 6
Convent Schools—		
Ali Hallows	1,425	4 6
Bundaberg	89	5 0
Charters Towers	64	9 6
Gympie	159	12 0
Ipswich	224	14 0
Lourdes Hill	193	1 0
Maryborough	26	5 0
Rockhampton	559	12 6
Toowoomba	185	1 3
Townsville	227	17 0
Warwick	191	2 0
Herberton	48	6 0
Cooktown	33	10 6
Yeppoon	5	5 0
Queensland Agricultural College	14	14 0
	£12,479	13 9”

MEN DISCHARGED FROM WINDERA BRANCH RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION WORKS.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. How many men have been discharged during the present month from the Windera branch railway construction works, and what was the reason for their discharge?”

“2. How many are still employed?”

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

“1. (a) 42; (b) so as not to exceed the loan expenditure allocated for this work for the present financial year

“2. 108.”

PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Amended Regulation No. 5 under the Primary Products Pools Act of 1922.

METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I beg to move—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Acts, 1909 to 1921, in certain particulars.”

Question put and passed.

[*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.*]

CLOSER SETTLEMENT ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

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

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Closer Settlement Acts in certain particulars, and to make further and better provision for the settlement of lands acquired under those Acts, and for other consequential purposes.”

Question put and passed.

SUGAR WORKERS' PERPETUAL LEASE SELECTIONS BILL.

INITIATION.

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

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to make provision for the selection of perpetual lease selections by sugar workers, and for other consequential purposes.”

Question put and passed.

UPPER BURNETT AND CALLIDE LAND SETTLEMENT BILL.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

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

Question stated—That clause 6—“*Advances to settlers*”—stand part of the Bill, on which Mr. Corser (*Burnett*) had moved the insertion, on line 48, after the word “declare,” of the following words:—

“In making such advances, the Minister shall carry out and administer the State Advances Act in the spirit desired by Parliament, and he shall not be bound to conform to or be governed by any regulations which he may deem, under the circumstances, to be vexatious or hampering.”

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): It is necessary that the Minister in making advances under the State Advances Act should take a different view altogether from that of a banker. If he does not do so, the Bill is not going to be a success. When considering applications for an advance, the Government institution usually takes the same view as any banking institution, and asks the question, “What is the security offered?” The security of a perpetual leasehold selection is not worth anything. The improvements erected upon it are valued at so much, but the selector does not own any of the land, as it still remains the property of the Crown. Therefore, he will not be able to get an advance upon the land. Would anybody buy a selection held under perpetual leasehold just selected without any improvements at an advanced price? What could anyone who took up a perpetual leasehold selection get for it on the open market unless the rent was below the actual value? The land in this case is going to be valued for what it is worth.

The Crown is not going to offer the land below its value. Any bank would say what

the land was worth on the open market—that is, it is not worth anything, beyond what the Crown is asking in rent. The banks would not have a right to dispose of it, the settler could not dispose of it, and the whole thing would revert to the Crown. A different view altogether will have to be taken by the Minister, otherwise the scheme is going to be a failure. I understand that the settlers are going to be judged on account of their suitability and not on account of the amount of money they possess, therefore a man may have very little money and his security will be worth nothing. Certainly the Secretary for Public Lands will provide water, and that will give an added value to the holding, but that added value will belong to the Minister and not to the settler. It is said that the settler will be able to borrow money from the State Advances Corporation, but in reality he will not be able to borrow anything. Any man having experience with the State Advances Corporation knows very well that that corporation takes just the same view in regard to the value of the land on the open market as any other financial institution. I am convinced that, if we do not deal with the matter somewhat differently from what is proposed in the Bill, the whole business is going to fail, and we might as well select settlers because of the amount of money that they possess. I hope that the Minister will favourably consider the amendment.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Vanango*): In my opinion the Secretary for Public Lands took up the wrong attitude when he tried to ridicule the view of the Opposition and when he stated that this amendment was ridiculous. The clause provides that the State Advances Act shall be brought into operation for the purpose of making "advances to allottees on portions or selections within the area." That means that the State Advances Corporation is going to be called on to do a great deal in the way of making advances. I cannot agree with the Minister when he takes up the attitude that the amendment is ridiculous. Even from the Labour point of view it has been argued over and over again that the State Advances Corporation is not working as it was intended to work in the interests of the settlers of Queensland. I think that any member who has gone to the State Advances Corporation from time to time to get advances for struggling settlers on small agricultural areas will admit that he has discovered all sorts of red tape restrictions that have to be surmounted before a loan can be obtained. Only recently we had cases in which many months elapsed before an inspection of the property was made, and all sorts of restrictions were put in the way to prevent the applicant getting the money quickly and so allowing the corporation to work in the interests of the settler. As far as I understand the amendment, the hon. member for Burnett wishes the conditions to be made more lenient and that the Act shall be carried out in the spirit Parliament desired when the Act was passed.

If the settler can get financial assistance quickly and under moderate conditions, I am satisfied that he will make a greater success than if he is subjected to delays such as now prevail in connection with the State Advances Corporation. Therefore, I hope the Minister will seriously consider this amendment, because that is where the finance is largely going to come from to help to make a success

of this land settlement scheme. In many instances settlers get into difficulties through unforeseen circumstances over which they have no control and they want certain monetary assistance, and they want that assistance quickly. I understand the hon. member for Burnett is trying to make the Bill so workable that they will be able to get that monetary assistance as soon as they apply for it. From my own experience I know that, when a settler first goes on the land and his selection is in the pioneering stage, if he can get £100 quickly when he requires it, it will be possibly of greater benefit to him than £400 or £500 would be in five or six months. The financing of the settlers promptly is going to be the biggest factor in the success of the scheme.

Amendment (*Mr. Corser*) negatived.

Clause 6 put and passed.

Clause 7—"Public water facilities"—put and passed.

Clause 8—"Other public works, etc."—

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I have an amendment—

The CHAIRMAN: I hope that hon. members, when they rise, will address the Chair, otherwise they may complain if I put the question.

Mr. MOORE: We do not complain when we are over on this side. It is when the question is put when we are coming across the Chamber after a division that we complain.

The CHAIRMAN: I gave every opportunity last night clearly and distinctly, and, as no hon. member rose and addressed the Chair, I declared the clause agreed to. I am sure hon. members will not suggest for a moment that I tried to rush the Bill through.

Mr. MOORE: That is a matter of opinion.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I put the question last night clearly and distinctly, and, as no hon. member rose and addressed the Chair, I declared the clause agreed to. I am sure hon. members will not suggest for a moment that I tried to rush the Bill through.

Mr. CORSER: You will agree that we did not have our list of amendments.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest to hon. members that when they rise, they address the Chair.

Mr. COLLINS: They stand up like statues.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MOORE: I beg to move the insertion, after the word "require," on line 29, page 6, of the words—

"Provided that upon the petition of at least fifty per cent. of the suppliers to any such factory or enterprise, the Minister shall so dispose of such factory or enterprise upon such reasonable terms and conditions as may be mutually agreed upon. In the event of disagreement upon the terms and conditions of sale of any such factory or enterprise, the matter shall be submitted to arbitration in accordance with the provisions of the Interdict Act of 1867, and in assessing the price to be paid, no greater amount shall be determined than the actual cost of all buildings, machinery, plant, and other physical assets to be disposed of, less a fair deduction for depreciation, and (if land is included in the sale) the fair unimproved value of the land at the date of commencement of operations of such factory or enterprise."

The Minister has power under the Bill to erect these factories and to run them inde-

Mr. Moore.]

finitely—he can get rid of them when he likes. We think that it should be within the province of the settlers within those years, if they wish to take over and convert the factories into co-operative concerns, to be able to make a deal with the Minister and come to a satisfactory arrangement by which they can run these factories for themselves. Most farmers have a predilection in favour of running their businesses in their own way.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is hoped that they may be able to make use of factories already in existence instead of erecting new factories.

Mr. MOORE: I do not suppose that in the beginning of a new settlement the settlers will have the funds available with which to erect a factory. It is when they get on to their feet that the amendment will enable them to purchase the factory from the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They will use existing factories. There is one at Gladstone and another at Mundubbera, both co-operative factories. The intention is to try and make use of them.

Mr. MOORE: The only thing which rather made me hesitate in forming an opinion on this is that in another Bill before the House definite powers are given to the Minister in regard to the establishment of factories, and to what quantities the individual settler shall supply to the factories. Power is given in the regulations afterwards to do anything which may be considered to the advantage of the settlers. I think that, if it is the intention of the Government to erect factories, it is only right that the settlers who go on to these areas should have an opportunity to acquire the factories at practically the cost price. I trust that the Minister does not intend to make a profit out of the factories which may be put up. The amendment is moved to assist the settlers when they get on their feet and desire to take up a factory as a co-operative concern. If 50 per cent. of the settlers ask the Minister for permission to purchase the factory from him on those conditions, under the amendment they will be enabled to take it over. The Minister has power to dispose of a factory to a company or individual or anybody he considers suitable, and we want to provide that the settlers shall also have power to approach the Minister when there is a sufficient number of them and obtain permission to take over the factory for themselves and run it for their own benefit.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There will be no difficulty. If at any time the settlers desire to take over a factory, we shall be only too willing to let them do so.

Mr. MOORE: That may be so, but the hon. gentleman, who is a new Minister, may have a different view to other Ministers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: When there is no special provision in this Bill, it can be done under the Co-operative Agricultural Production and Advances to Farmers Act.

Mr. MOORE: I am glad to hear those views expressed by the present Minister, but we do not know how long the hon. gentleman is going to be in that position. It is quite possible that he may want to go into the Federal sphere, and another Secretary for Public Lands may take his place here.

[*Mr. Moore.*

Mr. COLLINS: There are only a few big men in the Federal sphere.

Mr. MOORE: I suppose there are a few big ones required here, too. We cannot say that the present Minister is always going to stop in his present office.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There are more real problems before State Ministers than before Federal Ministers.

Mr. MOORE: The present Ministers are certainly leaving a terrific problem for anybody who comes after them to solve, but under present conditions they do not seem to be particularly worried.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is a problem you are not likely to be called on to solve.

Mr. MOORE: It is very hard for the hon. gentleman to say. I did not know he was a prophet.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will keep to the amendment before the Committee.

Mr. MOORE: I only said that if, while the present Minister happens to be in office, a certain course of action is carried out, it does not follow that it will be carried out indefinitely whether he occupies the position or not. It is possible we may have someone in the hon. gentleman's position who will have to take quite a different view to the present Minister. We want to have it provided in the Bill that the individuals who are vitally concerned shall have the opportunity, if the occasion should arise, of taking over a factory and running it. If that is the opinion of the Minister, he would only be putting a provision in the Bill which would enable him to carry it out if he accepted the amendment. I do not think that we are asking anything unreasonable. The settlers should know the exact terms on which they are taking up the land. It is quite possible that there are men proposing to come to Queensland who, if they see that the Government are going to run factories without the right of the settlers to take them over, would prefer to stay away. They may say, "I would rather go where I shall have the opportunity of running our own factory or of becoming a shareholder."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A number of settlers with money are already making inquiries.

Mr. MOORE: That may be so, but it does not follow that, because they make inquiries, they are going on with it. They may not do so if they find that the Bill imposes too many disabilities on them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And they know it is perpetual leasehold.

Mr. MOORE: They may, but they are working absolutely in the dark. It is a pretty big order to ask a man to go on to land when he does not know what his liabilities are going to be. The object of the Bill is to encourage settlement, and if you can achieve that object by putting something in the Bill which would give the settlers the opportunity of taking over a business when they want to do so, and if the Minister can do it without sacrificing any principle, he should have no hesitation in doing so.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): The amendment is a very reasonable one and does not affect the principles of the Bill. The Minister will

still have power to erect and work factories. The amendment merely specifies that, if a certain percentage of the selectors are desirous of purchasing any factory built by the Government, they shall have the opportunity of coming to terms with the Government, and in the event of failure the matter shall be submitted to arbitration. It simply gives to the settlers some say at some time or other as to what they wish to do, and indicates to some extent what they are likely to be called upon to pay. Without the amendment the position is indefinite, and nothing in the amendment is inimical to the proposal of the Minister. The Minister says that he is not adverse to the settlers owning the factory, but he may not always be Secretary for Public Lands. Some one else may occupy

[4 p.m.] his position, and he may hold an entirely different view from the position taken up by the Minister this afternoon. The whole design of the Bill is to promote, assist, and encourage land settlement. We are going to expend a tremendous amount of money in opening up this land. Railways are being constructed. Whilst there is, no doubt, a large area of good land in this district, still, it is subjected periodically to dry conditions. We want to have nothing which will in any way curtail or hamper the operations of the settlement. The settler should be given every encouragement. If the settlers know that at a certain time they can make certain payments to the Government by means of which they can acquire factories that may be constructed, that will tend to make the settlers more contented, and it will probably be an assistance to the Minister in getting the right class of settlers to take up this land. I hope the Minister will see his way clear to accept the amendment, which I think is eminently clear and reasonable from whatever angle you view it.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, Cairns): I do not see that there is any need for the amendment. I stated by way of interjection that it was not the intention to build factories while existing factories can serve the needs of the area.

MR. CLAYTON: Do you think that the existing factories can take all the produce from these 3,000,000 acres of land?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We do not know, but they will for a while. Already the co-operative company at Rannes have entered a protest against the Government's proposal to build factories in the Callide area, because they contend that their factory is not fully supplied, and, being in a central position, could be extended to treat the cream from the whole of the Callide area. That does not mean that they are prepared to treat the produce from the Upper Burnett area.

MR. TAYLOR: What area is comprised in what is known as the Callide area?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That factory will only serve the other end of this settlement.

MR. TAYLOR: That is a very small portion.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is a small portion. The Burnett end round about Monto is the bigger portion of the area, although I think that the Callide River area is the better land. The Mundubbera people will take a certain propor-

tion of the produce as the land comes under selection and is capable of producing. The Gladstone factory can take all the cream that is sent along the Many Peaks Railway. It is only 12 miles from Many Peaks to the top of the range, where this dairying country commences. The clause as it stands in the Bill gives the Minister power to do certain things. That power is necessary. The Minister has power to dispose of the factory to anybody at all. It is absolutely necessary to have that power. If that power were not provided, a Government might come in that would do what was done in New South Wales, where everything owned by the State was sold to private enterprise. The Government have the right to do that if the people elect to adopt those principles. It is the intention of the present Government, and, I think, the intention of all parties—or at least of the Country party—to make the companies co-operative and have no "dry" shareholders at all. As a matter of fact, a Bill is being introduced to conserve primary production to co-operation, and to prevent people exploiting the use of the word "co-operation." The factory that will be erected will eventually become a co-operative factory. The hon. member for Aubigny suggests that the factory should be sold on the petition of 50 per cent. of the suppliers. Even under that proposal it is all a matter of ways and means. They will eventually get the factory from the Department of Public Lands. They will find a portion of the money themselves, and they will be borrowing under the Co-operative Agricultural Production and Advances to Farmers Act in order that they may secure the balance. They will not deal direct with the Department of Public Lands. At the present time they have power under the Co-operative Agricultural Production and Advances to Farmers Act to secure a certain percentage of the money on loan, and find a certain percentage themselves. It will all be a matter of arrangement between the two departments, and not with the selectors at all, because no group of settlers in a new area is going to find the whole of the money to build a co-operative factory. That has to be carried out under a system of loans, and that system will be provided in a new Bill to be introduced by the Secretary for Agriculture. That Bill will provide the machinery for taking over the factories if we do establish factories in this area. I hope that the settlement will be so successful that one of the earliest things to be done will be to erect a butter factory in a central position to serve the whole area. If that is the case, it will mean the borrowing of sufficient money by the selectors later on from the State Advances Corporation when they feel that they can find their share of the money to make the factory co-operative. In the meantime little would be gained, because the Department of Public Lands would not run the factory for profit. Arrangements probably will be made with the Local Producers' Associations. It is only a matter of financing the scheme up to a certain stage and retaining ownership of it until such time as the settlers in the area are in a position to put up one-third of the money, and then they can get the other two-thirds from the State Advances Corporation. The hon. member for Aubigny stated that the ideas expressed by me might not be expressed by anyone who might succeed me in office. Under the Bill there can be no other course to follow

Hon. W. McCormack.]

except that which has been laid down by me. Of course, a Government might come in and sell the factory to private enterprise, but I do not think any political party in Queensland would do that. I think that all political parties are agreed that primary production must be assisted by co-operation.

Mr. MOORE: Is it not possible that, when the State conducts these factories and finds that they are payable, it will not hand them over, but will proceed to nationalise them?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Not necessarily. There will be no profit in running them.

Mr. MOORE: Not necessarily. I do not want the concern to be run as a State enterprise.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: According to the amendment, the provision cannot come into effect until 50 per cent. of the people have sufficient money to pay for it. Under the Bill, if the people can find the money, we do not propose to wait for that period.

Mr. MOORE: You might not, but some stronger organisation outside might compel you to.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am not prepared to accept the amendment, because I think it would hamper the operations of the Bill. It does not give the selector any greater security than is at present contained in the Bill. If you read the amendment, you will find that it is a matter of finding money to pay for the factory, and not a matter of giving the settler the right to go to the Minister. He may earn that right sooner or later—probably later—but it is all a financial proposition. There is no way of finding the money for a certain time. In a few years, if the settlement is successful, the settlers will be able to put up the required sum of money to purchase the factory, but the only process in doing that is to go to the State Advances Corporation and secure two-thirds of the money on loan, and probably make arrangements with the Department of Public Lands for the other third on loan. I can assure hon. members that I do not wish to control it as a State enterprise. It is my intention to allow the factory to get into the hands of the suppliers, the Minister retaining ownership of it until the suppliers can purchase it. While I am administering the department, I promise that that will be done. I have no desire to get control of the factory and run it as a State enterprise.

I believe the factory should be run as a co-operative concern. If the Government have to erect the factory, we will endeavour to get the suppliers in the district to take on the responsibility of running the factory.

Although it is slightly out of order, I would just like to mention that some amendments were not moved yesterday owing to some little misapprehension. I was surprised that the Opposition made no move in regard to the matter. I quite agree with the Chairman that he gave ample time for those amendments to be moved and I was astonished when they were not proposed. At the same time, there has been very little lost by the amendments not being moved. In reference to the amendment on line 12, page 3, notice of which was given by Mr. Corser, dealing with the allotment of portions by mutual agree-

ment between the Minister and the applicants, that policy is now being adopted. We are now dealing with the applicants.

Mr. CORSER: Are you giving them a chance to decide among themselves?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are giving them the first chance to decide between themselves. If they are unable to come to any agreement, the Minister will then prescribe that a ballot shall be taken among themselves. With regard to another amendment that was not moved, I would like to state that we intend to attach a slip to the lithographs giving the value of the land. We are going to let every selector know the value that is put on his land when he is inspecting it.

Mr. MOORE: Will that carry the amount of loading on it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I think it will carry the loading. We shall be able to let him know broadly the loading upon the land. The loading will not be costly.

Mr. MOORE: What will the loading be—2s. 6d. an acre?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not know. Every selector will have a slip giving him the value of the land. He will not be selecting in the dark.

Mr. CORSER: As it is stated in the Bill, he will be in the dark.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Hon. members opposite did not miss much by not moving the amendments, but I do not think they can blame the Chairman.

Mr. CORSER: In the case of a division it is very hard.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, but I suggest to the hon. gentleman that he should not persist in the amendment. The policy is as outlined, and, so far as it lies in my hands, the scheme will be co-operative.

Mr. MOORE: Will you please tell us about the amendment that was to have been moved by Mr. Corser on clause 4 (2) (c)? The clause in the Bill leaves it a very vague proposition.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The improvements are set out in the Land Act.

Mr. MOORE: No; the clause gives you power to specify any improvements.

Mr. CORSER: Improvements "to the satisfaction of the Minister."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The improvements intended are only those mentioned in the Land Act.

Mr. DEACON: That is your intention?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And water also.

Mr. MOORE: I am not referring to water. When a man takes up a selection he wants to be informed what improvements are required and the period within which they are to be effected. That is what we want to find out.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He has to erect his improvements and keep them in order.

Mr. MOORE: I think the hon. gentleman will admit that it is an unknown liability.

[Hon. W. McCormack,

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; the intention is to stick to the improvements under the present Land Act.

Mr. CORSER: There is no provision in the Land Act for roads, bridges, and culverts.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is another matter.

Mr. DEACON: That is your intention; but what about the other man who may come after you?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The intention is stated in the Bill.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): The reason why the amendments were not moved last night was due to the fact that we had just had a division. I am not blaming you, Mr. Kirwan. It sometimes does occur with the Opposition that they are hardly back in their places after a division and before they can get their Bills in their hands clauses rush through.

In reference to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Aubigny, there will be a necessity for cheese or butter factories, particularly a butter factory, in the Burnett area. While there may not be an immediate necessity for one to-day or in the opening stages of the Callide settlement, there will be a necessity for one in the Upper Burnett scheme because of the distance from the existing factory and the slowness of the trains in our country districts. The distance that the people have to take their cream to the railway line and the slowness of transit of country trains impel us to do our best for the selectors, because if we did not make provision for a factory the cream would not arrive in Al condition, and the selectors would not secure the full value for their cream. That is the necessity for establishing a factory. We want to see a provision in the Bill so that if the selectors wish to take over, control, hold, and own the factory there will be a means for them to do so. The next objection to the amendment is that the individual will do nothing other than what is provided by it. We know that, if a convention or another body decides that these factories shall be State-owned, there is a probability of the State setting up State ownership unless it is specified in the Act that they shall become co-operative. The promise of the Minister amounts to nothing when we consider that different instructions may be received when the next Labour Convention takes place. If that convention says that these factories shall be run as a State enterprise, there is nothing in the Bill to prevent it. The selector has no guarantee beyond the verbal statement of the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, clause 20 provides—

“Nothing in this Act contained shall be construed so as to constitute any business enterprise or undertaking carried on by the Minister under this Act as a State enterprise within the meaning or for any of the purposes of the State Enterprises Act of 1918.”

Mr. CORSER: We have to deal with these matters as we come to them, and up to the present time there is no provision other than that the Minister shall deal with the factory as he thinks fit.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The clause I have just read says that it must not be a State enterprise.

Mr. MOORE: That is in regard to bringing it under the State Enterprises Act. It does not say that the Government shall not run it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes.

Mr. MOORE: It does not say that the State Enterprises Department shall not run it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is not my intention to run it as a State enterprise.

Mr. DEACON: What about the Minister who may come after you?

Mr. CORSER: What is the value of the Minister's statement if the next Labour Convention at Emu Park says he shall do something else?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It may not be held at Emu Park.

Mr. CORSER: If it is not held at Emu Park, it ought to be held over in St. Helena.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If you are unlucky, you might be over there.

Mr. CORSER: Fifty per cent. of the suppliers might move to acquire the Mundubbera Co-operative Factory. Under this amendment the people could make a request, and the Minister could get his way almost at once. The Mundubbera Co-operative Company might finance it. There is nothing in the amendment to prevent that being done. The Minister has said, “What is the use of putting that in, because these people are unfinancial?” They can make their request on behalf of the truly co-operative factory at Mundubbera, who might have the finance.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They did that with their own factory.

Mr. CORSER: This was after it was built. We shall say for the sake of argument that the suppliers are not in a position to build a factory, and the Minister does so. In a year or two the position might be so altered that the supplying shareholders would suggest a co-operative company in order that they may take it over as they are then in a position to make satisfactory financial arrangements for it. This amendment provides that the Minister shall, on a request of 50 per cent. of the suppliers, hand over the control of the factory to them. The control would go right out of the Minister's hands, and he would receive the payment which is specified in the amendment. It provides for no payment for goodwill, it also provides for depreciation, and that the actual cost of the factory shall be repaid to the Crown. There is nothing unreasonable about the amendment and I would like to know what objection the Secretary for Public Lands can have to it. We only want to put something into the Bill which he admits he intends to carry out. Why then does he not accept the amendment? It is making clear to the settler just what kind of proposition he is going into. It is going to ensure that 50 per cent. of the suppliers may, on application, control the factory in a truly co-operative manner. That is only on the lines on which the whole of Queensland is being accommodated to-day by co-operative companies. There is no suggestion of party politics in the amendment; it merely provides what, I think, the whole House is out for. I think the amendment is a reasonable one, and I hope the Minister will accept it.

Mr. Corser.]

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I think that the Secretary for Public Lands ought to give some favourable consideration to the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I did, but I am not in favour of accepting it in its present form.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I hope the hon. gentleman will outline the form in which he is prepared to accept it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not consider the amendment is necessary.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I ask the Minister if the amendment is not eminently a reasonable one, and one which would encourage the suppliers to try and make a greater success of it. From what the Minister has said this afternoon, I take it that he is anxious to do whatever he can to make a success of this scheme. In order to make it a success I am sure one of the conditions should be to give the settlers, at the request of 50 per cent. of their number, the option of taking over the factory. I think hon. members on this side of the House have put forward a strong case, and I hope the Minister will see his way clear to grant the request made by the hon. member for Burnett. It merely provides for the disposal of a factory when certain conditions have been carried out by 50 per cent. of the supplying shareholders. I hope that the Minister will accept the amendment either in its present form or in an amended form. I am sure that it is the desire of every hon. member in this House to see that settlers shall be established in as favourable a manner as possible, and that they should be given every opportunity from the very jump. I take as an example what occurred in connection with some of our sugar works, when the parties concerned had the right to acquire those works after the expiration of a certain period. That has been one of the factors for the success of the settlers at Babinda and South Johnstone. If the Minister can see his way clear to adopt something similar in this Bill, he will be doing a considerable amount of good. I hope that the amendment will be accepted.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Narrango*): It is very pleasing to me and I am sure to other hon. members to hear the Secretary for Public Lands say that he desires that factories shall be built under the true co-operative spirit. Seeing that that is so, the Minister would be well advised to accept the amendment. The only argument that the hon. gentleman has used against the amendment is that it is not necessary. That is all right while he is Secretary for Public Lands, but we never know what may take place to alter present conditions. If it is his idea to assist new settlers in co-operative enterprises in the proper spirit there is no argument that he can possibly use against allowing the settlers to take over the factories that may be built from time to time by the State in the interests of the settlers. I am sure everyone in this Chamber this afternoon will admit that there is such a thing as confidence, and that there is nothing like the confidence derived from owning a thing yourself. This applies particularly in regard to settlers on the land. They are always pleased to come along and discuss their business in their own way if an opportunity is given to them to do so. The Minister will be well advised if he accepts the amendment, particularly as he has not any argument against it.

[*Hon. W. H. Barnes.*]

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I fully expected that the Secretary for Public Lands would accept this amendment without any discussion at all. I knew that his intentions are good. Our desire is to put settlers in the position to take over these factories when they see fit. We never know what Government is coming into power—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am afraid I shall have to pull up the hon. member for tedious repetition. This is the third time that statement has been made in the last five minutes.

Mr. DEACON: I put it to the Secretary for Public Lands that his intentions are to give every safeguard to new settlers, and I think he should look at the matter from this standpoint.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If the Secretary for Public Lands accepted this amendment, you would take credit for the whole of the Bill.

Mr. DEACON: Surely the Minister will not refuse the amendment because it reflects credit on the Opposition?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You claimed credit because we accepted thirteen amendments in another Bill.

Mr. DEACON: If the Government admit a defect in a Bill when we point it out, is it not fair that we should take credit for it?

Mr. COSTELLO: We are responsible if the administration goes wrong. The public will blame us.

Mr. DEACON: I am dealing with this amendment as a matter of business; it will protect the settlers. It provides that, when 50 per cent. of the suppliers desire to buy the factory, they may do so. Is there anything wrong in giving them that privilege?

Mr. COLLINS: If you are in opposition long enough, you will become an out-and-out Socialist. (Laughter.)

Mr. FRY: If the hon. member for Bowen stays there long enough, he will become a blue-blooded Tory.

Mr. DEACON: I can see that the hon. member for Bowen is coming round. What he used to think "High Tory" is not "High Tory" now; it is Socialism. It [4.30 p.m.] will not be very long before we shall be able to form a coalition with the hon. member for Bowen. (Laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: No, you will not.

Mr. DEACON: I hope the Minister will agree to accept the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): I am not prepared to accept the whole of the amendment, but to meet the wishes of hon. members opposite I am prepared to accept a proviso reading—

"Provided that upon the petition of at least 50 per cent. of the suppliers to any such factory or enterprise, the Minister shall so dispose of such factory or enterprise upon such reasonable terms and conditions as may be mutually agreed upon."

Mr. COSER: Will you not accept an amendment referring the question to arbitration in the event of a disagreement?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I cannot agree to that as it will be a most costly procedure under the proposal

suggested by the hon. member for Aubigny. There will be no difficulty in the Minister and the co-operators coming to an agreement as to the value of the property. Of course, depreciation will be written off each year, or it should be, and there will be no question of goodwill or anything regarding the rights of the Crown. After all, the intention is to hand over the factories to the settlers if possible.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): On behalf of the leader of the Country party, I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. CORSER: On behalf of the hon. member for Aubigny, I move the insertion, after the word "require" on line 20, of the words—

"Provided that upon the petition of at least 50 per cent. of the suppliers to any such factory or enterprise, the Minister shall so dispose of such factory or enterprise upon such reasonable terms and conditions as may be mutually agreed upon."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 9—"Water facilities on individual selections"—

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I have an important amendment to move on this clause which does not alter any of the features of the Bill. I move the omission, on line 8, page 7, of the word "fifteen," with a view to inserting the word "thirty." The Bill provides that the cost of any water facility is to be deemed a loan, and, if a water facility is provided on a perpetual lease—say it is a well—that well is owned by the owner of the land, and the owner of the land is the State. The clause provides that no greater time than fifteen years shall be allowed in which to pay for the cost of that water facility, and that payment shall be at certain rates. It is only reasonable to give at least the same terms as are provided under the State Advances Act to-day, and the Minister will agree that under that Act the settlers have twenty-five years in which to repay a loan. Now that we are dealing with perpetual leasehold, we claim that the water facility really belongs to the holding and is a part of the holding, and it is not going to depreciate within that time. For thirty years at least that well is going to be of value.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Not a well; a bore might be.

Mr. CORSER: The Minister will agree that it will be of value for thirty years. The Government can call upon the occupier or holder to keep it in repair, the same as may be done under the present Act. Surely the Minister is not going to ask the present holder to pay for the cost of the water facility within fifteen years, when those who come after him for fifty years are going to benefit by it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We must have some regard as to the probable lifetime of the improvement.

Mr. CORSER: The Minister will not say that that well will not last for thirty years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It may not last for thirty months.

Mr. CORSER: Then the selector should not pay for it at all. The Minister should not charge a settler for the cost of a well

that is not going to last thirty months. That is against the spirit of the Bill. On the second reading the Minister pointed out that the Bill provided facilities that were not offered under any previous legislation, and that it was proposed to charge only for water when it is found, and not charge for dummy holes that are put down. That is a very excellent provision, and the Minister must not now say that the selector is to be charged for the cost if the well is only going to last thirty months.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is like an old-age pension. You must have some limit.

Mr. CORSER: Yes, but I do not think it would be unreasonable to allow thirty years in which to pay for the cost of providing water. These settlers are going on the land with very little money, and you do not want to ask them to pay within fifteen years the whole of the cost of providing water which may run into £200 or £300. When a selector has to carve a home for himself on a forest selection or a scrub selection, you must give him some time in which to pay for the water that is provided for him.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The time you suggest is too long.

Mr. CORSER: The time is not too long. A settler has too many calls on him during the early part of his settlement. The early years are the hardest period for the man taking up land, and any extension of time in which to pay for these things, the benefits of which are handed on, will be of great assistance. If a man takes up a dry block and proves that there is water down in the earth—which will be of benefit to all who come after him—why should he within fifteen years be called upon to pay the whole of the cost himself when he has to clear his land as well?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why should the cost of the dam at Cabbage-tree Creek be charged to posterity?

Mr. CORSER: Thirty years is not posterity. Heaven help some of us if it is. You are taking a pretty big gap out of a man's life when you ask him to pay £300 for a well in fifteen years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What does it amount to?

Mr. CORSER: It is not much if that is all he has to pay; but he has to make a home, he has to stock his farm, and he has to clear the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If he is working for wages, he has to provide a house for his wife and children and clothe them.

Mr. CORSER: That is all a worker has to provide. The wages man is quite sure of his money every week, while the farmer is not. The wages man has to provide a home and clothe his children, and so has the farmer. But the wages man stops there, while the farmer is to pay for the cost of a water facility in fifteen years. Does the wages man pay the cost of his gas or electric light supply in fifteen years? Of course he does not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The wages man has to pay for his water, while this settler will not pay for his water.

Mr. CORSER: He has to find the water and to pay for it. If he does not find water himself he will have to pay to get it from the next place. I think the Minister will

Mr. Corser.]

agree that there are too many duties imposed on settlers when they first take up land to justify calling upon them to pay for their water facilities in fifteen years, when those who come after them will derive just as much benefit as the man of to-day, and will not have the calls on their pockets which the pioneers have. I shall sit down and give the Minister the opportunity to accept the amendment. It is a reasonable amendment, and the Minister has not been too reasonable in meeting us up to the present. The hon. gentleman told us he would not have accepted the other amendments indicated if we had moved them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are provided for.

Mr. CORSER: I hope the Minister will accept the amendment, which will be a big help to a man who goes out to make a home in the virgin forest or scrub.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, Cairns): The hon. member for Burnett has made out a fearful case about the selector with regard to water. I would commend him to the speech of the hon. member for Warwick last night. While I do not agree with everything that the hon. member for Warwick said, we must all admit that there is a limit to the extent to which the State can mother these settlers.

Mr. CORSER: Certainly; but you still own the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If we destroy the independent effort of the individual, we shall get nowhere. We can go on giving State aid here and there, and after a while people will regard it as a right.

Mr. CORSER: You are not giving it. The settler will not own the water facility, as it will be on Crown land; he is only getting a lease of it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He is given the money to provide permanent water facilities, and the Crown takes the responsibility of any "dud" bores. That is a great concession. Some of this area may be waterless, and dams may be constructed which will leak. That is one of the experiences that happen in providing water, and the State is taking the responsibility, because really the twelve months' provision means that the well or bore is given a fair chance of showing whether it will be a success or not. The hon. member will agree with me that in nine cases out of ten, if a bore is successful and runs for twelve months, it is likely to be permanent. We find that it is during the first twelve months that the water runs out in bores which are unsuccessful. This is a great concession, because there will be numbers of these bores which will come on the State. In the Burnett district we have already drilled holes; we have found salt water in some places, and no water at all in other places. There are going to be a number of bores which will be useless, and the State, as a whole, has to bear the burden of these unsuccessful attempts. That is something in the right direction, but we do not want to go too far in regard to these facilities that have a limited life. We must admit that all man-constructed facilities have a definite life, and our system of finance compels us to put upon a facility or undertaking the obligation of repayment during the term of its usefulness. No business could be carried on unless the

owner of that business makes provision for depreciation or renewals from time to time. If he builds a factory which has a twenty years' life, and does not pay for it or provide a fund to renew it in twenty years, it is bad finance, and he will go to the wall. I am prepared to meet the hon. member in a spirit of reasonableness, and make the term twenty years. I am going beyond a fair limit even in making it twenty years. I have gone into this matter of water facilities, and I think twenty years is the outside limit that we can allow for repayment. That is as far as I can go, and it is really going a little further than we ought to go. I repeat again that the selectors are independent men; we are not going to regard them as paupers who cannot help themselves. I hope we shall not get that type of men, but men with a capital of £500 or £600, or else a capable family, and men who are determined to make good on the land. We shall be able to advance them money from the State Advances Corporation, £1 for £1, which with their own money and labour will give them a fair amount. I am not one of those who believe they should work up to the limit of £1,200; they should keep within their means. I believe that if they only need £200 it is all they will ask for, and they will carry on from their own resources. For that reason I am loath, for the sake of making the terms too liberal, to do something that is fundamentally wrong. In connection with any instrumentality, business, or undertaking provision should be made to pay for any facility during its period of usefulness. That is a sound financial proposition, and that is the reason why we have made the term fifteen years. Of course, some bores and wells may last 100 years, while others may not last ten years. Many will come under the category of useless bores. We must have some fair general average, and I took the average of fifteen years. That is the figure supplied by the department, but I am prepared to meet the hon. member for Burnett by making the term twenty years.

Mr. CORSER: I shall be pleased to accept the suggestion of the Minister to make it twenty years in place of my amendment, and ask permission to amend my amendment by substituting the word "twenty" for the word "thirty."

Amendment, by leave, amended accordingly, and agreed to.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): I move the omission, on line 10, page 7, of the word "two" with a view to inserting the word "five." This is a very slight amendment, and I hope the Minister will accept it. The Government will not lose anything by it. It will give a selector another three years in which he is liable only to pay interest. During the first three years there is generally no return from a selection, and if we give the settlers five years in which he has only to pay interest he will be able to make his selection productive. The Government are not asked to finance a man under this amendment. I favour the nursing to a certain extent of new settlers on the land; they have to depend on the Government to carry them through. If a man is worth helping, let us help him; but if he is not worth helping the sooner he is out of the settlement the better. The State Advances Corporation is prepared to advance money, and I hope the Minister will accept the amendment.

[*Mr. Corser.*]

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I would like to see the amendment accepted. It is far harder for a settler to make repayments during the first five years than it is afterwards. Hardly any land, particularly in forest country, is improved in less than five years. Take any of the forest country along the coast and consider whether what I have said is not true. I admit that it is quite different where the land is scrub land, because a fire can be put over the land and the timber can be destroyed much more easily than in forest country. It is a well-known fact that, on ordinary forest selections, clearing and ring-barking and ploughing will take five years. Whoever saw people go on to virgin land and start to make money in less than three years? It is a well-known fact that, in the wheat country of New South Wales, they did not make anything on forest land for three years, and the Minister will be well advised to accept the amendment, which will only bring the Bill into line with the conditions under which the settler can get a loan from the State Advances Corporation.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): I am quite conscious of the fact that it is possible to do too much for a settler, and, after all, if you are going to make a choice between nursing a man and putting on the land an industrious farmer with the determination to succeed—a man of enterprising spirit—it is far better to choose the latter, because the other man is far better off the land altogether. At the same time, whilst sympathising with the Minister, we have to bear in mind the experience of the past, which has taught us, again and again, that men will take quite five years before they turn the corner and are able to realise the results of their labour. I think that in the case of the Maryvale selections, and indeed of all the settlement within my knowledge, if the principle of exemption from the payment of redemption for five years was not recognised in the original scheme, it was conceded afterwards by the Lands Department. I fancy that, if the Minister makes inquiries, he will find that such is the case. When one considers the position of the settler setting out on the herculean task of converting heavy forest lands into areas suitable for the plough, one wonders that the spirit is found in anyone to attempt such an undertaking. If we desire to offer inducements to men of the very best spirit, a very essential thing is to extend the term without payment of redemption to five years. I emphasise that the experience of the past confirms the opinion that that is the right and the wise thing to do.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I sincerely trust that the Minister will accept the amendment. I am sure he will admit that two years is rather too short a term. Under the State Advances Act, as has already been pointed out, exemption from repayment of the principal is allowed for five years, so that in this amendment we are only following precedent.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are making a departure in this clause from existing legislation.

Mr. PETERSON: I agree that the provisions dealing with the supply of water on the farms embody a very fine idea and deserve the commendation of the Committee, but we do not stultify ourselves if we ask that the position of the settler shall be made as easy as possible in the initial stages. It is only by the effort which he puts into the land that

any value in it is created. Consequently, during the first two years, the average settler does not earn anything; it is all going out, and he is living on borrowed money. If the Minister accepts the amendment he will earn the gratitude of the settlers. He should bear in mind that we should do everything to make the initial stages easier, even if we have to make the conditions ultimately harder.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): The concession I have already given means that the selector will have eighteen years in which to repay the advance, whereas under the clause as drafted he will have to pay it in thirteen annual instalments. Consequently, the repayment is now extended over a further period of five years. I am, however, willing to make the period without repayment of principal one year more. I am loath to do these things, because it is easy enough for me in Parliament to grant concessions like this. I have found a similar request put forward in the sugar industry. Under the Act which provided for the erection of the Babinda mill, for instance, the period without redemption payments is two years. The growers have fought time and again to get that period extended, and I could not understand well-to-do people who were making money at sugar-growing urging such an extension. The Government, fortunately, never gave way, but I had the opportunity of asking a leading grower the reason for the request. I said, "Why do you want this term extended?" The mill is making money—in one year they made a profit of £65,000—and you can meet your payments of interest and redemption." He said, "If we could get the period extended, I could get all my money, and I might be able to sell my farm and be able to hand the obligation on to the man who follows me." That cannot happen in this case, of course, because a settler will have to remain on his farm five years before he can transfer it; but, if you extend the period to five years, he would then be able to pass the obligation on to someone else. It has to be borne in mind that very few men who buy farms have commercial instincts sufficiently developed to look into these things. (Opposition dissent.) They do not look into the problems of the future. They say to themselves, "There is a farm at such and such a price," and they think very little of the other obligations. I am prepared to make the period three years, but I am not prepared to go any further. These provisions will apply to the water facilities, and not to the material for reticulation or to the machinery that goes on the settlement.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I would like to present this aspect to the Minister: Does he realise that by making the period three years he is giving a preference to those who are not in the Burnett and Callide areas, or, in other words, if a settler in [5 p.m.] any other district applies to the State Advances Corporation for money, he comes under provisions which allow for an exemption from the payment of the capital for a period of five years?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: So he will with respect to money borrowed from the Corporation for other purposes. We are fixing these periods in the Bill because of the uncertainty attached to water facilities.

Mr. PETERSON: The Minister has been very generous in conceding one year in this

Mr. Peterson.]

case, but, at the same time, I think it was hardly a fair thing to say that the Callide settlers are only to have an exemption of three years, when settlers in other parts of Queensland have an exemption of five years. They should all be on the one level.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The settlers will have the advantages provided by the State Advances Corporation with respect to work that is of a more permanent nature. The question of water facilities is a very uncertain proposition.

Mr. PETERSON: All the loans obtained from the State Advances Corporation carry a provision for a five years' exemption, consequently the settlers in other districts will be placed at an advantage compared with the Burnett settlers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: But they are not provided with water facilities.

Mr. PETERSON: No. The State Advances Corporation does not advance one farthing to any settler for the purpose of making water unless he has water somewhere in his holding.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are paying under this Bill for the whole cost of the water facilities. The settler under this Bill needs no money, but he has to find half of the money when he obtains a loan from the State Advances Corporation.

Mr. PETERSON: The Minister will probably find that in the future there will be a good deal of hardship, principally in view of the fact that it will take two years before a settler can bring his land to a state of productivity. It is only a very small amount spread over a number of years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am not prepared to go any further.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): In view of the Minister's statement, I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. COSTELLO: I beg to move, on line 10, page 7, the omission of the word "two" with a view to inserting the word "three."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. COSTELLO: I beg to move the omission, on line 20, page 7, of the word "seven" with a view to inserting the word "fifteen." I take it that the ordinary means for pumping water will be windmills or engine pumps. A period of seven years is a very short life for a windmill. I consider that fifteen years is only a reasonable life of a windmill, pumping engine, or pumps.

Mr. MOORE: I have had one for thirty years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What is the average?

Mr. COSTELLO: I know of one that has been up for over twenty years. For the first seven years after a man goes on the land he works day and night doing hard, solid toil. We should not expect him to pay everything back in a few years. We should give him a chance to get on his feet. He will enhance the value of his property each year as he works. If we make the taxation as low as possible for the first ten years, then we shall have a chance of getting successful farmers. I hope the Minister will accept my reasonable amendment.

[*Mr. Peterson.*

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): I am not going to accept the amendment. I have no intention of giving any further concessions in this direction. We have definite information about this matter. We know that some mills last from fifteen to twenty years, but we must fix the average life of the machinery. I do not think that this Committee is inspired with the idea of giving something away for nothing. Seven years is a fair average life for the equipment that we propose to supply.

Mr. MOORE: Where did you get your information from?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: From the Water Supply Department—people who know.

Mr. MOORE: It is most extraordinary information.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. gentleman may have had a windmill for fifteen years, but it is like Paddy's gun—it has a new lock, stock, and barrel. The parts have been continually renewed.

Mr. MOORE: No. I have never had a bolt put in mine for twenty-five years. Nothing has been done to it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I know a little about the depreciation of machinery. Some of it only lasts for a few years.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It depends on the treatment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is so. Our expert information is that the average life is five years. That was the term provided in the original draft of the Bill, but I altered it to "seven," because I thought that five years was a little short, as I was told that there were instances of mills which lasted fifteen years, though I have my doubts about it. The hon. member for Aubigny says that he has not had his mill repaired for twenty years.

Mr. MOORE: I have three mills that have never been touched since they were erected, except to oil.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What about the piping?

Mr. MOORE: It is exactly the same as when it was put down.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What about the troughs?

Mr. MOORE: They are all the same.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In the face of expert information, I am not going to give way on this matter. I know that pumping machinery depreciates very quickly. I have not had anything to do with the pumping of pure water, but I know that the machinery for mine pumping depreciates very rapidly. In twelve months, eighteen months, or two years you will see a real good pumping plant rendered useless through the action of mineralised water. I am informed that the water in the Burnett district is not going to be pure unadulterated water, such as we get through our reservoir in Brisbane.

Mr. WARREN: You had better not say any more about that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That has to be considered. It is foolish for us to allow a longer term than the machinery will last. I do not intend to give way on this matter.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): The Minister has been wrongly informed, but, if he had been rightly informed, the amendment does not compel him to allow the full period of fifteen years. It reads, "not being greater than fifteen years." Does that not leave it open to the Minister to make what agreement he thinks appropriate under the circumstances? In making it fifteen years it only gives the Government the same protection. A windmill may be provided by the settler which will not wear out in the time mentioned by the Minister. A windmill that would wear out in seven years would not be worth purchasing. A pump comes under the same category. In large areas where there is salt water it will corrode the pump. The Minister has been very reasonable, and I hope he will continue to be so. It is the experience of everybody who has pumping machinery that its life is far more than fifteen years. If the Minister went on the Darling Downs—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is your trouble. You have never been off the Downs.

Mr. DEACON: Let the Minister go anywhere he will. Any machinery agent will tell him that the life of a windmill is more than fifteen years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are selling it.

Mr. DEACON: What is expert advice on these matters if you do not go to the people who are selling this class of machinery or the people who have been using it? Where would you get your expert advice from? The Minister has only gone for his advice to the officers of the Department of Public Lands. That advice is altogether different from the actual knowledge of practical men.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I am sorry that the Minister cannot extend the period to fifteen years for these reasons: Firstly, these loans have to be obtained under the State Advances Act, and, secondly, the Minister must realise that, when a loan has been granted, the farmer has to mortgage everything possible on his farm to the State Advances Corporation. The result is that, although he is granted a loan for seven, ten, or fifteen years, or whatever the term may be, the fact still remains that the Government own the facility until the whole of the loans that have been granted have been wiped out by the settler. Consequently they incur no risk by extending the period to fifteen years, because they own the land, and because the State Advances Corporation has a mortgage over everything on the farm bar the farmer's mother-in-law. (Laughter.)

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumbidgee*): I am afraid that the Minister has been very badly informed. I have been handling windmills and pumps for a considerable number of years, and, if a windmill does not last for a longer period than two or three years with the exception of duplicating parts, it is either because it suffered as a result of a cyclone or through the carelessness of the user.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Are not those factors to be taken into consideration in coming to a decision?

Mr. WARREN: I will deal with that factor in a moment. Most of the pumps, whether power or hand, that are used on farms have a life of thirty years. If you take any pump at all as an example, you will find that only small parts have to be

replaced. The Minister touched on a very difficult problem when he referred to the quality of the water. I do not know that the Minister had any authority to say that the water is going to be bad.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is not the reason. The Rights in Water and Water Conservation and Utilization Act is to be amended, and this provision will be inserted for other places as well as for the Burnett district. I must exercise care in these provisions, because they are going to apply to places other than the Burnett.

Mr. WARREN: There are very few places in Queensland where you will find water that will damage the inside of a pump or the piping. If such water is found, it is just as well to leave it in the ground, because it is injurious to the stock. The Dalby bore water is one of the hardest on galvanised iron, but you will find that the containers last for fifteen years. That water contains soda as well as other chemicals. Such water will not be found in a settlement like this.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is any amount of water that has corrosive qualities besides artesian water.

Mr. WARREN: Yes, but where that water is found it is unfit for stock.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is fit for stock in some cases.

Mr. WARREN: It is generally unfit for stock. The Department of Agriculture has given the opinion that water which has corrosive qualities is bad for stock.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Lime-water is good for stock.

Mr. WARREN: It is not particularly bad so long as it is limewater. If the life of this farm machinery is only going to be seven years, the Minister is right.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are not going to end in seven years.

Mr. WARREN: If they are not, I do not see why the Minister should not extend the period. The men who will settle on these lands are not going to have an Eldorado.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The few shillings the hon. member is quarrelling over will not make any difference.

Mr. WARREN: If it is only a few shillings why should not the Minister spring it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Because there is a principle involved.

Mr. WARREN: In my opinion it is a want of principle. I am convinced that there is one point that the Minister has overlooked, and it is in relation to this point that I rose particularly to speak. There will be a lot of property on the ground which will probably revert to the Minister and may probably be neglected. The majority of settlers to-day are only slaves.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then I saw the finest lot of slaves at the Gympie Show the other day that I have ever seen.

Mr. WARREN: The Minister kept away from the districts where the poor sort are. A great deal of the loss on machinery on farms is through neglect. As there will be a considerable amount of property which will be really the property of the Department of Public Lands until it is paid for, it will be very wise for the Minister to have some one to see that the conditions he imposes are

Mr. Warren.]

carried out on these farms. He will thus be doing not only good to the country but to the settler.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You make inquiries and find out what the banks are doing.

Mr. WARREN: I do not want to make inquiries. I know too well what banks will do. They look after their own interests.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They will never give the owner the life of an article.

Mr. WARREN: That does not justify the Minister in not making the period a little longer.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am making it a few years longer.

Mr. WARREN: Why could not the Minister extend it a little more with respect to their windmills and machinery?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It would be like advancing them money for a suit of clothes to be paid for after the suit was worn out.

Mr. COSTELLO: I think a suit of clothes will last five years.

Mr. WARREN: I hope that the Minister will give his favourable consideration to the amendment.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I support the amendment. I contend that most of our pumping plants will last for the best part of twenty years, and I think it would be reasonable if the Minister acted similarly to what he did regarding the life of a well, when he met me in my amendment with a compromise of twenty years—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A pretty good compromise, too.

Mr. CORSER: I still argue that I was right in asking for thirty years. Seven years is too short a time in which to ask a new man to pay for the machinery installed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was thirty years just now.

Mr. CORSER: I agree that the machinery has not the same life as the well itself. Thirty years on a perpetual leasehold is not too long a period over which to extend the payment of the well. He does not own the well.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will not discuss that subject.

Mr. CORSER: I know any amount of pumping plants that have been in the same position for twenty years in the Burnett district, and which are to-day in good condition. They have only had small renewals.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What was the renewal—a new pump?

Mr. CORSER: No; a small part costing 4s. or 5s.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What is the cost of a windmill?

Mr. CORSER: It all depends on the size. It might be £40 or £45.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Don't you think seven years is long enough for a man to pay £40?

Mr. CORSER: It is not long enough, because the settler is not in a position in his early days of settlement to find the money. He has to find the mill, the pump, the pipe, a tank—and he will want one containing about

4,000 gallons; it is no use putting in a 500-gallon tank—troughing, and all that sort of thing, and it will cost him at least £100.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, but he gets the water on the spot.

Mr. CORSER: Yes, but it is only a spot. It is more than you will get here after 8 o'clock.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. CORSER: I ask the Minister to be reasonable and accept this amendment. I think he should grant a fifteen-year period. It is no use putting settlers on the land and asking them to pay too much in the early years of their settlement. In seven years they are still trying to make a farm out of the scrub, and it is during that time that the assistance we may give them is most beneficial. The Minister need not be afraid that it will depreciate the value of the holding.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not want the settler to be paying for something that has gone past its useful period.

Mr. CORSER: Does the hon. gentleman mean to say that a pumping plant has gone past its useful period in seven or ten years? That is not so.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I can see that you have never bought time-payment furniture. (Laughter.)

Mr. CORSER: Time-payment furniture?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It would be better for the man to pay straight out.

Mr. CORSER: On account of his shortage of money he has to pay in instalments.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The sooner he gets rid of his obligations the better.

Mr. CORSER: How can he do that when he is hampered?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Your previous argument was that he did not pay for his machinery because of the increased price of implements.

Mr. CORSER: The increased price of his implements, food, and clothing for his family.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Does not that apply to his commodities also?

Mr. CORSER: He has to find the money to pay for feeding and clothing his family, and it is possible that his first year's improvements in grass might turn out weeds instead. Up to this time he will have no income from his land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In seven years?

Mr. CORSER: Yes, but he has other payments to make for everything that he has bought. The hon. gentleman stated that the settlers going on this land will have an average of £200 as capital.

Mr. COSTELLO: Too little.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The settler is not getting a ready-made farm.

Mr. CORSER: A ready-made farm under this Bill! Perish the thought! I hope that the Minister will agree to the amendment.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): I feel sure that the Secretary for Public Lands has listened attentively to the arguments of practical men on this side of the House.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Keep your arguments to practical men.

[*Mr. Warren.*]

Mr. COSTELLO: May I suggest, in order to get away from this clause, that the Minister makes the period ten years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; I have to consider the whole of Queensland.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): The main object of this Bill is to attract settlers to the land, and when the settlers are there to make the conditions such as will cause the settlers to remain and carry on their operations satisfactorily. My experience for quite a number of years is that the man on the land, by and large, is a trier and will meet his obligations to the Government or the storekeepers or anyone else at the very earliest opportunity. By granting this extended time for the payment of machinery it does not necessarily follow that the whole of the settlers are going to take advantage of the privilege. It is simply asked that the privilege be placed in the Bill to give some settlers who may have had a particularly trying time an opportunity and an assurance that they will not be hampered. I do not profess to have any knowledge in regard to the life of the implements to be supplied, but I would point out to the Minister that the liability, if extended over the period of seven years, will have been considerably reduced at the end of that period by the four years' payments that will have been made. I understand, of course, that the Minister is prepared to allow three years to elapse before the settler will be responsible for any payments except interest. After that, he will have to make his regular payments in reduction of the amount due on these appliances. I am sure there is no better investment for the Government than that of advances to settlers and to local authorities. The local authorities are carrying on excellent work, and so are the men on the land, who are indispensable. I would like the Minister to visualise what is happening in the State of Queensland so far as our primary producers are concerned. I can say, truthfully, that we are growing practically nothing in the way of fodder at the present time.

It is all coming over the border. I do not know when a change is going to take place, but when we think that lucerne chaff is costing £18 a ton, and has been doing so for months, and that all the chaff is coming from the South, I cannot for the life of me understand how these people are going to carry on unless we give them every possible assistance. I do not call it "molly-coddling" them. I call it rendering assistance to the deserving. The Minister has introduced into this measure some new features altogether, and they are to a great extent in the nature of experiments. We know that at the present time, owing to the dry conditions, the tough propositions that the settlers have to face are tougher than they were twenty or thirty years ago, when we knew for a certainty that we would get the usual wet season and were sure of a crop. The Minister is not going to lose anything by giving an extended period. If he cannot make it fifteen years, he should at least make it ten years. He is not going to lose any money over it, and I hope he will see his way clear to accept the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): I do not wish to appear to be stubborn, but I have no intention of giving way. One of the prime reasons is that at the present time the

Parliamentary Draftsman is drafting a new Water Conservation Bill, which will apply to the whole of the State. It is a very big measure, and will contain a good many new features, and one of the new features is to apply to the whole State the provision with regard to water facilities that is being provided under this Bill, with the qualification, of course, that it will deal with artesian water also.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is absolutely necessary

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: By giving away something on this Bill I do not want to be compelled to give way on the bigger issue. I have gone fully into the matter, and Mr. Partridge assures me that seven years is the limit of safety. That being the case, I cannot go beyond that period. I would be lacking in my public duty as a responsible Minister if I were to give way when I have been supplied with information that it would be dangerous to go beyond a certain period. In some instances where good water exists it will be safe enough to give ten years, but, taking the whole of Queensland, it is not safe to go beyond seven years. I know the consequences of showing weakness in connection with a matter like this. It would not rest with this Bill. If I were to give way in a moment of weakness on this Bill, I would have to allow ten years to pay for the cost of water conservation by private people as well as on Crown lands, because the Bill which is now being drafted will allow private people to form groups to provide water, as is being done under this Bill. That is necessary in Queensland, where the lack of water is such a great disability. It is not because I am hostile that I refuse to accept the amendment, but I have to consider public interests, and I have gone as far as I can go in granting seven years.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): The amendment does not propose to defer the payment, as after the third year the selector will commence the repayments, and each year the indebtedness will be less, and I assume that if the selector does not meet his payments in the fourth year the department will make some inquiries. The selector will be paying interest all the time, and for that reason I join in the desire to get the period extended. We have to recognise that men taking up this land will have to borrow a considerable amount of money for improvements, and we should make the repayment of that money as easy as possible. Look at the seasons that we have experienced during the last three or four years. I hope that they will break soon. Assuming that they do break, and that another dry period is experienced in another three or four years, these settlers will be faced with a dry period when they are making their first payment, and under those conditions it will be very difficult for them to meet their obligations. Certainly it is easier to find one-tenth than it is to find one-seventh of the indebtedness.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I would like to point out that the average experience of shire councils is that windmills last for considerably longer than seven years. We would never dream of putting up a windmill if it was only to last for seven years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I know you would not.

Mr. Moore.]

Mr. MOORE: It is an asset for thirty years

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Seven years is a reasonable time within which the amount should be repaid.

Mr. MOORE: We have to consider that a windmill and equipment to-day costs something like £150.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There are a number of factors that you have not taken into consideration.

Mr. MOORE: I am taking into consideration that a man in starting on a selection has a considerable amount of money to pay out. For the first couple of years practically everything is going out and there is nothing coming in. I am not going to say that, if the water in the Burnett district is highly mineralised, the Minister is not quite right in limiting the period to seven years. He may have had experience in that connection.

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

Mr. MOORE: I know that there are certain districts where the water is highly mineralised, and the pipes wear out very quickly, and in such cases the Minister would be justified in his action; but I do know that in parts of the Burnett district, according to the reports of the land agents, water is only to be found at a great depth. They have to sink 400 or 500 feet to get water, which is going to be a costly matter, and then on top of that the selector will have to erect a costly windmill. That will be a tax on the owner of a small area of land, and if the Government distribute the repayments over a longer period of years without affecting the security, they will be doing a wise thing. I know that the life of a windmill depends largely on the way in which it is treated. I have seen windmills go to pieces in three years, because they were not looked after. All machinery must be regularly oiled and well looked after. My experience is that a man who takes up a farm and who has a windmill gives a great deal more attention to it than is given to public property by State or shire council officials. We have to make arrangements in connection with windmills in the hands of shire councils to keep them up to the mark. If there is a high wind blowing, and the machinery creaks, a private individual will look after the windmill and oil it, because he recognises that it would be a very expensive matter if it fell to pieces. If a man is careless, and the machinery goes to pieces by not being oiled, it will cost him a considerable amount of money.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There are a number of factors which you have not mentioned.

Mr. MOORE: That is so. I recognise that in certain districts there are vital factors in connection with water which will eat out pumps and pipes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There are waters that destroy locomotive boilers.

Mr. MOORE: But there are counter-irritants which you can put in an engine or boiler to preserve the pipes if you have water of that nature. If a man is putting pipes into a bore and gets water of that sort, he coats his pipes with a solution which will protect them. If highly mineralised water is met with, no man in his senses is going to put down ordinary galvanised iron pipes without some protection.

[*Mr. Moore.*

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: All these things have been decided on after consultation with a man who is supposed to know his job, and seven years is taken as a fair period.

Mr. MOORE: A good deal depends on the district in which he is located.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: One of his chief jobs is to analyse the water for the whole of Queensland.

Mr. MOORE: I cannot understand why a man with experience all over Queensland should recommend such a low term as seven years. If mineralised water is met with, coated pipes or pipes of some other material should be used and not ordinary galvanised iron pipes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In deciding on a period you must take all the factors into consideration.

Mr. MOORE: I understand that the Minister is anxious to see that the security is there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And that the man himself is not paying for something which really does not exist.

Mr. MOORE: If the country and quality of water is reasonably good, and there is not much chance of the windmill being destroyed in fifteen or twenty years, I cannot see that the security is depreciated in any way. After all, the amendment will only give a man an opportunity to extend his payments over a longer period, and the period in which he most needs assistance is at the beginning of his settlement. It only needs reasonable care to be exercised. The Minister has full power to declare where a bore shall be put down and the class of equipment which shall be used; and, if he finds that in certain districts the water is highly mineralised and will eat the pipes, he will see that a certain counter-irritant is used to neutralise the effects of the water, and so maintain the value of his security and enable the selector to carry on without too great difficulty. We are told that the department has a man who analyses the water throughout Queensland, and if he finds that the water in a particular area in the Burnett district is unsuitable for ordinary galvanised iron pipes, he will either have concrete pipes or put some preparation on the galvanised iron pipes to protect them. If this is going to be a burden on the selector, the term of repayment should be extended for a longer period. I do not want the Minister to do it if the security of the department is in jeopardy, but if he can find out that the security is there what difference can it make to the department whether the time is seven years, ten years, or fifteen years? All the Minister requires is that the asset shall be there, so that if at any period a man leaves his selection the Government will not lose anything. I do not want the Government to lose any money in assisting the settlers, and the terms in regard to loan money should not be too easy; but I recognise that, when the settler has an asset in the shape of water facility, he should be allowed more time to meet his obligation. The Minister would be well advised to take all these matters into consideration, to see whether he cannot agree to a little extension of the term of repayment.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): In accepting the amendment the Minister will not

be giving anything away, as it only allows the settler a longer term to meet his obligations at the discretion of the Minister. If we extend the term to fifteen years the Minister will be no worse off.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You go to a windmill firm in Brisbane, and see what terms you can get for repayment.

Mr. DEACON: The Minister is capable of administering his department, and ought not to be afraid of extending the term of repayment to fifteen years. He would not like it to be said that any member of his Government would be so foolish as to make a bad bargain when a matter is left entirely to his own discretion, and I therefore think he ought to accept this little amendment.

Amendment (Mr. Costello) negatived.

Mr. EDWARDS (Nanango): I move the omission, on line 22, page 7, of the word "two" with a view to inserting the word "three." The clause will then read—

"Provided that during the first three years of the period the selector shall be liable for payment of interest only."

I think the Minister will be able to see his way to accept this amendment, as it is only in keeping with the concessions he made previously.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Oh, no!

Mr. EDWARDS: The Minister is taking up quite a wrong attitude. He has stated over and over again that he has been rather too generous, but in practically all the amendments moved from the Opposition benches there is a big principle which affects the success of the scheme. The eyes of everybody in Queensland are on the Upper Burnett and other new areas.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you know the actual cash value of this concession?

Mr. EDWARDS: All the amendments have the important object of relieving the settler in the early stages of the settlement, and everyone who has had anything to do with the pioneering period of settlement will admit that sometimes the concession of a few shillings is really a big amount to a struggling selector. In other States as well as in Queensland a man may put in two or three crops before he gets any return whatever, and it would be only reasonable for the Minister to accept the amendment, even though it involves only a small amount. I can assure the Minister that in the very early years—which the amendment affects—the settler very often has all he can do to provide food and clothing for his family without paying out any cash at all for anything else.

Mr. CLAYTON (Wido Bay): I wish the Minister could see his way to accept the amendment. He has suggested by way of interjection that it involves only a very small amount. If that is so, why not give way, because the Government are in a better position to afford that small amount than the settler? We on this side know the hardships under which the men on the land have to work, and it is especially during the first few years that they require consideration from the Government. After that they have a crop and something coming in and are in a better position to meet their obligations.

Mr. CORSER (Burnett): I support the amendment. After all, only five years are allowed in which the settler has to pay for

his pumping or other water plant. The Minister proposes to give him two years free of repayment of principal, so that at the commencement of the third year he will have to find £25, if his windmill has cost him £100. We want to put off that evil day.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The machinery companies would want the whole of the capital.

Mr. CORSER: No; they would give him time to pay.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How many years?

Mr. CORSER: They give the time that they contract to give, and we are now laying down the terms of the contract with the settler. Surely we are not going to gauge our leniency by what a machinery company would do? Such a company is a business-concern running in a business way, but our object is the success of the settlement scheme.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The period laid down in the Bill is based on the average lifetime of a windmill.

Mr. CORSER: The average lifetime is considerably over seven years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How long will a motor engine last?

Mr. CORSER: It would be a very poor one that would not last seven years. It is not the engine that goes "crook." I have had an engine since 1918, and it is now going better than ever before. The hon. member for Stanley has had one for fourteen years, and his father had one before him, and it is still going well. I know that, when the Government are selling second-hand motor machinery, they do not claim that it is any way near the end of its utility.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Motor-cars?

Mr. CORSER: Motor engines, I said. I hope the Minister will realise that he is asking a settler in the third year to pay off the cost of his plant to the extent of £25 out of every £100. As has already been stated, it is not only agricultural farmers on 640 acres who will come under this clause. A man can hold 5,000 acres under the Bill and he may want more than one plant, and in the third year he will have to pay £25 of every £100 borrowed. The Minister says that some bores are 300 feet deep in this area, and £100 would not buy a lifting plant for a bore of that depth.

Mr. DEACON (Cunningham): I hope the Minister will reconsider his decision and accept the amendment. He has had evidence from members on this side of the House that the life of the machinery which will be affected is much greater than he asserts it to be.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Hon. members over there say that a windmill costs £100. I question that.

Mr. CORSER: Mine cost that. I say it will cost that.

Mr. DEACON: It will cost more than £100 for machinery to lift water from a 300-foot bore.

Mr. COSTELLO: You would not get it for £150.

Mr. DEACON: The Minister was very reasonable in the early part of the afternoon. Why should he go wrong now? (Laughter.)

Mr. Deacon.]

[7 p.m.]

Mr EDWARDS (*Vanango*): I hope the Minister will be generous enough to accept the amendment, which is only a small concession. The Minister must realise that a settler is under a lot of expense when he commences, and this amendment will give him some little assistance. It is the little matters in the early days of settlement that make or mar the success of the settlement.

Amendment (*Mr. Edwards*) **negatived.**

Clause 9, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 10—"Common water facility to a group"—

Mr. EDWARDS (*Vanango*): I beg to move the omission on line 50 of the word "fifteen," with a view to inserting the word "twenty."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): I beg to move the omission on line 52 of the word "two," with a view to inserting the word "three."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is a consequential amendment. It is giving to the group the same right that has been given to the individual.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I beg to move the omission, on lines 55 to 58, both inclusive, of the words—

"Unless the Minister otherwise agrees, such selectors shall, notwithstanding any proportionate allocation as aforesaid, be jointly and severally liable for such repayment of the loan with interest as aforesaid."

I cannot understand why the selectors should be jointly and severally liable for the repayment of the loan with interest. I look upon this as one of the most dangerous forms of security that can be placed upon a settler. The settler has no opportunity of knowing who his neighbour is going to be. I would refer the Minister to clause 10 (5) of the Bill, which reads—

"The expenditure incurred by the Minister in providing a water facility under this section shall, subject to the next succeeding provision, be deemed to be a loan to the selectors comprising the group for which it has been provided, and shall be repaid together with interest at the rate of five pounds per centum per annum thereon by such selectors respectively in the respective proportions as allocated by the Minister during the period.

If a selection is forfeited, the incoming settler will have to pay his proportion of the expense. But, if the land is forfeited, and there is no incoming settler, this clause will have rather a harsh effect. It may happen that the group is reduced to one or two, and this clause provides that they shall be jointly and severally responsible for the repayments of the loan, which will be a heavy impost upon them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: "Unless the Minister otherwise agrees."

Mr. MOORE: It is a big risk.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We have dozens of such cases.

Mr. MOORE: Where the selectors are jointly and severally liable?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes. All the lands on the border of Western Queensland are held on a jointly and severally liable basis.

[*Mr. Edwards.*

Mr. MOORE: That may have been in connection with grazing areas, where the people are settled and on their feet.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are not on their feet in a lot of instances. That is why they want a trust to be formed. You must have some security.

Mr. MOORE: The Minister has the security. He has the security of the incoming tenant.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will show you where the burden is placed on the incoming tenant.

Mr. MOORE: Supposing the incoming tenant does not come on immediately, the other individuals forming a group can be called upon to make up the amount.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It would be only in an extraordinary case that one or two individuals would be held to be liable. Still, you must have some saving clause.

Mr. MOORE: After they have been compelled to pay, the water facility will not be the property of the one or two who have been compelled to pay, but will still belong to the other settlers who are interested in the group.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Read clause 12 in conjunction with this clause to see how the liability is passed on.

Mr. MOORE: It may be passed on in certain circumstances. It is an onerous condition to place on an individual. I know of some cases where co-operative companies have been affected by the directors having to sign a joint and several guarantee.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Minister is not likely to impose a harsh condition. The clause merely safeguards the Minister. The words "unless the Minister otherwise agrees" means that he will take into consideration the facts in each case.

Mr. MOORE: Is there any object in having a clause like that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes. The object is to make the settlers keep up to their obligations.

Mr. MOORE: Does it not seem more likely that the people who have to execute a joint and several guarantee will not form a joint water facility, but will prefer to have water facilities of their own?

Mr. ROBERTS: Did the Minister ask us to read clause 12?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes.

Mr. ROBERTS: The liability there is on the individual.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, in the meaning of the clause the individual settler is a group.

Mr. MOORE: What I want to see is the selector shouldering his own responsibility. I am quite agreeable to that. When it comes to a group and the bore happens to be a deep one, it will be a heavy burden.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Minister is not likely to impose on one selector the obligation of shouldering the whole of the guarantee.

Mr. MOORE: No, but after they have paid that the three selectors who may be the remaining members of the group do not own the water facility; it still belongs to the group of five.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, but each new settler on coming in undertakes his share of the liability.

Mr. MOORE: It may look all right for the Minister, but from the point of view of the settler I am strongly against it, and the settler will be strongly against it. It is a dangerous provision. No man likes to shoulder a liability that another man is responsible for. If a man can look after himself, if he loses his own money, it is his own fault; but he cannot protect himself from another individual over whom he has no control. He might like to go into a group.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The system is working quite satisfactorily in Western Queensland.

Mr. MOORE: It may be more economical to go into a group, providing the settler knows that he has only to shoulder his own liability, but he will probably object to shoulder the liability of another man who he knows is not a competent farmer. Under these circumstances he will be more likely to incur a greater expense than in a case where he is solely responsible for what he has to pay. The man can only be responsible for his own efforts, and he should not be made responsible for the efforts of some other individual.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He is responsible for the liabilities in a co-operative factory?

Mr. MOORE: Yes, unfortunately.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Any group must shoulder the liabilities of that group.

Mr. MOORE: It has been so in some of the co-operative factories, and it has worked so harshly that to-day it is almost an impossibility to induce directors to shoulder a joint and several guarantee.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Their liabilities are limited under the Companies Act, but still they have to stand up to a certain liability.

Mr. MOORE: It must be recognised that in a co-operative company the members are not jointly and severally liable; but all directors are equally responsible for any loss that may be incurred. Under that scheme each individual is responsible only for the loss he makes on his own property. This clause of the Bill is a dangerous provision, and something that I, as a primary producer, would not care to take on myself.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I can assure the hon. member that it is working very satisfactorily.

Mr. MOORE: I am sorry that I cannot agree with the Minister. I think it would be far better to wipe out the provision altogether. The Minister has ample power without the clause. If one or two of the settlers default, let the incoming settlers take over the liability.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The default might be wholly on one man's farm. You would not have the incoming tenant pay the whole of that liability.

Mr. MOORE: No; I would treat it exactly the way you have done.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is the exact result of the law.

Mr. MOORE: In this subclause the Minister has the power to allocate the extent of the responsibility of the respective settlers, and if one defaults he wants to put that extra expenditure on to the other three or four members of the group. That is what I object to. Let each man shoulder his own liability. If one defaults it may concern a facility that does not affect the remainder of the group.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are getting the additional benefit of having the water. That benefit is carried on.

Mr. MOORE: They cannot get any additional benefit, as they have that facility already. If one man defaults the remainder get the water just the same.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then who should carry the loss?

Mr. MOORE: The incoming settler.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If you refer to clause 12, you will see that is what he does.

Mr. MOORE: Under these conditions the asset of the land still belongs to the Crown, and the other settlers have to carry the liability.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Crown puts a proportion of the charge on the incoming settler.

Mr. MOORE: That may be so later, but in the meantime the individuals have to pay for the same benefit; the benefit is not increased. I am looking at it from the point of view of prospective settlers and their hesitancy in taking up a guarantee of this sort. They will be averse to that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am sure they would do this rather than go in for an individual water supply.

Mr. MOORE: If it was a jointly managed concern, where everybody had a voice in the management, it would be a different thing, but under this scheme one man has no control over the other. They have no voice in the management of the various farms in the group. I am sorry I cannot agree with the Minister's point of view. From my point of view it looks too dangerous a provision, and I think the settler will not be inclined to shoulder a burden like this if he can possibly get out of it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, Cairns): The hon. member has not made out a very good case. Somebody must be responsible. Under the trust bores established in Western Queensland there is a joint and several guarantee. That is only a safeguard. There will be no occasion to put it into operation if a selection is sold or forfeited, as the incoming selector will shoulder the burden.

Mr. TAYLOR: What if there is no incoming selector?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If he does not come in, of course, the facility has to be carried on just the same. Suppose there were ten men in a group and eight remained in the group and two of them did not continue on their selections, I cannot conceive of such a situation, because men will not form themselves into groups on land that is likely to be deserted. The settlers who enter into an undertaking to form a trust bore are men of permanency; they can see ahead of them. They want water, but they cannot

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afford individually to put down a bore, so they combine, sink a central bore, and run the water through the several sections at considerably less expense, and they are jointly and severally responsible for the money. A board is formed of representatives of the group, and they control the affairs of the trust bore. Under my new proposal in regard to water the whole thing is outlined as definitely and as perfectly as we can make it. We propose to extend this provision with regard to providing water facilities to the whole State; even to freehold land. Where to-day people are suffering because they have not the financial ability to provide water, we shall allow them to form groups.

Mr. ROBERTS: You will have security there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We shall have security here in the appliances and in the improvements. That is not what the hon. member is complaining about. He does not want them to be jointly and severally liable. Well, who is going to be liable? I cannot conceive of a case where any Minister, unless in a case where there has been absolute neglect, would impose a harsh penalty.

Mr. MORGAN: Each block should carry its own liability.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We make provision for each block carrying its own liability. Clause 12, which deals with the forfeiture of a selection that has a water facility provided on it under the group system, reads—

“In the event of a selection on or in respect of which a water facility or part thereof has been provided under any of the provisions of section 8 or section 9 hereof—

Those are the two sections dealing with individual water facilities and group water facilities—

“being forfeited for any reason whatsoever or surrendered to the Crown by the selector, or in the event of the Minister or the State Advances Corporation entering into possession of any such selection, the Minister shall have power to require any incoming selector to execute a mortgage and other securities required by the Minister in favour of the Minister for a sum to be determined by the Minister not exceeding the fair estimated value to the incoming selector of such water facility.”

Mr. MORGAN: I am supposing that there is an incoming selector.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Suppose there were ten selectors on one group and eight on another group, the eight would have the same liability as the ten. Perhaps the situation of the central bore is favourable for a group of ten, but you may have five men carrying the same obligation that ten men should carry. Why relieve ten men or eight men of the obligation because two men have gone away?

Mr. MOORE: Clause 12 does not provide for group selection. It only provides for the protection of the Minister in case of forfeiture under clauses 8 and 9. Clause 10 deals with group selection.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will look into that matter. It should apply to group selection. If that provision does not exist in clause 12, I am prepared to amend it to allow the Minister to hand on the

liability in accordance with the amendment which has been printed; but I think the provision does exist there. I want to repeat the point which I made in regard to liability. The same bore may serve ten people, and the cost may be the same to ten as to five people; it is a matter of location. If two men desert from the group of ten, why should the remainder not carry the cost of the facility? If there were only two men left out of a group of five, they would have to carry the liability just the same as the five have to carry it. The only method of imposing the obligation is to make the members of the group jointly and severally liable, unless the Minister thinks it will inflict a hardship, and that is why the paragraph commences—

“Unless the Minister otherwise agrees.”

We must have security. Hon. members may wish to be lenient and generous to selectors, but, after all, we must have regard to the public interest in these matters. While dealing generously with the selectors, we must recognise that the public interest is paramount, and we must have security for the money which is expended. This is merely a safeguard which any business man would place in a mortgage if he were lending money under similar conditions. Of course, the conditions are more lenient under the Government, and the proviso is more lenient, but, in the last resort, somebody must be liable. Who is it going to be?

Mr. MOORE: The Crown holds the security.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Is the Crown going to carry all these liabilities?

Mr. MOORE: You hold the security.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We hold the land.

Mr. MOORE: With the water facility.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Should not the eight men who are going to use the facility and get their supplies of water from it carry the burden until somebody else selects it and reaps the benefit accruing from the land?

Mr. MORGAN: If there are only two men, the water becomes dearer, and it may be too dear for them to carry the liability.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It may cost as much to supply two as it does to supply five, and as much to supply five as to supply eight or ten. Perhaps some of the water facilities will only supply two selectors, while others in a more favourable situation may supply five or six. Why should the remaining five or six settlers be let off from their full liability?

Mr. MORGAN: We do not propose that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are asking the Crown to take over all these liabilities.

Mr. MORGAN: No, only in regard to the block which is vacant,

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is no royal road to secure money. It has to come from somewhere, and someone has to be responsible in the last analysis. Who is to pay, if not the people in the group who are getting the bore, but the Crown?

Mr. LOGAN: Would you charge it to an incoming settler?

[Hon. W. McCormack.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If a new settler comes along he will be loaded and will take the liability of the settler who has deserted.

Mr. MOORE: He will not come in if you are going to load him like that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I think the members of the Opposition are raising bogies. In fact, to deal with some of the matters which have been raised by hon. members this evening exhausts my patience. Many matters could well be discussed on a Bill like this, but hon. members opposite are raising bogies. I have listened to a lot of balderdash about the cost of machinery, which the man in the street knows is not reliable. I have as much common-sense knowledge of these things as hon. members opposite. What is the good of trying to mislead me? I am not blaming the Opposition for their desire to go a little further than we are prepared to go. I did the same thing when I was over there.

Mr. WARREN: We are not doing that. We want a fair deal.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not blame the Opposition for that, but I do blame them for reiterating again and again that we are not acting fairly and shouldering our liabilities. I must ask the hon. member for Warwick to make another speech this evening and tell hon. members that there must be some limit to the obligations which the Government can undertake.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): The Minister has adopted a wrong attitude altogether. First of all he is under the impression that the Opposition desire to amend the Bill so that, if one man or two men in a group vacate their selections, the whole of the responsibility for the water facility will fall upon the Crown. We do not desire that. Under our proposal the responsibility of the five or six men who remain would continue. We are merely arguing that the men who remain shall not have to carry a greater burden if the others vacate their lands because they have not been able to make a success of them. Wherever you go some men are more prosperous than others: some men will make a living and others will fail. When a man fails, are you going to make the man who has succeeded, perhaps by working long hours, shoulder the responsibility of the failure? I say that the land should carry the burden, just as it does in the case of shire rates, no matter who takes it up. If a local authority builds a road past twenty or thirty selections, if one of the selectors does not pay his rates for a number of years or leaves his holding, the other selectors are not responsible for his rates. The land carries the burden, and eventually the local authority can sell it in order to recoup themselves. The same thing should apply in this respect.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Would you let it accumulate on vacant land?

Mr. MORGAN: The rates accumulate on vacant land just the same. In the case we are discussing a man borrows so much money from the State Advances Corporation or some other source and is unable to carry on. His block is thrown open for selection again, but nobody will select it because the loading is so great. Take the case of a selection with several miles of bore drains on it, which is vacated. The other selectors will be responsible for those drains although they are not on their properties at all. In the event of

a selection being vacated in this way, will the other selectors who will be required to shoulder the extra liability have the right to select the land or to use it for grazing or other purposes? If they can, the position will not be so bad.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They will have the benefit of all the money that the other selector has paid.

Mr. MORGAN: But such a selector will only leave the land when he finds that he cannot see his way clear to pay his debts. The Crown will have the land and improvements as an asset—not the other selectors who are jointly responsible.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They will have their share. If the other selector has paid instalments for four years and then deserts, the remaining eight selectors will have the advantage of his payments.

Mr. MORGAN: They have that advantage; but, in order to get that little advantage, they will have to carry the whole burden.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Not unless the Minister decides that way.

Mr. MORGAN: I do not think that, when a block is vacated, the whole of the responsibility should rest on the other settlers. They should not be penalised because they have made a success or have remained on the land. I do not think the Minister can find any other Act containing these same provisions. Take the [7.30 p.m.] case of bores put down for group selectors. There is one in the Goondiwindi district. If a settler goes off one block because he is unable to continue, the rest of the settlers are not called upon to carry the burden.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Of course they are.

Mr. MORGAN: The land carries the responsibility. It is put up for sale.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: All the selectors are responsible for that.

Mr. MORGAN: They are responsible for so much in the pound on their own blocks.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The rates can be increased to make up the deficiency. You know that you are wrong.

Mr. MORGAN: What I say is right. The whole of the settlers are not responsible for the shire rates if one tenant does not pay his rates.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You cannot have group settlement and individual responsibility.

Mr. MORGAN: This clause is going to cause distress and will penalise the men on the land. We are not raising the point for the sake of wasting time or annoying the Minister, but purely to make the Bill a better Bill.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): The Minister will be most unreasonable if he does not accept the amendment. He will agree that, if the selector takes upon himself his own liabilities and is able to meet them, he should not be called upon to make good the failures of others. We are opening up land for settlement and providing water facilities, and we are asking settlers to guarantee not only their own share of the cost, or a proportion of the cost of the communal water

Mr. Corser.]

supply provided by the Crown, but we are also asking them to make good any loss entailed by others who cannot meet their obligations.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If the case warrants it.

Mr. CORSER: And the Minister is to be the adjudicator as to whether the case warrants it or not. The whole interest of the settlers is to be wrapped up in the humour of the Minister. He might be in a good humour, like he is to-night, or he might be in a very bad humour, like he was last night—not with me. (Laughter.)

Mr. COSTELLO: You do flatter yourself.

Mr. CORSER: We were quite in accord last night. Several other hon. members raised my ire much more than the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You have only got another twenty-five minutes before the bar closes. (Laughter.)

Mr. CORSER: That is one means of silencing us, I suppose. It is another kind of gag. It only needs one word from the Minister to say that he will accept the amendment, and I will not speak any longer. I think he will agree that all Ministers should be guided by Acts of Parliament, and that it should not rest on their personal desires as to how it shall be carried out.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The success of a Government is in its administration, and not in Acts of Parliament.

Mr. CORSER: The unfortunate part is that we generally have government by regulation. The machinery is so made that it is possible for the Minister to exercise his own discretion. The regulations can be so framed that the Minister—I do not say the present Minister, but the Minister who might follow him—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It might be you.

Mr. CORSER: I did not like to put it that way. I did not like to bring about a nightmare for the hon. gentleman. However, possession is nine-tenths of the law, and until there is an election we shall allow him to retain that position, provided that his party will agree to do so. We are all interested to know what is going to happen to these people in the Upper Burnett and Callide Valley when their neighbour fails to meet the obligations placed on him by the Crown. We should protect them, and the amendment seeks to give them that protection. If the Minister wishes to extend some measure of justice to those settlers, he should accept the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have to consider the public interest.

Mr. CORSER: Public interest is the success of settlement in our country districts. Public interest is not going to be considered if we are going to do an injustice in that way.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are not going to inflict an injustice.

Mr. CORSER: The Bill makes an injustice possible.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What position is he in to-day?

Mr. CORSER: He may be a watchmaker to-day; he is not on the land.

[*Mr. Corser.*]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What position is the selector in to-day who wants water?

Mr. CORSER: According to the spirit of an Act of Parliament he can secure £200 from the State Advances Corporation, but the regulations under that Act prevent him from getting it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman will discuss the amendment. He will have an opportunity of discussing the State Advances Corporation when the Estimates are being discussed.

Mr. CORSER: I was merely answering the question asked by the Minister. I shall not disobey, but, as usual, obey your call, Mr. Kirwan. The Minister must agree that there is an Act of Parliament which allows of assistance being given to settlers, but it is impossible to get that assistance because of the regulations under that Act. The Minister may so frame the regulations that he will be able to administer the Act in accordance with his wish at the time, and probably to the detriment of the settler.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Can you name any Minister, or any department that has ever been harsh to Crown tenants?

Mr. CORSER: We have had cases of the imposition of a 10 per cent. fine for late payment during drought periods. Do you not call that harshness? I call it almost burglary. The Government almost take the farm from them. They cannot pay the 10 per cent. fine.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Give me some particular case.

Mr. CORSER: I do not like to divulge the names of individuals who have been victimised, but I can give the Minister scores of cases where people—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman will discuss the amendment. He will have an opportunity of discussing the other matter when the Estimates are under discussion.

Mr. CORSER: I shall do that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am very lenient.

Mr. CORSER: You have only been in charge of the department for about a fortnight.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I think my predecessor was much more lenient.

Mr. CORSER: He was right enough, but where there was an Act of Parliament the Minister could hide behind that Act and say that there was a flaw in it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why should a Minister want to hide behind an Act of Parliament?

Mr. CORSER: The Minister said, "We must inflict the 10 per cent. fine, because the Act provides for it." The hon. member for Normanby, the hon. member for Murilla, and other hon. members on this side have with me mentioned cases time after time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have looked that matter up, and I find that there has been no harshness, and that every case has been dealt with on its merits.

Mr. CORSER: It was dealt with all right—the 10 per cent. fine was imposed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The fine is a penalty.

Mr. CORSER: There is no necessity to impose a penalty in time of drought. If the farmers cannot meet their ordinary payments, how can they meet a 10 per cent. penalty in addition?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I know of a case where a person wanted to invest £1,000 in business and wanted a remission of his rent.

Mr. CORSER: It is all right for the Minister speaking from a jam-tin in the Domain to say that to his supporters, but that would not do in the country districts. The Government never take any interest in the country districts.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. gentleman does not get back to the amendment, I shall ask him to resume his seat.

Mr. CORSER: I am nearly finished, and I do not want to fall foul of the Chair as I am finishing, because I want to sit down in peace. I sincerely hope that the Minister will accept the amendment and allow the settlers an opportunity of meeting their own obligations without asking them to meet the obligations of their neighbours who fail.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I hope the Minister will accept this amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I was thinking about accepting it, but I won't now.

Mr. DEACON: If the Minister will accept it I will apologise for standing up.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is certainly due of you.

Mr. DEACON: The Minister seemed so hard and positive that I rose to try and persuade him. It is in the interests of the public to protect two men against another man who may leave the group. It may so happen that two or even four selectors may leave the group. Supposing three of the group selectors left the group, and only one remained, the responsibilities that the remaining selector would have to assume under the Bill would break him, and to pass a clause which would have that effect would not be in the public interests. We are not digging up old bogies. It seems to me that the Minister has been basing his experience on pastoral holdings; but the conditions attaching to them are altogether different to those which govern a 160-acre block. The people who take up a 160-acre block are not nearly so financial as a rule as the men who take up large pastoral holdings. I am sure that the records of the department will show that this condition is much more likely to bring hardship to this class of settler than to the large pastoral lessee. The Minister may wish later on that he had cut the power out of the Act.

Amendment (*Mr. Moore*) negatived.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I move the insertion after the word "aforesaid," in line 58, of the following:—

"Provided that in case where a selector who is liable for repayment as aforesaid has defaulted in respect of any portion of such repayment, and has forfeited or surrendered his holding, and in consequence of such default increased payments have been made by other selectors jointly liable for such repayment under the foregoing provision, such increased payments shall, upon reselection

of such holding, be refunded by the Minister to the persons concerned, and the amount so refunded may be charged by the Minister to the incoming selector, and for this purpose the provisions of section 12 hereof shall apply."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: When we reach clause 12 I propose to move an amendment in order to bring it into conformity with clauses 9 and 10 to include groups.

Mr. DEACON: On that understanding I will not move my amendment.

Clause 10, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 11—"Securities"—put and passed.

Clause 12—"Protection of Minister in case of forfeiture, etc., of selection for which water facility provided"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (*Hon. W. McCormack, Cairns*): I move the omission, on line 19, of the word "eight," with a view to inserting the word "nine."

Amendment agreed to.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I move the omission, on line 20, of the word "nine," with a view to inserting the word "ten."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): The clause now does not altogether provide that the incoming selector shall have the money refunded. Will the Minister move a further amendment to provide for that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The money will not be charged to the existing selectors. There is no foundation for a lot of these misgivings.

Mr. DEACON: So long as the hon. gentleman thinks it is covered, it is all right.

Clause 12, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 13 to 17, both inclusive, put and passed.

Clause 18—"State Advances Corporation may manage loan business"—

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I would like to have some information on this clause. I understand no fund has been created under the Bill or money placed to the credit of the Minister for loan purposes. Does this management only operate for that, or only for the water facilities?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It may, and it may not operate at all. The clause only says "The Minister may arrange." At present I am not arranging.

Mr. CORSER: At present you do not think it necessary to arrange that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I want to see how the new Act works.

Mr. CORSER: Is the provision put there merely in connection with the water facility provisions?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is all.

Mr. CORSER: There is no money appropriated for general loan purposes, as is the case in the Palmerston Land Settlement Bill?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (*Hon. W. McCormack, Cairns*): No; but £50,000 has been put on the Estimates. That will be paid into this fund. From that fund the Commissioner of Irrigation will proceed with the work. The idea is

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that it may be found better to have the operations conducted by the officers of the State Advances Corporation, as they will be working in that area after the facilities are established. We are now using this fund to put down the bores in that area and provide the water facilities for the selector. It will be under the control of the Commissioner of Irrigation. His officers will carry out the work, and, where possible, we intend to conduct the work with the selectors themselves under the control of the Commissioner. We shall thus be able to give them some work in constructing their own water facilities. They will be engaged on wages in that work. The idea is to run it solely under the supervision of the Lands Department, and we shall have none of the delays that occur in making arrangements with the State Advances Corporation. We have the money there for providing facilities, and we are going on with the work. The money will be paid by the Department of Public Lands under the authority of the Minister. There is no obligation on the Minister except that he will have to see what facilities the selector prefers. One selector may prefer a dam in preference to a bore. Different classes of country may require different classes of facilities. The idea is to obviate those delays which are inseparable from banking. We want to get the work done quickly to enable the selector to get stock on the land. The hon. member need not be afraid that I will allow the State Advances Corporation to manage or mismanage the work, as the case may be.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 19 to 23, both inclusive, and the schedule, put and passed.

The House resumed

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

The third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Wednesday, 19th September.

RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Pease, Herbert, Temporary Chairman, in the chair.*)

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Keppel*): I beg to move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Railways Act of 1914 in certain particulars.”

The Bill does not introduce any new or important principles. It rectifies certain anomalies in the existing Act. One principle, or an extension of an existing principle, that the Bill deals with is to enable employees to appeal in the case of promotions in the respective divisions of the State, and to establish the right of inter-divisional appeals which at the present time does not exist. The present Act does not lay down which court shall hear an inter-divisional appeal in the case of an appeal being desired, nor is there any machinery provided. This is really at variance with the spirit of the measure that was passed some years ago when it was thought that the right of inter-divisional appeals was reserved to employees in the case of promotions.

Another provision in the Bill is to enable employees to have representation upon the Inquiry Board when a charge is laid against

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an employee. That is a simple act of justice that I am certain has the approval of members of the Committee.

The Bill further removes certain minor anomalies which exist in the present Act. Provision is made for direct representation for clerical workers. At the present time in the case of appeals, clerical workers may be represented by a manual worker—a worker who is not closely in touch with their particular calling. Consequently, it has been decided to extend the scope of the appeal provision of the Railways Act and to enable clerical workers to have a special representative on the Appeal Board.

There is very little else that I desire to state at this stage. This brief outline covers the chief provisions in the Bill, and I now ask the Committee to confirm its introduction.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): The Secretary for Railways did not give us very much information in regard to the constitution of the proposed board. I would like to know if it is proposed to have an independent chairman outside of the Railway Department as chairman of these various boards?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not necessarily. It is a Departmental Inquiry Board. Provision is already made in the Bill to extend the custom that now exists; all that is intended is that, when employees are charged, or in case of inquiry into an accident in which employees are interested, an employees' representative shall be a member of the Board of Inquiry. Such is not the case to-day.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

The resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Keppel*) presented the Bill, and moved—

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

Question put and passed.

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

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): The object of this measure is to bring within the scope of the Act various measuring devices such as have come into general use since the passage of the last Act in 1912. A number of weighing and pumping machines are now in general use throughout the State of Queensland—they are generally situated on the pavement outside motor garages and elsewhere—and it is necessary, for the protection of the public, that our inspectors should have an opportunity of testing these machines and seeing that they are up to the standard. A number of other devices of a similar character are in use in industries, and it is the purpose of this measure to bring all kinds of machinery of that kind within the scope of the Act.

Another point I wish to draw attention to is in connection with the right to increase the

scale of fees. The hon. member for Wynnum, at the introductory stages of this measure, suggested that this was a mere device to collect increased revenue. Such is not the case, although it is well worth bearing in mind that where a service is performed the people for whom that service is performed have a duty to pay for it. At the present time there are various Acts on the statute-book of a similar character to this, such as the Inspection of Machinery and Scaffolding Act, under which fees are charged for inspection and for a certificate certifying that things are in conformity with the Act. The inspectors under the Weights and Measures Act have the right to charge certain fees, but these fees are not payable in cases where the weighing machine is not passed as suitable. Consequently, when you bear in mind that in certain local authority areas the weights and measures inspector is paid on the basis of the amount he collects in fees, there might be a temptation to secure better returns by passing machines that otherwise would not be classed as satisfactory. It is proposed under this measure to apply similar conditions to those in force under the Inspection of Machinery and Scaffolding Act—that is, where an inspector has been made and the weighing machine is found to be faulty, the inspector either condemns the machine or instructs the owner what adjustments are required and collects fees for the department. When it is borne in mind that these fees were fixed in 1912, and that since then the rate of remuneration to inspectors and the cost of travelling and away-from-home allowances have increased very considerably, it is to be expected that fees that were equitable then may not be so now. It is the intention of the department to go into the question very fully, and, if increased fees are found to be necessary, those increased fees will be levied. It may not, however, be necessary to increase the fees in consequence of the amendments that I have suggested. Last year the revenue from this source was £2,794 6s. 4d. and the expenditure was £3,603 14s., so that it will be seen that there is a loss in this connection.

Mr. TAYLOR: Does that include the revenue received by local authorities?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No; I am referring to the revenue received by the Government. As a matter of fact, the local authorities have six inspectors and the Government have appointed eight. Under the Act the Government may appoint inspectors to control the whole business of certain areas. An inspector is appointed for a given district, and it is the duty of that inspector to do all the work pertaining to the Act in that district, or the Minister may call upon the local authority or a number of local authorities jointly to form a district and appoint an inspector who will carry out inspections under the Act, having all the authority of an inspector appointed under the Act. As I have mentioned, there are eight Government inspectors and six inspectors controlled by the local authorities. We are not making any change so far as that is concerned, because the Act itself is sufficiently elastic to permit of the Government doing all they think necessary for the successful administration of the Act.

Mr. TAYLOR: Does the revenue you receive include the revenue received by local authorities?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We only receive a very small sum indeed from the local authorities. The amount we received last year from the local authorities was only £32 7s. 8d., so that our receipts from that source are very small.

A further point in connection with the Bill is in connection with the appointment of a Chief Inspector. In the past this Act has been administered by the Treasury Department, the Under Secretary to the Treasurer being designated Chief Inspector for the purposes of the Act. A few weeks ago the administration of this Act was transferred to the Department of Public Works, and I propose to attach it to the Machinery Department, making the Chief Inspector of Machinery also Chief Inspector for Weights and Measures. I think that is a wise course to pursue, because it must be admitted that mechanical skill and knowledge are required in connection with the inspection of weighing machines and devices of that kind. The Chief Inspector of Machinery and the members of his staff are all skilled engineers, and naturally they are the men who are best qualified to administer the Weights and Measures Act. It is because of these things that I intend to attach the administration of the Weights and Measures Act to the Machinery Department, appointing Mr. Henderson Chief Inspector of Weights and Measures in addition to the position he now holds. I do not think there is anything further in the Bill that requires explanation. It is only a short measure containing the amendments I have referred to, and I content myself with formally moving—

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

Mr. WALKER: Do you control all Government scales?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I would like a little further information from the Minister as to the relationship between his department and the local authorities. In answer to a question just now he stated that the Government received only £32 7s. 8d. in fees from the local authorities. I understand that the local authorities in the metropolitan area collect a very considerable sum in the way of fees under the Weights and Measures Act for seeing that all weighing machines are working correctly. The Minister told us that the total revenue received by the Government from this source was £2,794 6s. 4d., and I would like to know whether that revenue is received from direct charges made by the inspectors under the Weights and Measures Act in various parts of the State where local authorities do not operate? The fees at present paid in the metropolitan area are fairly heavy. I think that before any increase is made for the inspection of weights and measures we ought to know whether the local authorities which are operating are making anything out of the inspection or not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Take Warwick, for example, where they have a local authority inspector. The receipts were £198 14s. 6d., and the expenditure £242 8s. 4d.

Mr. TAYLOR: Have you the figures for the Brisbane area?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: In the Brisbane district the receipts were £563 7s. 6d., and the expenditure £399 19s. 10d.,

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and in South Brisbane district £478 12s. 6d. and £420 16s. 4d., respectively. Both South Brisbane and Brisbane have represented to the department the inadequacy of the fees to do the work properly and effectively. You can see from those figures that the inspection is costly.

Mr. TAYLOR: The measure seems all right, but I think it would be a good thing if it was either under the control of the Government or of the local authorities. I do not think it is a good idea to have a dual authority, and the appointment of Mr. Henderson as Chief Inspector in connection with this measure is probably the best thing. We know that a certain amount of skill and knowledge of a mechanical character is necessary on the part of those who have to carry out the work. Probably, in the past that knowledge has not been possessed by some of the inspectors who have carried out the work. I am not saying anything derogatory to the men who have been acting in that capacity, but this is a special kind of work. There is a remarkable thing about weights. I undertake to say that, if you weighed a load of produce or goods of any kind on half a dozen weighbridges in the city, you would get half a dozen different weights, although all the weighbridges may have been tested within a week or ten days of the time of the weighing being carried out. That is one of the troubles we have to contend with. It seems to be always the case in regard to weighing machines, especially those weighing heavy loads. I do not like the idea of this continual increase of charges, although, as the Minister pointed out, the present fees were fixed in 1912. I am very glad to see that under the measure there is going to be an inspection of the noggins with which whisky is measured out. Several people have complained to me about the size of these noggins. It would be well if the Government would do something to see that fair measure is given.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Did you ever see the hole in the bottom of the glass? (Laughter).

Mr. TAYLOR: I have seen the hole at the top. If the Bill will make any improvement in regard to weights and measures, it will have no opposition from this side of the Chamber. All we want is to see that the Act is fairly administered, and we accept the Minister's assurance that the charges which are going to be made for inspection, will not be excessive, and that inspection will be made regularly throughout the State.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I had something to say on the introduction of this measure, and I would like, to some extent, to repeat what I said on that occasion. Knowing Mr. Henderson as I do—I had the pleasure of being associated with him when Minister in that department—I feel perfectly sure that he will carry out the duties in a way entirely satisfactory to the department. Mr. Henderson is a capable and excellent officer who thoroughly understands his work.

The Minister made reference to the fees charged for inspection, which he supplemented by interjection during the speech of the leader of the Opposition, but he failed to tell us that the local authorities themselves very largely have to make payment for the duties which are performed by men in their own area. I suppose that the great bulk of the work, except in isolated cases, is done by local authority officers and not by

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the Government. I want to strike the note which I struck previously—that two things are happening this session, one of which is that nearly every Bill which is introduced is of a small tinkering nature. There are really no "innards" in them, if I may use a vulgarism. A good deal is padding, which is introduced with the object of filling up time, and there is nothing which the country is asking for at this juncture.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The country desires to see true weights and measures.

HON. W. H. BARNES: And every hon. member desires it, too; but they want something more than that; they are crying out for something which indicates originality and thought in connection with the affairs of the State. The other thing which is happening is this, that I fear any action of the Government in the direction of raising fees. If I started to point out how charges have been raised since their occupancy of office, you, Mr. Speaker, would probably pull me up very promptly, but every action of the Government has gone in the direction of seeing how much more they can squeeze out of the pockets of the people. It has either been by some little thing or some larger thing; just now possibly, in view of the fact that loans are maturing, they are keeping to little things, and do not want to irritate with bigger things.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It seems to be very easy to irritate you.

HON. W. H. BARNES: My experience is that, when they say they are not going to raise very much revenue, they are going to raise a great deal. I fear very much any action which they take in that regard. I shall not be surprised, when the regulations come out, if they indicate the same old thing again—a desire to get at the pockets of the people and to supplement the consolidated revenue so that the Government may spend the money in some of the wild ventures for which they have been so conspicuous while they have been in office. That seems to me to have been the policy of the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You take a very distorted view of the situation.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman is in the habit of taking a distorted view, and he naturally thinks that, when men seek to get at the "innards" of something, they are doing the same. But this side are out with the Minister to see that justice is done with regard to weights and measures. We are not here to advocate that anybody who is doing a dishonest thing should be protected. We say by all means let the dishonest man be run to earth, but we claim that, when doing it, the Government should not penalise, as they have done in the past, pretty well every person in the community, and indirectly get every time at the worker whose friend they profess to be.

Mr. COLLINS: We took off your poll tax.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I would like to point out the discrepancy which exists between weighbridges in the country and those in Brisbane, which are a continual source of annoyance.

Mr. PETERSON: It is the same in the Central district.

Mr. MOORE: It applies all over Queensland. If weights and measures are all under the same authority, it seems to be a remarkably inefficient one. I have had experience

of produce sent down to Brisbane, which is weighed at the country end. I do not know where the discrepancy occurs, but I know that the weight differs when it comes down to Brisbane, so much so that you cannot get the purchasers to accept the weights of the weighbridges in the country, nor can you get the producers in the country to accept the weights in Brisbane. Surely we have a correct set of master weights and measures, and it should be possible for people to rely on the weighbridges sufficiently to purchase their produce on the weights they record, and it should not be necessary to reweigh.

Mr. DUNSTAN: They should be correct.

Mr. MOORE: They should be corrected, because the present condition of things is causing endless disputes among the producers. It has been suggested that the discrepancies may be due to faulty packages, but the cases I am referring to cannot be explained in that way because they refer to cheese, and the question of faulty packages does not enter into the matter. I have noticed a most extraordinary thing—that cheese which is weighed at the factory and is weighed again at Ipswich and registers the same weight as before has nevertheless shrunk by about half a pound in a ten-pound cheese by the time it gets to Brisbane. It seems to me that the discrepancy must be in the scales, and not, as the Minister likes to suggest, that it has dwindled because people handle it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Who said that?

Mr. MOORE: The Minister did not say it, but that will be the suggestion.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You take the responsibility for your own assertions.

Mr. MOORE: The point I want to make is the difference in the weights, because I have come here and seen them checked, and the discrepancy seems to occur always in that particular way.

There is another thing on which I would like to get some information, that is as to the amount collected by the local authorities. Does it go to the Treasury to pay the Chief Inspector, or does it go to the local authorities? It is rather strange in any case that the Government should show a loss on their operations and the local authorities a profit. According to the report for 1922-23, the revenue under Government administration was £2,794 6s. 4d. and the expenditure £3,603 14s.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: This year we shall not require so much.

Mr. MOORE: I find that under the administration of the Act by the local authorities the receipts and expenditure, according to reports for the year 1922, were—

District.	Receipts from Fees.			Expenditure.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
(1) Brisbane	563	7	6	399	19	10
(2) South Brisbane ..	478	12	6	420	16	4
(3) Toowoomba .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..
(4) Warwick	198	14	6	242	8	4
(5) Wynnum (Town) ..	..	..	..	..	..	..
(6) Hinchinbrook (Shire)	..	..	..	..	..	..

Hon. members will see that no information

is furnished by local authorities such as Toowoomba, Wynnum, and Hinchinbrook. It seems rather an extraordinary state of affairs that we should have a weights and measures administration by local authorities in certain districts but no information whatever about it. The reports also contain certain comments, which seem to indicate that the whole thing is administered in rather a lax way—

"1. No charge is taken into account for rent, light, clerical labour, supervision or other incidental costs. The inspector calls attention to the inadequacy of the fees.

"2. Receipts include expenses recovered from component local authorities (£32 7s. 8d.).

"3. Information not furnished.

"4. A sum of £5 was collected by the Weights and Measures Board from each local authority in this district (total £45). The amount is not included in the receipts from fees.

"5. Information not furnished.

"6. Information not furnished."

It seems strange that the report for Brisbane should call attention to the inadequacy of the fees when they collect £164 more than they spend. Apparently the comments refer to the local authorities because they are numbered 1, 2, 3, and so on, as in the case of the list of local authorities above.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must not go into details.

Mr. MOORE: This is a Bill on which details are rather important, and I want to find out the position in which we stand. I thought that we should have had some report which would give us more information. We do not get any information as to the jurisdiction of the Chief Inspector and his assistants, which districts are administered by local authorities and which by the department itself, so that it is rather difficult for us to decide whether it is necessary to increase the fees and give practically carte blanche to the Minister to fix them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It would be out of order to give full information on this Bill. That is a matter for the Estimates. I can only speak of the principles in the Bill.

Mr. MOORE: The Bill contains a most important feature, that is, it wipes out the schedule to the existing Act which fixes the fees to be charged for the inspections and leaves them entirely to regulation afterwards, so that people will have no idea what they are going to be. We find from the figures which I have quoted that in some cases there is a profit and in others there is a loss, and I think the Minister would be entirely in order in giving us all the information which would help us to understand the necessity for the measure. The whole thing seems to be rather laxly administered, if we do not know how it operates and what the conditions are. When we have a Bill like this before us, we ought to know how the Act is working, because it might be necessary to insert a number of amendments to make the administration satisfactory in the future. We want a system under which the weights at the point of departure will be the same as those where the goods are received, and in which the fees will not be harassing to individuals who have had their scales tested. The Minister said that, if

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scales were tested and found to be faulty, there was no charge, but he went on to say that the owner had to make them right, and, of course, he has to bear the cost of that, so that there can be nothing in the argument that some of the work is done for nothing. I do not approve of the principle of wiping out a fixed scale of fees and of leaving the matter entirely to regulation. Such regulations might come into force months before they can be laid on the table of the House, and we do not want to harass traders or anybody else. We want a fairly administered Act, and, when we find that in certain districts there is a profit and in others a loss, then, instead of raising the fees all round they should be so equalised that the number of inspectors we have already will be able to carry on with the fees already contributed by the people who use their services.

I am glad to see, for one thing, that petrol pumps are going to come under efficient supervision. I have often been inclined to believe that many of them sell American gallons instead of Imperial gallons, as they are supposed to do, but we have no way of checking them. It will be a good thing for the inspectors to ascertain whether they conform to the standard under which we buy petrol in Queensland, and, if not, the people should know exactly what they are paying for. I would like to have fuller information from the Minister as to the operations of the Bill. However, we may get the information in the Committee.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): It appears to me that there is very little use bringing in amending Bills when we know that principal Acts already in operation are not being administered in the way that they [8.30 p.m.] should be administered. For many years the public, not only in Brisbane but all over Queensland, have been robbed by unscrupulous traders by means of faulty weights and measures. There seems to be no one to check the robbery that is perpetrated by those who are out to fleece the public. We have a Government in power who are supposed to look after the interests of the people, more especially the working class; yet the working class are being robbed daily under the very nose of the men who are supposed to look after their interests. The Minister will tell us that it is owing to expense that a sufficient number of inspectors are not put on.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I never said anything of the kind. If the hon. gentleman's friends are cheating the public they will be dealt with.

Mr. MORGAN: There are not sufficient inspectors to find out whether the public are being cheated or not. These traders know that they only run one risk in a thousand of being discovered, because the Government have not a sufficient number of inspectors to carry out the provisions of the Act.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What does the Act provide?

Mr. MORGAN: There are many departments that are overstaffed, and it might be possible to have a reduction in the staffs of those departments, and appoint more inspectors under this Bill for a certain period in order to protect the public. In and around Brisbane there has been a certain amount of vigilance, but in the country districts the traders can do just as they like with the

general public, and there is nothing done to protect the people.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I do not think you know what is in the principal Act.

Mr. MORGAN: I know as much about it as you do.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I do not think you do.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MORGAN: I know just as much as you do. Although you aspire to the position of Premier, that does not say that you have all the brains of the Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in addressing another hon. member directly. I ask him to address the Chair.

Mr. MORGAN: I intend to do so. I thought you were calling the Minister to order.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman was not addressing the Chair. He is not in order in not addressing the Chair.

Mr. MORGAN: I apologise for disobeying your order. I thought you were calling the Minister to order and not myself. I did not know that I was offending when the Minister created the disturbance.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MORGAN: I hope that an endeavour will be made to protect the public, not only in Brisbane, but throughout Queensland. Unfortunately, there are many unscrupulous traders in this State. I am glad that the Bill is to be applied to petrol pumps. I hope the Government will endeavour to find out whether petrol tins and kerosene tins contain the stipulated amount of petrol or kerosene. We know that the tins are becoming smaller year by year. If it is said that they contain 4 gallons, then they should contain 4 gallons.

Mr. HARTLEY: And the pints of beer have been getting smaller, too. (Laughter.)

Mr. MORGAN: If the hon. gentleman was looking after the working class, and doing his duty, he would see that the worker got an imperial pint of beer, because he is entitled to it. He should not be called upon to pay for what is alleged to be a pint of beer when it is—

Mr. KELSO: Half froth.

Mr. MORGAN: I want to see the worker get full value for his money.

Mr. HARTLEY: I do not think it would be a good thing for them to get an imperial pint of beer.

Mr. MORGAN: There are many hon. members opposite who say that beer is a necessity. They say it is a food, and not a luxury, and that the worker is entitled to beer so that he can do his work. If it is a food, he has a right to an imperial pint of beer in the same way as he has a right to demand a proper pound of steak from the butcher, and the full weight in a loaf of bread from the baker. We find that it is not the rich man, but the poor man, who is generally fleeced. I would like to see this Bill carried into effect, so that the worker can get the full value for the money that he spends.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): I am sure that this Bill will meet with general satisfaction at the hands of the public. The

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Minister has not divulged all that might have been divulged in connection with the Bill. He has given no indication as to what the fees are likely to be. Knowing as I do that instruments both for weighing and measuring are likely to be largely on the increase in the future, it is only fair that the House should be enlightened as to what the fees are likely to be. Bearing on that particular point, only to-day I was informed of one firm who intend introducing thirty measuring machines into their establishment. The fees that may be charged in connection with weights and measures may form no small item, and it is only right that there should be some indication from the Minister as to what the charges are likely to be. Dealing generally with the work carried out by the department, I cannot disagree with or reaffirm the statement made by the hon. member for Murilla, but, so far as I am aware, the department have been fairly insistent in carrying out the work. I am speaking of my own personal knowledge of the work carried out by the department in the electorate which I represent. I know that the work there is carried out fairly faithfully. I am also sure that traders, in order to be fortified with that degree of satisfaction without which no one can carry on business with any degree of self-respect and self assurance, welcome the manner in which the work is being carried out in the Warwick district. Without making any wild and broad statements as to dishonesty or corruption, I think that traders are out as a whole to do the fair thing. I welcome the measure, but at the same time I agree with other hon. members on this side that we are entitled to know what the fees are likely to be. It has been demonstrated again and again that no matter what Act you take up—I have in mind the Stamp Act and the charges made by the department under that Act which have become extremely burdensome to the people—it accentuates the feeling that you have when ascertaining what are the intentions of the Government regarding a measure of this kind. Perhaps the Minister may yet see his way to enlighten hon. members on the matter of fees before the Bill passes its second reading stage.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): This is a very important matter so far as the business of the State is concerned. I was rather pleased to hear the remarks of the Minister in reference to the weighbridges at the railway stations and to learn that they are going to receive greater attention and will be better dealt with in the future than in the past. There has been something radically wrong in connection with the weighing of produce in the past. I do not know who is responsible for it. I know that in instances it has been absolutely impossible to get the weighbridges at the country railway stations and in the city to agree. No one can understand the trouble that this causes to settlers and traders. I will quote one concrete instance in connection with the weighing of the cotton crop. There was scarcely a consignment of cotton despatched from my district where the weights on the consignment note agreed with the weight recorded at the ginnery. In some cases the difference was cwts. In consequence the Department of Agriculture had to employ a man to supervise the weighing of the cotton at the ginnery at Whinstanes. It can be quite understood that the producers, after they had taken their crop over the weighbridge at

the various railway stations and consigned it to the ginnery, believed that they were consigning a certain weight of cotton; but, when they received their returns, they found in some cases that they had only two-thirds of the quantity of cotton that they believed they had. That is a great difference.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The weighbridges of the Railway Department credited you with more weight than the weighbridge at the ginnery?

Mr. EDWARDS: Yes, and the Department of Agriculture had to place a man at the ginnery to supervise the weighing of the consignments of cotton. That proved there must have been something radically wrong with the weights.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: At all the sugar-mills the cane farmers employ check weighmen.

Mr. HYNES: So do the cutters.

Mr. EDWARDS: Many of the producers live many miles from the railway. When they take their produce to the railway station it is weighed, they pay freight on that weight, and it is despatched to the market. The weighbridge is seemingly of no value at all. It is absolutely misleading unless the weight recorded on the weighbridge at the other end agrees.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Which weighbridge do you think requires adjusting—the one at the ginnery or the one at the railway station?

Mr. EDWARDS: I understood the Minister to say that the Government were taking over the weighbridges at the railway stations.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They are under the Act now.

Mr. EDWARDS: I hope that such action will result in better administration as regards the weighbridges at the railway stations than has been the case in the past.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: According to your statement they are giving credit for greater weight than the weighbridge at the cotton ginnery?

Mr. EDWARDS: That does not get over the difficulty. If produce is weighed on the weighbridges at country railway stations and on arrival in Brisbane does not weigh the same, the producers certainly will not be paid on the railway weights. It brings about all sorts of difficulties. I do not see why the consignors should pay for any more weight than they have. What they wish is for one weighbridge to correspond with the other, after making due allowance for deterioration of the product. The Act is one thing and the administration of it another. It is the duty of the Government not to be harassing in its administration, but to administer it in the interests of the whole of the people and the producer more than in the interests of the business man. If anything is wrong with the scales or weights of the business man, his close proximity to the telephone or postal communication enables him to have the defect remedied promptly. The producer very often is in a different position. In the instance that I have just quoted three or four weeks elapsed before the difference in weights was discovered. As I said, the differences cause a lot of trouble and great difficulty is experienced at times in having the weights adjusted to suit the producer.

Mr. Edwards.]

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I regard this as a very important Bill, and certainly as a move in the right direction. It contains certain principles which are new, but these principles are vitally necessary for the purpose of carrying on legitimate trade. One of the new principles is applying the Act to measuring instruments. Persons buy according to the measurement and pay according to the measurement recorded by these measuring instruments, and, if they are incorrect, that is dishonest trading. These instruments ought to be subject to inspection, and, if they are not correct, the persons using them should be punished for fraud just the same as they are for using incorrect weighing machines. The provision for the inspection of weighing machines on carts and vehicles is a very useful and a very important provision. There has been a large increase of the sale of goods by itinerant vendors. I do not know whether these weighing machines have been inspected in the past by inspectors; but, if they have not, they ought to be. The original Act only gives power to inspectors to go on certain premises. Whether the horse and cart of an itinerant vendor carrying on his avocation in the streets can be considered as "premises" under the principal Act or not I am not prepared to say. I am rather inclined to think that they do not come under the definition of "premises." Therefore the proposed amendment of the Act is a very important one, and will put all doubts on one side so far as that aspect of the question is concerned. There is one matter in the Bill that I do not approve of altogether, and that is the question of fees. Several other speakers have raised the same objection. The fees in the past have been regulated by the Act of Parliament itself. It is now proposed to abolish that provision and have the fees fixed by regulation. The Minister should give us some further information on this point. Measuring machines have very largely come into vogue in business. In the case of a large establishment having a number of machines, the Minister might well consider the reasonableness, instead of charging the same fee for every machine, to have a graduated or sliding scale so that such a business will not be penalised to any great extent by having a greater number of weighing machines than another business. I hope the Minister will take that into consideration when he is fixing the fees in the regulations.

There is a matter which I referred to when this Bill was introduced, and which I now repeat, only to emphasise it and again bring it before the Secretary for Public Works for his serious consideration. The Act provides penalties for fraud or the employment of light-weighting or incorrect machines. I ask the Minister if he could possibly insert in the Bill a punishment for fraud by those persons or trades who, although the machines are correct, take advantage of the inattention of the purchaser and give light weight? I know it is a difficult matter to deal with, and that, as the law stands, it is very difficult indeed to succeed in a prosecution against such a trader.

The PREMIER: Under what Act would you proceed at the present time?

Mr. KING: At present you have only the ordinary remedy for fraud. This is the position: I can go into a shop to buy, say, 5 lb. of a certain article. The trader sells

[*Mr. King.*

the commodity to me a little cheaper than does his competitor, but he makes up his loss by giving me less weight; he may only give me 4 lb. 10 oz. This happens frequently in the city and elsewhere, and it is very difficult to proceed against the dishonest trader. You take your parcel of goods away, and when you get home you weigh it and take it back to the trader. He simply says, "I weighed it correctly; you have been tampering with it." You have no remedy. The inspector's duties might be enlarged to a great extent, and the inspector could be given power to go in at any time when a purchaser is buying a parcel of goods and demand to see those articles weighed after they have been weighed and delivered to the customer.

The PREMIER: There is already some provision to give protection to the public in connection with under-weight bread.

Mr. KING: That is under the Health Act. Certain articles are mentioned in that Act in regard to which you get protection, but there are a lot of articles that are not mentioned.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What about the pure food and drugs sections of the Health Act? That covers some articles.

Mr. KING: Some, but not many. There is no general protection. Protection is given only in some specific instances which are small compared with the large number of commodities that one buys.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I think it would be a good thing to do what you are suggesting, but a special Bill would be required. This Bill only provides for correct weights and measures.

Mr. KING: And punishment and forfeitures.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I think it would be a good plan to draft a Bill for the purpose.

Mr. KING: I sincerely hope that the Minister will not forget it.

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

COMMITTEE.

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

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

The third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Wednesday, 19th September.

PALMERSTON LAND SETTLEMENT BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I think there is one point on which all will agree, and that is that measures of this kind are most important. The mere title indicates that—"A Bill to make better provision for the land settlement and development of the Palmerston area in North Queensland." We all know that to justify our position in this great country, we must people it. We know what large areas there are at present unsettled. This Bill is designed to bring about settlement on what, I think, may be described as the danger spot of Australia—the north-east coast—and is, therefore, on

that must receive our fullest sympathy and support, but it embodies totally new principles to what have been proved successful in bringing about the previous land settlement of Queensland. We had the same points occurring in the Upper Burnett and Callide Land Settlement Bill that has just gone through its Committee stage, but I must say that Government control is even more marked in this measure than in its predecessor. I know very well that I should not be in order if I dealt with that phase in detail, but I would like to refer briefly, to some of the features that first catch our eyes. For instance, I find that in accordance with the policy of this Government, freehold is debarred. We have already had that question before us in connection with the previous Bill, and I am not going into that question just now. I am more particularly concerned about the bureaucracy that is growing up around our Government departments, particularly in the Department of Public Lands. For instance, I find that

these settlers will have no right [9 p.m.] to decide as to what crops they shall grow; what improvements they shall make; or the breed of cattle they may raise. In all these matters the settlers will be subject to dictation at the hands of Government officials. Their own personal initiative, their own personal knowledge and experience are not allowed to influence them one iota. Again, they are absolutely controlled as to the disposal of their produce. It is provided in the Bill that the Minister or his representative may command them to produce certain crops in certain quantities within a certain time, and deliver that produce at certain factories. Again, the Minister has power to decide what improvements they shall make on the land. I speak with some little knowledge of this subject, because I am one of the 2s. 6d.-an-acre men whom we have heard of in this Chamber at different times. I took up my first homestead selection in 1881 or 1882. The conditions were much harder then than they are now, but, in spite of the very hard conditions, we hung on and many of us achieved a certain amount of success. I am not for one moment saying that those conditions were ideal, but I think now we are rather over-shooting the mark when we go to such lengths as we are doing in this Bill in the way of taking everything out of the hands of the settler. Every movement the settler makes is to be under the control of a Government official. It will be a good thing if we could alter some of these conditions when we get into Committee, and I certainly intend moving amendments with that object in view. Again, in regard to the factories that the Bill provides may be erected in this area, I find no definite statement that these factories shall ultimately become co-operative factories. We would expect from such a Government as we have in power to-day—who tell us that one of the most prominent planks in their platform is the encouragement of co-operation amongst primary producers—that provision would be made for co-operative factories. At the same time, any sane person must realise how impossible it is to reconcile a policy of co-operation with the communistic policy of the people behind them. They say they are in favour of co-operation, and one would have thought, if that was the case, that in connection with any scheme of land settlement providing for the erection of factories for the use of the settlers they would have provided that

ultimately those factories would become the property of the settler. As showing its drastic character, it is only a short Bill, yet on seven different occasions we find the word "forfeiture" used. In some cases of forfeiture an appeal is allowed to the Land Court, but in other cases the settler is to be entirely in the hands of the Minister. He is to have no right of appeal and it will rest wholly and solely with the Minister as to how he shall use his land, or whether he shall lose it. Under conditions such as that, you are not going to get the best class of settler. Men with initiative and of independent character who are quite capable of working out their own destiny on their own lines are not going to take part in a settlement under those conditions. The Minister, in a measure, has condemned his own Bill. I notice that, when moving the second reading of the Bill, when speaking of the settlement around the Babinda Mill, as reported on page 857 of "Hansard" of this session, the hon. gentleman said—

"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."

Later on he says—

"I ask them not to regard the scheme as anathema because the Brisbane newspapers are opposed to it. The whole of the settlements in North Queensland have been successful."

They have been successful, but they owe their success to a previous Government. They have been successful under the old system of freehold, and by being allowed to be free and independent to work out their own destiny as their experience has taught them was the best. What is likely to happen in connection with the lands we are dealing with now? We are likely to have some young official with no practical experience coming along and directing the settlers as to what cattle they shall breed, what crops they shall grow, and so on. That is not likely to make for successful settlement. It is not likely to bring to our State the best class of settler. We are not likely to attract settlers from the Southern States, and we know what we owe the Southern States in regard to the class of settlers who have come to Queensland. We know that cast-iron regulations such as that are not likely to attract these men.

Take this one matter of the breeding of stock. It is a well known fact amongst those who have had experience on the subject that each individual is prejudiced in favour of the cattle he has had experience of and of which he has made a hobby. One man says the Ayrshire is the best breed, and if you give him Jerseys or Friesians he probably will not make the same success with them as he will with Ayrshires. Then another man considers that Jerseys are the best, and he will do best with them. Why is provision made for interference in such matters as that? We are told that this is not a cane-growing area, but from what I can read of the report of the Public Works Commission, it is quite possible that a certain amount of cane may be grown. Again, there is the right of interference on the part of the supervisor as to what varieties

of cane shall be grown. In connection with fodder crops the same thing occurs. It is within the power of this official to lay down what improvements shall be carried out—whether a man shall build his house first, whether he shall fence his paddock first, or whether he shall clear this piece of land or that piece of land. That is unnecessary and likely to discourage settlers. As the Minister himself pointed out, we have had most successful settlement in that part of Queensland on totally different lines. In the past there has been freedom and liberty to each settler to carry on as he thinks best. If settlement has been so successful in the past under those conditions, why make this very drastic change to one of autocratic control? You can look upon the whole measure as a sort of combination of old-time feudalism and present-day Sovietism. That is the best description you can give it.

I think it is a pity that such fine lands as we have in Queensland should be sacrificed by experimental fads of this kind. Another question presents itself in this connection—that is, whether the very best piece of land has been chosen for this settlement? I have here the report of the Public Works Commission. I do not want to deprecate the fertility of the land. I have not been in the exact locality, but I have been in districts surrounding it, and have a fair idea of what it is like, and I am prepared to believe what we are told of its fertility, but it is very difficult of access. Reading from the report of "The Royal Commission appointed to inquire into and report upon a proposal for the construction of an extension of the Innisfail tramway from Nerada, the present terminus, to a point near the Little Beatrice River, for the purpose of opening up the Palmerston lands," I find that one witness, Mr. Davies, gave the following evidence:—

"From my observation we were travelling along a narrow strip of country on top of a spur, and on each side were very steep gorges?—Yes.

"What is the land like at the bottom of those gorges?—It is good agricultural land. I mentioned the matter to Railway Surveyor Wyther, and he said on any spur like that you will always get other spurs coming up from the gorges."

Another witness, Mr. Witham, gave very much the same evidence—

"It appears to be a narrow strip of land with gorges on either side. Assuming a tramline were built along that spur, what chance would the settlers on the lower country have of getting to the tramline?—Spurs run off from the main spur. When you look at scrub country in its virgin state it looks very difficult, but after opening it up you find opportunities of getting out. In the early days the country around here looked impossible country, but after it was opened up some means were always found of getting to the road."

The best of the land is probably away at the bottom of the gorges, and it will be very steep uphill hauling to get to the tramline. I should have thought that there were other areas closer to the route of the North Coast Railway which offer better facilities for settlement and at less expense than the Palmerston lands. It is pointed out in

[*Mr. Swayne.*

the report that there is a lot of timber, some kinds of which meet with a ready sale, and that there are some kinds which have not yet been brought on the market. The Minister said the other night that he was doing his best to include them in an exhibit at the Empire Exhibition, with a view to getting them on the oversea market. Mr. Sexton, Chief Engineer for the Queensland Government Railways, gave the following evidence:—

"Can you give us any idea what is the estimated cost of a 3 feet 6-inch gauge from Millaa Millaa to the Beatrice River?—No estimate has been prepared. It will be an expensive line.

"Do you favour the building of 2-foot tramways as a means of opening up the country?—I favour them if they are a reasonable length in themselves or are grouped. A short single line is questionable, on account of the continuous handling in transferring freights from one gauge to another.

"Would you not have to keep a separate staff if the 2-foot tramway was extended to the Beatrice River?—You would still have the staff on the system connected with Innisfail.

"Do you not think it would be far better if the 2-foot tramway was done away with and a 3-foot 6-inch railway constructed?—That is largely a matter of expense on which I cannot speak just now."

Further on he says that the country is rough, and that the earthworks would be heavy. The whole trend of the evidence is that the opening up of the Palmerston lands by railway is going to be very expensive. In my district we recently built a 3-foot 6-inch gauge line of the cheapest description through easy country at a cost of £9,000 a mile, and I think that a line of that gauge in this locality would cost from £12,000 to £15,000 a mile, and there was 25 miles of railway required. We are told by Mr. Sexton that the 2-foot gauge line which is proposed will cost about two-thirds of what a 3-foot 6-inch gauge line would cost, and we can therefore assume that a 2-foot gauge line will cost between £7,000 and £10,000 a mile. Expert witnesses tell us that that gauge is not suitable for carrying timber, although it could be modified for that purpose by using curves of lesser radii, but that would mean additional expense. It is also pointed out in the evidence that to carry the timber to market on a 2-foot gauge line would cost more than the timber would fetch. The Director of Forests, Mr. Swain, points out that there are large quantities of timber more or less valuable, and he says—

"With a 2-foot 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."

At 9.18 p.m.,

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

Mr. SWAYNE: Further on he says that with a wider gauge railway the cost of marketing would be reduced, but then again you have an increase of 33 per cent. in the capitalisation of the line. I would like to

quite some evidence given by the Under Secretary for Public Lands, Mr. Melville—

“Have you any idea of the value to be placed on this land?—It would be loaded for road construction, and making a guess at it I should say from £3 to £4 an acre. We have opened up land in the parish of Dirran at £4 an acre.”

Later on he points out that this land had previously been opened to selection—in fact, it is what is known as the Oswald Track Soldier Settlement, on which the Hon. W. Lennon, when he was a member of this House, used to expatriate. They had a road there then, but nevertheless only two blocks were applied for, and they were subsequently forfeited. I am quite aware that a railway makes all the difference, but I cannot help thinking that there are other areas in the North, closer to the North Coast line, and in flatter country, without these deep gorges, which could be secured for settlement. I might well ask: Is not this area one of those which might be set apart as a forest reserve? I know that it has been pointed out that there is no cedar or pine in the district, but there is a certain quantity of other timbers which are marketable, and which may be shortly in demand, and it seems to me, in view of the heavy expense which will be incurred, that it would be better to set it apart for that purpose.

Then again, I would like to point out that on Mr. Sexton's estimate a 2-foot tramline will cost at least £6,000 a mile, and a 25-mile line will therefore involve an expenditure of at least £150,000. The Minister says that the area to be opened up will be 180,000 acres, but I think we shall be safer in saying that it will be more like 150,000 acres, so that the capital value of the land will be loaded by the building of the railway to the extent of at least £1 an acre.

I would like to suggest, too, that some scheme should be devised whereby the settlers could have, at any rate, some right or some power of being heard in matters affecting the control of the settlement. The Act under which the Babinda sugar-mill was built—one of the successful mills referred to by the Minister to-night—is the Sugar Works Act of 1911, which was passed by a previous Administration. When that Act was going through this House, I moved on behalf of the farmers—being a farmer myself it was only natural that I should be interested in conserving the interests of the farmers in such matters—that provision should be made for the constitution of advisory boards of cane-growers, and the Minister who was in charge of the measure, now an occupant of the front Opposition bench, accepted the amendment, so that in the 1911 Sugar Works Act a provision to that effect was incorporated. I would like to ask the Minister in charge of this Bill if he is prepared to accept in Committee a similar amendment.

Furthermore, I would like to ask him if he will not incorporate in the Bill a provision similar to that which appears in the Co-operative Sugar Works Act of 1914. In that measure there is a section to the effect that, when the indebtedness to the Government is paid off, a company shall be formed, the shares in which shall be allotted to the producers in proportion to the quantity of raw material they have produced, and to nobody else, so that nobody but a producer can ever hope to get a share in such a company. The safeguards in the Act secure

that the company shall always be a genuine co-operation. In 1914, therefore, a Government which did not talk very much about co-operation, but which put into force some of the finest co-operative legislation ever put on any statute-book, gave to the producers the opportunity of controlling for all time the factory which worked up the raw material. Will this Government, who profess so loudly to be in favour of the co-operative principle, accept an amendment on those lines?

There are one or two other features in the Bill which have caught my eye. The first is the dual control, which seems to me objectionable. First of all, the farm improvements—buildings and so on—come under the control of the supervisor appointed by the Minister; but, when it comes to the question of clearing, the settler will be largely under the control of another branch of the Department of Public Lands—that is, the Forestry Branch. I can quite see that the settler will not know in some cases whom he is to obey—the forestry authorities or the supervisor.

Another feature which I wish to touch upon is the administration of the area under an authority other than the local authorities. I take it that the local authorities will have no power to rate the lands. That may be a questionable advantage; but, on the other hand, the settlers will not be able to be represented on the local authority. They will have no power to elect councillors. Why should this land be taken out of the surrounding area and be singled out in the matter of local government and placed in the hands of the Minister, who will make the roads? There may be good reasons for it, but these are things which should be inquired into, and, so far as I can make out, the Minister did not mention them. It makes practical men wonder why these things were not mentioned.

We all hope that the settlement will be a success. In pursuing the lines adopted by this Government the land settlement scheme is not likely to be a success. I have already pointed out that in the North a different policy was pursued. Look at the Darling Downs, the Lockyer, and all our thriving districts to-day. None of them was settled under such a cast-iron regime as we are now under at the hands of this Government. No one can say that those districts have not been settled successfully, and that there is not a prosperous population there at the present time. I know that there are climatic vicissitudes that affect Queensland, but go where you will the same risk obtains. The farmers should have more freedom, more right to initiate, more right to do what they think is best in their own interests. They are able to say without the assistance of any supervisor what their capabilities are, what the land is best suited for, and work out their own destinies far more successfully in connection with this land settlement.

At 9.30 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. SWAYNE: The Minister pointed out during his second reading speech that some of the most successful land settlement took place in the Mossman and Mulgrave districts. There was a large amount of loan money involved in the erection of the sugar-mills in those districts. I think that they have now paid off their liability to the Treasury. They made new districts and prosperous

Mr. Swayne.]

settlement. Neither of those mills was built under such a system as we are now discussing. It was stated at the time when the money was expended that the conditions allowed were too liberal. Under the Act which gave us the Mossman and Mulgrave mills there was not even provision for Government representation. The cane-growers were allowed to appoint their own directors. Then we had the legislation which gave us the Babinda and South Johnstone mills, and which incidentally led to the development of the Federal Herbert electorate increasing its population to a greater extent than any other country electorate in Australia. All that success was largely due to the work of the previous Government, and it was all done on individualistic lines and under a system of freedom and liberty, and a system which allowed the farmer to carry on farming operations as he thought best without dictatorial commands or orders from a supervisor. Settlement should only be carried out on those lines.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): This Bill is a very important one from many stand-points. Before attempting to deal with it I would like to thank the hon. member for Mirani for his reference to the fact that it was in 1914 that the Babinda and South Johnstone mills were made possible and were established on absolutely co-operative lines by the then Government. There is no doubt that the principles laid down then were absolutely democratic and co-operative, and, as the hon. member for Mirani pointed out, they very largely contributed to the success of those districts.

MR. PEASE: It is not proposed to utilise this area for growing sugar-cane.

HON. W. H. BARNES: There is no question that the Bill is absolutely a socialistic measure.

MR. KIRWAN: That is a wonderful discovery. "Queen Anne is dead."

HON. W. H. BARNES: This is a socialistic measure.

MR. HYNES: You said that about the cane prices legislation.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Here and there are provisions inserted in the Bill in order to bring about a Russian policy in Queensland. I hope to be able to show that when I come to analyse the Bill. I am perfectly certain that every hon. member, particularly on this side, is anxious that legislation should be introduced that will help to settle the land and fill up the empty spaces of this State. It is absolutely essential that that should be done in the interests of Queensland. I think that legislation in that direction would receive the full support of every hon. member, especially hon. members on this side of the House. In referring to some of the clauses of the Bill, it will be found that there is to be constituted under the Bill what one might call a veritable Pooh Bah in connection with the administration of the scheme. In the first place, a person is going to be placed in charge of the settlement, and he is going to control all expenditure. The only person who can interfere with him is the Minister. The Bill makes provision for the person in charge to have absolute control of every detail.

MR. PEASE: In the soldier settlement scheme you had a supervisor.

[*Mr. Swayne.*]

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member for Herbert should not refer to soldier settlements, because I do not know that they have anything in common with the principle of this Bill. There has been a great deal of difference of opinion with regard to soldier settlements. As I said, the supervisor under this scheme will control all expenditure and have the collection of all moneys. He will practically hold the bag, and he will be in the position of saying to this one "Do that," and he will do it, and to the other "Stay here," and he will have to stay here. The power placed in his hands is a very mighty one. Under ordinary circumstances when Parliament is in session the Minister controlling this area must remain in Brisbane through no fault of his own. What happens? The person in charge is going to have actual control.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You had absolute control of the sugar-mills.

HON. W. H. BARNES: We had control of the sugar-mills to a certain extent, but not to the extent indicated here.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Exactly the same.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is no use the Minister making that statement, because it is not correct.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is correct.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is not correct.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Show me where it is not correct?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I will, if the Minister will obey the Standing Orders and interject a little less. He will then have an opportunity of understanding as I proceed.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I want to help you to make your speech intelligent.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman knows that I do not get on my feet unless it is to make an intelligent speech. There is no need for the hon. gentleman to assist me to make a speech, and he should profit by an intelligent speech and interject in an intelligent manner.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You insult the intelligence of this side of the House.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The responsibility of the working of the whole of the scheme is to be left in the hands of the supervisor. There is one exception and, strange to say, it is the sawmill. The sawmill is not going to be controlled by the supervisor. I was wondering why the supervisor, who is the Pooh-Bah of everything else under control of the Minister, should have this taken from his control. Is there any fear that the person looking after the business will not deal fairly with the timber that is supplied from the sawmill? He has the right to give employment. I wonder when men come up and ask for work, whether it is going to be a condition that they need work, or is it going to be a condition that a certain brand must be on them? The hon. gentleman might say that is an unworthy suggestion, but we know it is happening in other cases. At a certain gathering not very far from Rockhampton a resolution was carried demanding that only certain people should be employed by the State in their works. The hon. gentleman cannot deny that. He knows how true it is. We know that to-day many a man cannot

get a job because he may not be in line with certain organisations. Is that going to apply in connection with employment at this saw-mill? What is going to be the method to be adopted with regard to disrating and suspension? It seems to me that no man dare make a suggestion because the supervisor may say, "This man has too many brains for me; I must get rid of him," and because he has made too many suggestions he is disrated or suspended according to the provisions of the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Has not any "boss" that right? The farmers will not be under him.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Sometimes the "boss" has that right; sometimes he has not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Well he ought to have.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I agree with the Minister that he ought to have that right, but we know where men have been dismissed, and another power has come along and said, "John Brown has been dismissed, and he should not have been dismissed. Down tools." And, unless John Brown is reinstated, there is no work. We know to-day that the "boss" has not the power—

Mr. KIRWAN: He has not the right to inflict a wrong on another man.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I agree that he has not the right to inflict a wrong on another man—but if I proceed on those lines, you will pull me up, Mr. Speaker, for getting away from the subject. The hon. member for Mirani drew attention to another very important matter, that is that the local authority is not—at any rate at the inception—to have any power in connection with this area. That power has been withdrawn, and I shall ask the Minister when we get into Committee, if he will give the reason why it has been withdrawn. After all, the local authority is one of Queensland's sub-Parliaments. The tendency has been to put on local authorities more and more responsibilities in carrying out certain works.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This is done to relieve them of heavy expense in an area from which they receive no rates.

HON. W. H. BARNES: If the Minister says that is the reason, I say it is a very proper reason. We find that again and again some of the institutions which are carrying on the work of the country in a most admirable fashion are penalised because of their actions, and somehow or other are robbed of the powers they previously had. If the Minister says—I want to pin him down to this—that he wants to get the area into proper condition before it is handed over to the local authority, then I say it is a good thing for the local authority.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Public Estate Improvement Board and the Forestry Department will have to build the road in the first instance, and they will hand it over to the local authority when the settlers begin to pay rates.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I would like to know whether the area will be mapped out and left in a rough state for the local authority to tackle the job, or if the roads are going to be put into proper condition. If the Minister is going to do that, it will be a good thing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If this action was not taken, there would be no roads. You would not admit that the sun would rise if I told you it was going to.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. W. H. BARNES: I congratulate the Minister upon the interpretation which he is putting on my criticism.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am only looking for the nigger in the wood pile.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is perfectly certain that in this particular district the making of roads is going to be a very expensive item. We have found the Government extremely expensive in making roads. We have the authority of the Minister earlier in the proceedings for the statement that it is almost impossible, by reason of the roughness of the country, accurately to survey it. I am prepared to admit that it is most essential to get country like that under cultivation, and anything that can be done in that direction is going to be good for Queensland provided the conditions are right. It is upon this point of conditions that I want to criticise the Minister in charge of the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The timber on this land is worth about £30 an acre.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I wish to speak about that matter later. Anyone who knows the North will know that unfortunately—this does not apply to last year or the previous year, but to many years back—a lot of the finest timber, by reason of the cost of getting it to a port, has had to be burnt. It was very regrettable that such was the case, and I have no doubt, if the country is as described by the Minister, that the timber upon it must be good, because we know the timber in the North is a very fine asset.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If it were not for the timber, we would open it up without building a railway.

HON. W. H. BARNES: One of the great faults I have to find with this Bill is that the whole trend of the legislation is in the direction of removing any incentive from the individual person who is going on the land to excel himself.

Mr. KIRWAN: What incentive had those men at Cessnock the other day?

HON. W. H. BARNES: No man would speak other than in the highest praise of the men of Cessnock. No one could speak of those heroes but in the very highest possible terms. (Hear, hear!)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Did you not hear of the fight I put up to-day to try and retain some of that independence?

HON. W. H. BARNES: What has been the position in the past in connection with settlement? Without any unfair remarks with regard to soldier settlement or as to the cause of failure on the part of individual settlers—because after all we may not all be fitted by Providence to make good farmers—what has made the difference in connection with soldier settlement? The ineptitude of one man, or it may be the ineptitude of another man—not a lazy man—but of someone who has not the knack. It is no reflection on a man if you find one man doing

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the job admirably while the other man fails, although he may be just as good in another direction. The selections which are going to be made by the Minister to decide who shall take up this land—

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The selection will be made by the Selection Board.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Minister has the right of approval. He has the final say.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He will not take any action.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is no use the hon. member saying he will not do this or he will not do that; it is in the Bill. Will there not be influence brought to bear on the hon. gentleman? There are seventy-two members of Parliament, and, taking the House all round, if someone comes along and says, "I want to get there," what will members of Parliament generally do? If the man is a decent man, they try to help him, and these seventy-two members of Parliament will probably be worrying the Minister and asking him to do something for this man and something for that man. The fact remains that there will be influence brought to bear in that direction.

There is another extraordinary clause in the Bill dealing with factories and the power that is to be put into the hands of the Minister in connection with those factories. There is power to compel people to supply them. Where is the free agency of individuals coming in? And, in addition to that, there is power on the part of the Minister to say what they shall grow and what they shall not grow. If I know anything about successful selection, it is due to the fact that some selectors do not confine themselves to one particular line. But these people have to do exactly what the supervisor or the Minister says. There are a lot of things which may be put upon paper in this direction, and there may be people who will say they can do infinitely better with some other crop, and why should they be compelled by the Minister to do just what he says they shall do?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You gave the sugar-growers a mill and compelled them to grow sugar.

HON. W. H. BARNES: This is only part of a scheme which apparently has for its object the bringing of the selectors into line, in order that it may become part of one big scheme which is going in the direction of a policy which is to some extent being kept quiet now by reason of the maturing loans, but it is there all the same—the carrying out of a purely socialistic policy.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you think we are a communistic Government?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am asked a straight question, and, if it were not out of order, I would say "Yes." (Laughter.) The protection which the Minister has under this Bill seems to be an extraordinary protection. No one can do anything except himself. What he says is law, and must be carried out. What he says has to be grown must be grown. Have group selections in the past in Queensland been the success which we would like them to have been? I am not referring to the group selections which this Government have had to do with. Go back to any of the group selections which have been tackled by previous Governments.

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There was one at Wallumbilla, and others in other places; but one by one the men drifted away simply because men who are outside, just as we who are inside, are not angels, and they discover when they get close together in the group that they cannot get on.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: But these are not groups for that purpose at all; they are only groups for the purpose of selecting the land.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I will take the Minister at his own word. Are they not groups to enable settlers to get into a certain area; and are they not to speak to their next-door neighbour? As soon as they get together they must keep together.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is a social association. There is no compulsion that they have to kiss one another over the fence and that sort of thing.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am quite sure that, if the hon. gentleman had to do the kissing, there would be no selection at all. (Opposition laughter.)

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If reports are correct, you were pretty good at that sort of thing. (Laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES: There are some things in which I excel; but that is not one of them. We know that in the past, whether in Queensland or in Russia or elsewhere, whenever the idea of keeping people together in certain communities has been tried it has always failed. Over thirty years ago some of the best men in Queensland went to Paraguay, but they came back. They asked to be brought back, and it seems to me that we are here experimenting with legislation which is going to leave the individual with nothing to work upon, and the result will be disastrous to the community. I hope that my fears will not be realised, because it is absolutely essential that there should be an increase of cultivation in this great State of Queensland.

*Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): The Palmerston proposals are of such an important nature that one feels inclined to look at them as far as time and opportunity will allow. I find myself somewhat in conflict with the objects and aims of the Government in opening up these great areas of land—not with their object of bringing about the settlement of people on the land, but with the manner in which they intend carrying out their purposes. I cannot fall into line or associate myself with the generally socialistic proposals of the Government of the day, and I look upon the scheme as extremely serious, and one which should certainly be accepted with a good deal of diffidence by this House and the country generally.

To some extent I disagree with the last speaker with regard to community settlement. I can see that it is possible to induce groups of selectors to come to Queensland from the different villages elsewhere—people who have like ideals and common sympathies, and who would find a degree of satisfaction through being able to be near each other and associate with each other in the aims and activities of life. I think a great deal depends on something of the sort, and it seems to me that successful settlement would result from an arrangement of that kind. I base my belief on the general trend which we notice to-day to leave the country for the towns. If we can do anything that will help to make the people feel at home

when they settle on the land, we shall achieve some high purpose. It is the failure to understand each other and to work together which has a great deal to do with the drift of numbers of men from the country into the towns. I noticed quite recently that some thirteen or fourteen country centres show a very considerable decline, and I imagine that it should be the business of the Government of the day to lay themselves out to bring about satisfactory surroundings for the people in the country so as to make our settlers thoroughly contented. I notice that the Government seem to be providing for town areas and recreation reserves, and I feel sure that if people are to be contented they must be able to get fairly close together. There must be provision for schools and other conveniences.

If the opportunity for engaging in some sport on recreation grounds is given, we are going to help to bring about a degree of contentment in settlement in Queensland. I

believe we have to study more [10 p.m.] than we have ever done what is going to keep the people on the land once they get into that position. Having said so much, you will see that I am to a degree in agreement with some of the aims of the Government, but I am altogether in disagreement with the land tenure of their settlements. Looking at things from this distance, I maintain that we are very likely to have very grave failures. In discussing the Bill in connection with the settlement of the Upper Burnett and Callide land, reference was made to the character of settlement that has been taking place. I think the same charge can be made against the Minister. He has done nothing to assure this House or to bring conviction to this House that the nature of settlement which is being introduced by this Government will make for success. In no country that one can think of has any success attended proposals like those that have emanated from the Government. I look upon the proposals in this way—that we are on the eve of making a stupendous effort regarding the renewal of our loans. I do not know how it strikes some individuals, but I do know how it strikes me. I can well imagine that, when the Premier arrives in the old land with his various officers and he undertakes to place before the people there the magnificence of the country he represents and outlines his proposal for land settlement, when there is a disclosure of the contents of this Bill and the Bill dealing with the development of the lands in the Upper Burnett and Callide districts, that will not make for a degree of helpfulness in carrying out the high purpose that he is performing for the country. Naturally, when you speak of a great country and your requirements are pretty heavy, it is only to be supposed that the people abroad to whom we appeal to renew their confidence in this country will require to know just how we manage our affairs, just how we intend to settle the country, and what our land laws are likely to be. I insist that there is nothing in this Bill or in the Bill dealing with the Upper Burnett and Callide areas—which have to do with something like 5,000,000 acres or thereabouts—which is going to be the least incentive either to the capitalists who are going to lend their money or to the people who are to be encouraged to come here. The conditions that apply with regard to perpetual leasehold are of such an autocratic nature

that I can conceive of no free man acquiescing in them. If the Palmerston land is taken up at all, one will be interested to find out just what kind of characters have been induced to take up land under such conditions. You cannot conceive of them. The men will have no initiative and no freedom. They will have to do as they are told. They will be bound, so to speak, hand and foot to do what the Minister dictates. You cannot conceive that the best success will attend their efforts unless it is in following out their own purposes in life. Men have that idea and thought. Men enter upon the various avocations of life with that strict purpose in view. If that attitude is going to be disturbed, we are not going to make the success of our land settlement what we wish for.

It will be interesting to see what effect the action of the Government in advancing sums up to £1,000 is going to have in the direction of bringing about land settlement. It will not bring about the settlement of the kind of men we want, but it will attract an adventurous type of people, who will not serve the country to the extent we wish them to do. The powers which are to be vested in the Minister are altogether unheard of in any free land. It would have been interesting if the Minister had been able to bring before the House an example of settlement such as this which has been a success. We have no such information. We can only conclude from the nature of this Bill and other Acts of Parliament presented to us that it is the intention of the Government to work on communal lines. If we want to get settlers from abroad, we are not competing as we should with other lands in the direction. We should look at what is being done in Canada and elsewhere in connection with land settlement. We can only take lessons regarding what has been done elsewhere as an encouragement to us. Canada, in the settlement of her public lands, is to a large extent practically competing with us for the very best blood and the very best type of Britishers. How are we likely to get these settlers unless the circumstances are more favourable and better and there are greater opportunities of richer reward? How are we likely to compete with them and give the settlers these opportunities under the legislation we have? From the Canadian "Year Book" of 1921 a very fine idea of the settlement which has been taking place in Canada in recent years can be obtained. The great bulk of the best settlement has been brought about under the homestead area system. Altogether, the inducements offered by Canada are superior to anything we are offering, so that the success we wish for from our efforts is not likely to be achieved. On page 775 of the Canadian "Year Book" it is stated—

"Public Lands—Dominion Lands.—The Crown lands of the Dominion of Canada are situated (a) in the prairie provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta), (b) in a belt of 20 miles on either side of the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway known as the Dominion Railway belt of British Columbia, and (c) in a block in Northern British Columbia, containing 3,500,000 acres, known as the Peace River Block.

"Every person who is the sole head of a family and every male who has attained the age of eighteen years and is

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a British subject, or declares his intention to become a British subject, is entitled to apply for entry for a homestead. Lands are laid out in townships of thirty-six sections; each section contains 640 acres, and is divided into quarter sections of 160 acres. A quarter section of 160 acres may be obtained as a homestead on payment of a fee of 10 dollars and fulfilment of certain conditions of residence and cultivation. To qualify for the issue of the patent a settler must have resided on his homestead for at least six months every three years, must have erected a habitable house thereon, and must have at least 30 acres of his holding broken, of which 30 acres must be cropped. A reduction may be made in the area of breaking where the land is difficult to cultivate on account of scrub or stone. Provision is made for residence in the vicinity on certain conditions, in which case the area of cultivation must be increased."

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: That is done by the railway companies.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: This particular case has nothing to do with railway companies, but I know that generally railway companies have a great deal to do with it—

"In addition to the surveyed area there are large tracts of land in the northern parts of these provinces which have as yet been explored in a very partial way. The total area of this unsurveyed tract is 285,362,489 acres, of which 22,384,720 acres are water-covered. Reports on the resources and developments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta have been issued by the National Resources Intelligence Branch of the Department of the Interior, some of which are as follows:—"

Then it goes on to show the various areas. It is really too late to make extensive quotations from this work, although I think no apology is necessary for going into matters thoroughly when subjects of such grave importance are being brought before the House. I know that the House would like to rise, but I am not going to fall into line out of deference to the feelings of hon. members in that respect—

"In the calendar year 1921 the total number of ordinary homestead entries for lands of the Dominion Government was 7,346, as compared with 5,435 in 1920, 6,623 in 1919, 4,378 in 1918, 8,768 in 1917, 12,568 in 1916, 17,532 in 1915."

Under the heading "Homestead Entries" in Manitoba, the figures are decidedly interesting. It gives the nationalities of those who have taken up homesteads, and it is pleasing to know that a very large number of holdings have been taken up by Canadians who have returned to Canada. Also I notice that in the year 1921 Americans to the number of 1,072 took up homesteads and English people to the number of 821. Altogether the investigations into land settlement in Canada are so extremely satisfactory that it leads one to say we might well copy the example which Canada has set as regards peopling her country. I mention these facts to indicate how very popular and attractive the homestead settlement conditions are to the people. It seems to indicate to me that, unless

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we can work on lines very similar to what is being done in Canada—and I make it that our big interest is that our people in Australia should take up our lands and people them with our own nationality—unless we can do something very superior to that which is offered in this Bill and that which was previously before this House—we are not going to achieve the success which any ardent lover of his country desires.

I maintain again that the Bill before the House should not be acceptable to the people of Queensland. It is socialistic to a degree, and it is not going to bring about the settlement of a happy and contented people such as we desire.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN interjected.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Why should they not be happy? It may be a matter of no concern to the hon. gentleman whether a man is contented or not. All he wants is to have some man supplying an article that may be made to his own order and carrying out his own despotic ideas and thus become a mere chattel. This side is not out for that kind of thing. We are out for the settlement of a contented people, and I maintain that the proposals of the Government in the Bills that have been brought before this House are distinctly unsatisfactory and are not going to achieve the purpose which they seemingly have in view—the peopling of the country by men of our kith and kin from abroad. The Government would do well to take into consideration again their proposal, and, seeing that we have such a magnificent area of land now being made available for settlement, if a trial is to be made of their ideas, let it be on a small scale, but by all means follow the mode of settlement which has proved so satisfactory in the past and which has made Queensland the success it has been.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I do not desire to take up the time of the House very long, because so much has been said on a similar measure that it is difficult to say anything new. I do not want to take up the position of being a critic of the Bill, but I look at the matter from the point of view of the State. Is it going to be a success for the State? I also look at it from the selectors' point of view. Are they going to make a success there? I am not afraid that the settlers will not do very well under this measure. I think they will make a good thing while the money lasts, but I very much doubt whether it will be a good thing for the State.

Mr. COLLINS: You should not reflect on the future settlers.

Mr. DEACON: I am not reflecting on the future settlers. Hon. members on the Government side seem to look on the ordinary settler as a fool. He is not a fool.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Do you say he is a "crook"?

Mr. DEACON: He is not a "crook," but he is a man who is quite capable of looking after himself, and, if we are going to offer him something out of which he can do very well, he will do well out of it. This is not really a new kind of scheme—it is a variation of the "New Australia" scheme. The Minister, when he has had experience of the settlement under this scheme, will have a truer idea of

human nature than he has at the present time. He is going to put a supervisor on the settlement with almost the power of a Czar. That officer is to have full control of the whole settlement. He is going to pick the settlers and take them up there, and, if they do not obey orders, he can discharge them. The settlers are to have a large sum of money advanced to them—up to £1,000 in each case. Whether they have any money of their own or not they can draw £1,000.

Mr. CARTER: That is not in the Bill—you exaggerate.

Mr. DEACON: It is in the Bill. Hon. members opposite do not know the Bill. I wish some of them would read the Bill, as it would do them good. The settlers are not going to be free farmers all the time, and they are not going to be free working men—that will be the effect of the Bill. To a certain extent when this measure is being administered the settlers will make their own way and get a different result out of the settlement to what the Minister intends.

There is a departure here from the ordinary principles of land settlement. If anybody has a dispute with the supervisor he can appeal to the Land Court where one member is sitting, but he cannot appeal again to the full Land Court.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you want him to go to the Privy Council? (Laughter.)

Mr. DEACON: No, but you might allow him to appeal to the full Land Court. There is no reason for making a new departure like that. I notice that the Minister takes greater power than any other Minister has ever taken, inasmuch as he can declare any of the land to be a forest area. I can tell him what will happen. It does not matter whether there is a supervisor or not, any settler will do just what he likes with the timber. The Minister may order him to cut it down, but he will not do it; he will only cut down what he likes. I am quite sure that the Minister is not going to be able to reserve any salable timber on any area after it is once selected and say that it belongs to the Crown. It will belong to the settler—the Minister can make sure of that.

The Minister is going to be a sort of fairly godfather to these settlers. He thinks, no doubt, that he is going to help them, but it is possible that the settlers may tell him that he is a sort of mild tyrant. He may become one. He may be forced into the position of having to exercise tyranny over them. He is making an agreement with them to finance them and lend them a good deal of money without much security, and some of them may not be successful. Is he going to get rid of them? If he is, he will have to take a pretty strong hand, and in doing that he must remember that he will strike public opinion in that district pretty hard, because all the other settlers are going to sympathise with the man who is up against real trouble with the Government. It is a difficult matter for anybody to keep settlers anywhere up to the mark. Take the conditions imposed on settlers with respect to prickly-pear. They are imposed on every settler in prickly-pear districts, but very few of them keep them. Other conditions are imposed on them, but they are modified according to the selector's position. The same thing is going to happen

in this case. Of course some of the men will be all right. The Minister will probably get 50 per cent. of good selectors and he will not have any bother with them at all. The others will take his money; so long as there is £1,000 to be drawn they will draw it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is why they want a supervisor. You have given the real reason for it.

Mr. DEACON: I am not going to say that there is no need for a supervisor when the Minister is going to lend them £1,000 with very little security. There will be nothing to sell. The Minister will find that a percentage of the settlers will not be able to make a success of their farms—not because they are not triers, but because they are not fitted for the work. There is always a percentage of that kind of selector on any settlement, and the Bill makes no provision as to how the liabilities of those selectors are going to be met. Are they going to be added to the value of the land? If men get into a position that they are £200 or £300 in debt, then is that going to be loaded on to the land? The next man who comes along will have a dearer bit of land than the other holder had before him. If that does occur, then the Minister will have a block of land that is overloaded, and he will have to write off some of that liability.

The HOME SECRETARY: You must have indigestion to be saying all those things.

Mr. DEACON: With all this land settlement the Minister will have indigestion. In fact he will be lucky if he gets off so light. The Minister has power under the Bill to commence any business enterprise, and he will be lucky to get off with just indigestion.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will make a very fine profit out of timber.

Mr. DEACON: The settlers are not going to get any benefit from the sale of the timber. The final result of the settlement must be that there will be a certain writing down of the liability. I do not see any provision in the Bill exempting the settlers from the liability incurred by a settler who could not make a success of his block. I wish the settlers luck. When the Minister is finished with the settlers he will have a different idea of the business intelligence of the ordinary bushman and the farmer than he has at the present time.

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*): 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.

MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

DISCHARGE OF ORDER FOR THIRD READING.

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

“That this Order be discharged from the paper and the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering clause 3; and further, that, when the Bill is reported, the third reading may be then proceeded with.”

Question put and passed.

Hon. W. McCormack.]

RECOMMITTAL.

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

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): I beg to move the omission in clause 3, page 3, of the words—

“The local authority within whose area permanent improvements have been created on a developmental road shall pay to the Treasury annually for a period of twenty years an amount equal to one-half of the interest payable on the total cost of such permanent improvements; and the rate of such interest shall be fixed by the Governor in Council, but shall not exceed the rate charged to local authorities at the time when the works were executed as interest on ordinary loans.

“All such sums shall be payable by local authorities at the time and in the manner prescribed.

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

“The certificate of the Board as to the amount due under this section from any local authority shall be conclusive evidence of the facts therein stated.”

with a view to inserting the words—

“The local authority within whose area permanent improvements have been created on a developmental road shall, subject to the next succeeding provision, pay to the Treasury annually for a period of twenty years an amount equal to one-half of the interest payable on the total cost of such permanent improvements; and the rate of such interest shall be fixed by the Governor in Council, but shall not exceed the rate charged to local authorities at the time when the works were executed as interest on ordinary loans:

“Provided that where permanent improvements have been created on a developmental road which lies within the areas of two or more local authorities, the amounts on which interest as aforesaid is to be calculated as payable by each local authority benefited may, if the Board thinks proper, be fixed not on the total cost of such improvements in each respective area, but in proportion to the benefit which the whole of such improvements has conferred on each area, notwithstanding that no part of such improvements has been created in one or more of such areas.

“All sums by way of interest payable under this section shall be payable by local authorities at the time and in the manner prescribed.

“The certificate of the Board as to the amount due under this section from any local authority shall be conclusive evidence of the facts therein stated.”

That meets the question raised by the hon. member for Logan. It is correct that a developmental road might be built through one shire which will really serve other local authority areas, and the shire through which the road was built would have to pay the whole of the interest on the road and the

whole of the upkeep. Under this provision for benefited areas, the area benefited will have to pay its proportion of the interest and cost of upkeep.

Amendment (*Mr. McCormack*) agreed to. Clause 3, as amended, put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with a further amendment.

THIRD READING.

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

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

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 10.40 p.m.

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