Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 1923

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

QUESTIONS.

ERADICATION OF PRICKLY-PEAR ON BAJOOL RESERVE.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*), asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. What was the result of the usage of Dr. Jean White's formula of arsenic pentoxide with water on the Bajool reserve?

"2. Who carried out the experiments?

"3. What was the cost of same?

"4. Has the Government since spent further money in eradicating pear by the unemployed on this area?

"5. What was the cost of the work so carried out?

"6. What would it cost to absolutely clear the reserve of pear to-day?"

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

"1. The results obtained were satisfactory so far as killing the pear is concerned.

"2. The experiments were carried out by officers of the Prickly-pear Experimental Station under the supervision of Dr. Jean White.

"3. £252 13s. 8d.

"4. Yes.

"5. £5,113 8s. 2d.

"6. The information is not available."

HAIL INSURANCE OF 1922 WHEAT HARVEST.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*), asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. What amount was received by the State Insurance Department in premiums on hail insurance of wheat, 1922 harvest?

"2. What amount was paid in damages?

"3. What is the total cost to the department, including office expenses, share of adjustment expenses, and any other?"

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

"1. £1,000.

"2. £1,623 16s.

"3. £1,873."

CURE OF "BUNCHY TOP" DISEASE IN BANANAS.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"1. In view of recent statements in the Press of scientists from different parts of the world that 'bunchy top' in bananas can be cured, what is the Government doing in the matter of endeavouring to find a remedy for this disease?

"2. Is the Government aware that hundreds of acres of banana land have gone out of cultivation in Southern Queensland and in New South Wales owing to this disease, and that the consequent decreased production in Queensland alone must amount to thousands of pounds per week?

"3. Will the Government consider the advisability of appointing a specially trained pathologist to deal solely with this disease?"

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

"1 to 3. The answer given in reply to a question by the hon. member for Logan on the 18th July last contains the information sought, and since then a definite offer has been received from the Science and Industry Bureau to co-operate in the investigation."

PAPERS.

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

Eighth annual report of the Commissioner of Taxes on land tax.

Twenty-first annual report of the Commissioner of Taxes on income tax.

Report upon the Government Central sugar-mills.

Report of the Marine Department for the year ended 30th June, 1923.

PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Regulations (dated 14th September, 1923) 1 to 3 under the Dingo and Marsupial Destruction Acts, 1918 to 1923.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

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

Question put and passed.

COTTON INDUSTRY BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to provide for marketing cotton and to authorise the acquisition of cotton by the State, and for other purposes tending to the improvement of the cotton industry."

The object of the Bill might be summed up in one sentence. The object of this Bill is to give legal enactment to the policy of the Queensland Government—a policy that has been responsible in the short space of five years for increasing the value of the cotton crop to the farmer from less than £1,000 in 1919 to over £250,000 in the season just closed. If this industry is going to succeed, it is necessary to start well. The Bill is for the purpose of protecting and fostering the industry. It has become necessary to pass this legislation, first of all, because of the policy

of the Government in making an advance on cotton. That advance has been referred to as a cotton guarantee or a bounty. It is neither a guarantee nor a bounty. It is the function of the Commonwealth Government to give bounties, and we would be coming into conflict with the Federal Constitution if we were to give bounties to any industry in the State. What we wish is to make an advance to the cotton-grower. The advance last year was 5½d. per lb. on all good quality cotton. "Good quality cotton" is interpreted to mean annual cotton, clean, and free from disease. It is proposed to continue the system of advances until the end of 1926. It is to be hoped that the industry by that time will be firmly established and be able to stand on its own feet. There is certainly a risk of some loss on the part of the Government in making this advance, but if I thought for a moment that the effort on the part of the Government would not result in placing the industry on a firm footing, but that it would languish and die out after that advance ceased, I would not be proud of the part that I played in the matter. But I feel certain that if we start right and produce the very best, success will be assured to the industry; for, after all, the only hope we have of building up a great industry is by producing an article which the people will buy and for which they will pay a good price, because good wages have to be paid in Queensland.

Other countries are growing cotton. Cotton is grown in many countries where labour is cheap, but I find that much of the cotton grown in those countries is inferior and probably will not command more than 2d. or 3d. per lb. in the seed. In order to justify the advance of 5½d. in the seed, the Government must be satisfied that the best article is grown, and to that end we propose now to introduce a Bill to foster, encourage, and protect the industry. The guarantee of the advance naturally involves the acquisition of the cotton. The Government could not undertake to guarantee a price to all farmers in the country and then allow the farmers to sell the cotton as they liked. The Government have to acquire all the cotton to carry out their policy of advances. The Government have the obligation to transport, gin, and market the crop. I think this is the one industry in Australia in which the grower has been relieved of the responsibility of transport, manufacture, and marketing. I have always said that the farmers of Australia take too great a risk. First of all, there are the risks of the seasons and pests, and after the farmer produces a crop he takes the risk of finding a market. In this case the Government relieve him of that risk, and undertake to find a market. If we fail to do so, we still stick to our contract, provided the farmers do their part. We propose to continue this cotton advance for three years, the rate to be fixed time after time; also take power to enable the Government to make agreements for the ginning of the cotton. In this regard I hope that by the time the present ginning agreement is at an end the farmers will be sufficiently alive to their interests to be advised by the Council of Agriculture, and that they will be in a position to have their own co-operative ginneries. The Government need make no apology for the agreement; the alternative would have been that the State would have had to spend probably £150,000 on State ginneries. The farmers made no effort in the direction of erecting ginneries; in fact, they were not in a position to do so. They had not the technical advice, nor did the Government know anything about the technical skill required in working up-to-date ginneries and carrying out the work in a proper manner, and when the Cotton Growers' Association came along and offered to spend £300,000 in the erection of ginneries and oil mills, I think it was a very good deal on the part of the Government on behalf of the cotton-growers of Queensland. At the end of 1926, when the agreement comes to an end, I hope that the farmers will be in a position—particularly in view of the fact that we are introducing legislation to enable farmers to form an association with or without capital, and in view of the fact that the State Advances Corporation will make more liberal advances—to control their own industry so far as the ginning of the cotton is concerned. Whether in the course of years Queensland will become a cotton spinning and manufacturing country remains to be seen. I think that that question will be faced when Queensland produces sufficient cotton to warrant the expenditure on the necessary machinery for spinning and weaving cotton.

Probably the most important provision in connection with this Bill—and one on which there is a difference of opinion in this Chamber, and what vexes the ordinary individual who does not, perhaps, know as much about the question as the Department of Agriculture, who have made it their business to gain all the information they can—is the determination of the Government to put an absolute embargo on the growing of ratoon cotton. I am satisfied that when I have the opportunity of making my second reading speech I shall convince members of this Chamber, with few exceptions, that the Government are more than justified in respect to the embargo they are putting on ratoon cotton.

I know something about farming on scrub land from many years' experience. I know the difficulties of the farmer growing cotton on scrub land, and I say without hesitation that, if the Government had not given special assistance, and if the farmers had simply established this industry themselves without any advance and without any fostering and without any assistance from the Government, then the Government should hesitate before they put an embargo on any individual. In the interests of the industry itself, in the interests of Queensland, in the interests of the great industry that can be worked up and established in this State—which, in my opinion, in a few years' time will be worth as much as the great wool industry to Queensland—this step is amply justified. We are guided in this action, first of all, by the people who buy the cotton. It takes two to make a bargain—the seller and the buyer—and the buyers have said definitely, "We will not have ratoon cotton." They have indicated quite definitely that the majority of the spinners do not want ratoon cotton. In fact, they have gone further than that and have told the Premier of this State that, if any ratoon cotton at all were found in the Queensland pack, they would refuse to buy Queensland cotton. Then we have the advice of our experts, who have no axe to grind. It has been hinted that the British-Australian Cotton Growers' Association have some axe to grind—that the Lancashire spinners want a good article at a cheap price—but surely the experts of the

department such as Mr. Evans, Mr. Wells, and Mr. Gudge, the expert grader who arrived a few days ago, and one or two others I could quote, have no axe to grind. They are here to do the best they can for the industry, and to advise the Government what is the best policy to carry out to establish this industry on a sound financial footing.

There are only two reasons why cotton growing in Queensland should not pay. One is if we fail to produce an article that will command a price that will enable Queensland wages and Queensland living conditions to be carried out by the people doing the work. That is No. 1. No. 2 is if we are careless in our control of the industry and allow either the Mexican boll weevil or the pink boll worm to get into the State. It has been said that Queensland is in a unique position. We have no Mexican border. The Mexican boll weevil got into America and destroyed more than one-third of the crop of the United States of America, and it is largely due to that fact that Queensland has the opportunity to establish a name for itself on the English market that will enable us to produce cotton for all time. We know that many years ago—during the American Civil War—cotton was grown in Queensland. There was a large area put under cotton in those days, but, when prices fell, the Queensland farmer went out of the business. The farmer, like anyone else, is not in business for the fun of the thing, and he grows cotton only so long as it pays him. If he finds something else which pays better, he turns his attention to that. With legislation giving the Department of Agriculture power to control pests, regulate the distribution of seed, and by means of advances to the farmers to encourage farmers to establish their own ginneries, I am hopeful that the wisdom of the present Government in carrying out their policy in regard to this industry will be appreciated by generations to come. I do not think we should enter into a lengthy discussion on the principles of the Bill at this stage, nor do I think I am justified in putting forward a case against ratoon cotton. I will do that in detail in my second reading speech, and, when the Bill is in Committee, I shall be quite prepared to receive any suggestions from hon. members on either side of the House that will improve the Bill.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I notice from the Minister's remarks that the Bill provides the means for making legal the action of the Government in backing the growers and securing the cotton and exporting it through the British cotton-growing interests. He further explained that the acquisition of the cotton crop by the State is secured to the State until 1926. We would like to know—and I think the Minister might make the matter clear—whether it is the intention of the Government to acquire for the State all cotton grown in the State after the guarantee period has expired.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. CORSER: I am very glad to hear that. There is another point we would like to know about. Whilst the guaranteed price is for the cotton, has the Minister made provision in the Bill for the value of the seed to be returned to the grower, because all profits and products of cotton should be returned to the grower.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Profits will be returned to the grower if there are any.

Mr. CORSER: I am glad to hear that. No doubt the Government hope that, when the British cotton interests evaporate, there will be a possibility of the State taking control for the farmers under the system of co-operation. That is a thing which we have advocated right along—that the ginneries should be co-operative.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is no use advocating it unless you can do it.

Mr. CORSER: Another matter of very great interest is the action of the Council of Agriculture in this matter. We would like to have an answer from the Minister to the questions which I asked yesterday.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I promised that information on my second reading speech.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman promised it when this Bill was before the House. However, we are quite prepared to put that aside for the moment. In an important matter like this I think it will be agreed that, since the desire is that the Council of Agriculture shall control and direct all matters pertaining to rural industries, in which cotton growing is included, their advice and recommendation on the matter should at least be considered, and we would like to have that advice as the matter of ratoon cotton will come up for consideration. We must remember that the interests which are developing the cotton industry here to-day, and the interests which are advising the Minister and the powers that be, are the interests, and to some extent the paid officials, of the British cotton interests. Whilst the Minister takes an amount of credit for the guarantee and an amount of responsibility, we trust that that responsibility will end in a profit being made over the guaranteed price of 5½d. per lb., which can be distributed to the growers. But we must remember that that guarantee is not wholly and solely paid by the State. Half of the guarantee, I understand, is undertaken by the Federal Government in every State of the Commonwealth.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They came in very late.

Mr. CORSER: They did not come in late. Before any agreement was made negotiations were in train between Mr. Crompton Wood and other British interests and the Federal Government, and the Federal Government, whose guests the British delegation were, undertook to guarantee half the loss on the cotton, if any.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Queensland paid a half-share of their expenses.

Mr. CORSER: Yes, while in Queensland, but the Commonwealth pay half the costs in every State.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

Mr. CORSER: That is quite all right; we only want to get down to bedrock. It is not my intention now to go into the question of how the guarantee was brought about.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not wish to prevent the hon. member for Burnett from dealing with this very important question, but I would point out that the matter he has now introduced is extraneous to the question before the Committee. The hon. member will have full opportunity on the second reading of discussing the liability of

the State and Federal Governments, but, if I permit him to introduce the matter at the present stage, some other hon. member may wish to introduce other extraneous matter, and we shall then be discussing a matter other than the question before the Committee. I hope that the hon. member for Burnett will keep to the question before the Committee. He can mention the matter he has raised in passing, but may not discuss it in detail.

Mr. CORSER: I merely wanted to mention the matter in answer to the Minister. I sincerely hope that we shall have from the Minister at a later stage all the information available with regard to the subjects of the guarantee and ratoon cotton. We are going to give the Government credit for anything they may do for the good of the State, and I am not going to try to break down any solid advice that may be given by them and acted upon by them. They have a grave duty to the State to discharge, and I sincerely hope that they will discharge it in the interests of the State, remembering, however, the interests of the grower and the fact that he has a big concern in the question, too. As country representatives, we have to stand for the interests of the producer as well as those of the State. In fact, we put foremost the interests of the man who is expected to grow these things, and we do not want the interests of outside individuals, whether manufacturers or anybody else, to outweigh the evidence which can be put forward by the grower. Whilst we expect and hope that the Government will do its duty, we want every proof from the Minister that what is proposed is in the interests of the State and of the grower, and not merely in the interests of a section.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I certainly think that it is desirable that this Bill should be introduced. The Minister said in his opening remarks that what we have to do in Queensland is to start right. There is no doubt that that is just the crux of the whole business—that whatever is done in the stabilising of this industry we start off right, because, if we have to retrace our steps after a year or two, Queensland will suffer a very serious loss. It has been established that Queensland can produce cotton—nobody disputes that—and I take it that the first duty of Queensland is to render whatever assistance can be given in the matter. But we want the Minister to give us all the facts at his disposal, so that we may—to use his own words—start right. We do not want him to keep back anything that will be of assistance to us. The industry is in its incipient stages, but, unfortunately, conditions during the past year were such that the return was not as great as it might have been. Had we had the rainfall, the probabilities are that the return would have been £750,000. The whole question is that the British Australian Cotton Growing Association have supported the industry by the expenditure of probably £300,000, and contemplate spending another £300,000 or £400,000 in Queensland in order that the industry may be thoroughly and properly developed. Personally I look upon what the Government are doing as one of the functions of the Government—to assist and encourage in every possible way, not only primary production, but also secondary industries. The primary producer is having a pretty bad spin in different parts of Queensland, and we need to see that the cost of production—I am not speaking now of wages, but the cost of production generally, transport, and so on—shall be as low as possible. We have to compete with other countries which are growing cotton under conditions which we do not wish to see introduced into Queensland.

We have to compete with the Egyptian cotton, which, I am credibly informed, is probably the best cotton in the world. From the evidence we have had, I think it can be said that the cotton which is being grown in Queensland is quite equal, if not superior, to the best cotton grown in America. We are also informed that the cost of har-

[4 p.m.] vesting and picking cotton in Queensland—although the charges are probably fairly high—do not exceed the cost of cotton-picking in America; so that we have everything in our favour at the present time, provided, as the Minister stated, we start off right.

The matter of ratoon cotton is one of the difficulties that we are faced with at the present time. So far as my knowledge goes, we have had no one come to Queensland to say that they will buy ratoon cotton in large quantities. We have had people over here who have spent their money here, and who have stated that they are prepared to buy the annual cotton crop. Until such time as someone comes along and tells us in no uncertain manner that he is prepared to purchase the ratoon cotton, I do not see that we can get anywhere in the matter. If ratoon cotton is not to be grown, then that means an added cost on the production of the annual crop. The removal of the cotton plant from the land immediately the crop has been harvested will cost a fair amount of money. The Minister also indicated that it was proposed to extend the cotton agreement for another two years. That is quite all right. I am sure that none of us object to that. It might be necessary to extend it a little further. At all events, the growers are guaranteed that the Government will stand behind this industry until the end of 1926. By that time, as the Minister stated, if the cotton-growers feel that they are in a position to take over the ginning of cotton, there will be no objection offered in that direction. If the cotton-growers can show their bona fides under this Bill, and can show that they can successfully run those ginneries and produce the cotton lint, then all I have to say is, good luck to them. We shall be able to discuss the Bill in detail at another stage. I hope the Minister, in providing the information which he is going to supply to this Chamber with regard to certain debatable features associated with cotton-growing in Queensland, will spare no effort to get information that will be absolutely reliable, and which will enable us to make that right start which he spoke about.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I intend to give every possible assistance towards the stabilising of the cotton industry, because I believe that it is in the interests of Queensland to do so. The Minister can be complimented on giving a fairly lucid explanation of the Bill, but there are one or two little matters that I would like to touch upon. I understand from the Minister's remarks that the agreement with the British-Australian Cotton Growers' Association is to be extended until 1926.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The agreement terminates at that date.

Mr. PETERSON: I understand there is a provision, and a very good one, too, to enable the cotton-growers to own the ginneries co-operatively after 1926.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That would have to be provided for in another Bill.

Mr. PETERSON: Seeing that the agreement with the British-Australian Cotton Growers' Association is only for a further term of three years, can we honestly expect that the association is going to put a lot more money into the development of the ginneries through Queensland in that term? I am not saying that it is not a right thing to assist the growers, but I am only raising the point to find out whether we can honestly expect the association to expend further hundreds of thousands of pounds when they have only such a short tenure.

The next matter is a very important matter so far as my electorate is concerned, and that is the question of ratoon cotton. The Minister touched upon that question very lightly. We have heard a great deal of debate on the question outside, but very little debate in this Chamber on that matter. Did I understand the Minister to state that an embargo is to be placed against all ratoon cotton, or that the growing of that cotton will be prohibited throughout the State after the passing of this Bill?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, that is so.

Mr. PETERSON: That means that the growers who do not wish to claim the assistance or subsidy offered by the Government, and who desire to sell ratoon cotton, are to be debarred from growing that cotton if they so desire, even if they have a market for it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is so.

Mr. PETERSON: That is a diabolical principle to introduce into Queensland. The Government are going to tell the farmer what he has to grow. They are going to prevent the farmer from growing certain crops, even if he has a market for them. I agree that the Government should have the right to say what class of cotton shall be grown if they are paying a subsidy; but if the producer puts his brains and muscle into growing cotton, he should have the right to say what kind of cotton he will grow, and where he will sell it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Even if it destroys his neighbour's crops?

Mr. PETERSON: That has got to be proved.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You do not know much about it.

Mr. PETERSON: I have just as much knowledge as the embryo Secretary for Public Lands.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not think you have. The only knowledge you have gained is in going round the district.

Mr. PETERSON: I go to men who are practical, rather than to unpractical men like the Secretary for Public Lands. In my district this is a burning subject. The Cheshire-cat grin of the Secretary for Public Lands may annoy someone, but it does not annoy me.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope these personal reflections will cease. I trust that the hon. member for Normanby will not go into detail in dealing with the question of ratoon cotton. He may refer to it in passing. He will realise that, if I allow him to go into detail in a Committee stage, then I shall have to allow the same privilege to other hon. members.

Mr PETERSON: I bow to your decision, Mr. Kirwan. It seems unfortunate that every time I rise to speak the Secretary for Public Lands should indulge in personal insults.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The matter is now closed.

Mr. PETERSON: While I agree with the principle that the Government should have the right to determine what class of cotton shall be grown seeing that they have to subsidise the industry, still I think that those settlers who desire to grow ratoon cotton, and who do not seek the subsidy from the Government, should have the permission to grow that cotton until the Government can establish the fact that the growth of such cotton is pernicious and against the interests of other cotton-growers. The Minister has taken a keen interest in this cotton-growing proposition, and a great deal of credit is due to him. At the same time, I do trust that the remarks of the leader of the Opposition will be taken into consideration, and that the Minister during his second reading speech will submit evidence in the fullest terms against ratoon cotton-growing, and I, like other hon. members, shall be open to reason on the matter.

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): I think we all agree with the great importance of establishing the cotton industry in Queensland. There are one or two phases that I would like to touch upon very briefly at this stage; I hope that at another stage we shall be able to go a little further into detail. There is one principle which, it seems to me, the Government are adopting in bringing forward this proposal, and that is that they are putting all the cotton-growers in the position of being tied up to one company in the disposal of their cotton. To that end they are also practically dictating to the farmers the class of cotton to be grown. It has been recognised that there is only one variety that will give a staple of a certain length and longer.

I do not think that any of the growers who have been growing cotton in Queensland have seed that will grow cotton of the length of staple desired. If the Government are going to work on those lines, it will be incumbent on them to be more active in supplying growers with seed, so that the possibilities of their growing the class of cotton laid down will be assured.

It is very unwise to dictate that no ratoon cotton shall be grown. The growing of ratoon cotton is certainly going to cheapen the cost of growing cotton throughout the State, and provided you can get the length of staple and quality, why should not those men who wish grow ratoon cotton? There is another phase of this matter to be considered, and that is the possibility of a company coming along at a later date with a proposal to buy ratoon cotton.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member is not going in for a long debate on this question, as his arguments are more in the nature of a second reading speech.

Mr. NOTT: The farmer should not be prohibited from growing ratoon cotton, because a market for it may come later. If a firm, at a later stage, say, "We want to buy ratoon cotton specially, and we will gin ratoon cotton for £4 or £5 a ton instead of £9 a ton," the growers ought to be able to take advantage of that proposal. At a later date, opportunity to sell ratoon cotton will come, and I believe that the buyers will be able to gin it at £4 or £5 a ton instead of £9 a ton, which is the price embodied in the agreement made by the Government with the British Australian Cotton Growers' Association.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): We all know that it is only at this stage that hon. members can move amendments with respect to the principles involved in the Bill. Therefore, I am taking a certain amount of liberty with regard to the principles. There are two very great principles involved in this Bill. First, there is the principle of the right to dictate to the farmer what crop he shall grow or shall not grow. There is also this big principle involved in this industry—which we hope will be a big industry and one that will largely affect the prosperity of Queensland—and that is that it is apparently being run at the dictates of a certain company. Speaking as one who is interested in the sugar industry, we all know that it has always been said that one of the drawbacks to that industry is that it is entirely in the hands of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you believe that?

Mr. SWAYNE: Here, in the very initiation of this new industry, the Government, who in the past have inveighed so bitterly against the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and attacked it strongly in their electioneering speeches, are handing this industry over to the control of another company.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not true. You want to look at the agreement.

Mr. SWAYNE: From what we read and from what we hear from those who do know something about the industry, the question of growing ratoon cotton largely rests upon a dispute between Lancashire and Yorkshire. The Lancashire people say that they want a certain class of cotton. They apparently have the ear of the Government, and they say that ratoon cotton is not suitable to them. They are, therefore, asking the Queensland Government to pass a law summarily debarring farmers from growing the type of cotton that they do not desire. Before such a law as that is placed on the statute-book, it should be shown conclusively that the growth of that class of cotton is detrimental to the community as a whole. The argument used against it is that it is a means of introducing pests. It cannot be the means of introducing these pests, and it cannot start those pests. It cannot be the means of introducing any new evil, and it would be quite fair to allow those growers who have information at their disposal, and who think they can do better out of ratoon cotton than out of plant cotton, to take their chance and risk in the matter. As has been pointed out by the hon. member for Stanley, a time will come, if we judge by what we read, when we shall find buyers for ratoon cotton. Speaking as a practical agriculturist, and one who knows the value of having a crop in the ground before a dry season comes along and of the lessened cost of production in growing two crops from one planting—I hope that the Minister will reconsider the matter.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! I hope that the hon. member is not going into detail on this matter.

Mr. SWAYNE: The fluctuations of the seasons is an important factor when embarking on a new industry, and the chances when you put seed in the ground are that it may not come through. That risk is largely done away with by being able to take two crops off the one sowing. In regard to the sugar industry to which I belong, we all know that the second crop is the most profitable. I hope that the Minister will be well advised, and that on the second reading he will be able to justify the very drastic stand he has taken.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I know it is not desirable at this stage to enter into the merits of the case, but in dealing with the desirableness of introducing a Bill for acquiring and marketing the cotton crop, every hon. member who has the interests of Queensland at heart must come to the conclusion that it is desirable for Parliament to do something to place this industry on a firm basis. Legislation is necessary to authorise the acquisition of the cotton crop and validate the agreement which has been made. As usual, Parliament is asked to validate something which has been agreed to whether for right or for wrong. We are in the same old happy position as we have been on many occasions in the past. It does not matter whether we agree with it or not, as the thing has already been done and we have to consent to it.

We find, after reading the motion a little further on, that the Bill is "for other purposes." That is what we should give our attention to. That is the question of whether we should ban ratoon cotton or stand by an agreement made with a proprietary company in the old country. So far as I can see, it is simply pitting one section against another—Lancashire against Yorkshire. I had the pleasure of travelling with the Cotton Delegation. They were a very estimable lot of men, who understood their business. They saw an opportunity of creating a fresh industry in Queensland when America had failed. Mr. Harold Parker and his companions were genial men, and were able to put the case from one point of view—that is the point of view of the companies they were representing. I could never understand in the conversation and speeches of the delegation that I listened to where ratoon cotton was going to fail so far as treatment was concerned. It was not a question of the length of staple, but a question, so far as I could understand, of the strength of staple. The delegation were so determined to corner the Queensland cotton crop that they were only going to ask the Government to grant a subsidy to the crop which would be suitable to their purposes. I remember Mr. Parker saying at a banquet that ratoon cotton was all very well, but he would not risk putting it through his looms, because he would not risk the credit of his output.

It was problematical to my mind. It is merely bolstering up one man's business at the expense of men who have been growing cotton in the past and in the face of public opinion. When you come to look at public opinion in regard to ratoon cotton, as expressed in our various newspapers, and when you refer to a man like Mr. Daniel

Jones, who has had a good knowledge of cotton-growing, not only in Queensland and Western Australia but in other places, you will find that just as good results have been obtained from ratoon as from any other kind of cotton. I protest against legislation banning that class of cotton, more particularly when it is not going to be subsidised. If you are going to grant a subsidy for certain classes of privileged goods, well and good, but why ban other goods for which there is a market? I understand there is a market for ratoon cotton, as Western Australia has experimented with it, and there is the same prospect of Queensland finding a market. Opinions differ. This agreement only holds good until 1926, and we are told that we should not be a party to the encouragement of ratoon cotton because it harbours pests. On the question of harbouring pests, I think we are going to deal with a bigger pest in connection with the cotton industry—that is, the boll weevil. When we come to the second reading stage, and discover what is in the Bill, I shall have a little more to say. I think it is only a fair thing, when we are consenting to the desirability of introducing legislation, that we should have an opportunity of discussing it, if not in detail, at some length. It is not that we pose as experts. I sincerely trust that the Minister will be in a position, when this matter is brought before the House, to give us opinions from both sides. I have a very open mind as to whether we should place a restriction on ratoon cotton, and as to whether we should confine ourselves to an agreement subsidising the production of only one class of cotton which is suitable for one class of trade.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

The resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*) 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 Tuesday next.

UPPER BURNETT AND CALLIDE LAND SETTLEMENT BILL.

DISCHARGE OF ORDER FOR THIRD READING.

On the Order of the Day for the third reading of the Bill being read,

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

"That the Order of the Day be discharged from the paper, and that the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering clauses 8, 9, 10, and 14, and, further, that when the Bill is reported the third reading may be then proceeded with."

Question put and passed.

RECOMMITTAL.

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

Clause 3—"*Other public works, etc.*"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): I beg to move the insertion in clause 8, line 28, page 6, of the word "further." Hon. members will remember that I accepted a proviso moved by the hon. member for Burnett. It is now necessary to insert the word "further," because the second proviso becomes a further proviso.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 8, as further amended, put and passed.

Clause 9—"*Water facilities on individual selections; Cost of equipment to be deemed a loan*"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): I beg to move the omission, on line 24, page 7, of the word "seven," with a view to inserting the word "ten."

After the long discussion that took place in Committee on this question, I went to some trouble to find out the life of machinery, and I also got the analyses of the water tests in the Burnett district. After discussion with Mr. Partridge, he informed me that he did not think there would be any risk in acceding to the request to extend the term to ten years.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I desire to congratulate the Minister on the trouble he has taken in looking round to prove that the advice of the Opposition was correct. We do not want any credit for amending the Bill, but we give the Minister the credit for taking a live and active interest in some few of our suggestions.

Amendment (*Mr. McCormack*) agreed to.

Clause 9, as further amended, put and passed.

[4.30 p.m.]

Clause 10—"*Cost of equipment to be deemed a loan*"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): I beg to move the omission on line 10, page 8, of the word "seven," with a view to inserting the word "ten." This is a similar amendment to the one in clause 9, and makes the proviso apply to groups as well as to individual selectors.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as further amended, put and passed.

Clause 14—"*Failure of Bore, etc*"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): I beg to move the omission on line 19 of the word "eight," with a view to inserting the word "nine." This is consequential on the amendments inserted in clause 12, which were necessary in consequence of the insertion of a new clause in the Bill, as a result of which sections 8 and 9 should appear as sections 9 and 10.

Amendment agreed to

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): I beg to move the omission on line 20 of the word

"nine," with a view to inserting the word "ten."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with further amendments.

THIRD READING.

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

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

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I would like to ask the Minister one question. How long will the settlers in this area be free from rates, and what will the position of the local authority be during the time no rates are received from the settlers in the area?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): I could not answer that question off hand. The roads will be constructed and the cost of the roads will be added to the value of the land; but, as soon as the settler is on the land and we have given him a reasonable time to construct some sort of a residence, we shall allow the local authority to come in—perhaps in twelve months, perhaps in nine months. We do not want to impose a double tax if we can help it, and we do not want to hamper the local authority either. There are two parties to be considered. The local authority on taking over the roads will have to keep them in repair, and there is the settler who is carrying the cost of the roads on his land. I can assure the hon. member that we will be as lenient as we can to the prospective settler.

Question put and passed.

METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

COMMITTEE.

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

Clauses 1 to 5, both inclusive, put and passed.

Clause 6—"*Amendment of section 47—Board may lessen supply*"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I beg to move the insertion after the word "District" on line 16 of the words—

"(other than an agreement dated the eighteenth day of November, one thousand nine hundred and twenty, between the Board and the Council of the City of Ipswich for the supply of water to the City of Ipswich)."

It was pointed out last night by the hon. member for Ipswich, that it might be held that this clause will interfere with the contractual obligations of the Board with the City of Ipswich. That is not intended. However, after consultation with the Board, I had a look at the agreement and agreed to insert this amendment so that this provision will not in any way vary the agreement which was entered into last year between the Council of the City of Ipswich and the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board. That agreement provides for a certain quantity of water being supplied to the City of Ipswich in bulk. It also provides that, in the event of drought or a scarcity of water, the Board may diminish that minimum quantity. Where that is done, in the event of any dispute between the Board and the Ipswich City Council as to the justification for so diminishing the quantity, the Government Hydraulic Engineer is to be the sole arbiter and his decision is to be final. That agreement should stand.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 7 to 10, both inclusive, put and passed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I beg to move the insertion of the following new clause to follow clause 10:—

"Section ninety-seven of the principal Act is amended as follows:—

(*a*) Subsection one is repealed and the following subsection is inserted in lieu thereof:—

'The owner shall be liable to pay all rates in respect of vacant land. In other cases the owner or the occupier, as required by the Board, shall pay the rates.'

(*b*) In subsection two, the words 'For the purposes of this section' are repealed."

At the present time it will be remembered that the owner is liable for rates up to a valuation of £20, and after that the occupier is liable. It has been found by the Board that in connection with large properties let to a number of weekly tenants, there is great difficulty in collecting the rates. Take, for example, a building such as Preston House, where there are a large number of different tenants. The occupants of the various rooms, flats, or suites of offices may vary from time to time, and consequently it is difficult for the Board to keep in touch with all the changing tenants who may be there. We are therefore giving the Board the option in those cases of charging the owner with the total rates, and the owner can then recover them from his tenants by including them in the rent charged for the premises.

New clause (*Mr. Smith*) agreed to.

Clauses 11 and 12 put and passed.

Clause 13—"*Limitation of liability*"—

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I move the addition, after the word "Board" on line 21, page 5, of the following proviso:—

"Provided further that nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the liability of the Board to pay compensation for an actual physical injury to any person or for the actual value of property completely destroyed or for the amount of the loss in value of property permanently damaged, where such injury, destruction, or loss respectively, is caused by reason or in consequence of the operations of the Board."

On going closely into the Bill I cannot see that there is any protection under it in the direction sought by the amendment. As I said yesterday on the second reading, the whole onus of proof of negligence is thrown on the claimant, and accidents will happen in connection with which it will be quite impossible to establish a claim for negligence, as they may be absolutely unavoidable. This amendment is an endeavour to get over that

difficulty, and to give compensation where it is deserved and should be paid. A person walking along the street might be injured by an unavoidable accident caused by one of the water mains bursting, and a similar accident might happen to a dwelling-house, and a considerable amount of damage could be done to an individual's property. The Board might not have been negligent in carrying out its duties, and the individual who received physical injury or whose property was damaged would not have contributed to the accident. All I ask is that protection should be given in those cases. I cannot see that such protection is given at present by the Bill or in the principal Act. The amendment is reasonable, and I hope that the Minister will see his way to accept it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I do not propose to accept the amendment in its entirety, but there is one portion of it which I am prepared to accept, which I will outline later. The leader of the Opposition states that he fears the public will be deprived of certain rights under the Bill, and in consequence he proposes to protect what he considers to be those rights by moving the amendment. I claim now, as I claimed in my second reading speech, that there is nothing in this clause when read in conjunction with the principal Act which is unjust or inequitable. One cannot fail to take note of the fact that certain people in the community are always prepared to fire shots at a public authority of this kind with a view to securing some game. In connection with a public authority such as the Water and Sewerage Board, carrying on vast operations, a number of people seize every possible opportunity of endeavouring to acquire something that they are not entitled to receive. One only needs to go through Brisbane to see buildings to which, owing to faulty construction, certain things have happened. The buildings have cracked in corners and other places, and are, perhaps, out of alignment. It may easily be assumed that a person desirous of getting something for nothing, when the Board carries on operations anywhere in the vicinity of those buildings, may prefer a claim for damages against the Board. I do not consider that to be right. I do not think that the public purse should be used to enrich people who have no legitimate claim against the public. Of course, if people have suffered through the operations of the Board and damage has actually resulted through the neglect of the Board, either in regard to construction or maintenance or in any other respect which it is the duty of the Board to observe, then compensation should be paid. The present Act places the disability on the Board. Anyone who has a damaged building at present may lay a claim against the Board on the ground that the cracks or faults in the building are due to the operations of the Board. We claim that the onus of proof should be on the claimant. If a person comes forward with a claim that the Board's operations have resulted in damage to his property, the onus of proof should be on the claimant that he has suffered damage or loss to his property; the Board should not be asked to prove the negative. Unless the Board was to minutely examine with a microscope every building in Brisbane in the vicinity of its operations, it would be impossible for the Board to say whether certain cracks or subsidences had resulted from the operations of the Board. We contend therefore that it is equitable that in a claim against the Board the onus of proof should be upon the claimant. The amendment brings us back to the old position. If the leader of the Opposition is opposed to the proposal in the Bill he should oppose the whole of the clause, because his amendment is tantamount to restoring in another way the old provisions in the principal Act which we propose to tighten up. In other words, the amendment would introduce a number of new words into the clause without accomplishing anything. It would be going back to the old position of allowing people with property rights, who claim that they have sustained damage, to prefer claims, real or otherwise, against the Board.

There is no desire on the part of the Board to evade its lawful obligations. All we are asking for is that it shall be protected against imposition by those harpies who never neglect an opportunity to claim damages from a public authority. No common law right is invaded by this proposal, as has been suggested by certain critics. We are merely placing the Board in the position of the owner of adjoining land. The Crown owns the fee-simple of the majority of the land through which the Board operates, and the Board is a statutory authority and can do nothing unless under the authority of an Order in Council, so that to all intents and purposes it is the agent of the Crown, and is really in the position of the owner of adjoining land, and we propose that in law it shall be regarded as such.

A good deal has been said by certain people about the possibility of injuring the rights of the small property owner. Some people almost shed tears about the small occupant of land who is endeavouring to pay off his own little home. We all have sympathy with such persons, and we all seek to see that their interests are protected, but on this occasion, when those people speak about the small property owner whose rights require safeguarding, they really have in mind the large property owner.

Mr. MOORE: Who spoke about the small property owner?

Mr. FRY: I am not a large property owner. I sang out for my constituents.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If the hon. member for Kurilpa imagines that by the volume of his voice he is going to close me down in this Committee, he is making a mistake.

Mr. FRY: I am not going to allow you to make statements which are not correct.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I mentioned no individual, and, if the hon. member likes to wear the cap if it fits, he may do so. The leader of the Country party says, "Who spoke about the small property owner?" He apparently wishes to deny also that he said it.

Mr. MOORE: No; you are putting up an Aunt Sally.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I never accused him of saying it, although I have said on many occasions that we always know where the hon. member is.

Mr. MOORE: That is what I am anxious to know about you.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member apparently has taken a leaf out of the bible of a former political

identity which might have been deemed original in the time of our grandfathers. I cannot agree to accept the amendment in its entirety, because in that case the Board would be left in the same position in which it is at present and we propose to protect the Board against imposition, but I am prepared to accept portion of it, to read as follows:—

"Provided further that nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the liability of the Board to pay compensation for an actual physical injury to any person occasioned by the operations of the Board in cases where the Board would have been liable if this Act had not been passed."

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I am prepared to accept that, and I ask permission to withdrawn my amendment to enable the Minister to move his amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the Committee that the hon. member for Windsor be allowed to withdraw his amendment?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I am rather sorry that the hon. member has asked permission to withdraw his amendment. He was perfectly justified in his attitude.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He has a right to withdraw the amendment if he likes.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. member for Aubigny object to the withdrawal of the amendment?

Mr. MOORE: I am going to say a few words.

The CHAIRMAN: I asked whether it was the pleasure of the Committee that the amendment should be withdrawn. Does the hon. member object?

Mr. MOORE: I expressed regret that the hon. member was going to withdraw. I am not objecting.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I move the insertion, after the word "Board," in line 21, page 5, of the proviso I have already read. The point taken by the leader of the Opposition in the course of his remarks that persons may sustain injury through no fault of their own where sewerage or drainage works are being carried on, is a good one. If, for instance, such a person fell down a hole, he should be entitled to compensation, because it would be the duty of the Board properly to erect a barricade round the hole.

Amendment (*Mr. Smith*) agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 14—"*Amendment of section* 149—*Board may recover cost of works; instalments*"—

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I move the insertion, after the word "thereof," on line 48, page 6, of the following words:—

"After the word 'month' where it secondly occurs in the said subsection the following proviso is added:—

Provided that the Board may at any time extend the time for payment of such expense with interest as aforesaid for any period not exceeding a further twenty quarters and, in such case, the amount of the quarterly instalments payable as herein provided shall be proportionately reduced."

The reason for moving that amendment is that a considerable amount of expense will be incurred in making connections with the sewerage system in Brisbane, and in quite a number of instances it will be a hardship to require the owner to pay for them within the time specified in the principal Act. If the Ministers works it out, he will find that in quite a number of instances the cost will amount to about £1 5s. a month under the terms set out in the principal Act. Certainly I realise that the present charge for sanitary operations will drop out automatically, but that saving will not amount to more than between 1s. and 1s. 6d. a week—it may not be as much as that—and my amendment will give the Board discretionary power to extend the time for payment if it so wishes. If the Board says that the term of five years allowed under the principal Act is quite sufficient, it will stand; but the amendment gives the Board authority to extend that period where the individual concerned may find payment difficult under existing conditions. I hope the Minister will accept the amendment. I am not moving the amendment in any captious spirit or to hamper the operations of the Board in any way. I do think that the Board should have discretionary power to extend the time of payment if the case warrants it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I propose to accept the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition, as I consider that it is a reasonable one. I do not think that I have ever accused the hon.
[5 p.m.] member of moving amendments in any captious spirit. I do not think that that is a method of the hon. member for Windsor. It must be remembered that under the Bill the Board will only make connections at its own cost where the persons are in necessitous circumstances, or in such a financial position that they cannot pay the whole amount in one payment. That will be work carried out chiefly in the suburban areas. It will apply to workers' dwellings and places of that sort. I think it is perfectly safe to accept an amendment which will give the Board power to extend the period of payment for another five years.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 15 to 18, both inclusive, 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, 26th September.

CLOSER SETTLEMENT ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

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

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced 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."

This Bill is necessary in order to amend the present law dealing with the freehold land acquired under the Closer Settlement Acts. There are really only two provisions in the Bill. The most important is to give the Minister power to withdraw from resumptions after the court has given its decision with regard to compensation. This has been found necessary because, after all, under closer settlement we must have some regard to the value the land is now being put to and to the prospective value of that land. If that land is considered by the Land Court to be highly productive and the compensation is based accordingly, it will almost forbid us from successfully settling that land under the Closer Settlement Acts. We have the right to withdraw from resumption land held under leasehold tenure within one month after the decision of the court has been given. The hon. member for Oxley has asked a question in regard to the Clermont land. I have exercised the right of not proceeding with the resumption because in the meantime we have been able to secure by exchange a sufficient area on Retro and Langton to meet the needs of closer settlement in that district and for cotton-growing purposes. It would be inadvisable to disturb the existing tenants—they are mostly grazing farmers—when we could secure land by other means. It is proposed to resume land in the Maranoa district. That land—Mount Abundance, for instance—is land that is highly productive at the present time. The decision is to bring that land under settlement for the purpose of growing wheat and making the area an agricultural settlement. We desire to know exactly what the terms of settlement will be, and the only means of arriving at a conclusion is to find the value placed on the land by the Land Court. If the value is too high for successful closer settlement, or, in other words, if the present owners are using that land in a highly productive way, then the Crown desires the right to withdraw from the resumption of that land and, of course, to pay compensation to the owners of the land for any disturbance that may take place.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Could that not be ascertained before the notice to resume is given?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No. It is impossible to tell what the decision of the Land Court will be. The Land Court has its own principles in connection with assessing compensation. The value of disturbance is an unknown quantity. The land might be used in a higher productive way and the compensation might be so great that it would be cruelty to place men on that land and load them with that compensation. At present we have the right to withdraw from resumption in connection with leasehold land. It is impossible to find out the actual cost except through our assessing commissioners. They might say that the land is worth £3 to £4 per acre, but the court might say it is worth £3 to £4 per acre plus £2 per acre for disturbance.

A man carrying on the business of sheep-raising, particularly in these good areas, might be regarded by the court as using the land up to its full capacity, and compensate him accordingly. If we were then to continue with these resumptions we would have on the new resumptions a repetition of the failures of the past. We are not able to give an idea of what the value of the land will be until after the court has given its decision. I do not think there will be any objection from the persons concerned. Of course, they do not want to give up their land, but they admit that the State has a right to secure land for closer settlement, and that as time goes on the Government must displace the big holder by the small holder. They recognise that the Government are acting in the best interests of all concerned when they ask that the Crown be given the right to review the question after the court has given its decision in regard to compensation. That is the main object of the Bill. It has to do with two valuable proposed resumptions—the one Mount Abundance and the other in the Goondiwindi district.

Mr. TAYLOR: You do not specify the time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Within one month after the court has given its decision the Government must give an answer as to whether they propose to go on with the resumption or not.

Mr. TAYLOR: It might be twelve months before the court gives its decision.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes; and in these particular instances I have informed the owners of these properties not in any way to disturb themselves because of the notice of resumption. They have valuable sheep, which they fatten, I understand, for the Southern market, and the Government were at pains to let the owners know that they should not disturb themselves in view of the notice of resumption until the Government serve them with a notice of their intention to proceed with the resumptions. The Bill provides for compensation for any expense that they may be put to as a result of the notice of resumption.

Mr. TAYLOR: That is for the period intervening between the notice of resumption and the decision of the Land Court?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes. In the case of the Clermont lands, the Government had one month in which to decide, and they immediately got a decision on the matter. The Government needed the land, but recognised that unless they could bring about closer settlement which had a fair prospect of success it would be unwise to disturb the small grazing holders of that land, and they were accordingly notified that the Government did not intend to go on with the resumption.

Mr. COSTELLO: Can the Government proceed with the resumption at any period after the expiration of the month's notice?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It might be reviewed again. The holders of land are notified through the "Gazette" of the intention of the Government to resume certain areas, and the officers of the Government make and submit their valuations. The case for the holder is worked up and submitted to the court. Under the existing Act the Government are bound to accept the compensation awarded by the court, and complete the resumption even though the court may award an extraordinary high amount. It seems to me that that is a flaw in the present Act. The Government do

not desire to disturb people even though they are carrying on business in a big way if they are making the full productive use of their land. There may possibly be cases where holders are making more use of their land—I do not say in large areas—than would be the case even with closer settlement. If an extraordinary high value is awarded as compensation, and it is placed on the incoming settler, he is compelled to carry a greater burden than he would if Parliament had the opportunity of reviewing the situation.

The second part of the Bill deals with necessary alterations in the law if the resumptions are gone on with. It is generally admitted in the case of Mount Abundance that the smallest area that should be opened for selection adjacent to the railway line should be 1,280 acres, but in the back portion of the estate larger areas will be necessary. Provision is being made in the Bill for a system of group settlement, as provided for in the Upper Burnett and Callide land settlement scheme. One of the principal points stressed in this Chamber in connection with land settlement is the smallness of the holdings.

Mr. COSTELLO: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I admit that many of the mistakes made with regard to land settlement have been due to an attempt to make a living on too small an area. I am not speaking now of purely agricultural land. I mean in sheep country, and in partly agricultural and partly pastoral country. Provision is being made in this Bill to create a new tenure, to be called a "Farm Settlement Lease." The smaller areas are to be taken up under perpetual lease, and the larger areas, up to 5,000 acres, may be taken up on the same terms and conditions as provided for the larger areas under the Upper Burnett and Callide land settlement scheme.

Mr. CORSER: That is homestead selection?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is in order that the selectors can make the best possible use of the land during their tenure. The perpetual leaseholds will be in perpetuity, and these farm settlement leases, which will be back from the railway line, will have a twenty-eight years' lease, the same as a grazing homestead selection. If it is found necessary to subdivide them after the expiration of the twenty-eight years' lease, the original settler is to be allowed priority in the selection of one of the blocks. The desire is to get as many people on this land as can make a living. In the case of the soldier settlement schemes in the Western areas, the Government have found it necessary to double the areas held.

Mr. VOWLES: We told you about that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am endeavouring to act outside of politics in regard to land matters. (Hear, hear!) If we are going to settle people on the land, we shall have to give them conditions that will induce them to remain there. (Hear, hear!) In those soldier settlements the Government are increasing the area.

Mr. COSTELLO: The Government will have to do that in the South also.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not care what my predecessor has done: I am going to try and make land settlement a success. (Hear, hear!) I believe the area of grazing homesteads has been too small. (Hear, hear!) In the cases of the Western lands we are fixing the area of the blocks at 10,000 acres, and on the inside areas, where they can do dairying, we are increasing the area from 1,280 acres to 3,000 acres, 4,000 acres, and 5,000 acres, according to the quality of the land.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): If the introduction of the matters which the Minister has brought before the Committee will assist land settlement, and tend to make our settlers prosperous, the Bill should have the support of hon. members. No doubt it will, as the provisions he has outlined with regard to serving notices of resumption on landholders, and the assurance he has given that he has advised the people who have had these notices served on them to carry on their operations in just the same manner as if they had not received them, is an excellent idea. The way in which notices of resumption have been served in the past must have had a very disturbing influence on the people receiving them. The fact that there will be ample time given, and that compensation will be paid for any loss sustained during the period intervening between the service of the notice of resumption and the decision of the Land Court, is equitable, fair, and just. Then, the fact that the Crown may, within one month after the decision of the Land Court, if circumstances require, give notice to the owner that they do not intend to go on with the resumption, is fair and reasonable. We shall probably learn more about the Bill when it is before us in Committee. I understand there are not many clauses in it.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I quite agree with the desire of the Crown to have an opportunity of getting out of the resumption in case the Land Court decides on a valuation above what the Crown considers a fair thing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Which the selector really could not make a living on.

Mr. CORSER: We will put it that way. Of course there is the other side—that of justice to the settler. When the amending Bill was going through on a previous occasion I opposed it from the point of view of the old settler who had made a freehold out of his lease, on the ground that there was no provision to enable him to secure what he contended was a fair valuation. If he does not think it is a fair valuation, he cannot get out of the resumption. He has to go. The Crown is going to take his land even if he protests that the valuation is not a fair compensation for the time and money and improvements he has put into the holding.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Of course that always occurs in resumptions.

Mr. CORSER: You will agree that the Crown valuation is taken, and that the Crown makes the value. The owner is made an offer, and he goes to the Land Court—that is his only appeal—and the Land Court gives its decision. If the value is small enough, the Crown will take over the land, and, if it goes against the Crown, this amending Bill lets it out. But it does not let the man out if he does not think the valuation is sufficient. Of course the Minister uses the argument that it is in favour of the settler.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Is that any better than to disturb the man who is making full use of his property, and probably having an unsuccessful settlement?

Mr. CORSER: We do not want an unsuccessful settlement, but everyone wants full compensation for the time, labour, and worry put into a property. On the Upper Burnett settlement all these freeholds were secured by the Crown by the amending Act of 1922. The Act made it possible for the Crown to secure the old homes of the pioneers of the Burnett, if they were not valued at more than £20,000 each. Where they were valued at more than £20,000 the Government had the power previously.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The court fixes the compensation.

Mr. CORSER: The court does not fix it. The Government fix it; they go to the court.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; the court fixes it.

Mr. CORSER: The court fixes it on the Government's valuation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Government put in their value, the man puts in his value, and the court decides.

Mr. CORSER: As the Minister knows, practically in all those cases of the Upper Burnett the Government's valuation was the valuation adopted.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; the acquirement valuation was the owner's in some cases.

Mr. CORSER: There are many other amendments necessary that I would like to bring under the notice of the Government. I know there are other reasons for the introduction of the Bill. I hope that when the Minister is dealing with the grazing pioneers he will carry out his intention of increasing certain sheep areas and that he will bring those on that country under the grazing homestead tenure, which provides for personal residence during the whole period of the lease and that he will give settlers other advantages. If the Minister really wants to assist the cattleman, particularly the man in the pear districts, he can give to each cattleman, who is only on a living area, a surety of tenure in that area.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will give him security of tenure if he clears the land of pear.

Mr. CORSER: If he does that, he is going to render properties valuable which are to-day valueless in the hands of commercial and banking institutions. He will improve the value of the lease so that banking institutions will advance money on it. That money will enable him to increase the employment on the place, which in turn will increase the improvements and will enable the holder to live under better conditions. Further, it will improve the State's assets. Such action would cost the Crown nothing, and it would mean a lot to those people. At any time under the present Land Act the Government can take those grazing farms if they are wanted for agricultural purposes, the same as they have acquired the whole of the Upper Burnett lands. I hope that the Minister, among the "certain particulars" which he claims he is amending in the Bill, will give some consideration to the cattleman in pear areas on what might be termed living areas.

Mr. VOWLES (*Darling Downs*): In dealing with the Closer Settlement Acts Amendment Bill, I had hoped that the Minister would tell us that provision was to be made to deal with the soldier settlement at Cecil Plains. I have seen letters in the Press during the last week or so complaining that representations had been made to the Department of Public Lands about the revaluation and reclassification of those lands. Action should be taken in that direction, even if it is necessary to write off some of the capital value. An effort should be made to allow those soldiers to carry on with a better prospect of success than they have at the present time, more particularly in view of the drought conditions they are experiencing. Representations have been made, and all sorts of remedies have been suggested, and, when I learned of the introduction of this Bill, I really thought that this would have been one of the first things to be taken into consideration.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I think we shall have to review the whole question of soldier settlement.

Mr. VOWLES: When referring to soldier settlements I am referring to repurchased estates. I consider that the Government are not making a job of it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You would have to face immense loss to do so.

Mr. VOWLES: It is far better to do so and keep the settlers there. It is better to wipe off that loss than to have them living a hell upon earth, with the sword always hanging over their heads, never knowing when it will fall. The Minister explains that it is intended to decide the question of resumption after the decision of the court has determined the question of compensation. We know exactly where the leaseholder stands, but we are told that the freeholder is to be placed in exactly the same position, and that he is going to be compensated with regard to the loss sustained through disturbance. We know what that compensation will be. Surely it is right that the leaseholder and the freeholder should be properly compensated when they are asked to get out.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is a difficult question, I know.

Mr. VOWLES: The Crown may refuse to pay reasonable compensation, but the man has to get out and has to make provision in the meantime for his future existence. That is not taken into consideration in determining a man's losses; it is only the actual loss of the property that is taken into account. They do not take into consideration the fact that a man has to find a new home.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I think the court considers that.

Mr. VOWLES: The court considers it as little as it possibly can. It simply considers the actual disturbance on the property and does not take into consideration the waste of time and the loss of business. If anyone goes into court he should be prepared to abide by the decision, it does not matter whether it is an individual or the Crown. I do not see that the Crown should be placed in a better position than the ordinary litigant. I am not condemning the Bill, because I have not seen it, but, from what the Minister tells us in reference to increased

areas on repurchased estates. I am right with him. I have always advocated larger areas on the country he refers to. As a result of my knowledge of the country, I know that the areas there must be reasonable. If you trace back the history of the repurchased estate of Jimbour, going back probably twelve years, you will find that the failure of the settlers was because of the limited areas. I remember that, when the Jimbour Commission sat, they told us that the downfall of the selectors was due primarily to that cause. When we were dealing with Cecil Plains I asked the Government not to restrict the area. If you are going to give a confined area to a selector, then he is going to have his nose to the grindstone all the time. If you give a reasonable area it gives him a prospect of carrying on; and, if he is not able to carry on, it gives him a chance of getting out. I know the areas in the Roma district to which the Minister referred this afternoon, and I quite admit there are areas in the vicinity of the railway line which could be cut up into much smaller blocks than those in the hinterland, and I ask the Minister to take into consideration in that district the experience of the soldier settlers on Mount Hutton and Injune Creek. It is a regrettable thing that there has been a big falling-off in settlement there. The soldiers are disappearing. They were up against seasonal conditions all the time. In that country you have to base the carrying capacity on the average seasons. At one time they may have unlimited rain and good crops, but you cannot possibly decide what is a living area in a season such as that. The most misleading factor in connection with land settlement in the Western country is the average rainfall. It is not distributed. Sometimes you have a prolific season. You will probably have heavy rains in the summer season—I have known 12 inches to fall at one time—and you may find that the average rainfall is very good. That rain certainly does good as it fills the creeks and gullies, and, if it could only be distributed over the year, it would be very nice, but, unfortunately, it is not distributed. The same conditions apply where it is proposed to repurchase estates, and, unless you give reasonable areas—unless you find that water can be got or put on the land—then the idea of closer settlement is a farce. In dealing with closer settlement on repurchased estates it is not the same as dealing with Crown lands, where it does not matter very much from a capital point of view whether the thing is a failure or not; but where you are dealing with repurchased estates you have to pay cash and debentures have to be issued. That money has to be paid back, and, unless you can put selectors on the land and put them at the very beginning in such a position that they have a reasonable hope of success, you are starting on a wrong basis, and, instead of creating prosperity, you are going to create misery. I sincerely trust that the Minister will take the suggestions I have made into serious consideration, because the conclusions I have come to have been arrived at after years of experience of settlement in the Western country—on Jimbour, Mount Hutton, Cecil Plains, and Injune Creek. If you are going to repurchase estates, do not make the mistakes you have made in the past, but give the settlers a reasonable living area in order that they may have a prospect of advancement. Once the settlers see a prospect of success they will go ahead; but once they see the case is hopeless they will drift and drift, and the Crown estate and the money borrowed for the purchase of the land will be in jeopardy. That is the very thing we do not want, because it will be a bad advertisement for Queensland.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I would like to know whether the Crown will be prepared to pay the costs of appeal after the individual has had his property assessed by the Land Court and the Crown has decided to resume the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The clause in the Bill reads—

> "The claimant shall be entitled to payment of proper costs and expenses incurred up to the date of the discontinuance, and the amount thereof shall, when necessary, be fixed by the Land Court or an Appeal Court, as the case may be."

Mr. MOORE: I am quite satisfied with that. I only wanted an assurance on the point. I quite agree with the proposal of the Minister to increase the areas. I am afraid that the areas in connection with the Upper Burnett settlement scheme in many cases are too small. The experience I have had in Queensland shows me the absolute folly, except in certain cases, of cutting land up into small areas. There is a class of country in Queensland that is eminently suitable for cutting into 150-acre blocks or even smaller areas, owing to the class of produce that can be grown on the land, but, when it comes to a question of dairying, a great mistake has been made by every Government in endeavouring to settle people on too small an area of land. They have always seemed afraid that the selector will be able to make more than a living. We have had that experience in connection with all the repurchased estates and in regard to nearly all settlement in Queensland, except in some specially favoured districts.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is remarkable what evidence you get. I have been told by a successful farmer in Roma that 640 acres are sufficient.

Mr. MOORE: That is possible in some districts, but we have also to take into account the human equation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He is on a 640-acre block.

Mr. MOORE: It is quite possible that one man, who has had experience and knows how to work his place, may make a living on 320 acres, while other settlers round about him are unable to do so.

Mr. COSTELLO: He may be on alluvial flats.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No.

Mr. MOORE: I know it is quite possible. One can see successful settlers in different districts. As a rule, it is because of good farming, but it takes a long period of probation before a man reaches that stage, and very often a good deal of intelligence, too. That, unfortunately, has been the fault. We have put men on the land to cultivate it who are not adapted for the work. We only need to give the settlers reasonable conditions until they can grow crops, in order to bring about intensive culture such as has been evolved in other places. We are in the same state to-day as I suppose Victoria was forty years ago. They are evolving a class of farmer there who

understand intensive culture, but we have not got them in Queensland to any extent. I would like to see the Government err on the side of giving a man too much land rather than too little, because we have seen the failures which have taken place in the past owing to uncertain rainfall and other drawbacks. If a man has too small an area, he has to stock up so much to make a living that in a dry time he has not enough land for his requirements. The giving of a sufficient area of land will make all the difference between successful and unsuccessful settlement. I am pleased to see that the Minister has realised what, to my mind, has been one of the vital factors in connection with successful settlement—that is, giving a man a sufficient area to enable him to make a living.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): As an advocate of living areas, I was very pleased to hear the Minister say this afternoon that it is the intention of his department in future not to settle a man on a block of land unless it is a living area. The statement of the Minister with regard to the future policy of the department was the broadest utterance I have heard from the Government side. I do not blame this Government alone for the failure of land settlement in Queensland, as all Governments have been to blame. They have settled men on blocks of land which were not sufficient in area to enable them to support themselves and their families. The result has been that men have been unsuccessful, and have been forced to sell their blocks. If we put settlers on blocks large enough for them to make a living on, we shall not find them selling out.

The hon. member for Dalby pointed out the conditions of the settlers on Jimbour and Mount Hutton. I called at the Department of Public Lands lately with regard to the forfeited selections on Cecil Plains, and I was disappointed with the information I received. I was informed that those forfeited selections were set aside for settlers coming from the Coominya soldier settlement. I hope that the Minister will consider the requirements of the present settlers on Cecil Plains before he puts people from Coominya on the forfeited selections on Cecil Plains. There are settlers on Cecil Plains who are quite capable of managing a little more land than they have got.

I want to refer to the Glenlyon resumption at Stanthorpe, where there were 390 applicants for two blocks of land. The Department of Public Lands may say that, as there is a great land hunger in that district, they should have cut those two blocks into four or five blocks. That is where the department has made a mistake in the past—because there has been a keen demand for land the department has reduced the areas. The fact that there were 390 applicants for the two blocks in question should satisfy the department that the blocks were worth going for. I can assure the Minister that on the 4,000 acres resumed on Glenlyon, which is second-rate sheep country, the people concerned will have just enough land to make a living, and will be successful. They will not be always worrying the department for a reduction in their rent or for an extension of the time for the payment of their liabilities, as has often been the case. I trust that this will be the future policy in regard to land settlement in Queensland.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I was pleased to hear the remarks of the Minister to the effect that living areas would be given to new settlers. I hope the hon. gentleman will go further and do something to give a living area to the people who are already settled on the land, otherwise there will be two classes of settlers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What do you call a living area?

Mr. DEACON: I am taking the Minister's estimate of a living area.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I would like to know yours.

Mr. DEACON: What it is worth from the point of view of land value.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is very indefinite.

Mr. DEACON: It is not. Land is valued by what you can get out of it. You may have 20,000 acres of poor land which will not be a living area, while you may have 5,000 acres of good land, which is too large an area. What I want to get at is the Minister's idea of a living area. If he put it in terms of land value, I could understand it. Take, for instance, 5,000 acres at Mount Hutton. That land ought to be worth £1 an acre, which would be £5,000. Is that a living area?

Mr. COSTELLO: It should be.

Mr. DEACON: If a man had 5,000 acres of land worth £1 an acre, he would be looked on as a criminal by the Government. The Government are treating one class of settler as criminals, yet they are saying under this Bill that the other settler is entitled to a living area. The Minister should be consistent. Under this Bill the settlers are to be given a different tenure to what previous settlers were given. We are now starting to go in for a living area. I am glad the Minister admitted that there is such a thing as a living area, as there is a possibility that a man who is on an area now which is not a living area will be given the same treatment as settlers under this Bill.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

The resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS 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.

SUGAR WORKERS' PERPETUAL LEASE SELECTIONS BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

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

> "That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to make provision for the selection of perpetual lease selections by sugar workers, and for other consequential purposes."

This is a very small Bill to apply to certain alterations to selections held as sugar workers'

blocks. Under section 179 of the Land Act, it is possible for a man working in a sugar district in a mill or in the field to select a small area of land close to a mill, known as a sugar worker's block, and to cultivate it during the slack season. In that way a very laudable attempt was made to solve the difficulty of the slack season in the industry, but the tenure allowed was simply a lease which could be terminated upon six months' notice. That was found to be very unsatisfactory. The sugar worker could not borrow money on the place, or build a home, or get an advance from the State Advances Corporation or a bank or anybody else.

Mr. KING: It was merely an occupation license.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, or a special lease. I propose to amend the Act to allow him to convert the holding into perpetual lease, so that he may be able to borrow money and build a home. There are not many of these sugar workers' blocks. There are twelve in the Bundaberg district, seventy in the Mirani district, thirty-seven in the Ingham district, four in the Innisfail district, and twenty-three in the Cairns district.

Mr. KING: Will he have the right to transfer to another man?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, to another sugar worker. A definition of "sugar worker" is included, and he will have the right to transfer to another sugar worker, and he may sell his improvements to the incoming tenant.

Mr. TAYLOR: Is there any limitation on the area?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes. It ranges from 10 to 30 acres. In some instances the Minister might not approve of the transfer, because a township may have grown so considerably that the land is required for township allotments, and it would be unwise to give a perpetual leasehold tenure of 10 or 15 acres on the immediate outskirts of such a place. In only a few cases does that position hold good, and in them we will compensate the leaseholder and probably reserve the land for sale as township allotments. I know of such a case in my district at Gordonvale. That is a very prosperous little town, which has grown out to the sugar workers' blocks. One of them, which is not cultivated, is really suburban or town land. The holder has no right to cut it up. Under this proposal we can resume that area and make provision for him elsewhere, and utilise it as town allotments. I can assure the Committee that there is no "nigger in the wood pile" about this Bill. I had a spare half-hour and I had the Bill drafted to right a wrong which has been in existence for a number of years.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I think the Bill outlined contains very good principles. The feature about it which particularly appeals to me is that it allows the sugar workers to develop their holdings in the slack season. Since this right is being conceded to sugar workers, I trust the Minister will see his way clear to alter the Bill so as to make provision to enable other workers than sugar workers to develop similar blocks in the slack season and take work when it is offering. I have in mind a large number of returned soldiers at Ridgelands, who are working on the main roads because drought conditions have prevented them from making a living on their farms, and who have been ordered back to their holdings, according to information I have received. I do not say that my information is absolutely correct, but it has been given to me in correspondence by way of protest.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Your proposal would necessitate an alteration of the definition of "sugar worker."

Mr. PETERSON: I agree with the definition as far as it goes, but the Minister might enlarge the scope of the Bill to include Main Roads Board workers or railway construction workers, for instance. I think one of the finest ideas the Minister could put into effect would be to enable railway construction workers to take up land, so that, whilst their families were perhaps developing them, they could go out and earn a little money.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We could not forfeit selections in that case.

Mr. PETERSON: The trouble is that the settlers are harassed by many letters from the Lands Department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Some of those men at Ridgelands have been two and a-half years away from their selections. Do you agree with that?

Mr. PETERSON: No, but they have had two and a-half years of very bad seasons. I hope the Minister will see his way to help them in the direction I have suggested—they may be supporters of his Government.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I have an amendment to move on this motion. This is a matter that I have interested myself in for many years. I notice, according to "Hansard," that about six years ago I asked a question tending towards the
[7 p.m.] introduction of a measure similar to the one forecast, and I received a reply from the then Treasurer that something would be done. The fact that the Government are going to introduce a Bill to make better provision for the holders of this land shows that they at last recognise the advisableness of extending this system. I would now ask the Government to go still further and not confine this to sugar workers. I therefore move as an amendment the omission of the word "sugar." The motion will then read—

> "That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to make provision for the selection of perpetual lease selections by workers, and for other consequential purposes."

I have always held and I have always urged when unemployment has been discussed, that one of the effective means of coping with it or minimising it—I do not mean doing away with it altogether—was to allow the workers to secure small holdings. They could have half an acre in some cases, and perhaps as much as 5 acres in others. I have always considered that they should have land on which they could employ themselves when they were out of work. They could grow their own vegetables. They could keep a cow. It is wonderful when you travel through the country to see what can be done in the way of self-support. I believe that many years of work in that direction has been lost because the Government would not take the advice that I offered something like six years ago. However, it is better late than never.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why did you not get your own Government to do it when they were in power?

Mr. SWAYNE: That is a very relevant interjection. My own Government—as the Minister puts it—or the Government that I was supporting at the time introduced a measure in regard to sugar workers not long before they went out of power; they were the originators of the idea. I am sure that, if they had remained in office, what I am suggesting now would have been carried out years ago. Let me show what I have done in this regard. According to "Hansard" for 1916-17, I asked the then Treasurer this question—

> "1. Are holders of sugar-workers' blocks able to borrow money either from the Agricultural Bank or the Workers' Dwellings Branch for the erection of their dwelling-houses?
>
> "2. If not, and the tenure of these blocks prevents such loans being granted, will he endeavour to arrange with the Secretary for Public Lands such a tenure as will enable them to borrow either under the Agricultural Bank Act or the Workers' Dwellings Act money to such purpose, or in some other way arrange for it to be done?"

It was only then that we found that the tenure under which the blocks were held was not sufficient security either for the Agricultural Bank or the Workers' Dwellings Board. I thought then that all should be put in the same position, and that the worker who went away from the town and became in a measure self-supporting should be able to borrow for the erection of his home just as well as if he had a 16-perch allotment in a city and could borrow for the erection of a worker's dwelling, or else be placed in the same position as a farmer and borrow from the Agricultural Bank. The Treasurer replied—

> "Not at present: the matter will be considered if an application for an advance is made to the Commissioner of the Queensland Government Savings Bank."

Applications were made to the Commissioner, and still nothing was done. That was so long ago as February, 1917. At last something is going to be done. It was not regarded as security at the time because of the terms of the lease. The lease was not regarded as sufficient security, and I take it that the object of this Bill is to change the tenure to the ordinary perpetual leasehold which will then be regarded as sufficient security under either the Workers' Homes Act or the Advances to Settlers Act to enable these men to borrow money for the erection of homes. Why should this Bill be confined to sugar workers only? Why should not all workers be enabled to take advantage of its provisions? It would be the means of making many families to a certain extent self-supporting. A man who likes to work and owns a little land, even if it is only an acre, will never want. He will never be on the bread line, as he will be able to produce sufficient to stave off actual want for the time being. He is, therefore, in a far superior position to the man who occupies a rented house, as he will be able to utilise his time during unemployment. This Bill will do some good, and, as I have said, I am glad to see even at this late hour that something is going to be done on the lines I urged six years ago, and I would ask the Minister to accept the amendment to enable all workers—not only sugar workers—to take advantage of this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): I do not want to be discourteous to the hon. member, but there is nothing practical in the suggestion. The system comes under section 179 of the Land Act; there is no sugar workers Act at all. It was only an administrative departure that was made in order to deal with seasonal workers in the sugar industry. What the hon. member for Mirani proposes would mean an alteration of our whole system of land settlement. There is already a law on the statute-book dealing with workers' homes, but this is quite a different proposition to workers' homes, which provide an allotment and a home for workers under the Workers' Homes Act. The aim of the Government is to encourage agriculture in the sugar areas. We have not got the land in other areas. I do not suppose it is possible to get an acre of land to extend this system even in areas where it is in existence.

Mr. BRAND: The Government can release land from the Forestry Department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. gentleman shows his intelligence in saying that. I do not know of any land available in any sugar districts close to the mills

Mr. BRAND: I will name you one—the Isis district.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Close enough to the mill for the men to walk in and out to work?

Mr. BRAND: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are wrong.

Mr. BRAND: I am not wrong.

Mr. CORSER: The Minister must accept the hon. member's denial. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is a fiction that I have never put forward. The hon. gentleman will have ample opportunity later on of dealing with that matter. I hope it will be next session—I do not think I shall have an opportunity of introducing a Forestry Bill this session. I have great difficulty in standing up against the would-be despoilers of our forests, and I am sorry that the hon. member for Burrum is another despoiler.

This Bill deals with a special seasonal industry. We have no land available to extend this system even in the sugar areas. We might set apart an area of land in the Tully River district near the new mill to allow workers to take advantage of this proposal; but in the settled sugar areas of Queensland you would have to pay from £50 to £60 an acre to settle all workers, as the hon. member for Mirani suggests, on small blocks of sugar land. I know of some cases where men are making a real good living on these small areas——

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: But it is impossible to extend the system to all workers and all industries. It would mean the repurchase of land.

Mr. DEACON: And why not?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Because of the impracticability of it.

Mr. DEACON: It is not impracticable.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member is about the most impracticable farmer that I have met.

Mr. COSTELLO: You are wrong there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then his ideas in Parliament must be different to the ideas he has when on the farm. I hope that the hon. member for Mirani is not serious in pressing his amendment. It is not possible. The present intention is to rectify a wrong that has existed. I am not prepared off-handed to make this Bill apply to the settlement of workers throughout the whole of Queensland. Only recently it took nearly a week to initiate a Bill to deal with one particular area—the Burnett—and now the hon. gentleman wants another Bill to deal with all the land in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: One step at a time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Workers' Dwellings Act already provides for the average individual——

Mr. BRAND: You cannot run a cow or a horse on a worker's dwelling area.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This is the first notification that I have had that this Bill is to provide for the running of a cow or a horse.

Mr. BRAND: The sugar workers desire that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The definition of a sugar worker is here. However, I do not intend to argue the point. I have made the explanation merely out of courtesy to the hon. member for Mirani, because it has been due somewhat to his efforts that the disabilities of sugar workers have been brought under the notice of the Government.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I cannot quite agree with the Minister when he speaks of my amendment as being impracticable. The motion reads—

> "Consideration in Committe 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."

Why should the elimination of the word "sugar" change the proposition from a practicable to an impracticable one? If it is practicable for sugar workers, it should be practicable for others workers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No, it is not. The Bill deals with existing settlement, not with new settlement.

Mr. SWAYNE: I am quite prepared to listen to suggestions from the Minister with regard to some limitation, but the people I have in view are farm workers. We know how desirable it is that we should have a settled population of good workers in our farming areas. As to the difficulty of procuring land for them, if it can be got in the sugar districts—which are some of the most closely settled farming districts in Queensland—it can be got in any other farming district.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The land was obtained when the mill was established. It could not be secured now.

Mr. SWAYNE: I can show where land can still be secured. The Government are purchasing land for those who wish to erect workers' homes, and they are paying fairly big prices for such land in the towns. Why not go outside town areas and purchase blocks a little larger on which the workers could do something to sustain themselves during times of unemployment, on which they could grow their own vegetables and keep a cow or so, and that kind of thing? It has already proved to be advantageous in the sugar districts. I take it that that is granted, otherwise we should not have this Bill introduced. All I am asking is that other agricultural workers—I am quite willing to limit it to agricultural workers—should have the benefits that already have been found to be good for sugar workers. I ask the Minister to treat the amendment with all seriousness. I can show him where areas are available. I made inquiries two or three years ago from some of the land agents in Brisbane, and I found that within a radius of 3 or 4 miles of Brisbane areas could be purchased—not such large areas as could be obtained in further out districts, but areas sufficiently large for a workman to build a home and grow a certain amount towards his support.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): We all like to assist the Minister a little. (Laughter.) The proposed amendment would assist him and would make the Bill a much more liberal one than it is now. Why should not all workers come under the provisions of the Bill? I heard the Minister say there was no land available, and that you could not make it apply all round. The Government are founding new townships every year, and there are new areas being settled every year. The Government have several proposals now to found new settlements, and why should not the workers who go to those settlements have the same benefits that are being given to the sugar workers? It would not hurt the Government to cut out the word "sugar." The Bill will still apply to sugar workers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What other word would you put in?

Mr. DEACON: If it does no more than plant the idea in the Minister's mind, it may come to something later on. The hon. member for Mirani planted the idea that this provision should apply to sugar workers some years ago, and it has taken some years before it has borne fruit. It is a good thing, and later on the Minister will come to the conclusion that all workers are entitled to the same rights that the sugar workers are getting under this Bill. It would assist them a great deal. I am not talking just for the sake of talking, because it really would improve the Bill.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Which Bill?

Mr. DEACON: This Bill before the House.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no Bill before the House.

Mr. DEACON: Well, the proposal to bring one in. (Laughter.) It would improve the proposal. If the Minister does not agree to the proposal now, I am sure that, sooner or later, he will wish that he had.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*): I am quite surprised at the Minister, being a Labour Minister, not accepting the proposed amendment. One would think that, at any rate, hon. members opposite would be only too pleased to find some land in Queensland on which to settle our many workers. I am one of those who are of opinion that the time has arrived when the Government should repurchase land, if necessary, for the purpose of settling workers in suitable homes. When the Minister was introducing the Bill, he mentioned that there were something like

twenty sugar workers' homes in the Bundaberg district. Most of those are in my own electorate, and I know that they have been very successful. The hon. member for Mirani, in moving the deletion of the word "sugar," is, in my opinion, on good ground. We should be able to bring all workers under the meaning of this proposed Bill. If the Minister does not like the way in which the amendment is moved, surely he can include some definition in the Bill so that others besides sugar workers may come within the scope of the measure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If you know anything about drafting a Bill, you know that a certain procedure has to be followed.

Mr. BRAND: The Minister can quite easily include other workers besides sugar workers in the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not intend to do so.

Mr. BRAND: I know from practical experience that there are many workers in Queensland who are desirous of securing land such as the sugar workers enjoy to-day, on which they can run a few cows and horses. Hon. members opposite have many applications from men who are desirous of securing land close to their employment, on which they can do something in their spare time, but now that we have the opportunity the Minister will not enlarge the scope of the Bill so as to include these workers.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I quite recognise the difficulty of the Minister. He is used to the sugar worker, and nothing else, as far as I can see, and he sees a difficulty. But I cannot see any reason why other workers besides sugar workers cannot be included in the resolution. I have had personal experience in connection with wheat-growing. We used to grow large areas of wheat, and we depended for our labour upon what we called the "cocky" type of wheat-grower—the small wheat-grower. They were the very best type of worker you could get hold of. The man who is prepared to make a home for himself on one of these areas will be a great asset to the State. I would like to refer the Minister to the Nambour district. I do not say that public land could be secured there—the hon. gentleman might have to repurchase land—but if 100 or 200 men were living around that district on these homes they would be a great asset to the district, and they would be there when the seasonal work came round.

Mr. DUNSTAN: What is the use of talking when you cannot get the land there?

Mr. WARREN: I say that it would be more difficult to put men in that locality, but there are new places coming into existence continually where this could apply. I sympathise with the Minister in this proposal being sprung on him at the present time, but I hope the hon gentleman will give it serious consideration. Sugar workers are not the only workers in Queensland. I do not say that wheat is as big a proposition in Queensland as it is in the other States, but there are other industries which should have as much consideration as sugar The Minister, who is a keen business man, will recognise this, and, even though he does not see his way to accept the amendment, I feel sure that he will give the matter consideration. If he is able to bring in a scheme which will help the workers in different centres of Queensland, he is not only going to be a blessing to the men themselves, but also to the districts in which they will be situated.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): I hope that the Minister will see his way to accept the amendment. There are two very big principles involved in it, one of which is decentralisation—that is, getting the workers away from thickly settled towns on to areas of their own. In these days of quick transit it is quite easy for a worker to get backwards and forwards between his home and his work. Nearly all our rural industries, such as the sugar and cotton industries, are seasonal, and the workers drift back to the cities after the work is done, and it is very often difficult to get the right class of men for the same work next year. Every farmer in the Chamber will admit that it would be an advantage if we could settle them in the districts in which they work. We are just establishing the cotton-growing industry, and the cotton-pickers in the districts where it is going to be a success will come and go each year. If you had practical men on their own holdings able to do a little bit for themselves in the growing of cotton who would be able to take contracts when that failed, you would help to solve the problem. Then the Cotton Association is establishing ginneries in country districts, which will employ a certain amount of labour, and surely it could be easily arranged to adopt the suggestion of the hon. member for Mirani and give those workers homes in the districts in which they work. There is no question that many men who start on areas of that description would make the best farmers afterwards. They see the best methods of growing cotton or whatever crop they are associated with, and, when they set out as farmers for themselves, they have first-hand knowledge. I hope the Minister will see his way to accept the amendment, because by so doing he will achieve a big thing in the interests of the workers and help to keep them out of the centres of population.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I am sure we must all be interested in the amendment, particularly that phase of it which has been brought forward by the hon. member for Nanango. Cotton is going to be extensively grown in the agricultural districts throughout the State, and the cotton-picking will be a seasonal industry. I hope the Minister will be able to extend the provisions of the Bill so as to enable workers to take up their permanent residence in the districts in which they work. I hope that at any rate, without hampering himself in connection with this Bill, the Minister will keep in view other industries than that which the Bill is designed to cover. We are asking that it should be applied to all workers, which would include workers on our main roads. A number of them may have been farmers, or they may be the sons of farmers who have taken up a new calling, and such a measure would offer a splendid opportunity to them to settle down in a district and engage in main road or local authority work, so that they will have an interest and a stake in the country as the holders of small perpetual leaseholds, on which they can work during the slack season. If the Secretary for Public Lands wishes to do his best for the State of Queensland, he should set out upon a great policy of giving everybody an interest in a piece of land and ownership of his own home. The people in the cities ought to help us

towards that object. By so doing, we would bring about a better citizenship, a keener interest in our State and a greater love for it, and thus bring into being people who will follow along developmental lines instead of engaging in temporary occupations and spending their earnings in undevelopmental work.

We know that many of our workers throughout the State are able to save a little money and are placing it in the savings bank and getting 3½ per cent. interest on it. How much more beneficial would it be to the [7.30 p.m.] State, and how much broader would the policy be, if the Government enabled those people to develop an area large enough to make it a successful undertaking and thus give the workers that interest which is essential to themselves and is best in the interests of the State? I hope that country interests will be preserved, and that the Minister will make the small areas available. He could say just where these lands are to be opened up so that we are not forcing anything upon him. I am not going to strip away any of the good features of the proposal that he now brings forward. I admit that this matter applies essentially to sugar-workers. I am not going to argue along the lines of dairy farmers or mixed farmers, who find it generally necessary to make provision on their farms for their particular work.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Give me some particular industry in which seasonal workers could be employed.

Mr. CORSER: The cotton industry.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Where is there an opportunity for seasonal workers to go on the land in connection with that industry?

Mr. CORSER: The Minister will agree that the cotton industry is just a budding industry, and an industry which, in the next year or two, will extend out of all reason in comparison with the present stage of the industry. The industry is going to extend more than fourfold within the next few years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are going to take all the cotton-growers on to the Burnett lands if they desire to go there.

Mr. CORSER: The Government have provided selections for them there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Name a seasonal industry.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Meatworkers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Where are you going to get land suitable for cotton-growing adjacent to meatworks?

Hon. J. G. APPEL: There are big areas around Townsville.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman knows that large areas could be made available to people to grow fruit—not necessarily pine-apples—along the coast. I hope the Minister will view these suggestions from a constructive point of view, as they are in the interests of the workers, and remembering that, at the back of our minds we have implanted our policy of a vote to every man as a ratepayer. We want to make these workers the owners of a piece of the State that they are prepared to stand up for and induce them to put their savings into the land and so lead them to take an interest in local government in accordance with the principles that we advocate.

Amendment (*Mr. Swayne*) negatived.

Original question put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

The resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

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

JURY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Dunstan, Gympie, in the chair.*)

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

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Jury Acts, 1867 to 1898, in certain particulars."

I shall briefly explain the provisions of the Bill, dealing more fully with it at the second reading stage. The Bill provides that the property qualification for jurors shall be entirely abolished. It also provides that all males between the ages of twenty-one and sixty years who are enrolled upon the annual electoral roll shall be liable to serve as jurors, subject, of course, to the exemptions and disqualifications provided in the principal Act.

Mr. TAYLOR: Is there any age qualification now?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes; the same as I have indicated. The Bill also provides that all females between the ages of twenty-one and sixty years who are enrolled upon the annual electoral roll and who notify the Principal Electoral Officer or an electoral registrar of their desire to serve as jurors shall be liable so to serve.

Mr. KELSO: Jurors or juresses?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Call them what you like. At all events, women will have an opportunity of serving on juries if they so desire. The Bill also provides for the abolition of special juries.

Mr. FARRELL: Hear, hear!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In future there will be no special jury, nor will there be any common jury. The juries will consist of qualified persons representing all classes.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Gentlemen of the jury.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: And ladies of the jury also. The jury will consist of qualified persons representing all classes.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: What will happen if they are locked up over night.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We can consider that question when we come to it.

Mr. KING: Will they get any refreshments after 8 o'clock?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Every party to a dispute will be able to obtain a jury as at present. In all criminal trials there will be a jury of twelve, and the verdict to secure a conviction must be, as at present, unanimous. There is an important departure in civil actions in the direction that the jury will consist of six instead of four as at present. If the six jurymen impanelled in a civil case cannot agree upon

a verdict after six hours' deliberation, a five-sixths majority will be accepted. The verdict, however, must be unanimous in civil actions for defamation, malicious prosecution, false imprisonment, breach of promise of marriage, sedition, and alleged fraud. In all these cases the verdict, for obvious reasons, must be unanimous. The Sheriff in the future will not give notice of the day and times when the jury is to be drawn. At the present time it is done in public. The jury will now be drawn in the presence of the Sheriff and the Registrar. The names will not be posted more than one day before the precept. At the present time the names have to be posted up for three days. We are following the precedent of Victoria, where jury-squaring has been in operation. I am glad to say that jury-squaring is not in operation here, but prevention is better than cure.

Another important provision which will be appreciated by the community is that the Sheriff may excuse jurors, instead of making them come before the court as at present. Although the Sheriff has a right to excuse jurors, he must produce in open court or to the judge all applications for exemption, the reason submitted for leave of absence, and his reasons for granting leave of absence, so that the interests of all concerned will be safeguarded.

Mr. KING: The names of the jurors who are excused will not go into the box at all?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No. Females will be exempted for medical reasons. They will be also exempted because of the nature of the evidence or nature of the issue to be tried. That is following the precedent in England, where the Jury Act makes it obligatory for women to serve as jurors.

Mr. TAYLOR: At their own request.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It also provides that the Governor in Council, with the concurrence of two judges, will be able to make the necessary Rules of Court to give effect to the Bill.

Mr. KING: Will all the jurors be locked up together?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We will get to close quarters when we reach the Committee stage of the Bill and arrange all those details. Briefly, those are the main outlines of the Bill, which consists of only five clauses, but on the second reading I hope to go fully into the matter and give the reasons which have actuated the Government in introducing this legal reform.

Mr. MAXWELL: What about the fees?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The question of fees will be settled by Rules of Court.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): For a long while we have heard of the necessity for jury reform. The reform we are getting here is not the measure of reform that the public have been looking for—not even the jurors. From time to time representations have been made to the judges with respect to the subject of fees, and one of the first matters that should have been attended to was that question. It is a bad state of affairs when men can be forced to leave their ordinary business at a loss to themselves. Jurors are constantly complaining, and, as the Minister and those associated with him claim that they represent the working class, and as the common jurors are principally drawn from that class, one would have thought that attention would have been paid to them.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Fees are not a matter that can be specified in the Bill. It is much better to leave the question of fees elastic and have them decided by Rules of Court.

Mr. VOWLES: I quite agree with that. Jurors have been complaining about the fees, and new Rules of Court have not been brought into existence.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We increased the jury fees last year.

Mr. VOWLES: Yes, but they are still altogether inadequate.

Mr. KING: Do the judges fix jurors' fees?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Governor in Council will do it with the concurrence of any two judges.

Mr. VOWLES: In the country districts where jurors have to travel long distances, they get paid the minimum fees, and they consequently come into the towns very grudgingly in order to give their services to the Crown. The reason is that they are out of pocket in doing so.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is the reason for increasing the number of jurors so that they will not be called upon to come in so frequently.

Mr. VOWLES: A certain amount is set aside for jurors' fees and expenses, and the rates are worked out on that basis.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We are prepared to consider the fees sympathetically.

Mr. VOWLES: You should have considered them sympathetically in the past.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Are you condemning the Bill? What sum would you state in the Bill? You know you could not state any sum.

Mr. VOWLES: A workman may be receiving £1 a day under an award, and why should he have to leave his work in order to receive 10s. a day as a juryman? In some cases, when he has to travel by motor car in order to reach the court, he is allowed travelling expenses at the rate of 6d. a mile.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Government have increased the jurors' fees on three occasions since they have been in power, and before that they remained the same for fifty years.

Mr. VOWLES: The fees have not been increased proportionately to the actual amount that jurors have been out of pocket. If the country has to be served by jurors, then they should be paid such an amount as they receive at their ordinary work and out-of-pocket travelling expenses. No one should be out of pocket through being called upon to serve on a jury. The Bill proposes to abolish special jurors. We are to have common jurors in future in both criminal and civil cases. There is not much objection to that.

Mr. KING: The right of challenge still remains.

Mr. VOWLES: Of course it does. The reason for having special jurors is in order to secure the services of a certain class of men who are to some extent experts in connection with the nature of the suit coming before them.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You do not as a rule get that class of man on a jury when he should be on it.

Mr. VOWLES: I have had a great deal to do with jurors, and in the country I find you can get a practical set of jurors in almost every case that has to be dealt with.

Mr. CONROY: No, you cannot.

Mr. VOWLES: I am sorry for Roma. I know that, so far as Dalby is concerned, you can get practical men. Very often they are looked upon in the light of experts, and have a better knowledge of the practical things than the judge himself.

At 7.50 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kirwan, *Brisbane*) took the chair.

Mr. VOWLES: I have known cases where they have disagreed with the judge's direction in practical matters, and I consider that they have a perfect right to do so.

We are to have the innovation of females on the jury. This will mean that in criminal cases men and women will be locked up together all night. (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: It might make it more popular.

Mr. VOWLES: A suggestion has been put forward that sitting on juries will become much more popular. With regard to majority votes, I take it that will not apply to criminal cases, but only to civil cases.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes—five-sixths—the same as in Victoria and South Australia.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not know why we should increase the jury in civil actions to six. If we are going to have a majority, why not have five members and so make it possible to secure an absolute majority? Why go to the unnecessary expense of having six men when four have been sufficient in the past? We realise that the cost of juries is high, yet it is proposed to increase the number and still have an even number—six.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We have an equal number now, but we have not had majority verdicts.

Mr. VOWLES: You should have an odd number, so why not have five? I do not see the necessity of asking a verdict of five out of six. I cannot understand why in any particular class of litigation there should be a distinction with regard to majority verdicts. What is the difference between defamation, breach of promise, and false imprisonment? I should like the Minister to give us his reasons for these outstanding cases.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You should realise that where a man's character is involved it is essential to have a unanimous majority. (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: Is the man's character coming into question in a breach of promise case? The lady's character might. The question of the jury is one of the matters that the legal profession do not worry about at all. We simply see the list drawn and nobody worries about it.

Mr. CONROY: Don't you use any influence? (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: I am sorry to learn of the state of affairs that is going on in Roma. I quite agree that it is a fair thing that the Registrar should have a right to accept requests in certain cases, but what is the good of the Registrar accepting reasonable excuses if those excuses have to be finally brought before the judge?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is only a safeguard to prevent wrong practices.

Mr. VOWLES: I take it that the man does not ask to be excused if he has not a good reason. It has always been the custom in the past for the judge to deal with exemptions.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You know what inconvenience that system has caused. A man has had to come from his place 20 miles out and ask for leave of exemption.

Mr. VOWLES: I have never found that in my experience. I found the judges quite reasonable. Where a man has sent in a message by wire or telephone, pleading the urgency of his need for exemption, the judge has put that man's name aside. Has the man to come in to the Registrar and then wait until the Registrar deals with him, and finally stand by for the judge's verdict?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You misunderstand the position. The sheriff has the right to grant leave, but, as a safeguard against abuse, he must submit applications to the court.

Mr. VOWLES: Exactly, he submits them to the approval of the judge; but supposing the judge turns them down, what is the position of the juror?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The judge cannot do that. The application has been granted. He can turn down the sheriff if he has not done the right thing.

Mr. VOWLES: If the sheriff has not done the right thing, how is the juror going to get on? He has made his application bonâ fide, and he understands that he has been granted an exemption, but subsequently the application has to be put before the judge.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If the sheriff is found guilty of dealing with these applications in a wrong way, we will not interfere with the juror but with the sheriff.

Mr. DUNSTAN: This is not the second reading. You will have to say that again at the second reading.

Mr. VOWLES: I should like to hear the Attorney-General's views on the matter even at this stage. I did not know the hon. member for Gympie was out of the chair; possibly if he had been there he would have called me to order. When we get into Committee I shall have a little more to say.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): We have been looking forward to an amendment of the Jury Acts for some considerable time, but I think that the matter that affects the jurymen more than anything else is the question of fees, which has been raised by the hon. member for Dalby. We know that there has been a tremendous lot of dissatisfaction in connection with the fees that have been paid. Jurymen have lost time and money in attending to the demands of the Crown in serving their country, and I certainly agree with the hon. member for Dalby that a man should not be penalised for attending the jury on behalf of his country. At the same time I recognise that it is a very difficult thing to set out classified fees in an Act of Parliament. I feel quite confident that the judges, when they are making their recommendation, will take into consideration all the difficulties that have been incurred in the past and will recommend a scale of fees that will meet with general satisfaction. Taking

the Bill all through, I must confess that I do not see anything objectionable in it.

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

Mr. KING: At the same time I am looking forward to the Attorney-General's reasons for increasing the jury from four to six in civil cases. I cannot see the reason for it. Four men have proved quite sufficient previously. I know that the object of the Government in bringing in the amendment is to reduce the cost of litigation as much as possible. That has been their endeavour in the past, but I cannot see that this amendment is any way going to tend in that direction. Rather it is going to increase the cost. If the case runs on for three weeks——

Mr. FARRELL: Three days are enough.

Mr. KING: I notice that the hon. member for Rockhampton evidently knows something about costs. When the case lasts for a lengthy period it is going to cost the unsuccessful litigant quite a lot of money, for which he will not thank the Government. I ask the Government to follow their previous policy and keep the costs as low as possible.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: What about a single set of fees?

Mr. KING: For all courts? You must bear in mind that counsel are in a difficult position. Any fees paid to counsel are simply given as an honorarium.

Mr. FARRELL: The honoraria are pretty big.

Mr. KING: We know that counsel has the right to refuse to accept a brief unless a fee accompanies it. However, I am [8 p.m.] not very much concerned about counsel, as they can look after themselves. What I am concerned about particularly is the cost of litigation to the ordinary citizen.

Mr. CARTER: The fees of the jury are nothing compared to the fees of counsel.

Mr. KING: You take two extra on a jury at increased fees in a case extending over three weeks, and see what it is going to cost. These are matters which I feel quite sure the judges will take into consideration when they are recommending increased fees. So far as I can see at the present time, there is no justification for an increase in the number of jurymen, and I shall be very pleased to hear what the Attorney-General may have to say on the matter on the second reading.

There is another matter that the Attorney-General has dealt with—that is, in connection with women jurors. I do not know how this is going to operate. In a case where the jury is locked up all night, if there are women sitting on the jury, I feel perfectly certain that their minds will not be on the case. (Laughter.)

Mr. W. COOPER: What do you suggest their minds will be on?

Mr. KING: I am not going to suggest what their minds will be on. There are to be jury women to look after the interests of litigants, and, all joking on one side, I do not think it is going to tend to obtain a just decision.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The women want it.

Mr. KING: They are always after something new. Provision is also made for a majority verdict in certain civil cases, and in certain civil cases the verdict must be unanimous. The Attorney-General just now made use of the expression "a unanimous majority." What it means I do not exactly know. I think it was one of his Irishisms. (Laughter.)

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What do you suggest I said?

Mr. KING: You made reference to a "unanimous majority."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No; a unanimous verdict.

Mr. KING: I thought it was one of the hon. gentleman's jokes. I do not see why there should be a differentiation by requiring a majority verdict in civil cases in some instances and a unanimous verdict in others. I believe in majority verdicts. It is a shocking thing to see litigants having to go to the expense of a costly legal action, and then at the end of the trial to find that the jury disagree, and the judge orders a new trial. I am very glad indeed that this Bill will put an end to that sort of thing, because it certainly needs remedying. In criminal cases I certainly think that the verdict should be unanimous, and, of course, the prisoner must always get the benefit of any doubt. I quite agree with that.

The provision giving power to the sheriff to grant exemption to jurors is a very wise one, and I quite agree with it. When parties come to court and face the judge, and the jury is being selected, there is a lot of time lost in listening to excuses and applications for exemption. I am quite prepared to leave the question of exemption in the hands of the sheriff or the registrar, and he can, of course, make his report to the judge. We know that costs get very heavy as soon as the parties appear before the judge in court, and any time saved in doing away with any unnecessary procedure is a move in the right direction. I look forward with a good deal of interest to seeing the Bill, and I will do everything I possibly can to help to make the Bill a good measure, and a measure that will not only be satisfactory to all concerned, but one that will help to reduce the present heavy costs of litigation.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

The resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

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

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

Question put and passed.

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

STALLIONS REGISTRATION BILL.

COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 1—"*Short title*"—put and passed.

Clause 2—"*Interpretation*"—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): There have been some amendments circulated by the hon. member for Murilla, who is absent from the Chamber, the first of which is the proposed insertion, after the word "horse" on line 14, of the words "or donkey." I am agreeable to accept that amendment.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): On behalf of the hon. member for Murilla, I move the insertion, after the word "horse" on line 14, of the words "or donkey." It is the opinion of many who are concerned in agriculture that mules are even better for draught purposes in certain climates than horses. I may say that in the cotton and sugar districts of the United States of America the greater part of the work is performed by mules. I have a report presented to the Federal Government in 1916 which deals extensively with the advantages which would accrue from the use of mules in certain parts of Australia. I am pleased that the Minister is accepting the amendment.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): I would like to impress on the Minister the advisability of introducing into Queensland at least one or two well-bred jackasses for breeding mules. These jackasses would be useful for the farming districts. I have had a long experience in connection with the service of mules, and I am satisfied that mules will do well in this climate. Light draught mules will pull as much as horses twice their size and live on half that horses will live on. I am with the Government in their venture to improve the breed of horses, but I think they should also give an opportunity for the breeding of mules in Queensland. I would suggest that the Department of Agriculture give the matter a trial. I have pleasure in supporting the amendment.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I am pleased that the Minister is prepared to accept the amendment. No one could see the draught mules used in connection with war work without being much struck with them. I have seen mules working in dry districts in New South Wales. In my opinion, the mule is far before the horse for draught work. No doubt there is a lot in the breed of the mule. The mules used in the war by the Imperial forces were brought from Spain, and they were good draught animals. The suggestion of the hon. member for Carnarvon is that we should breed a good class of mule. I do not think that is a matter for private enterprise. If the Department of Agriculture were to stretch out a little further than it has done and assist in the breeding of mules, the matter would be taken up and it would have a useful effect. Not only are mules good for pulling, but they are good for carrying. They are the most powerful animals of their weight for draught purposes that we have. The Minister is to be commended for accepting the amendment, and I hope that he will do something in regard to the suggestion of the hon. member for Carnarvon.

Amendment (*Mr. Swayne*) agreed to.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I move the insertion, after line 15, of the words—

> "'Thoroughbred mare' and 'thoroughbred stallion' mean respectively a mare or a stallion entered in any prescribed stud-book or in the register kept by the association known as the Queensland Turf Club."

The definition follows on the lines of the Victorian Act, and it is very necessary to insert the definition.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W N. Gillies, *Eacham*): The hon. member said there are good reasons why the amendment should be accepted; but this Bill does not propose to deal with mares at all. It is simply a Bill dealing with stallions. I cannot accept the amendment, as it is foreign to the Bill.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): In supporting the amendment, I would point out that there are very good reasons for its acceptance. It simply endeavours to define what is a thoroughbred. Anyone who has worked amongst horses knows how often an attempt is made to pass horses off as thoroughbreds which are not thoroughbreds. This is an important question. Having some knowledge of the subject, I say that our saddle-horse stock in Australia depend on the thoroughbred as the fountain-head. There is no breed of horse that we have had brought into the country which gives such good saddle-horses as the thoroughbred. Many of our young men who served in the Light Horse regiments in Palestine have told me that none of the horses which came from South America and European countries could beat the Australian horse, and he depends upon the thoroughbred for his being. It is necessary that some fixed definition should be laid down now. We are dealing with a measure which it is hoped will do a good deal to raise the standard of the Queensland horse, and while we are at it we should do the work well. Although I know that horses, even in Queensland, are falling out of general use owing to the use of motor cars and other automotive vehicles, still in a country of wide spaces like Queensland horses will always be necessary. If ever a war should arise like the South African War, for instance, in which mounted infantry will be needed for the defence of the country, the mounted men to be efficient must be well horsed, and, without the thoroughbred, that will not be the case. We have our roadsters and hackneys and other sorts of horses from the old country. I know what it is to run wild horses, and know that where endurance is desired there is no horse to compare with the thoroughbred. Now is the time to deal with the whole question and lay down a definition of what is a thoroughbred.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): The primary object in moving the amendment is to provide for the breeding of blood stock. We all know very well that blood horses have been imported into this country at different times, and their stock are the best we have. It is necessary to include mares also, because later on we propose to move the insertion of a new clause—

> "Notwithstanding anything in this Act contained, it shall not be necessary for the owner of any thoroughbred stallion to apply for registration of such stallion under this Act: Provided that any such stallion shall not be used for stud purposes except in regard to thoroughbred mares, and if they are used for stud purposes for other than thoroughbred mares they shall be deemed to be unregistered stallions."

The only point in introducing mares is to limit the use of the thoroughbred stallions which need not apply for registration to use with thoroughbred mares only—cut out the others altogether so far as they are concerned. I should like to point out that there are any number of good stallions which are thoroughbreds with natural defects which do not affect their stock. Take the "roarer." Some of the greatest horses in the world have been "roarers," but their stock have been free from the defect. Take

one horse I know as a racer in Australia—Mountain King. He was a "roarer" as a colt and would be condemned under this Bill, yet he is one of the leading sires in Australia to-day. In England another great horse, Ormonde, was a "roarer." He was exported to Argentina. Several great horses which have been "roarers" have been imported to this country, but their stock have not been "roarers," and the amendment is designed partly to protect such horses, provided they are thoroughbreds and provided they serve only thoroughbred mares. I hope the Minister will reconsider his decision.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I am sorry that the Minister has not accepted the amendment. It is a well-known fact that it is much better for the horsebreeder to go in for thoroughbred stock. Take any show day and think what an absolute picture the thoroughbreds make. Not only are they beautiful, but they are also horses of a fine type. We in Australia are able to breed the finest horses in the world, and thoroughbreds, if bred properly, are worth at least 100 guineas. It is a very strange commentary on the breeders of horses that they are going out of the breeding of the type for which we stand and for which the country should stand, and which will stand to the country. Many years ago there were twenty breeders of this type of horse in Queensland, but now we see some of them with "brumby" stallions breeding horses worth £2 and £3 instead of animals worth 100 guineas on the Indian market. We are breeding horses to-day which are a drug on the market. If we bred a few thoroughbred horses instead of a lot of mongrels, we would be able to dispose of them every time. Draught horses are a drug on the market—I was speaking the other day to one breeder who has 400 on his hands—but nothing of the kind exists with thoroughbred horses. A thoroughbred horse of the police-horse type will command a price anywhere, and I think the hon. member for Cunningham is to be commended for the interest he is taking in the breeding of stock, and I think that the Minister should seek some way of overcoming the difficulty. No doubt it does present a difficulty, because in framing the Bill he looked at the question from quite a different point of view—and probably his point of view was quite right—but, if he looks at it in a far larger way, he will see the necessity of enlarging the scope of the Bill in the direction required. Something was said on another Bill this afternoon about the necessity for starting right. With a stud or a herd nothing is so much needed as a good foundation. Every horsebreeder knows that without a good foundation he will never breed good horses, whether they be thoroughbreds or draughts or ponies.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I was hoping that the Minister would accept the amendment. If he cannot do so, I trust that, at any rate, he will seek to meet us on this point. I have already pointed out the importance of this question from the point of view of home purposes, including defence, but there is another feature which we have to bear in mind—that of Indian remounts. The Indian Army has been obtaining a large proportion of its horses from Australia, and we know that that trade has been very profitable to the Australian horsebreeder and has brought a great deal of money into the Commonwealth. It is recognised that, after keen competition, Queensland and the Northern Territory stand out as the two great sources from which the Indian Army will have to draw its supplies in the future.

As has already been pointed out, the thoroughbred is the foundation for the production of our saddle-horses. There is no other foundation for the production of our saddle-horses. Let me show how that matter has been recognised in the other States. "The Leader," of 27th May, 1916, stated in connection with this matter—

[8.30 p.m.]

> "It is one that must be emphasised, since it directs attention to the grave danger of an important industry becoming formless. What are points of a typical Australian-bred light horse? The hackney of the Rosador type, illustrated on this page, is represented in Australia, but it is used indiscriminately by breeders. The drain on our light horse supplies, due chiefly to the demands made by the Defence Department, is depleting the Commonwealth, and no provision is being made for the future."

The article continues—

> "In Australia, as we have indicated, the tendency to place light-horse breeding in a subordinate position is becoming too pronounced. In Victoria, with the advance of closer settlement, light horses of the class used on the old-time sheep stations are less in request. Nevertheless, Australia is an ideal horse-breeding country, and while the industry under notice may not be adapted to farming conditions, there is no reason why small landholders should not have the opportunity to mate good sires to good mares, even if for the purpose of breeding only one or two foals in a season."

The article, in referring to Mr. Warburton as an authority, states—

> "He asserted that the deterioration in our light horses is due to breeding with roadsters and mongrels, and added: 'There are only three classes of horses in Australia upon which breeders can depend for saf results, the thoroughbred, the Welsh pony, and the established breeds of draught stock. If you go outside these breeds you get mongrels. In New South Wales the introduction of roadsters played havoc with the legitimate breeding of light horses. These roadsters are attractive animals and look well in the show ring, but—and this is the important point—they do not reproduce themselves.'"

The "Leader" states that the London "Field" points out—

> "We have too observed, not only in the particular district to which we have referred, but in others, a distinct improvement in quality which, in a great degree, must be due to the farm breeder having been able to mate his half-bred mares with a sound thoroughbred of some repute."

I cannot see why the Minister should refuse to accept the amendment, which must commend itself to every practical man. I understood the Minister to say that the Bill was only introduced to improve the breed of draught horses.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not say that.

Mr. SWAYNE: When the Bill was first introduced hon. members were given to under-

stand that it would apply to horse-breeding generally. I urged previous Governments to bring in a Bill of this kind. I asked the late Hon. J. T. Bell to take up the matter. Now that there is a Bill before us we should make it clear in every detail and make it efficient in every respect.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): The whole administration of the Bill will be placed in the hands of a Board. It is impossible to include the principles of the Victorian Act in a Bill of this character. Clause 8 of the Bill makes the matter quite clear. It says—

> "The Board shall examine all stallions brought to the place for inspection, and shall judge by personal inspection whether the stallions inspected are sound, true to the type of the breed they represent, and are stallions which can be expected to improve the breed of horses in the State."

I do not think the hands of that Board should be tied in the way that the amendment would tie them. The hon. member for Mirani stated that I said that the Bill only applied to draught horses. I told him personally that the main object of the Bill was to improve the breed of draught horses. I was not concerned so much about race horses. It is well known that some of the provisions in the Victorian Act were insisted upon by the breeders there, and although the Government were not enamoured of those provisions, they desired to get the Bill through and accepted those principles. Those principles could not be included in this Bill, as they are foreign to the matter. I cannot accept the amendment for the reasons I have stated.

Amendment (*Mr. Deacon*) negatived.

Clause 2, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 3—"*Application of Act*"—put and passed.

Clause 4—"*Stallion Boards*"—

Mr. EDWARDS (*Yamango*): I beg to move the omission, on lines 33 and 34, of the words—

> "and shall be appointed chairman of the Board."

Boards may be constituted in different districts, and in many instances it will be impossible for a veterinary surgeon to carry out all the duties of the chairman of the Board. I think that a Board is more workable where it is allowed to choose its own chairman. If my amendment is accepted, it is my intention to move the insertion, after line 38, of the words—

> "The chairman of the Board shall be elected by the Board from amongst its members."

That will make the position absolutely clear. If the Governor in Council decides to appoint a Board in a particular district, then the Board will have an opportunity to appoint its own chairman and conduct its business in its own way. It may be that the appointment of a veterinary surgeon as chairman may not be in the best interests of the Board. The veterinary surgeon has to go from one district to another, and it would be impossible for him to carry out the duties of chairman.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I regret that I cannot accept the amendment. There are many precedents in this State for providing that a public servant shall be chairman of the Board. In view of the statement made the other night about Government experts and Government officers having full power and responsibility and being trusted, I think there are many good reasons why I should not accept the amendment. The veterinary surgeon will be an officer of the department. He will only have one vote. The members of the Board will control the voting power. I can quote a number of instances where a public servant has been appointed chairman of a board. Public servants have been appointed chairmen of a Wages Board, a Cane Prices Board, and a number of other boards.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is very different. The veterinary surgeon would be travelling from district to district.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The chairman of this Board can travel from district to district.

Mr. DEACON: He could be chairman of two or three boards?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

Mr. DEACON: Would that be workable?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I think it would. I do not see any reason why the veterinary surgeon, who will have only one vote, should not be chairman of the Board. There will be no undue advantage in favour of the Government nominee.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): The Minister has not given any reason why he will not accept the amendment. The amendment does not take away the possibility of a veterinary surgeon becoming chairman of a Board. The amendment makes it possible under certain circumstances for some other person to be appointed. Possibly in three out of every five boards the veterinary surgeon will be the chairman if he is a fit and proper person. The amendment only asks that it should be left an open question. In rural districts, where the people live far apart, it may be more convenient for the working of the Board to have some person other than a veterinary surgeon as chairman. The working of the Boards in their pioneering stages will be made more easy if the amendment is accepted.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I support the amendment. No doubt in the majority of cases the veterinary surgeon will be the chairman of the Board, but there may be occasions when he will not be the best man for the position. The chairman can always exercise a great deal of influence in the proceedings. It is not altogether a question of soundness that comes within the scope of the Board's activities, but, as set out in another clause later on, these Boards have to deal with conformation, trueness to type, soundness, and ability to judge whether the stallions can be expected to improve the breed of horses in the State. We may have a young veterinary surgeon fresh from the old country and utterly ignorant of local conditions, climatic and so on. He may be a first-class man on any question of soundness, and be able to diagnose all cases of sickness, and that sort of thing, but he may not be the best judge of the type of horse suitable for Queensland or for a particular market. We are more likely to get a man able to fill the position by allowing the Board to choose the man most suited for the position. I know a number of veterinary surgeons, and taking them all through they are good all-round men not only in their profession but are good judges of horses. I know of some also who never really did a

day's work with horses in driving, or walking beside horses in a team, or that kind of work. The man who has been dependent for his livelihood upon working among horses, and who has been in the habit of buying and breeding them, is the man best able to judge the most suitable type of sire for a district—better perhaps than the man who has just arrived from the other side of the world.

Mr. FRY: You are very rough on the veterinary surgeon.

Mr. SWAYNE: No; I know many good all-round veterinary surgeons, but there might be a young man fresh from the other side of the world with no practical knowledge of the working of horses, and, even if he had, his knowledge would be confined to horses in a cold climate, whereas a different type of horse is required in Queensland. The Board should therefore be free to choose its own chairman, who will have a deliberative as well as a casting vote, in order that the man most suitable for the position may be chosen.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I hope that the Minister will accept the amendment. It is preferable to trust the Boards so that the best work possible can be got out of them. It is quite possible that a man fresh from college may be appointed to the position of chairman.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Under the definition of "veterinary surgeon" he is supposed to hold a diploma.

Mr. DEACON: Yes, but it is very difficult to appoint a lad to the position of chairman over the heads of experienced men, who will know as much about horses, if not more, than he does.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It must always be borne in mind that the lay members may be interested in horses when the veterinary surgeon is not supposed to be.

Mr. DEACON: I take it that the men selected to compose the Board will be honourable men, and that they will do their best. It should not be assumed that some of them will be dishonourable.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not assuming that, but you can safely assume that the veterinary surgeon will not be interested in horses.

Mr. DEACON: I do not think the Board will be. There will not be the slightest difficulty if the Minister chooses to trust the Board in the direction that the amendment asks.

Mr. LOGAN (*Lockyer*): I want to support the amendment, because in many cases the best horsemen in the district will be on the Board. Many of them, although they do not hold the diplomas, will certainly have a considerable knowledge of horses and will know all the points about a horse. In many cases, perhaps, they will be able to show the veterinary surgeon a good many points. It is a hard and fast rule to lay down that the veterinary surgeon in the district shall be the chairman of the Board. In many of the districts many men prepare horses for the show, and, with all due respect to the veterinary surgeon, many of them know more points about a horse than the veterinary surgeon, and are certainly able to tell a sound horse just as well as the veterinary surgeon. It is possible that in some of the districts retired veterinary surgeons, although not possessing diplomas, will be appointed to the Boards. It would be a wise policy to allow the members of the Board to select their own chairman in view of these facts. Many of the older settlers have had a lifelong experience in live stock, and certainly greater experience than some veterinary surgeons.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): If the Minister seriously considers this amendment, he will agree that its adoption will be in the interests of the working of the Board. As was remarked this afternoon, on many occasions Parliament has laid the foundation of an industry, and to get the best Board might possibly be laying the foundation stone of horse-breeding in Queensland, and allowing the Board to select its own chairman would be acting in the best interests of horse-breeding in Queensland. It must occur to the Minister, from a practical point of view, that it would very often happen that a man who has had a lifelong experience in breeding and working a suitable type of horse would be more capable of conducting the Board in the interests of practical horse-breeding than a veterinary surgeon. I have every respect for the veterinary surgeons, who know their work, but I do not think that the procedure suggested by the Bill would be satisfactory. In conclusion, I wish to say that the Minister has not put forward any argument against the amendment. It seems rather hard that the only word he has inserted, so far, as an amendment, is "donkey." I hope he will seriously consider this amendment, which will have the effect of laying the foundation stone of a good measure in the interests of practical horse-breeding in Queensland.

Mr. W. COOPER (*Rosewood*): I have listened to some of the reasons put forward by members of the Opposition as to why they do not want a veterinary surgeon to be appointed as chairman.

Mr. BRAND: I did not say anything of the sort. I said that it should be left to the discretion of the Board.

Mr. W. COOPER: The hon. member's opposition to this appointment is quite apparent to anyone who listened to his remarks. As a matter of fact, the hon. member for Nanango claimed that a man selected from the Board might be the best person to preside over that Board. A man may be possessed of a wonderful amount of knowledge in connection with horse-breeding, but he may not necessarily make the best chairman, just as the veterinary surgeon may not make the best chairman. There is nothing to prevent members of a Stallion Board from advising the chairman. The chairman will only have one vote, unless there happens to be a tie. Five members will constitute the Board, and the chairman is to be a veterinary surgeon. I cannot see the reason of hon. members opposite objecting to that. It is merely a matter of obstructing the Bill for the purpose of getting a little propaganda. A veterinary surgeon is the right man to act as chairman. He is practically the representative of the Government, and even if he be a young man he will be a qualified man. Hon. members opposite say that they can find plenty of men who are as capable as a veterinary surgeon of saying whether a horse is diseased or not. Where is the necessity for these surgeons to secure diplomas if the hon. members can get such a number of men just as highly qualified as

a veterinary surgeon? There would be no need for veterinary surgeons if this were so. Why then are they paid large salaries to carry out their scientific work? It appears to me that the argument is absurd. There is nothing to prevent the Board from outvoting the chairman on any question, provided that there is a full number of members of the Stallion Board present.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I do not know what the hon. member for Rosewood got up to say. He certainly conveyed very little information. It is no use getting up in this House and trying to impute motives to the Opposition. I venture to say that sitting on my left there are a number of men who know more about horses, the life of a horse from its birth to its death, than does the hon. member for Rosewood.

Mr. W. COOPER: If they do not know more than you do they do not know much.

Mr. FRY: There has been no request made to the Minister that has not been reasonable. The request is simply that a Board shall be permitted to elect its own chairman. There is nothing clearer nor fairer than that. The fact that the Minister stated that he would not accept the amendment does not alter the fact that the principle is a good one. The Minister, in his wisdom, has not accepted it because it does not suit the policy of the Government which he represents; but that does not warrant an attack on the members of the Opposition such as was made by the hon. member for Rosewood. I am not going to say that a young man should not be entrusted with responsibility——

Mr. COSTELLO: We don't say that.

Mr. FRY: He may be clever and he may be keen——

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He may be very old.

Mr. FRY: I am not referring to the question of age at all. The point that I want to make is that, if five men are competent to sit on the Board, then one of those five should be competent to be chairman. Whether that man is a veterinary surgeon or not makes no difference. If each man is not competent to be chairman of the Board, he should not be on it. How many Australian-born natives are there who have not a knowledge of the horse?

Mr. HYNES: They can all pick a donkey.

Mr. FRY: I picked the hon. member long ago.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. FRY: I have been associated with horses from my early days, when I rode them barebacked and with a string bridle; I still have the marks on my body from the accidents I had as a child. It is no use trying to convince a Queensland Parliament that one man is not more fitted to sit on a Board than another. We know too much for that. We are not people who come from the uttermost parts of the earth, who are planked down here and treat the horse as a strange animal. We know all about the horse and what he is used for. Hon. members on this side of the House have actually bred horses—in fact some of the best horses in Queensland.

Mr. HYNES: Why don't you endeavour to talk sense?

Mr. FRY: I feel sure that the Minister, if he gives the amendment mature consideration, will arrive at the same conclusion that I have arrived at. The chairman of the Board should be a man who is competent to fill the position. The expert is not always the best man for the office of chairman. You cannot expect an expert to combine all the qualities that are required of a chairman; neither can you expect from an ordinary member of the Board all the qualities that go to make a complete horse expert. The position is very clear to me. We are dealing with persons who are handling horses all day long. I am sure that the veterinary surgeon would, in many cases, be glad to get away from the work of organisation. I feel certain also that if the amendment is accepted no harm can be done. I only rose to defend some members of the Opposition from the unwarranted attack made on them.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): Members of the Opposition have no other wish than to see the man who is best fitted for the position elected as chairman of the Board, and we do not know that the veterinary surgeon will make the best chairman. The men who will be elected to the Board will be the leading horse-breeders in the district, and certainly they will know a great deal more about horse-breeding than the average man. I am quite convinced, if I was a member of one of these Boards, and the veterinary surgeon would make the best chairman, I would have no hesitation in voting for his election to that position; but, if there was some other member of the Board who had more ability, then I would certainly vote for him. This surely cannot be classed as a party measure, and surely it is not part of the great scheme of bringing everyone down to the one level. The Minister will not be giving very much away by accepting the amendment. I am sure there will be better results from these Boards that the Minister is going to create if the members are allowed to elect their own chairman.

[9 p.m.]

Amendment (*Mr. Edwards*) negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—"*Veterinary surgeons*"—put and passed.

Clause 6—"*Application for registration of stallion*"—

Mr. LOGAN (*Lockyer*): I beg to move the omission, on lines 38 and 39, of the words "if satisfied." The subclause will then read—

> "Upon such an examination being completed, the Board shall report to the Minister; and the Minister shall cause to be entered in a register of stallions to be kept at the Department of Agriculture and Stock particulars of all such stallions which are of approved standard and sound, and for which certificates are to be issued."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I will accept that amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. Logan*) agreed to.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): I beg to move the insertion, after the word "Act," on line 13, page 4, of the words—

> "but shall not exceed twenty shillings in either case."

The clause provides that the fees for registration and renewal shall be prescribed by regulation, but we think it is necessary to

have the fee fixed in the Bill. We think £1 is quite enough in these cases.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I accept the amendment, because I am satisfied that it will cost a great deal less than that.

Amendment (*Mr. Costello*) agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I beg to move the insertion of the following new clause, to follow clause 6:—

> "Notwithstanding anything in this Act contained, it shall not be necessary for the owner of any thoroughbred stallion to apply for registration of such stallion under this Act: Provided that any such stallion shall not be used for stud purposes except in regard to thoroughbred mares, and if they are used for stud purposes for other than thoroughbred mares they shall be deemed to be unregistered stallions."

I quite recognise the need for insisting upon soundness as a general rule in regard to sires for horse-breeding, and it may seem that this amendment is running contrary to that principle; but we know that there are exceptions to every rule, and the Minister will notice that the exemption is asked for only in the case of stallions serving thoroughbred mares. Hon. members may say that they do not believe in horse racing, that there is no need for it, and so on; but it does a great deal of good in connection with the breeding of horses. I may say I have no practical interest in racing now. It is many years since I was on a racecourse, but my knowledge teaches me that you require some such thing, although I would like to see longer distances run, as a proof of speed and stamina. We know that many of our best racing stallions would not pass a veterinary test for soundness. The hon. member for Cunningham, in moving a previous amendment, pointed out that the great stallion Ormonde was a "roarer," yet he was sold for 30,000 guineas to go to South America. I remember when I was a lad seeing on the Sydney exhibition ground a horse called Maribyrnong, who had one foreleg as crooked as a boomerang, and yet that stallion was head of all the sires in Australia, and his book was filled at 50 guineas a service, which was a big fee in those days. I saw one of his yearlings sold at Randwick for 810 guineas. That was a big price fifty years ago. As I already stated, he was the best sire for some years in Australia, and the intention of this amendment is to allow such sires to be used in connection with breeding racehorses. The amendment does not apply to the breeding of utility horses. Therefore, any unsoundness these horses may possess will not be detrimental in that regard. It cannot be passed on, but in exceptional cases, where a horse is a good sire for the breeding of racehorses, that horse should be exempt.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): This amendment is merely consequential on an amendment which I declined to accept earlier in the evening providing for a definition of "thoroughbred." In fact, if I accepted the amendment, it would not be workable without a definition of "thoroughbred" being inserted in the Bill, as there is at present no such definition in the measure. The Victorian Act is an entirely different measure to this Bill, which leaves the matter to the Board nominated by the Council of Agriculture, of which the veterinary surgeon is chairman. The great difficulty in connection with the amendment would be in regard to the part which reads—

> "Provided that any such stallion shall not be used for stud purposes except in regard to thoroughbred mares."

Who is going to say that a stallion is going to be used exclusively for that purpose? How will it be possible to police the clause if it is inserted in the Bill? I regret that I cannot accept the amendment—first of all, because it is not workable without a definition of "thoroughbred"; and, secondly, because it is foreign to the principles of the Bill.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I would ask the Minister whether without this amendment such a horse as I have described—a high-class horse of racing stock—will be debarred from serving in Queensland?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not think so. Clause 8, subclause (1), reads—

> "The Board shall examine all stallions brought to the place for inspection, and shall judge by personal inspection whether the stallions inspected are sound, true to the type of the breed they represent, and are stallions which can be expected to improve the breed of horses in the State."

I think there is sufficient power there. I am quite satisfied that, if the Board thought that such a stallion would improve the breed of horses in the State, they would grant a certificate.

Mr. BELL (*Fassifern*): I think this is quite a reasonable amendment. The idea of the hon. member for Mirani is really that thoroughbred horses standing for a season shall be regarded as thoroughbred when they are serving thoroughbred mares. Our experience in the past has been that veterinary surgeons would have thrown out some of the most successful thoroughbred stallions in Australia on account of certain faults. The Minister says that he cannot accept the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The veterinary surgeon can be outvoted by the members of the Board.

Mr. BELL: That may be so, but the veterinary surgeon's opinion is required in regard to soundness. Some of the most successful sires in Australia would be thrown out by the veterinary surgeon. I hope the Minister will see his way to accept the amendment, which provides that our thoroughbred horses which are sound will be able to stand for the season and serve mares which are approved as thoroughbreds. The amendment will have a very important bearing on the breeding of thoroughbreds and hacks in the State.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): The Minister said that the rest of the Board could outvote the veterinary surgeon, but no veterinary surgeon can give a certificate to a stallion which is unsound.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The majority of the Board can do this.

Mr. DEACON: The matter could be dealt with by the regulations, and any horse which did not conform to the regulations would

have to be declared unsound. The Board could not give a certificate in that case. It is not necessary to include racing stock, as they can look after themselves.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You know very well that clause 8 gives the majority of the Board power.

Mr. DEACON: They will have to do that in accordance with the provisions of the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They will have to act in accordance with their own judgment.

Mr. W. COOPER: Do you want an unsound horse to have a certificate?

Mr. DEACON: If he is a blood horse and used only for getting racehorses, it does not matter.

Mr. W. COOPER: Would you consider a horse with a broken leg unsound?

Mr. DEACON: No. It does not matter whether a stallion has a broken leg or not so long as he can stand on it. Any certificate given by the Board would have to be in accordance with the regulations, which would prescribe what is unsound. It is not necessary to include thoroughbred stock at all.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I do not think anyone on this side of the Chamber would wish to give a certificate to a horse with some disease if it could be avoided. When New South Wales started to register stallions they turned them down for ringbone and many other things, but these things are no detriment to sires and are not transmitted.

Mr. W. COOPER: Surely you can trust the Board.

Mr. WARREN: I do not want to trust anyone. I want the matter stated in the Bill. The veterinary surgeon will practically guide the Board in many cases. If he is not good enough to guide the Board, he is no good to breeders. Are we going to destroy something which is of value to the State simply because such horses would be turned out of a show ring? In a show receiving money from the Department of Agriculture, if a horse is not sound in every particular he cannot take a prize. I remember being at the Chinchilla Show a few years ago, and a Government veterinary surgeon was there to examine a horse. There were two horses there that could not pass the veterinary surgeon. One of them was a brood mare from Victoria owned by a man named Payne. Before I came over here I was breeding Clydesdale draught horses for many years. That mare was probably the finest mare in Queensland, and she was highly commended, but because she had some defects she could not take a prize.

At 9.20 p.m.,

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. WARREN: I can say that the mare was fit to breed foals for many years, and we want to see that that class of animal is not disqualified for such a reason. That is all we are asking for. We are not asking for anything that is wrong or unwise. As horse-breeders and dealers, we know these defects and what the effect of them is, and I do not think it is asking too much to ask the Minister to meet us in the matter. I am sure it would be beneficial to horse-breeding if the amendment were accepted. We can honestly back up the hon. member for Mirani.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I would like to answer one objection raised by the Minister as to the difficulty of keeping a check on the horses affected by the proposed new clause and preventing them from being used for general purposes. The horses contemplated by the amendment would be animals for whose services a fee of twenty guineas or thirty guineas at least would be asked, and mares fit for foaling saddle or general utility horses would not be sent to a horse of that kind. I quite agree with the Minister that it is not right that unsound horses should be allowed to serve mares as a general rule, but we have exceptional cases in view, and it might be provided that no permit should be given to a horse where the fee is less than twenty guineas. The amendment would only affect a particular class of mare—that is, the mare which is supposed to be capable of producing racehorses.

Proposed new clause (*Mr. Swayne*) negatived.

Clause 7—"*Annual examination and adjudication*"—put and passed.

Clause 8—"*Board to inspect stallions*"—

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I move the omission, on lines 37 and 38, of the words—

> "the Minister from any decision of the Board"

with a view to inserting the words—

> "from any decision of a Stallion Board to an appeal board consisting of the chief veterinary inspector and—
>
> (*a*) When the report shows that the stallion is not sound, such two other qualified veterinary inspectors, or
>
> (*b*) When the report shows that the stallion is not of approved standard, such two members of other Stallion Boards
>
> as shall in either of such cases be selected by the Minister."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Alter the word "inspector" to "surgeon" wherever it occurs, and I will accept the amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. Deacon*), amended accordingly, and agreed to.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I move the insertion, after the word "purposes" on line 41, of the words—

> "other than mares which are his own property."

The clause then will read—

> "An appeal shall lie to the Minister from any decision of the Board: Provided that during the period for which the decision is postponed, the owner shall not use or permit the stallion to be used for stud purposes other than mares which are his own property."

Amendment (*Mr. Gillies*) agreed to.

Clause 8, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 9 to 14, 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 Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at 9.29 p.m.