Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 18 OCTOBER 1923

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

QUESTIONS.

FORMATION OF QUEENSLAND COTTON GROWERS' CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION—AGREEMENT WITH BRITISH COTTON GROWING ASSOCIATION.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"1. Has his attention been drawn to the report of the meeting of shareholders in the British-Australian Cotton Growing Association, at which it was decided to issue a further 200,000 shares for subscription by the public?

"2. Is he aware of the contemplated actions of the farmers, supported by the endorsement by the Council of Agriculture of the recommendation from its General Agriculture Standing Committee:—'That this committee considers it imperative that preliminary steps be taken in the direction of establishing a Queensland Cotton Growing Co-operative Association, and with this object in view suggests that provision be made for the establishing of the basis of a fund to be subscribed to by compulsory levy on all cotton-growers with a view to placing the cotton-growing industry in a position to erect or acquire and control its own co-operative ginneries, etc?'

"3. Was he responsible for the invitation for representatives of the Central District Council to be present at the meeting of the General Agriculture Standing Committee of the Council of Agriculture on 6th September ultimo, to discuss the question of co-operative ginneries, and at which the resolution in the preceding question was carried?

"4. Does he approve of and will he support that resolution?

"5. Will he state if, in view of the contemplated action of the farmers, he considers further investments by the speculating public are likely to conflict with the farmers in their determination to establish co-operative ginneries?

"6. In the event of the farmers taking over the control of the industry and establishing their own ginneries, subsequent to the expiry of the agreement in 1926, can he define the position of the British-Australian Cotton Growing Association?

"7. Will he give a definite assurance that the growers will be free of all connection with the British-Australian Cotton Growing Association on the expiry in 1926 of the agreement between the Government and the British-Australian Cotton Growing Association?

"8. Will he have copies of the agreement between the Government and the British Australian Cotton Growing Association handed to the Council of Agriculture for circulation to the District Council?

"9. Are there any other agreements in existence that may affect the control of the cotton industry subsequent to 1926?

"10. Are any other agreements contemplated?"

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

"1 to 10. I made it quite clear during the debates on the Cotton Bill that, in my opinion, the growers should aim at co-operatively controlling the cotton ginning business as soon after the termination of the ginning agreement as possible. The Council of Agriculture have the matter under consideration."

DISCONTINUANCE OR DECREASE OF ALLOWANCES FOR STATE CHILDREN.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*) asked the Home Secretary—

"1. In what number of cases were mothers or other female relatives in charge of State children, under the provisions of section 35 of the State Children Acts, notified of the discontinuance or decrease of the prescribed allowances for such children during each of the months from April to September inclusive, of this year?

"2. What were the numbers of children affected thereby during each of such months?"

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*), in the absence of the HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*), replied—

"1. Four hundred and eighty.

"2. Six hundred and seventy-nine."

ALLOCATION TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES OF COMMONWEALTH GRANT FOR MAIN ROADS.

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

"1. When will the allocation to local authorities of the money provided by the Commonwealth Government to the State for road purposes be made known?

"2. Who is responsible for the allocation?

"3. Will full consideration be given to the claims of the shires of Eidsvold, Mount Perry, Mundubbera, Gayndah, Degilbo, and Woocoo for a fair share of the money provided?"

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

"1. The allocation, with plans, specifications, and estimates, is awaiting the approval of the Commonwealth authorities.

"2. The State Government on the advice of the Main Roads Board.

"3. Yes."

PETROLEUM BILL.

DISCHARGE OF ORDER FOR THIRD READING.

On the Order of the Day being called for the third reading of this Bill—

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

"That this Order be discharged from the paper, and the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering clause 10, and further, that, when the Bill has been reported, the third reading be then proceeded with."

Question put and passed.

RECOMMITTAL.

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

Clause 10—"*Qualification of permittees and lessees*"—

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): I beg to move the insertion, after the word "aforesaid," on line 8, page 5, of the words—

"or persons qualified under paragraph (v.) hereof to hold a permit or lease."

I might explain at this stage that I intend to move the insertion of a new paragraph (v.) in this clause which makes this amendment in paragraph (iii.) necessary. Paragraph (v) will pretty well explain itself. The Bill as it now stands may or may not be an interference with any treaty that may be in existence, and the insertion of paragraph (v.) will make it quite clear that such interference will not take place. I may say that paragraph (v.) will be the usual educational test.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): What I should like to know is just what is meant by the words "qualified under paragraph (v.)"? Will that exclude any of the persons qualified under paragraph (iv.)? As we have not got paragraph (v.), we do not know what it will do.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: This amendment will be necessary to govern paragraph (v.).

Mr. CORSER: Of course we have not yet got the new paragraph (v.), and I consider it very hard if we are asked to agree to a qualification which we have not yet seen. We are supposed to receive amendments before they are proposed. Not only did we not receive the amendment, but we have had the recommittal of the Bill brought on without notice. When the Bill was going through Committee we made complaints about this matter, and now we are faced with an amendment. If we have made it possible for the Minister to improve the Bill, it is all the better, but we should like to know what this paragraph (v.) means.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): Paragraph (v.) will read—

"(v.) Any person not qualified under paragraph (i.) hereof who has obtained in the prescribed manner a certificate that he is able to read and write from dictation words in such language as the Minister may direct. Regulations may be made under this Act for the examination and granting to such persons of certificates of ability to read and write from dictation words in such language as the Minister may direct and for the exemption from the operation of this provision of any person or class of persons whom for any reason it is not considered necessary to examine to the intent that such persons so exempted may become qualified persons under this section."

Mr. MORGAN: Will the Minister explain the object of the amendment?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I have explained both amendments. This Bill may or may not interfere with treaties that may be in existence. Treaties between the Imperial Government and other nations may exist that we may know nothing about. Naturally we desire that no interference should take place. This amendment will not alter the principle of the clause; the qualifications will remain the same. Paragraph (v.) will merely impose an educational test to overcome the difficulty. We want the Bill to be not only constitutional but to interfere in no way with any existing treaty.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I confess that I cannot quite follow the Minister. I recognise that in many Bills an educational test has been provided for certain purposes. When this Bill was going through Committee, some of us said that the company which was going to embark on this enterprise was not a British company, and the Minister said it was. It seems to me that under cover of these amendments we are to be asked to do something which is going to permit people from outside who do not care about being naturalised coming in, and the educational test to them will be the easiest thing in the world. I quite understand that, if a certain company is desired by the Government, even though it is a foreign company, the Government can impose a test in English; but, on the other hand, if the Government do not want the company, the Government may impose an educational test that they are sure the members of the company cannot stand up to. It was said by hon. members on this side that this Bill was not to help British investors at all, but to help people who were coming in from outside. Apparently the Minister neglected to put this amendment in previously, and he wants to include it now so that he can shelter himself under a clause attacking aliens when he wants an outside company to come in.

Amendment (*Mr. Jones*) agreed to.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): I beg to move the insertion of the following new paragraph to follow paragraph (iv.)—

"(v.) Any person not qualified under paragraph (i.) hereof who has obtained in the prescribed manner a certificate that he is able to read and write from dictation words in such language as the Minister may direct. Regulations may be made under this Act for the examination and granting to such persons of certificates of ability to read and write from dictation words in such language as the Minister may direct and for the exemption from the operation of this provision of any person or class of persons whom for any reason it is not considered necessary to examine to the intent that such persons so exempted may become qualified persons under this section."

When this Bill was in Committee, the discussion centred largely around this clause, and hon. members opposite wanted to delete paragraph (iv.), as they argued that under that paragraph a foreign company could become qualified to hold a permit or lease under the Bill. There may be a doubt on the subject as the clause stands, but this new paragraph will put it beyond all doubt.

If I accepted the suggestion of the hon. member for Burnett, the Bill would not receive the Royal assent in that particular form. In drafting this clause and inserting it in the Bill, there was no intention on my

part to bring up the question of nationality, because I believe that we should be broad in vision on that question. My desire in inserting the clause in the Bill was to prevent a monopoly of oil being secured by any foreign company or any company formed outside Australia—not to raise the question of nationality, but to prevent the American oil trust not only from securing our oil areas by way of applying for prospecting permits or leases, but to prevent them from forming companies to exploit the petroleum oil fields of Queensland after oil has been discovered. We also desire as far as possible to encourage the expenditure of British capital—and particularly Australian capital—so that, if there is oil in Queensland, we may discover it and work it for the benefit of our own nation and country.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I take it that the spirit of this amendment is that no person shall be entitled to a lease unless he is a natural-born or naturalised subject, or a company, association, or persons who are either naturalised or natural-born subjects or privileged persons under the Bill. It is now intended to enlarge the clause by adding a new provision, which is a scientific way, I should imagine, of getting round treaty obligations. It is the latter portion of the amendment which I am not able to understand. Does it mean that people who have not been naturalised for three years, but are in process of naturalisation or qualifying for naturalisation shall be given exemption owing to the fact that they are able to pass some examination which is placed there for their convenience—not as in the case of Asiatic aliens placed there for the purpose of keeping them out?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It means what it says.

Mr. VOWLES: It seems to me to be wrong.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: They will be qualified if they pass the test imposed under the amendment.

Mr. VOWLES: It seems to me that all we are trying to do is to let in a certain class of persons who are not naturalised, but who may go through a process of naturalisation within a stated time. I thought that the main object was to keep them out.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Did you ever hear of a favoured nation clause in a treaty?

Mr. VOWLES: I do not know whether this has something to do with the American loan and is one of the obligations we are under, and whether this is their quid pro quo and we must regard America as a favoured nation. I only want to know what is really intended, because it seems to me that the last portion of the amendment is going to undermine the whole of the principle laid down in the original clause.

Amendment (*Mr. Jones*) agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with further amendments.

THIRD READING.

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

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

Question put and passed.

INSURANCE BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): After listening to the speech of the Attorney-General on the second reading of this Bill—which speech I have since read—one must realise that there is certainly a necessity for its introduction. Whether the measure which we are now discussing is going to meet the full requirements of the case I am not prepared to say at the present moment, but the Opposition have several amendments to propose which we think will improve it. That there is a necessity for the introduction of a Bill to control insurance in Queensland is quite evident from the quotations which the Minister read when introducing the measure. I regret very much that action has not been taken by the Federal Government with regard to insurance matters. Under the Commonwealth Constitution they have power to regulate insurance throughout the Commonwealth, and insurance being such an important matter to the people and operating in every State both as to fire and life, it is a pity that the laws of Australia are not uniform. However, the Federal Government have not taken any action in that direction, and the responsibility is therefore thrust on the various State Governments of passing laws regulating and controlling insurance within their own areas.

I was very much surprised to hear the statement of the Attorney-General that in New South Wales no deposit at all is required from any person or company desiring to form an insurance company. I certainly think the insurance laws of our State are much in advance of the insurance laws in New South Wales with respect to safeguarding public interests. The Attorney-General also informed us that in Victoria, whilst they make provision for a deposit—I think for £5,000—when the premiums amount to a sum of £15,000 the £5,000 which has been deposited by the company as a guarantee of good faith to the public is returned to the company if it so desires. I understand that in the other States deposits are required from persons or companies desiring to operate. There is quite a lot of truth in what the Attorney-General has said with regard to new companies. During the past five or six or perhaps ten years insurance companies have sprung up like mushrooms in Australia, and, if I understand the position aright, they have not come into being on account of a public demand for such companies or from the fact that the public of Australia were not being sufficiently catered for in this matter. I quite agree with the remarks of the Attorney-General when he stated that in quite a number of instances there was no doubt whatever that these new companies had been brought into being by men who had been probably associated with existing companies for some considerable time, and they realised that there was a favourable opportunity presented to them for forming new companies for their own benefit. They received so many paid-up shares and so much in cash in most instances. From the number of companies that have been established in Australia during the last few years, it would appear as though company promoting in that direction has practically become a business. I think we in Queensland know pretty well that the companies that have been operating for quite a number of years have served the people

well, and have given good value for the money which they have paid by way of premiums on their policies and in meeting their various obligations. Take a company like the Australian Mutual Provident Society. We know that during the war period the Australian Mutual Provident Society and other insurance companies were subjected to a very heavy drain on their finances. They had effected quite a number of insurances on men who went on active service, and we know that there were very deplorable results for Australia, in that deaths amounted to somewhere about 60,000 persons during that period, and probably half of them, or perhaps more than half, were men who carried an insurance policy on their lives. Yet, notwithstanding the tremendous drain on those companies during that period, they were able to meet all their obligations and carry on, and they were able in a very marked degree to assist the Commonwealth Government by providing loan money during that very anxious period in the history of Australia and the history of our Empire.

One can imagine what would have been the result if a number of the companies which have been started since the war had been started twelve, eighteen, or twenty-four months before the war. There is no doubt that they would have succumbed.

[4 p.m.] They could not possibly have met their engagements if the war had come on them before they were fully established and before they had sufficient reserve funds to meet such demands as were made on the other companies. During the last few years the Government have entered into the insurance business in Queensland, and with a very fair amount of success. That is not because they are doing better for the policy-holders than the existing companies; but there is always a feeling on the part of the public that there is a greater measure of security in the State Government Insurance Office. It stands in relation to the people in the same way as a State bank does. So long as the State is there and has obligations to meet, those obligations will be met. It is only when something happens such as has happened to Germany during the last few years that anything in the shape of disaster is likely to happen to a State bank or State Government Insurance Office. I have never found any fault with the establishment of the State Government Insurance Office. What I have objected to is the creation of a monopoly. If an individual chooses to take the risk of taking out a policy or investing his money outside a State bank, he should be allowed to do so.

The Australian Mutual Provident Society has been mentioned several times during the debate. It was stated by one member that the bonus of the Australian Mutual Provident Society last year was £2 14s. for every £100 assured. That statement is not correct. The hon. member who made that statement probably did not do so with the intention of running down the Australian Mutual Provident Society in any shape or form; he probably thought the information was correct. As a matter of fact, the bonus allowed last year by the Australian Mutual Provident Society was £2 for every £100 of insurance on policies in their first year up to £3 16s. per £100 for policies that have been in existence for thirty years. Policies that have been in existence for a longer period than that earned larger bonuses. The Australian Mutual Provident Society has given me these particulars for my own information. I happen to have a policy which I took out with the Australian Mutual Provident Society thirty-six years ago, and it is still a live policy. The bonus on that policy last year was at the rate of £4 per £100. I just mention this matter because I do not think any statement which is not in accordance with fact should be allowed to go forth to the public in connection with a very worthy institution in Australia.

The Bill provides that there shall be no shareholders in any new life assurance company to be established in Queensland, or, in other words, that they shall be purely mutual in their operations and incidence. The State Labour party's platform provides that there shall be no further registration of proprietary life assurance companies. The Government by prohibiting the establishment of any new proprietary companies are simply carrying out the policy of the party. I do not altogether agree with that policy. I do not see any reason whatever why there should not be proprietary insurance companies. Although personally I prefer the mutual companies, there are others who are quite prepared to insure their lives with proprietary companies. Less than 1 per cent. of the policy-holders in the Australian Mutual Provident Society are non-profit sharing. The average of the non-profit sharing policies in the Australian Mutual Provident Society, the Mutual Life and Citizens, and the National Mutual Life Assurance Association of Australasia is less than 2 per cent. If a comparison is made with the State Government Insurance Office, it will be found that over 58 per cent. of the policy-holders in that office do not participate in the profits. The bonus declared by the State Government Insurance Office on whole life policies last year was £1 10s. per £100, and £1 per £100 on endowment policies, but only 42 per cent. of the holders of policies payable at a fixed age participated in the profit sharing. In view of these facts, it is difficult to reconcile the concern of the Government for establishing only mutual life assurance companies in Queensland, because those figures clearly show that the State Government Insurance Office is not sharing its profits among the shareholders in the same proportion as the other companies. The policy-holder in the State Government Insurance Office should be furnished with a report similar to that which other life assurance companies have to furnish their policy-holders with. I have here the report which the Australian Mutual Provident Society is compelled to furnish to the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies. Three copies have to be furnished to that official. The report must cover the whole of the society's business. If the Australian Mutual Provident Society has to go to all the trouble of dissecting and showing its business and lodging certified copies of it with the Registrar, surely it is only right that the State Government Insurance Office should do the same. I am quite aware, as I said, that the position of the State Government Insurance Office is practically impregnable so long as there is no war, earthquake, or that kind of thing, and that it can go on fulfilling its obligations.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Do not overlook the fact that we print an annual report.

Mr. TAYLOR: I quite admit that, but the expense involved in getting up a report such as the Australian Mutual Provident

Society is compelled to do is something tremendous. It is not a small matter. The same law which prevails in so far as outside insurance companies are concerned should also operate in the case of the State Government Insurance Office.

I would like to quote some figures for the benefit of hon. members relating to the State Government Insurance Office. In 1922-1923, the surplus of that office was £9,852, and, after providing for bonuses at the comparatively low rate of £1 10s. per £100 on whole life policies and £1 per £100 on endowment policies amounting to £9,734, the balance carried forward was £118. As the balance carried forward at the commencement of the operations for the year was £594, the actual result of the year's working was a loss of £476. In addition to this, the share of the general administrative expenses allocated to the life department was £32,300 for 1921-1922, while the share allocated for 1922-1923, with increased business, was £26,346—a drop of £5,954, or nearly two-thirds of the cash value of the bonuses.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You want to add the amount of commission and bonuses for both years to make the comparison fair.

At 4.10 p.m.,

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, took the chair as Deputy Speaker.

Mr. TAYLOR: Clause 15 of the schedule to the Insurance Act of 1916 provides that income tax shall be paid by the State Insurance Department. The amounts paid during the past four years were—

	£
1919-1920	714 13 11
1920-1921	1,095 15 8
1921-1922	nil
1922-1923	64 5 2

That is a very fair indication as to what the State Insurance Office is doing at the present time. To carry on it is absolutely necessary that an income tax should operate in Queensland. If there were no income tax, where would the Government get their taxation from? If the figures of the insurance companies operating in Queensland were anything like those I have quoted, the income tax receipts would be very much less than they are.

The Attorney-General stated in the Press that the total new life assurance business for the year ended 31st December, 1922, amounted to approximately £1,643,000. Then we have a remarkable statement, though no doubt it is quite true, but the valuation summary shows an increase of only £992,703 in the policies in force on the 31st December, 1922, as compared with the policies in force at 31st December, 1921. Claims amounted to less than £20,000 for the year, and the wastages—that is the only term I can use—from people allowing their policies to lapse.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Our lapses compare more than favourably with those of other companies.

Mr. TAYLOR: They amounted to very nearly £600,000 or £700,000. That is a very considerable amount. Those people were either unable to continue their premiums or for some other reason they drew out of the State Insurance Office what they could, and allowed their policies to lapse. A comparative statement of the new life business acquired by the State Insurance Office and the Australian Mutual Provident Society during the past two years is as follows:—

STATE INSURANCE OFFICE.
New Business.

	£
1921-1922 ...	... 1,557,729
1922-1923 ...	... 1,323,175
A decrease of ...	£234,554

AUSTRALIAN MUTUAL PROVIDENT SOCIETY.
New Business.

	£
1921-1922 ...	... 1,190,418
1922-1923 ...	... 1,336,876
An increase of ...	146,458

The new business of the Australian Mutual Provident Society for 1921-1922 was certainly less than that of the State, but 1922-1923 shows a slight increase over the business of the State Insurance Office. However, there is an increase in the Australian Mutual Provident Society figures for the second year over the first of £146,458. I am bringing these matters forward, not because I am interested in the Australian Mutual Provident Society—I am merely a policy-holder the same as many other hon. members in the Chamber probably are—but because I think that the Minister, when he was making his second reading speech, instead of publicly trying to damage this fine institution with faint praise, should have said something more in its favour. The society has been established in Queensland and Australia for a great number of years, and has done excellent work. (Hear, hear!)

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I never said an unkind word about the Australian Mutual Provident Society. In fact, I boosted it up.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is not my intention to go very much further into this matter. A Bill to control insurance companies is an absolute necessity. It is desirable that it should be brought in, because an insurance company represents, I suppose, in the bulk of its business, the contributions of individuals throughout the State who are endeavouring to provide in some way for those who are left behind in case they are taken away suddenly, or even if they live over the period of the policy. It is therefore necessary that ample security should be given to the public.

There is no doubt whatever in my mind, and I think the Attorney-General is of the same opinion, that the proposed Bill will mean, although it does not say, that no further companies will start in Queensland. I admit that we do not want any more for awhile. We have quite sufficient for a long time, and there certainly will not be any company prepared to put up this large amount of money if the shareholders are not allowed to participate in the profits of the business. The Bill will effectively stop that. Some people say that competition is the life of trade. I do not know whether it is or not; but I certainly do not think it is in the life assurance business.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There are seventy companies in Queensland now.

Mr. TAYLOR: I think that the more competing companies there are in the business the less profit there will be to be divided among the policy-holders. We have a few

amendments which, I think, the Attorney-General will admit in no way tend to weaken the Bill, but rather to tighten up some of its provisions. I feel sure that the Bill will receive the favourable consideration of this House. There are certain restrictions as to registration and prospectuses being issued to the public, providing that nothing shall be done without the supervision of the Government. I think it is a good idea that the Auditor-General will have these prospectuses submitted to him. If anyone should have a knowledge of the principles and so on of an insurance company, and should know whether that company is able to carry out what is stated in the prospectus, that person should be the Auditor-General.

There are some matters in connection with the Bill that are probably meant to act in the interests of the State Government Insurance Office, with which principle I do not agree. Probably we shall be able to get the Attorney-General to look at the matter in the way we do. Sometimes he does, and sometimes he does not.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): First of all, I should like to express my appreciation in connection with the action taken by the Commonwealth Government in appointing a Royal Commission to go into the very important question of national insurance. Undoubtedly the question of life assurance will come up for the consideration of that Commission. I notice by this morning's paper that the intention is to give the Commission wide powers, and to go into every possible point in regard to insurance and national insurance.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Do you know that they have already had a Commission?

Mr. KERR: Yes, I read the previous report. I understand that Mr. Knibbs visited other countries in connection with that Commission, and the report was very interesting. The time has arrived when the Commonwealth should tackle this important question of national insurance. It is provided for in the Constitution of the Commonwealth, and it is a matter for the Commonwealth as a whole. I am very pleased that this Bill has not gone further in that connection than to provide protection for the policy-holders. I am not altogether sure that this is essential under existing conditions, as the life assurance companies have to lodge a certain amount with the Government as security and to comply with other conditions, such as the submitting of returns and such like, which in itself is a safeguard to the policy-holders. At the present time in Queensland there are something like 222,000 policy-holders carrying assurance to the extent of £30,000,000. That is a very big proposition for a population of a little over 800,000 people. The Bill lays it down very definitely that no new company, unless it be a mutual company, shall be formed, and at the same time there are provisions in the Bill providing that the Treasurer shall issue licenses at his discretion. There again is the same old policy of the Government granting licenses and other matters at the discretion of a Minister of the Crown. That policy is being followed to too great an extent. In regard to competition and the issuing of licenses, I take the stand that the security at present lodged by any company operating is sufficient, and that the public is the best judge as to whether further assurance companies are necessary or not. If the security is sound, it is for the public to say whether they will support another company. If a new assurance company desires to start operations in Queensland or if another company from one of the other States desires to start a branch here, it is for the public to say whether they will patronise that company or not. The Government are not competent to say whether there is room for another company in Queensland or not. They are not in close contact with the people in this connection, and it is wrong for the Government to retain in their possession the power to issue licenses. If there is business here, private enterprise will find it, and, if the security is sound, there is no reason why restrictions should be placed on any company desiring to come to Queensland to start business. I understand that an amendment has been circulated to delete that provision, and in my opinion it is a reasonable amendment and I hope it will be seriously considered by the Attorney-General. We already know the profits made by some of the mutual companies, and just let us have a look at the position of the State Insurance Office. No one can contend that that office is seeking more business on a profit-sharing basis. In the Australian Mutual Provident Society 1 per cent. of the policy-holders only are non-profit sharing. If we take together the Australian Mutual Provident Society, the Mutual Life and Citizens, and the National Mutual—three mutual companies—we find only 2 per cent. of the policy-holders are non-profit sharing: yet if we turn to the State Office we find something in the vicinity of 58 per cent. of the policy-holders are non-profit sharing, showing that there is a much larger percentage of non-profit sharing policies in the State Office than in the other three companies together. The margin of difference is a tremendous one. We have the Government bringing in legislation which provides that in future only mutual assurance companies shall operate in Queensland; yet at the same time they are creating a monopoly and issuing non-profit sharing policies. That is the position the Government take up, and it is nearly impossible to reconcile that attitude with what is proposed by the Bill.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: A man takes his choice there, and the mutual policy-holders will get the benefit.

Mr. KERR: A man takes his choice no doubt, but the Government are not giving that choice to anyone else, and the State Insurance Office certainly is not an institution that can be held up in support of this Bill. The leader of the Opposition has pointed out that the State Insurance Office at 30th June, 1922, showed a profit of £594. For the year 1922-23 there was a surplus of £118 after providing for small bonuses, so that on last year's operations there was a loss of £476. That is the position of the State Insurance Office so far as life policies are concerned.

I do not know whether the Bill is going to do any great amount of good or give any great amount of protection. If it does, well and good; let us support it. It provides for increased deposits. At the present time every life assurance company must deposit with the Government as security a sum of £10,000, and the Bill provides for an increased deposit of £5,000 for every £200,000 increase in the current policies, with a maximum deposit of £50,000. I do not

know the reason for that additional deposit, as it will give no protection if a mutual company or other companies go into liquidation. It must be remembered that the policies issued by the companies in Queensland amount to £30,000,000, and, if the maximum security the Government are asking is £50,000, that in itself is no security; it is only a drop in the ocean. The greater security would be in compelling the companies to carry out the provisions of the present Act and have the balance-sheets and actuarial results examined by the Auditor-General. That is how we can give the policy-holders the best security. The mere fact of depositing the additional security in the form of bonds is not going to relieve the situation so far as the policy-holders are concerned. The Bill also provides that interest on the deposits is to be paid every twelve months. I hope that will be altered. The insurance companies will lose money unless the interest is paid on these securities every six months. I think six months is a reasonable period.

I understand that the Bill also provides that the prospectus of any new company must be submitted to the Auditor-General, but there is no provision in the Bill that any reports or circulars or other information usually issued with a prospectus must be submitted to the Auditor-General. I would like to know whether the prospectus when agreed to by the Auditor-General will be allowed to contain the words "This has been agreed to by the Auditor-General." I do not know that it is altogether wise to bring in a procedure of that kind.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is provided for.

Mr. KERR: There is not much in the Bill so far as I can see, but it may do some good if it is going to give greater protection to policy-holders. I cannot see that it will, but various quotations have been given from newspapers throughout the world to show that different companies operating under laws which are not equal to the Queensland laws have gone into liquidation and the policy-holders have suffered. There is room for several amendments in the Bill, and when we reach the Committee stage I hope the Attorney-General will give them proper consideration.

Mr. KELSO (*Yundah*): I think the Attorney-General is to be commended on the introduction of this Bill in one important phase at any rate; that is, in his endeavour to protect the public against what he calls "snide" companies—which is perhaps an American term. I think we can guess what the word "snide" means.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is used in America.

Mr. KELSO: It has been suggested that these terms have been used in the House since we borrowed money from America, and that there is an attempt on the part of the Attorney-General to familiarise himself with the slang that is used in America. At the same time it appears to me that in all these measures, which have in themselves a certain amount of good for the protection of the public, the Government always seem to manage to put in something which benefits themselves.

Mr. WEIR: Sure! That is what the Government are for—for the people.

Mr. KELSO: The Attorney-General would have us believe that he is the watchdog of the public in these matters, and that his sole concern is to see that the public are not defrauded. One would imagine that he pondered over the matter during the night and missed his sleep. I can see something more in this Bill than what appears on the surface. The hon. gentleman is very fortunate in bringing in a scheme by which he can get very cheap money.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It will not be cheaper than we can get it elsewhere.

Mr. KELSO: It will not be cheaper, but it will be obtained by an easier method. There is no advertising required—there is no advertising 5½ per cent. stock over the counter business.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is a good investment.

Mr. KELSO: I admit that, but it is an investment that comes without any advertising.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are really putting up a case for "snide" companies.

Mr. KELSO: I am just as anxious as the Secretary for Public Lands to see that the public are protected. I have congratulated the Attorney-General—the Secretary for Public Lands did not hear everything I said, so he should not chip in. There will be certain amendments forecast for the improvement of the Bill, but the big principle in this measure is the question of the elimination of competing companies other than those which are at present established. I quite admit that the Attorney-General, in accordance with the policy of his party, would, if he could, eliminate every company except the State Insurance Office. If the hon. gentleman is honest, he will admit that. I do not blame him for that in the slightest. If he has a policy, he has a perfect right to carry it out. If he could decently do it, he would bring in a Bill which would wipe out the Australian Mutual Provident Society, the Mutual Life and Citizens Assurance Company, and all the other large companies, and everybody would have to insure their lives in the State Insurance Office. The hon. gentleman knows that in connection with workers' compensation the Government have a monopoly, and I am quite sure that certain hon. members opposite would like to have a monopoly not only of insurance but of everything else. The hon. gentleman has gone a good way in order to squash any new competition, because the Bill distinctly says that no new insurance company is to be formed except on the mutual principle.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I think we have enough now.

Mr. KELSO: It may be—I am not going to discuss that—the leader of the Opposition has given his opinion on that matter. I admit with the hon. member for Enoggera that it is a very good thing to have competition. Let me quote a case in point to bear out my contention.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You may get too much competition.

Mr. KELSO: The Attorney-General and every other individual have a perfect right to invest their money in a new company. We have not got to the stage where all the investments of the State are to be made only in one Government office. Take the

case of the Australian Mutual Provident Society and the Mutual Life and Citizens' Assurance Company, for instance. The Australian Mutual Provident Society has gone along for a number of years. Everybody in the House—even the Minister, although he admits that he has cast in his lot with the State Insurance Department so far as life assurance is concerned—will admit that the Australian Mutual Provident Society is a wonderful institution. It is probably the greatest mutual company in the British Empire. I remember reading some time ago an account of the foundation of the society—I think it was on the occasion when it completed the seventy-fifth year of its existence. It was stated that twenty men banded themselves together and put up a small deposit in order to carry on this mutual life assurance company. It took two or three years for the company to justify itself. The hon. gentleman knows that the first three or four years in the life of an insurance or financial company are not prosperous. It very often happens that at least the whole of the first year's premiums are expended in acquiring business, as the cost of getting good business is very considerable. The Australian Mutual Provident Society went on for a considerable time, and then the Mutual Life and Citizens' Assurance Company, which is a semi-proprietary company, came along. The Citizens Company took over two large assurance companies, and guaranteed the shareholders in those companies that the expenses would not exceed 10 per cent. per annum. Up to that time—I am quoting from memory—the expenses of the Australian Mutual Provident Society amounted to from 18 per cent. to 20 per cent. This put the society on its mettle, and nothing has done it more good in my opinion than the fact that the Mutual Life and Citizens' Assurance Company has been a serious competitor, because the weak spot in the Australian Mutual Provident Society was the expense ratio. It had to set its house in order and bring down the expense ratio, and I think that the expense ratio of the Australian Mutual Provident Society at the present time compares favourably with if it is not better than that of the Mutual Life and Citizens Company. As regards mere proprietary companies, instead of the clause which the Minister has put in this Bill preventing any company being formed unless on a mutual basis, it would be a very fair thing to allow the companies to be formed with a capital of, say, £100,000, and make it a condition that the shareholders shall not get more than a certain dividend on their shares. Some years ago there was a great stir in the insurance world over the affairs of a certain American company. That company was founded by a man who started it on the basis—and I believe there are similar companies in Australia—that the shareholder should receive a certain proportion—say, 20 per cent.—of the profits. That seemed a very good plan to start with, because it guaranteed the solvency of the institution in the earlier years when it was difficult to secure business. But you can easily see that, as time went on and this huge American company was making good—when it had millions of pounds of assurance and a large annual income and necessarily a large annual profit—the proportion which went to those who had shares in the company—say, one-fifth of the net profits—was out of all proportion to the capital they had invested in the company. I think the Minister would be well advised to leave it to the public to say where they are going to insure; and, if they decide to form a new company, to see that there is a provision in the Bill limiting the dividends to be paid to the shareholders who put the money up; in order that the company may weather through the dangerous years which come to every insurance company. I would go further than that. I would say that, if after a lapse of ten, fifteen, or thirty years the company decided that it was in a position to pay the shareholders off, the shareholders should be compelled to take the face value of their shares. By that means the stockholders would be paid off and the public could insure wherever they liked, because, if there is one thing in this Bill which is objectionable, it is the provision which prevents any mutual life assurance companies from commencing operations. That would ultimately prevent any other companies from being formed, and deprive the people of Queensland of the chance of insuring in any new company, because people are not philanthropic enough to put their money up just for the purpose of starting a new company without getting any return on it.

I think that in a matter like insurance, seeing that the State Insurance Office is competing with outside companies, it should be treated on exactly the same basis as those companies. One of the objections which can be raised to the present Bill is the fact that returns which have to be made by outside companies are not made by the State Insurance Office. There should be no distinction between them. If the State Office can show better returns than the private companies, good luck to it! The hon. gentleman said that the operations of the State Office, with the guarantee of the Government behind it, were better than the advantages which the private companies could offer, and that the business which the State Office has been able to do proved the wisdom of the Government's policy right up to the hilt. I am in accord with the hon. member for Oxley in the remarks he made in his very fine speech on the second reading of the Bill. It is absolutely clear that, so long as the greater part of the money of the State Insurance Office must be invested in Government securities, it cannot possibly pay the bonuses which private companies are able to give. The hon. member showed absolutely that the State Office has to invest its funds in Government securities. We know perfectly well that a large amount of money is invested by insurance offices on first mortgages, which are recognised as first-class investments—so much so that any trustee can invest money which is the subject of his trust in that way under certain conditions. Insurance companies whose funds are largely invested in that way and whose returns on investments are fairly high are naturally able to give better terms to their policy-holders. I am sure that as time goes on and when the years of development are passed—the State life assurance business is going through that period now—we shall be able better to judge whether the State Office is able to offer better terms than private companies. I have no doubt that the companies which have been in existence for some time and have accumulated large reserves over a period of years and are able to run the business at a very moderate cost and make more on their investments than the State Office, and which moreover in calculating their rates provide for a return on their investments of only 3

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per cent., whereas I believe the actuarial valuation of the State Office is 4 per cent.—these offices will in the course of time go ahead of the State Office so far as bonuses and profits to the investors are concerned. I would remind the hon. gentleman that the New Zealand Government Life Insurance Office cannot show the returns which the Australian Mutual Provident Society show in New Zealand. That State Office has been in operation for something like forty years, and during that time there has been sufficient experience to show whether a State insurance office is better than a private insurance company

I am very pleased to notice one provision in the Bill. Under the principal Act certain returns have to be sent by the private insurance companies to the Insurance Commissioner. By this Bill the words "Insurance Commissioner" are repealed. That was a very wrong provision. It is very unfair that returns should have to be sent by private companies to the Commissioner, so that he knows everything that is going on amongst his rivals. The State Insurance Commissioner should be in the same position as the managers of private companies, and if the Government are going to treat the State Office as an outside company, the returns should be sent, if not to the Auditor-General, at any rate to some skilled officer who will be independent and treat every office without fear or favour.

I do not intend to delay the House any longer, because much of the debate on this Bill could take place in Committee. I hope that the hon. gentleman will be a little more reasonable than his colleague yesterday, who was not amenable to reason in connection with amendments. I am perfectly certain from the experience we have had of the Attorney-General that he will be reasonable in these matters, and that, when we put up a good argument, he will be prepared to admit that the Bill is not perfect, and will be prepared to give due consideration to suggestions from this side of the House.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*), in reply: The hon. member for Oxley in his very interesting speech on the second reading of this Bill referred to the fact that it will exclude from transacting life assurance business in Queensland any company which is operating here in fire insurance but not in life insurance and yet has branches doing life assurance business elsewhere. I have given consideration to that question, and I have decided that companies operating here at the time when the Bill comes into operation shall be placed on the same footing as other companies which are already transacting life business.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I think that will meet the objection of the hon. member and largely eliminate the contention that we are desirous of preventing competition with the State Office. The hon. member also raised the point of the fees of £50 prescribed for each examination of the accounts of insurance companies, which we propose to collect to pay for the administration of the Act. He seemed to be under the impression that the State Insurance Office is to be exempt. As a matter of fact, the State Insurance Office now pays for its own examinations, but I am quite prepared to provide that it shall pay the same as every other office, because I believe it will succeed when placed on the same footing as other companies with which it competes. (Hear, hear!)

The point has been raised by the hon. member for Oxley and others that the State Office is not required to submit the same returns as private companies. Evidently they have overlooked the report which is issued every year by the State Insurance Commissioner, giving very detailed information regarding the operations of the life insurance branch. They also overlook the fact that a very detailed statement goes to the Auditor-General. In fact, the Auditor-General's inspector goes into that office and goes through every item every year, so that the State Insurance Office is thoroughly investigated annually by the Auditor-General now. But here again, if hon. members think that we have an advantage over the private companies, I am prepared to allow the same returns to be supplied by the State Insurance Office.

The hon. member for Oxley referred to the harshness on small companies who had to rely upon the rate of interest prescribed in the Bill, which rate he admitted to be fair. There is certainly something in his contention that companies may be able to lend money on mortgage and in other ways and secure a higher rate of interest, but what do we find in the aggregate? We are to-day paying £5 10s. per cent. for money, which is equal to 6 per cent., after taking into consideration that it is free from State and Federal income tax. We find that last year the Australian Mutual Provident Society only paid £5 10s. per cent.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: At the present time, the position with regard to the payment of interest on Government securities is rather abnormal.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The present rate of interest is perhaps a little more than is usually obtainable.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The rate of income tax is rather abnormal, too.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes. The hon. gentleman ventured the statement that the State Insurance Office would never be able to pay the same rate of interest as the Australian Mutual Provident Society, and gave as his reason that we were putting our money into Government stocks, whilst the Australian Mutual Provident Society could put it into whatever investment they consider best. As a matter of fact, the difference last year between the return from the State Insurance Office and the return from the Australian Mutual Provident Society was only 3d. in £100. Our return last year was £5 10s. 7d. per cent., and the return of the Australian Mutual Provident Society was £5 10s. 10d. per cent., so that, for a baby office, the hon. gentleman will admit that our investments have been fairly successful.

There is one point in the remarks of the hon. member for Oxley to which I must take very strong exception, and that was where he deduced from his investigations of the figures of the State Government Insurance Office that they were not allocating to the life department its fair proportion of the charges, and in order to prove his case he referred to the fact that the administrative

charges for 1920 were £24,000, whereas in 1921 they were £18,500, which, of course, meant that, if those figures were correct, there was something wrong. He pointed out that, whilst our business had progressed rapidly, our cost of management had decreased. He pointed out that we could not have paid the bonus last year but for the fact that we had done this, and he certainly led the House to believe—I do not think he did it intentionally; I think it was an oversight on his part—that the Commissioner was manipulating his figures in order to obtain a sufficient surplus to pay bonuses.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I was going on the Auditor-General's figures.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If the hon. gentleman will look at the report of the State Insurance Commissioner for 1920, he will find that the Commissioner puts down under the heading of Revenue Account for Life Department a sum of £12,557 4s. 1d. for commission and bonuses and as its proportion of administrative expenditure a sum of £24,482 9s. 2d., making a total of £37,039 13s. 3d. In 1921 the method was slightly varied, by which more money went for the payment of commission and bonuses and less for administrative expenditure, but it all had to be debited to the life account. In 1921 the amount set down for commission and bonuses was £26,114 13s. 9d., and for administrative expenditure £18,559 9s., making a total of £44,674 2s. 9d., or an increase—instead of a decrease as the hon. gentleman stated—of £7,634 9s. 6d., to cover the cost of increased business. I do not think the hon. gentleman wilfully distorted the figures, because he stated that he believed that State insurance, properly managed, was a correct thing.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I was simply giving the figures contained in the Auditor-General's report.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If the hon. gentleman will look at the Auditor-General's figures, I think he will find that he has overlooked the rearrangement that has taken place in connection with the expenditure for commission and bonuses. I have given the figures that are contained in the Commissioner's report, and any hon. member can peruse the figures that have been given to me by that officer. I would like to point out that the State Insurance Commissioner cannot arbitrarily allot to the Life Department a certain proportion, to the Workers' Compensation Department a certain proportion, and to the Marine Department a certain proportion of expenses.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Who determines it?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The allocation is based on actuarial lines by the Auditor-General, and to that allocation the Commissioner is bound to adhere, and from it he dare not depart, otherwise the Auditor-General would pretty soon haul him over the coals.

Mr. KELSO: Do you think it would be better to have the Life Department separated from the Fire Department?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We shall deal with that phase of the question later on. I would not have risen at all had it not been to point out that the hon. member for Oxley certainly committed a very serious error, and that a very serious injustice because of that error was being done to the State Government Insurance Office. I am sure that the hon. gentleman never intended to do that. The hon. gentleman was also quite in error in his remarks in connection with workers' compensation. He pointed out that, in order to be able to pay the Mount Mulligan disaster liability, a proper proportion of the expenses were not charged to that department.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: There was a decrease on the previous year.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We had to meet the obligation in that particular year. I discussed this matter fully with the Commissioner and asked him the reason, and he said that the administrative expenses for workers' compensation for the year ended 30th June, 1922, were £55,397, or £2,600 less than the previous year, which was owing to the fact that workers' compensation premiums in that year had not increased in the same proportion as premiums in other departments. The hon. gentleman knows that, owing to stagnation, particularly in the mining industry, there has been a tremendous slump in workers' compensation premiums from that source.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The amount of premiums received for the year 1921-1922 was reduced by £1,401, and there is a decrease of £4,446 in administrative expenses.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You cannot establish a ratio between the claim rates and what we receive in premiums. The State Insurance Office might be a bit lucky one year and have a low rate of claims, and next year it might have a high rate of claims.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am talking about accident.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Commissioner points out that the proportion of costs was greater in every other department because of the increased volume of business, whereas the volume of business had decreased in connection with workers' compensation.

The hon. member for Oxley raised the question that the State Government Insurance Office should have had reassurance in connection with the Mount Mulligan disaster, but we could not reinsure the miners at Mount Mulligan without reinsuring others. As a matter of fact, it has been [5 p.m.] estimated that it would cost as much in one year to reinsure as it cost for the whole of the Mount Mulligan disaster.

The hon. member also contended that the State Government Insurance Office should not have carried the fatality risk alone. I drew the attention of the State Insurance Commissioner to the remarks of the hon. member for Oxley and his suggestion as to the desirability of reinsuring the miners at Mount Mulligan. In a memorandum to me, he states—

> "Workers' Compensation Reinsurance. —Mr. Elphinstone is evidently not aware that reinsurance of workers' compensation risk is seldom, if ever, attempted by insurance offices. He has also overlooked the facts—
>
> (*a*) That workers' compensation insurance in Queensland is a monopoly and not one of the acceptance of special or selected risks; every workers' compensation risk has to be written;

(*b*) That there was no disaster limit as in the case of private offices, and this would not have appealed to reinsurers."

"That is very important—

(*c*) That even if reinsurance of workers' compensation risks were desirable, it is unlikely that any office would accept a reinsurance of the whole risk, quite apart from the fatal portion only on account of the business being a monopoly.

(*d*) Mr. Elphinstone overlooked (as pointed out by the Attorney-General) that if 10 per cent. of the workers' compensation premiums were reinsured, of an income of approximately £333,000 per annum, the cost of reinsurance in each year would equal the cost of the Mount Mulligan disaster.

"That bears out what I stated—

(*e*) That it is quite possible that no reinsurer, if the business had been acceptable to them, would have followed this office in covering the rescuers at Mount Mulligan, without premium, which cover only a monopoly, and a State one, would have been prepared to give."

That sums up the position regarding the Mount Mulligan disaster. The hon. member tried to impress upon me the other night that he had drawn my attention to this matter of reinsurance long before the disaster occurred. He may have drawn the attention of one of my predecessors to it.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That may be.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: As a matter of fact he drew my attention to it a few days after the disaster. Public men in discussing the State Government Insurance Office, just the same as in discussing the affairs of a private office, should hesitate to say anything that is of a damaging character. I do not think it would be judicious for me to malign any office, because my remarks would not rebound on the directors or managers but on the shareholders and policy-holders. In the same way any person reflecting on the State Government Insurance Office, apart from legitimate criticism—which is desired and welcomed—will, to some extent, injure the State or a State instrumentality.

The hon. member for Windsor referred to the Australian Mutual Provident Society, and compared it with the State Government Insurance Office. I spoke very highly the other night of the Australian Mutual Provident Society, and I did not have one word to say against legitimate life and fire insurance offices which are properly managed. All I had to say was directed against those companies which are operating to the detriment of public interests. I had no intention of making any comparison between the Australian Mutual Provident Society and the State Government Insurance Office. To use my own words the other night, the Australian Mutual Provident Society is a wonderful and most successful organisation. It is perhaps one of the greatest successes in life assurance in the world. Nevertheless, the State Government Insurance Office, as a baby—because it is only a baby office as compared with the great Australian Mutual Provident Society, nearly two generations old—has done remarkably well.

Mr. KELSO: Do you believe in competition?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I have just pointed out to the hon. member how our office compares with the Australian Mutual Provident Society. I will take the expense rates for the last three years and compare them between the Australian Mutual Provident Society and the State Government Insurance Office, even though the latter is only a new office. It will be seen from them that the business of the State Government Insurance Office has been very satisfactory. The respective rates of the State Government Insurance Office and the Australian Mutual Provident Society for the last three years are—

Year Ended—	State Government Insurance Office.	A.M.P. Society.
31st December, 1920 ..	95·7	99·9
31st December, 1921 ..	100·3	117·6
31st December, 1922 ..	92·8	113·9

I have not quoted those figures to disparage the Australian Mutual Provident Society, but merely with the desire of showing the respective rates.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Are the industrial figures included with the ordinary life business?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I could not answer that off-hand. The hon. member for Windsor referred to the high bonuses paid by the Australian Mutual Provident Society. The State Government Insurance Office has, as a matter of fact, paid a bonus, but it would be impossible for a new office to get anywhere near the figures of the Australian Mutual Provident Society. Apart from that fact, if the difference in the premiums was capitalised, it would be found that there is a wonderful difference in certain rates quoted by the State Government Insurance Office as compared with other offices. Here is an example of the premiums payable under a whole life policy with profits—

	£	*s.*	*d.*
State Government Insurance Office	2	12	0
Australian Mutual Provident Society	2	15	4
Temperance and General	2	17	0
Mutual Life and Citizens	2	16	1
Canadian Life Company	2	15	10

The premiums payable under an endowment policy payable at fifty-five years are—

	£	*s.*	*d.*
State Government Insurance Office	4	18	0
Australian Mutual Provident Society	4	18	11
Temperance and General	4	18	0
Mutual Life and Citizens	4	18	9
Canadian Life Company	5	1	11

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That is because the State Government Insurance Office estimate at a higher rate of interest.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That may be so. These figures show that the State Government Insurance Office, as compared with other offices, is doing remarkably good work. The State Government Insurance Office, it must be freely admitted, is the envy of competing offices. There are fifty-two fire insurance offices in Queensland, yet the

State Government Insurance Office transacted one-fifth of the business last year, whereas it ought only to have done one-fifty-second part of the business if the other offices had been equally successful. The turnover in premiums of the State Government Insurance Office was £141,406, whereas the total turnover in premiums of the whole of the fifty-two fire insurance offices was £742,917. It will be seen that the State Government Insurance Office in that department is doing remarkably well.

Mr. KELSO: What was the amount of profits that the State Government Insurance Office made?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. member for Windsor gave figures which showed that, although the State Government Insurance Office is only an infant, it has written wonderfully large business. The lapses in the State Government Insurance Office have been considerable, as in all new offices where there is keen competition, but on the whole the office is doing remarkably well.

I am prepared to deal with each amendment as it comes forward on its merits and discuss it with hon. members opposite. If we can make it a better Bill, then it will be so much the better for the country.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 1—"*Title of Act*"—put and passed.

Clause 2—"*Amendment of Life Assurance Companies Act*"—

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): I beg to move the omission of the word "current." on line 4, page 2, with a view to inserting the words—

"in force at the close of its last financial year."

The object of this amendment is to make it quite clear as to the date on which the companies' obligations are due in regard to deposits. I understand the amendment is acceptable to the Minister, and it appears to me that it does not require discussion.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I accept the amendment, which is a reasonable one.

Amendment (*Mr. Elphinstone*) agreed to.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I beg to move the insertion, after the word "pounds," on line 8, page 2, of the words—

"Every such further deposit shall be made within a period of three months after it has become due under this section."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I am prepared to accept this amendment, as I realise that under this Bill companies will be called upon to pay additional sums, and it would not be fair to ask them to pay them at once. That might cause them unnecessary inconvenience and dislocation of business, which we do not desire. We only desire to provide reasonable security for those insured.

Amendment (*Mr. Taylor*) agreed to.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*): I beg to move the omission of lines 11 to 21, page 2, reading—

"7A. (1.) From and after the date of the passing of the Insurance Act of 1923 no company shall commence to transact life assurance business within Queensland or carry on such business in Queensland unless such company is a company in which the net profits from time to time earned by the company are by the constitution of the company exclusively divisible amongst the policy-holders of the company.

"This subsection does not apply to any company carrying on life assurance business within Queensland at the date of the passing of the said Act."

I think that is not at all necessary, because subclause (2) really covers what is needed. The Attorney-General proposes that no other companies shall start in Queensland except mutual companies. I do not think he can seriously expect companies on a strictly mutual basis to start in Queensland.

Mr. WEIR: Why would they not start?

Mr. BRAND: Because you are not going to get people to band themselves together for the purpose of forming a mutual society who will pay the deposit of £50,000 necessary under the provisions of this Bill. I therefore think this subclause should be deleted. It cannot be said that a mutual society is the most virtuous. There are other companies transacting business who are on an equal plane with mutual offices.

Mr. WEIR: That is not so.

Mr. BRAND: I differ from the hon. member. I hope that the Attorney-General will recognise that it will be better to delete this subclause.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I cannot accept this amendment, as I see no justification for it. The leader of the Opposition admitted, and rightly so, that there are enough companies in Queensland already.

Mr. BRAND: You are practically making it a monopoly.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There are twenty life offices established in Queensland to-day.

Mr. BRAND: Don't you think the necessary protection would be given by subclause (2)?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am sure it would not. There are quite sufficient companies already in Australia to carry on for years. If Queensland thinks otherwise in a few years, the law may be changed. We have twenty life assurance companies operating in Queensland to-day, and under the amendment which I propose to move—which was really suggested by the hon. member for Oxley in his speech when he referred to some of the big fire insurance companies, which are operating also as life companies elsewhere—fifty-two fire insurance offices will also be eligible to transact life business. To-day there are seventy-two insurance offices operating in Queensland, in addition to the State Insurance Office, and nobody can show me that there is likely to be more business for a long time to come than those offices will be unable to handle.

Mr. KELSO: That only covers life assurance.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am going to move an amendment to alter that later on. I hope that the hon. member for Burrum will withdraw his amendment, especially in view of the fact that I am prepared to meet hon. gentlemen opposite in every way.

*Mr. WEIR (*Maryborough*): I am pleased that the Attorney-General cannot see his way to accept the amendment. I believe it is time we restricted the floating of new companies in this State. People have realised that this State is a pretty happy hunting ground. I am not going to agree with the hon. member for Burrum that these new private companies are altogether virtuous. I say definitely that some of them are not nearly as virtuous as are the mutual societies, and in saying that I want to quote what recently happened in connection with the Equitable Life Association, with which the hon. member for Burrum is connected. Those people started to get to work jockeying the price of their shares as soon as this Bill was introduced.

Mr. BRAND: That is not a fact.

Mr. WEIR: On the 3rd of this month these people wired to people in this State, stating—

> "Amending Insurance Bill in effect prohibits new life companies from commencing. This enhances value our shares considerably since creates monopoly present companies. Our shares probably last opportunity offering in lucrative insurance investment.
>
> "(Signed) EQUITABLE."

Mr. BRAND: Do you say that that wire was delivered to anyone? I say it was despatched by my company.

Mr. WEIR: The hon. member for Burrum is either pulling his own leg or he is trying to pull ours. This wire was sent as an urgent message to a man through whom they were trying to unload shares at a higher price. Since then some reference was made to it in the street and these men got busy, and to show they are not altogether virtuous. I will read their letter—

> "On 3rd instant we sent an urgent wire to Mr. c/o you, and we shall be glad if you will advise us as to whether this reached you, and if so was it handed to
>
> "If not, do you know what became of it? We are extremely anxious to trace where this wire went to, and shall be glad if you will advise us by return post. Stamped envelope is enclosed for your reply."

They hunted the State to find this wire.

Mr. BRAND: Who sent that letter?

Mr. WEIR: It is signed "C. H. Saxby," general secretary of the company of which the hon. member is a director.

Mr. BRAND: Who sent it?

Mr. WEIR: I do not know who sent it. I will lay it on the table if the hon. member likes. They have been hunting for this wire all over the State. These people deliberately used the legislation which is being passed through this Chamber to exploit the public by selling their shares at a high price. A company that will do that has an infernal cheek to have a representative here saying they are virtuous. Whatever we can do to tie these people down we ought to do. My regret is that the Government in the National Parliament have not been big enough to take up this issue straight out and make this a monopoly for the sake of the people. The hon. member for Nundah laughs. I want to show just what he has in his mind.

Mr. KELSO: I said you would do it if you could.

Mr. WEIR: So we will do it. The hon. member for Nundah suggested things which this House has not been game to do, that is to restrict dividends, etc. He got up in this Chamber and advocated what he calls Bolshevism—a definite repudiation and a restriction of dividends. We want to go the whole hog. We want to carry out the Labour party's platform and monopolise these things to protect the people from people like the Equitable Life.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*): The hon. member for Maryborough the other day informed me that he had received a certain wire. I made inquiries and I found that the wire the hon. member has spoken of was not delivered to any person at all.

Mr. WEIR: That is new.

Mr. BRAND: It may be new. The contents of the wire he has referred to were somewhat similar to a wire which was sent to an officer of the company, but it was not delivered to him.

Mr. WEIR: Is this the wording of it?

Mr. BRAND: Not exactly. From the information I have received the wording of the wire quoted by the hon. member is not quite accurate.

Mr. WEIR: I will pit my wire against yours.

Mr. BRAND: It is a matter that should hardly be brought up on the Committee stage of this Bill. I am not representing any company here, and I have no jurisdiction over any wires that any company may send to its officers. I am sorry that the Minister will not accept my amendment; but, if he is prepared to accept some of the other amendments of which notice has been given, I am prepared to withdraw my amendment, as he has met the Opposition already. I know very well that the life assurance offices of Queensland welcome the clause as it stands. They do not desire to have it omitted, but I believe that this provision should not be included in the Bill, because it gives an absolute monopoly to existing assurance companies in this State. With the permission of the Committee, I will withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): On line 14 the Minister will find the words "or carry on such business within Queensland," and if he looks a little lower down he will find the next paragraph reads—

> "This subsection does not apply to any company carrying on life assurance business within Queensland."

I think there is double-banking there. If we delete the words "or carry on such business within Queensland," on line 14, the matter will be fully provided for later on. It is only a small point, but I would like the Attorney-General to give it consideration.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I raised the point with the Parliamentary Draftsman and pointed out that you could not "carry on such busi-

ness" without commencing business. Nevertheless he favoured the Bill with those words in, and I did not care to argue the point. I beg to move the insertion, after the word "Act," on line 21, page 2, of the following new paragraph:—

> "This subsection shall not apply to any company carrying on insurance business under the Insurance Act of 1916 at the date of the passing of the Insurance Act of 1923."

That puts fire companies on the same footing as life companies.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*): I beg to move the omission of the word "annually," on line 32, page 3, with a view to inserting the words "half-yearly." At the present time the interest is paid half-yearly, and, if the deposits of life assurance companies are made in bonds, the interest will be paid half-yearly.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I accept that amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. Brand*) agreed to.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I beg to move the omission, on line 41, page 4, of the word "fifty," with a view to inserting the word "twenty." That amendment will reduce the fee for the annual investigation of a company from £50 to £20. The Attorney-General said he would be disposed to favourably consider an amendment in the direction I have indicated if the Committee could show that there was any justification for such an amendment. In the last Auditor-General's report I find this—

"Last year 'Administration of Act' expenses amounted to	£2,055
Collections under section 27 of Insurance Act, 1916	2,106
Surplus	£51"

There are eighty insurance companies in Queensland, which on a basis of £50 each would pay £4,000. Up to the present there has been a surplus for five years out of the seven years during which the Insurance Commissioner has been operating, [5.30 p.m.] therefore I do not see any necessity for this charge of £50. The contributions of the companies amounted last year to £2,106, and now the Government are asking for £4,000, although there was a surplus of £51 last year. The Government will be getting 100 per cent. more than they charged before.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We do not propose even to collect £25. I hope we shall not have to collect it. The Treasurer can only allocate the money for that purpose. The words are "not exceeding."

Mr. TAYLOR: It says "not exceeding," but there is always a tendency to go up to the maximum in calling upon the companies for their contributions. A £50 collection will give the Government 100 per cent. more than they have been getting for administering the Act, and there are not going to be any more companies.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We are undertaking an unknown quantity in regard to the investigations which have to be made. We may have to go into the earlier years of a company's existence. It is hard to say what the actual expenses will be.

Mr TAYLOR: I quite admit that there will be unforeseen expenses, but the Minister knows that there will not be any new companies started under the Bill. I suppose that a fair amount of investigation has been done already in connection with existing companies, and in regard to some the expense will not be increased. I think that the 100 per cent. increase which the Government are going to get ought to be ample. I think that if it is made "not exceeding £20" it will give the department all they want. I submit that the amendment is quite reasonable.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I think that the figures referred to by the leader of the Opposition are in connection with fire assurance only. The Commissioner collects a fee of £10 per annum from brokers and 5s. from agents.

Mr. TAYLOR: That is under section 27 of the Insurance Act of 1916?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Under section 18, and penalties collected under section 27 help to pay expenses, but that is no guide at all as to the amount of money which will be required to make the necessary investigations on the part of the Auditor-General with regard to the returns sent in by the various life assurance companies. Naturally for a time the Auditor-General will have to give them an overhaul and satisfy himself that everything is O.K. I can assure the hon. member that the Treasurer, who will administer the Act, will not be likely to impose any greater obligation on the insurance offices than is necessary in order to carry out the Act. The hon. member will admit that it will be no good sending returns to the Auditor-General if he does not make an investigation. The investigation is going to cost something which is an unknown quantity, so we state in the clause "not exceeding £50." That is not an extortionate sum. I have in my mind some concerns in which £50 would not go far in giving them a thorough overhaul. The Auditor-General may have to get experts in a special class of actuarial work, and the average auditor would not know anything about the work. A man would have to be an actuary trained in insurance business to handle the matter properly. In view of what I have said, I would suggest that the hon. member should withdraw his amendment.

Mr. TAYLOR: I will withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*): I move the insertion, after the word "Act," on line 43, page 4, of the words—

> "For the purposes of this section and of sections 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 16 hereof, the term company shall be deemed to include the State Government Insurance Office."

The clause provides that certain information for policy-holders shall be given in a form set out in the schedule to the Act and that copies of same shall be supplied to policy-holders. Every life association with the exception of the State Government Insurance Office has to give this information to the Registrar. I think that the State Government Insurance Office should be placed in the same position as the other companies in this respect and also with regard to making returns.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): I intend to support the amendment. In my judgment the time has come when the State Insurance

Department should comply with exactly the same conditions as appertain to proprietary and mutual life offices. The present practice is that all life assurance companies are called upon to make exhaustive returns to the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, but the State Insurance Department makes its return in the manner prescribed by the Auditor-General. This amending measure makes it compulsory on life assurance companies to render the returns to the Treasurer at the same time and in the same form as they are sent to the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, and I can see no reason whatever why the State Insurance Department should not comply with exactly the same conditions —not that we have any fear that things are not perfectly straight, fit, and proper in the conduct of that department's affairs, but it seems to me to be quite in keeping with the order of things and with the dignity of the State Insurance Department that it should comply with exactly the same conditions which Parliament prescribes that competing companies should comply with. Many of the anomalies which appear on the surface when reading the Auditor-General's report would then disappear.

The Attorney-General, quite in keeping with the order of things, has defended the State Life Assurance Branch against certain suggestions which I made in my second reading speech. The inferences which I drew were based on the figures given in the Auditor-General's report. Had the life department of the State Insurance Office been obliged to render its returns in the same manner as competing offices, so that a comparison could be made on the same set of figures and circumstances, there could have been no room for doubt and one could have examined its work entirely on its merits. I do not know whether the Minister intends to place the State Office on the same basis as the private companies.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I intend to accept the amendment.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Under those circumstances I shall not take up any further time but congratulate the Minister on the broadmindedness he has displayed.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Amendment (*Mr. Brand*) agreed to.

Mr BRAND (*Burrum*): I move the omission, on line 56, page 4, of the words—

"State Government Insurance Office."

with a view to inserting the word—

"Treasurer."

The reason for the amendment is that the Treasurer is now charged with the administration of the Act, and I think the Treasury is the proper place for the payment of penalties for offences against it.

Amendment (*Mr. Brand*) agreed to.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*): I move the insertion, after the word "Act" in line 58, page 4, of the words—

"Any balance shall be carried to the Consolidated Revenue."

The clause will then read—

"All penalties recovered shall be paid to the credit of a special account of the Treasurer, and there shall be paid thereout all expenses incurred in administering this Act. Any balance shall be carried to the Consolidated Revenue."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I am not disposed to accept the amendment, for the reason that I have already assured the leader of the Opposition that the fees chargeable for the investigation of accounts will not be collected to the extent of the maximum mentioned in the Bill—£50—but we must have some fund for administrative expenses, and the penalties are now held to reduce the charges for investigations.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*): After the explanation of the Attorney-General, I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 3—"*Marine and General Insurance*"—

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*): I move the insertion, after "1916," on line 3, page 5, of the words—

"(1) In subsection one of section ten, the word 'Commissioner,' where it secondly occurs, is repealed, and the word 'Treasurer' is inserted in lieu thereof."

Subsection (1) of section 10 provides, with respect to the carrying on of insurance business by private companies, that—

"Save as next hereinafter provided, no person other than the Commissioner shall carry on marine or general insurance business in Queensland unless or until he has obtained a license so to do from the Commissioner."

I propose to omit the last word "Commissioner" and insert "Treasurer" as the person charged with the administration of the Act.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I accept the amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. Brand*) agreed to.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I move the insertion, after the word "pounds," on line 39, page 5, of the words—

"Every such further deposit shall be made within a period of three months after it has become due under this section."

Amendment (*Mr. Taylor*) agreed to.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*): I move the omission of the word "annually," on line 52, page 5, with a view to inserting the words "half-yearly." That will mean that interest on deposits made by marine and general insurance companies will be paid half-yearly, as we have already provided in clause 2 with respect to life assurance companies.

Amendment agreed to.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I move the insertion, after the word "insurer," on line 5, page 6, of the following proviso:—

"Notwithstanding any Act to the contrary, such interest shall be exempt from State income tax: Provided that if the interest accruing from any State securities is at any time hereafter made chargeable with State income tax, then interest accruing from such securities deposited thereafter with the Treasurer under this section shall be chargeable with such tax."

Under the principal Act interest on deposits is exempt from State income tax. The

amendment is considered desirable to remove any doubt there might be as to whether the interest on deposits made under this clause would be exempt from State income tax, although personally I do not think it is necessary. The effect will be to exempt such interest from State income tax until such time as an arrangement between the States and the Commonwealth is made with respect to taxation.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*): I move the omission of the word "section," on line 21, page 6, with a view to inserting the words—

"sections eighteen and."

The subclause will then read—

"(5) The following amendments are made in sections eighteen and nineteen:—

(*a*) The word 'Commissioner,' wherever it appears, is repealed and the word 'Treasurer' is inserted in lieu thereof."

Section 18 relates to the licensing of brokers and agents, and the amendment will have the effect of placing that duty in the hands of the Treasurer, who is charged with the administration of the Act, instead of the Commissioner. It is in harmony with other amendments already agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): I would like some information from the Minister regarding the conditions upon which the companies which have paid their deposits can withdraw those deposits. It seems to me that there is no definite policy laid down as to what obligations they have to comply with before they can have their deposit returned from the Treasury.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: After they go out of business?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Yes.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I think that under the 1901 Act a company has to satisfy the Treasurer that it has discharged all its just obligations in Queensland, and then the money is refunded.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: What is meant by the words "satisfy the Treasurer"?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They must satisfy the Treasurer by the production of some evidence that they have met all their obligations in Queensland. I suppose in the ordinary course of events they would have to advertise for claims in the same way as the Public Curator would advertise for debts due in an estate. It is purely a question of administration as to what method shall be adopted. There is no procedure laid down in the existing law beyond that it states that they must satisfy the Treasury that they have met their just obligations before the money is refunded. The Treasurer has to be satisfied by satisfactory evidence.

Mr. MOORE: By waiting until the insured persons are dead?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Possibly the Treasurer may cause the company to insert an advertisement in the leading papers of the State calling for claims against the company, and, if no claims are sent in within the prescribed time, it will be taken that the company has met its obligations, subject now to the Auditor-General having the right to investigate and see if there is any liability in the way of policies. I admit that there is no definite line of procedure laid down, but the Act only provides that, if companies fulfil their obligations, the money will be returned to them. If this matter had been mentioned at an earlier stage it might have been as well to go into it and lay down the line of procedure. I move the insertion, after the word "appears," on line 23, page 6, of the words—

"in the said sections."

This is only a consequential amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I beg to move the insertion, after the word "four," on line 26, page 6, of the words—

"of section 19."

This is only a consequential amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I beg to move the insertion, after the word "five," on line 35, page 6, of the words—

"of the said section."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, 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.

[7 p.m.]

MORNING SITTINGS.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I move—

"That during the remainder of this session, unless otherwise ordered, the House will meet for the despatch of business at 10.30 o'clock a.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, and that on any of those days Supply (including any resolutions thereof for the present or the ensuing financial year) may be taken both from 11 o'clock a.m. to 4.30 o'clock p.m. and from 4.30 o'clock p.m. to 10.30 o'clock p.m.; each of those periods shall be accounted allotted days under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307, and all other provisions of that Standing Order shall apply: Provided that at 4.30 o'clock p.m. the proceedings shall be interrupted for the purpose only of dealing with formal business, for asking and answering questions, and for giving notices of motion."

There is a general desire that the session should not be continued too late into the hot months of the year. At the same time the Government do not desire to curtail discussion on matters which they feel ought to be fully discussed. There is some business yet to come before the House, and there are on the business-sheet quite a number of important measures. Some of the Bills may evoke much discussion, though they are hardly measures which can be termed contentious. Notice has already been given of a Bill to amend the Income Tax Act. It will deal principally with the increased exemption and deductions and the making of certain amendments of no great importance to the

present Act. The Land Tax Act Amendment Bill, which is to be introduced, provides for the continuance of the super tax for another year. The Greater Brisbane Bill will be introduced for the purpose of getting it on the table and of having its principles explained by the Minister, although it is not intended to go any further than that with it this session. The Prickly-pear Bill has yet to be introduced.

Mr. MORGAN: What about the Land Act (Review of Cattle Holding Rents) Amendment Bill?

The PREMIER: Notice has been given of that.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: What do you intend to do with those local authorities the period of office of the members of which expires next year?

The PREMIER: They will continue as they are in the new year. The Greater Brisbane Bill will not be dealt with until next session. Ample opportunity, therefore, will be given to the local authorities concerned and citizens to make suggestions with respect to the scheme. There is a hope, even allowing for due time for the consideration of these measures, of finishing this session by the end of the week after next, if not earlier. The intention of this motion is to provide for double day sittings to get the Estimates through. That is preferable to asking hon. members to sit late at night. (Hear, hear!) It is far better to allow hon. members to discuss the Estimates of the departments in the morning, get them through, and allow ample time for the discussion of the measures that I have mentioned.

Mr. TAYLOR: Are you going to start to-morrow?

The PREMIER: We had better start to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

PRIMARY PRODUCTS POOLS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): This is a very small measure of five clauses, and is self-explanatory. There is no occasion to waste time on the second reading. The Bill is to remove some anomalies and to extend the application of the word "commodity" to other commodities about which there is some doubt, such as butter, cheese, and eggs, and to give the Council of Agriculture power to conduct pools instead of applying, as at present, to the Department of Agriculture. This request comes from the Council of Agriculture itself. The Council of Agriculture also desires to have a representative on the Pool Board. The object is that the representative shall be able to give advice to those Boards and generally assist members in carrying out their work and interpreting the various Acts and regulations. In future the chairmen of all pools will be appointed on the recommendation of the Council of Agriculture. It has been found necessary in carrying out the pools to hold property—for instance, the Metropolitan Milk Pool will find it necessary to hold property. The Maize Pool at Atherton propose to erect silos and drying and cleaning machinery; therefore it must hold property.

With regard to advertising pools, we find this is a very expensive business, because the present Act provides that the information must be advertised in papers circulating in all districts affected by the Bill. That would be all right if it did not cost so much. Now that the Council of Agriculture has its own organ, which goes to practically every farmer, it is considered that the money could be better spent in advertising in the "Queensland Producer" and the "Government Gazette"——

Hon. W. H. BARNES: How many people read the "Government Gazette"?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I admit that not many farmers read the "Government Gazette," but practically all Acts of Parliament require a notice to appear in the "Government Gazette." This will be made obligatory. It cost us £150 to advertise one of our pools in Queensland, and in all over £600 has been spent to date in this way. That is a big sum of money. Local papers should be sufficiently interested in their primary industries to insert paragraphs. The Council of Agriculture desires to save money in this regard, which I consider commendable, so long as the general public know the proposals with regard to the pool.

The Bill will take effect as from 31st January, 1923. I have pleasure in moving—

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

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): In my judgment, the explanation by the Minister does not represent all that is intended by the Bill. It may be looked upon as a very innocent kind of Bill to make good some defects of previous legislation—that is what I think the Minister said; but his remarks have left some little doubt as to some of the matters covered by it. The Secretary for Agriculture explained that the Council of Agriculture was going to come in in some form, and it seems to me that, if you follow closely some of the measures that have not yet been considered, the Council of Agriculture is going to occupy a position in connection with the future domination of affairs in Queensland which may be very inimical to the best interests of Queensland. Clause 5 may cover what the Minister said, but I want to point out to the House and country that it opens a very much wider door, and it seems to me that it is part and parcel of the legislation which is going in the direction of controlling all the supplies of the State by the Government or by an official organisation of the Government. It is all very well for the Minister to say that the Milk Pool should have power to hold property. Rightly or wrongly, there is a feeling in the minds of the people at the present time—there are rumours to that effect, at any rate—that the Government, as part of their Russianising scheme, are going to take possession of quite a number of things.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You should not allow them to pull your leg like that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman may be carrying out what was suggested last night by the hon. member for Fitzroy, who said that a certain Bill we were then discussing was only part and parcel of the policy of nationalisation.

Mr. HARTLEY: I did not say that. I said that it would be a step in that direction.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It appears to me that this is part and parcel of their policy,

and is going in the direction of doing certain things to carry out the platform of the Labour party.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I think there is a great deal more danger in clause 4 than in clause 5. Pools are not a good thing, but they are absolutely necessary under present conditions, as the worker has his union, and he is backed up by every power and law in the land, but the producer has no means of placing his produce on the market at a value that is going to return him wages equal to those received by the worker, and pools are necessary in order to make the position of the producer equal to that of the consumer. All these things must be worked out by the producers themselves. If there is an egg pool, the poultrymen must work that out to its logical conclusion. The man who produces the article should be the one to hand it over to the consumer. That is the logical conclusion to all co-operative movements, and I do not think the producer wants the assistance of the Council of Agriculture. That is where the levelling down process comes in. The whole policy of the Government to-day is not only to bring about an unnatural condition, but to bring about a condition under which the Department of Agriculture will be the absolute head of the whole situation. The Department of Agriculture has no right to be the head of all these movements, but, as the Secretary for Agriculture is the chairman of the Council of Agriculture, the department actually controls all the movements of that body. It is quite clear that this is so, because anything that the Council brings in to which the Department of Agriculture objects does not see daylight, but anything that the department approves of is brought forward.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You do not suggest that we suppress anything, do you?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WARREN: I do not need to suggest it. I want to make myself quite clear on this. Anything that the Council of Agriculture passes which is opposed to the wishes of the Department of Agriculture does not see daylight, but all that is approved of by the Minister is pushed forward. That should not be so. That was the danger we saw in the Primary Producers' Organisation Bill from the very start. The Minister would be wise to allow these pools to work out their own salvation. If it is said that the producers have not got business men amongst them, surely it cannot be said that the Council of Agriculture has got business men. I do not think there are any better business men than those who are to be found engaged in the different industries.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: The men on the Council of Agriculture are selected by the producers.

Mr. WARREN: How are they selected?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What better method of selection can you suggest?

Mr. WARREN: The names are sent down to the people, who do not know whether they are white men or black men, other than that the names are those of Europeans or otherwise, and they do not know whom they are voting for. As a grower in the district I am in, I did not know the men I was voting for. It is impossible to know these men. In the dairying industry, for instance, the people know the men they are putting forward, and it is only right that the men who represent the industry should be those who carry out the work of the industry. I hope that the Minister will see the necessity of allowing men who are engaged in poultry farming or dairying to control the Egg Pool and the Milk Pool. It is absurd for a wheatgrower, for instance, to have anything to do with the Metropolitan Milk Pool. The best men to work it are those who are producing milk. The Minister would be wise if he knocked off this levelling process and allowed these things to be determined by the people concerned.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): The Minister said that this Bill had been asked for by the Council of Agriculture, and I think there are a few very important questions in connection with it. The first thing I take exception to is the cutting out of advertising in the papers which circulate in the various districts. I do not think there is any occasion to advertise in two papers, but there is urgent reason why matters should be advertised in a local paper or in a paper which circulates in the district or locality.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You think it should be compulsory?

Mr. MOORE: I think it should. There are a number of people who do not get the "Queensland Producer," and a large number of people do not open it when they get it. The effect of a pool on a large section of the community may be very great, and it is only right that they should have every opportunity of having a voice as to whether they want something done or not and that they should know exactly what is going on. The articles in the "Queensland Producer" do not tend to make one open it and read it with avidity. Anybody who takes up an opinion which is contrary to that of the Director of Agriculture is held up as having been paid by the middlemen—and is stigmatised as a "tool of the exploiters" or something like that—merely because he does not happen to hold the same opinion as the Council of Agriculture or the Director of Agriculture. It is an absolute farce to have that sort of thing going on.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member will not be in order at this stage in dealing with details.

Mr. MOORE: I am not going to deal with details, but there are three or four important principles in the Bill, one of which is very vital, and I want to give reasons why an advertisement should be inserted in a paper circulating throughout the district. Farmers in some districts very often get a paper only once a week, and they do not always open the "Queensland Producer" when it comes. Very often they do not read it at all. Many people become irritated when—because they happen to hold an opinion different to that from the Council of Agriculture or the Director of Agriculture—they are abused and called "exploiters" or "tools of vested interests." That is not the way to encourage people to read a paper. People have a right to their own opinions, and I personally, as a primary producer and a member of Parliament, claim the right to have my views. (Hear, hear!) Because they happen to be different in some small respect from those of the Council of Agriculture or the Director of Agriculture. I do not think that the paper or the Director is justified in publishing leading articles calling me a "tool of the ex-

ploiters." We should have the opportunity to vote on these pools absolutely as our judgment dictates, and we should not be abused or pushed or rushed into something which we do not think is in the best interests of the community. After all, the views of the Director are only those of one individual, and we have a perfect right to our own views. If we think they are just as good as his, we have the right to advocate them and advise the people to do what we think is right. I think it is absolutely necessary that the producers should have the fullest opportunity of knowing exactly what is going on, of knowing when a pool is proposed, and of becoming acquainted with other ideas besides those which are pushed at them in an official organ. I do not want to say that the official organ is wrong, but the people ought to have both sides of the case put before them in order that they may express a correct judgment.

There is another thing I want to mention as absolutely essential—that is, the provision of sufficient advances by the Government to enable a pool to be carried out successfully. Unfortunately there is nothing in the Bill to show that the Government intend to do that. They blindly go forward with the operation of declaring a pool, to be managed by a board who have no funds or any way of getting them. In my opinion the last pool formed was formed under absolutely wrong circumstances. The people were led to vote for a pool under the belief that a sufficient amount of money was going to be advanced.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How?

Mr. MOORE: The Premier himself in a telegram from the Downs said that £15,000 was going to be made available.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not true. I made it perfectly clear to the Council of Agriculture that there was no obligation on the Government to finance any pool.

Mr. MOORE: I do not say there was an obligation on the Government. I say that the Premier sent a telegram to Brisbane that £15,000 was going to be made available. The obligation may not be there, but that sort of thing certainly is misleading the people who are going to vote on the formation of a pool. I think, too, that it is only right that, when people are led to go into pools, there should be some official machinery providing that they shall be paid. The Minister knows what has happened in connection with the Egg Pool. There are individuals who have put their eggs into it from the beginning and they have never got a penny out of it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: All pools have to be recommended by the Council of Agriculture, and I have made it plain to them that there is no obligation on the Government.

Mr. MOORE: The Council recommended an advance of £10,000, and it has not been made. The sort of thing I have mentioned is a great hardship to those individuals. They have to buy feed and keep going, and it is almost an impossibility in some cases. It is going to discourage the whole system. I think it is vital that, when we are going to have an amending Bill, it should be made so that it can be officially administered without any hardship being inflicted upon a large number of individuals who have to stand out of their money and have no idea when they are going to be paid or how they are to carry on. I do not think it is a step in the right direction to have a member of the Council of Agriculture on the Board. I do not see any advantage in that. A pool may be asked for through the Council of Agriculture, or it may be asked for by petition, but why should there be a representative of the Council of Agriculture on the Board?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What is the objection?

Mr. MOORE: The people who are going to pool their products are going to elect the Board, and I do not see what is to be gained by having a representative of the Council of Agriculture.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You have no confidence in the Council.

Mr. MOORE: Why should the Minister immediately say that we have no confidence in the Council of Agriculture?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you believe in the Council of Agriculture or not?

Mr. MOORE: I believe in the Council of Agriculture being absolutely free and unfettered, and when they recommend that anything be carried out they should not have to consult the Government as to whether it conforms with the Government's policy or not.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They have recommended this Bill, and you are opposing it.

Mr. MOORE: I have already pointed out that I am entitled to my own views. I am not bound to accept the views of the Council of Agriculture or the Director of Agriculture.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You say you believe in the Council of Agriculture. They have recommended this Bill, and you are opposed to it.

Mr. VOWLES: Did they not also recommend the growing of ratoon cotton? (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: The Council has recommended many things to the Government, and the Government have not seen fit, on occasions when it has not suited them, to adopt those recommendations. We know that on the last occasion when there was a debate about cotton the Government carried a Bill in spite of the Council.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are opposed to the recommendation of the Council.

Mr. MOORE: If it is of no benefit to the Pool Board, I disagree with it. I am not bound to adopt the recommendations of the Council of Agriculture if they are not going to be of any advantage. These people who are going to have their products pooled are going to elect the Board, and they should accept the responsibility of management: and, if the Government recommend the establishment of a pool, it is the duty of the Government to find funds to enable those people to make a successful start. I am sure that, if the Minister happened to be a producer, and was sending his eggs to the pool, he would think it a considerable hardship if he had to stand out of his money indefinitely, and not know when or where he was going to get it. The primary producer is a man who has to have money continually coming in to enable him to carry on his business, and if he cannot get it then the principle that is responsible for bringing about such circumstances is a bad one. I recognise that there is a good deal of difficulty in connection with pools, and that

there is a certain amount of newness and a certain amount of trouble to overcome. It is a difficult thing for ordinary people to carry on business when you have an inexperienced Board who are endeavouring to experiment with somebody else's product. The people themselves have to grow it and bear all the expense of getting it to the market, and then they have to hand it over to a pool to do as they like with it. It is absolutely impossible for an individual to carry on unless he is going to be kept informed by the pool of what is happening. I would like to give an illustration of what is occurring in connection with the Cheese Pool, with which I have been connected. Last January we got a notification from the pool, saying that there would be no more levies, or, if there should be any, the individual must use his own judgment as to what they were likely to be. We heard nothing until July, and when no money came from the agent we wrote and asked the reason why, and we were told that it was all absorbed by the pool. We got another communication then from the pool to say that, owing to the low prices received in London, there was a levy of 4½d. All the product had been paid for, and the money distributed, and we had no knowledge of what quota was sold in Brisbane or anything else until six months after. The Minister will recognise that it is almost impossible for people to carry on like that. They must have information. The Minister is proposing to amend the Primary Products Pools Act.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Vote against it if you don't like it.

Mr. MOORE: I am endeavouring to point out how the Minister, in his position as chairman of the Council of Agri-
[7.30 p.m.] culture, can do something if it to be carried on in the efficient way it should be.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The Minister should not get cross.

Mr. MOORE: No, there is no occasion for the Minister to get cross. He is taking up the exact position the Director of Agriculture does, who, if any matter is criticised, refers to the critic as a "middle man" and a "tool of the exploiter."

Mr. HARTLEY: That is only what you used to do with our party, when you said we were Bolsheviks and all the rest of it.

Mr. MOORE: There is no colour in the accusations and charges that have been against us. The hon. members opposite have themselves to blame to a considerable extent for the charges levelled against them. We have every reason to make the charges that we are levelling.

This Bill is an amendment of the Primary Products Pools Act, and it is supposed to make that measure more workable. In my opinion the provisions I have called attention to are going to make it work to the detriment of the producer who puts his produce into the pool. The Council of Agriculture has recommended that it should have a representative on the Pool Boards. I do not know why they have done so, because they have no knowledge of the working of a pool, and to my mind they are endeavouring to take on something for which they are no more qualified than the men who are elected by the producers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: After experience they will be more qualified.

Mr. MOORE: They have had experience on the Council of Agriculture, but they have not had experience of pools. If we are going to have reappraisements which are deemed necessary owing to the artificial conditions created, it is only right that the people who place their produce in the pool should elect the men whom they think most qualified to look after their interests, and not have a man who is elected on the Council of Agriculture from all over Queensland. Those are two or three points in the Bill that I cannot see the object of. I also object to the principle of retrospectivity, because it is making the producers pay for something which they had no idea they were going to have to pay for when they asked for the pool. I question whether retrospectivity is necessary, owing to the refusal of the Minister to accept an amendment in respect of butter and cheese when the Bill was going through last session. The Minister has now to bring in an amendment to make it clear that the term "dairy produce" includes butter and cheese, and also for the purpose of including eggs.

Mr. VOWLES: The Minister was told all about it at the time.

Mr. MOORE: Those men who secured the last pool went into it on a definite Act. There was no question of expenditure being saddled on to them afterwards. How these unfortunates who are not getting anything at the present time are going to have further expenditure placed on them I do not know, and it seems that it is only adding insult to injury. I have always opposed retrospectivity in regard to taxation, and I am going to oppose it under this Bill. When people go in for a system of pooling produce under a particular Act it is neither fair nor just to bring in a Bill subsequently to saddle them with another charge.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I am rather astonished at the attitude of the Minister in this matter. When we were dealing with the Primary Products Pools Act last session it was pointed out to him that the definition of "commodity" did not embrace any of the subjects which have to be dealt with under this amending Bill. The Minister assured us at that time, when we wanted to move an amendment, that the Governor in Council had sufficient power to declare anything to be a "commodity."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Did you try and move this amendment then?

Mr. VOWLES: I tried to bring it forward and the hon. gentleman told me it was all right. As a result of hastily considered legislation each session Bills are returned to the House for amendment. I do not blame the draftsman, but the legislators for the manner in which they have rushed the legislation through, more particularly when there is no revising Chamber. Under this Bill there is a greater necessity for publicity than ever before. I do not think that the advertisement in the "Queensland Producer," which we have heard so much about to-night, is sufficient for the purpose. The "Queensland Producer" is supposed to be the official organ of the Primary Producers' Organisation, but it has made itself so unpopular already that in many places it is cast into the waste-paper basket because it has become political in character. It is a direct insult to the producers, because their representatives have been abused, and the paper is being used

for purposes for which it was not intended. The need of greater publicity arises from the fact that the altered conditions are going to give the pool very large powers in respect to the property of the individuals concerned in the pool. Their property is going to be used in experimental directions—something on the lines of State enterprises. Under this Bill—

> "The Board may . . .
>
> (*a*) Purchase, contract for the use of, or otherwise provide, and hold any land which may be required by the Board and any personal property whatsoever.
>
> (*b*) Contract for the use of or erect or otherwise provide any buildings or structures, and repair, equip, furnish, and maintain the same."

If we are going to have pools in different directions, and they are going to acquire large properties and start businesses, the people should know what they are up against. The experience of the public in connection with State enterprises in the past has not been a very happy one. I am quite at a loss to know why there should be a representative of the Council of Agriculture on the Pool Board. The experience of the producers has been that it would have been very much more to their interests if they had an accountant or some such person on the Board who could tell them exactly what their position was and what their respective profits were. I would like to see an amendment made in the Bill in that direction. I have not heard anything to warrant a person being put on a board merely because he is a member of the Council of Agriculture. The Council has its own functions. Attention to these duties should occupy the members' full time.

I also disagree with the principle of retrospectivity which is introduced at the end of the Bill. I am quite in sympathy with the remarks of the hon. member for Aubigny when he says that people have no right to be charged back for liabilities for which they were not responsible.

Mr. COLLINS: Do you take up the same attitude on retrospectivity on the Bill to give relief to cattle men in regard to their rents?

Mr. VOWLES: I do not know what to think of this Bill. I know that on Wednesday some hon. member on the other side said that certain legislation which was brought forward was the basis of the socialisation of industry, while others went further and said it was a good step towards communism. That being so, I do not know how far this Bill is going. The increased powers asked for to acquire property, run businesses, and carry out other objects, may savour of the socialisation of industry or communism in some degree, when we get the real purport of the Bill. The future will tell. Hon. members opposite ridicule the suggestion, but the suggestion came from them and from certain individuals who are wrapped up in the socialisation of industry. We can only take them at their own word and look at this matter in the very worst light.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I should like to see the Bill go through. As I said last night, provision should be made for those concerned to form a cattle pool or a meat pool, and power should be given in the Bill to that effect. We are living in a period when all those engaged in any industry must amalgamate for their own protection. We find that the merchants who do business in the cities and in the country have their organisation. They meet together at different periods and fix the prices at which their commodities shall be sold so that there will be no cutting of prices or unfair competition, thus enabling each one to make a profit and conduct his business successfully. We also have organisations formed by people conducting businesses for the purpose of preventing competition. It is only right that the producers should combine in order to stabilise their industry and to enable them to get a fair remuneration for supplying the people with foodstuffs. Were we all in a disorganised state, producers would not be different to other sections of the community, but we find that organisation has been successfully carried out throughout Australia, causing the disorganised to suffer at the hands of the organised. The producer has therefore come to the natural conclusion that for his own protection he must have control of what he produces.

I do not agree with the amendment the Minister intends to include in the Bill giving the Council of Agriculture power to nominate and elect a member of a Pool Board. Take our Wheat Pool Board as an example. Although mistakes were undoubtedly made, I feel sure that the wheat-growers generally are satisfied that good has come from that pool. I recognise the fact that pools have not been very long in existence in Queensland, and we have not had a number of men experienced in the conduct of pools to enable us to make them the success we anticipated they would be when they were first formed. As time goes on men will become experienced in the working of these pools Legislation will be altered in order to make the working of the pools more satisfactory and more businesslike, and they will get beyond the experimental stage. In my opinion it will be only a matter of a few years when the producer will be able to secure a fair value for his produce. Owing to the existence of the Wheat Pool, the wheat farmer gets a fair value for his wheat, and the same remarks applies in regard to other pools. The Butter Pool undoubtedly did a lot of good while it existed, and as time passes pools will become the order of the day. So soon as one pool proves a success another will form, and eventually the producer will receive what he is entitled to—a fair remuneration for his work in producing foodstuffs.

Take the cattle industry. Owing to the disorganisation that exists, those engaged in this industry are at the mercy of every organisation. In order to meet the combined forces that are working against the meat industry, it is necessary for the cattlemen to organise—to meet organisation by organisation. By so doing they will eventually receive a fair price for the cattle they grow. There can be no objection to that. I feel sure that no section of men desires to see another section of men working day in and day out and receiving insufficient remuneration for their labour. The industrialists are organised for the purpose of looking after their interests—to see that they do not work hours that are too long and that they get fair remuneration. We do not object to that. We recognise that it is only

by their organisation that they are in their present position. So it must be with the producer. Of course, if the people of the State desire cheap food they must not encourage pools and the organisation of the farmer. It is only by the disorganisation of the farmer that they get cheap food.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not agree with the hon. member. The pool makes for economy. It does away with the middleman.

Mr. MORGAN: It may make for economy, but it enables the farmer to get a fair and reasonable price for his product, which falls on the public. An hon. member interjected the other night that a Cattle Pool would increase the price of meat to the consumer. Hon. members opposite must recognise that, if the producer was getting a sufficient remuneration to meet his liabilities, he would not be in favour of the establishment of a pool. It is only due to the fact that he is not getting a fair price that he desires a pool. It is only when an industry is down and out that the people connected with it are in favour of the establishment of a pool.

Why does the Minister insist upon it being compulsory that a member of the Council of Agriculture shall be a member of a pool? I certainly think that is going to do an injury. Before a pool can be formed a vote is taken of those interested in it, and this innovation is going to prevent a great number of producers from voting in favour of the pool.

If the Minister insists upon a member of the Council of Agriculture becoming a member of the Pool Board, he is going to put a stumbling block in the way of the formation of pools. It is not a proper thing to do. The present Act is democratic enough, inasmuch as it states that the members of the Pool Board must be elected by those who are interested in the pool, so that those who produce the article shall control and manage the pool. If that is so, why should the Minister try to amend an Act that is already democratic enough to allow the election of a Board that meets with the approval of those most concerned? The function of the Council of Agriculture is to put in motion the machinery to form a pool, and the very moment a pool is formed the Council ceases to have anything to do with it. That is as it should be. It would be wrong for the Minister to insist that a member of the Council of Agriculture should be a member of the Wheat Board. The growers of wheat elected their own representatives to the Wheat Board, and that system of election has been generally approved of. The wheat areas of the State were divided into divisions, and each division elected a representative on the Board, and there is no objection to that method of creating a Board. The Minister now states that the Council of Agriculture should nominate a member to the Pool Board. The Council of Agriculture may nominate the Director of Agriculture, and he may be a member of every Pool Board in Queensland. He will become a professional manager of pools.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He would be a very useful man on a Pool Board.

Mr. MORGAN: He might be or he might not.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the hon. member not to go into details. He is now dealing with clause 4.

Mr. MORGAN: Clause 4 alters the present Act in a most important direction, because it gives the Council of Agriculture power to elect a member to every Board at present in existence and to every board that may be created in the future.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Council of Agriculture is the mouthpiece of the farmers of this State.

Mr. MORGAN: That may be so, but the farmers have a right to say who shall control their business. The Minister is endeavouring to get some control over these pools that he has no right to have, and I certainly intend to vote against clause 4. I am not objecting to pools generally, because they have been forced on the producers owing to the fact that the producers in the past have not received fair treatment from the public generally; but I am not going to vote in favour of giving the Council of Agriculture control over all pools. The duty of the Council of Agriculture should be to set the machinery in motion.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: To see that the pool is successful.

Mr. MORGAN: The functions of the Council of Agriculture should cease the very moment the pool is formed. The Council of Agriculture has no more to do with the Wheat Pool than I have.

I hope the Minister will recognise that certain alterations in the Bill are necessary. At first sight it seems a very innocent measure, but, when one analyses it, it is discovered that there are powers contained in the Bill that should not be there. The provision that it shall only be necessary to advertise in the "Gazette" and in the "Queensland Producer" is not right, and I suggest that an amendment be made in that clause providing that the secretaries of the Local Producers' Associations be also notified. An amendment to that effect will considerably improve the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You mean notified of the creation of a pool?

Mr. MORGAN: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That can easily be done.

Mr. MORGAN: They should be notified so that they may notify their members. I will support the second reading of the Bill, but I reserve the right to move amendments in Committee, and I hope the Minister will accept them.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): I was astonished to hear the Minister tell the House that a pool could not be formed except on the recommendation of the Council of Agriculture.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I would not expect you to be very familiar with the operations of the Council of Agriculture, being a middleman.

Mr. KELSO: During the last couple of nights, whenever anything annoys the hon. gentleman, he appears to get personal. I think he ought to take a leaf out of the book of hon. members on this side and try to be courteous.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I heard you were abusing me to-night when I was out of the Chamber.

Mr. KELSO: I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon—I did not abuse the hon. gentleman.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You compared me unfavourably with the Attorney-General. (Laughter.)

Mr. KELSO: I am very glad the hon. gentleman heard it, and I hope it will do him good; but from what I have just heard, it does not appear that he is repentant, and I hope he will be repentant to-morrow. I would like to refer hon. members to section 3 of the Primary Products Pools Act, which reads—

> "The Governor in Council, upon the recommendation of the Council of Agriculture, may from time to time, or if requested so to do by a petition signed by a representative number of growers of any particular commodity or by an organisation representing the growers of that commodity, by Order in Council declare—"

and so on. If I read that correctly, the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Council of Agriculture, or, if requested to do so by a representative number of growers or by an organisation representing the growers of that commodity, may create a pool. I would point out that the Queensland Dairy Companies' Association—a very representative association and an association that has worked for years to organise the dairy industry—recommended that a compulsory pool should be formed because the voluntary pool broke down, and that recommendation was referred to the Council of Agriculture. It seems to me that everything has to centre round the Council of Agriculture.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Council of Agriculture is the mouthpiece of the farmers of Queensland now.

[8 p.m.]

Mr. KELSO: The Act says that any organisation representing the growers of the commodity can ask for the formation of a compulsory pool. If an organisation does ask for a pool the Minister refers the request to the Council of Agriculture, which makes a recommendation, and if there is anything good in it the Council gets all the credit for it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It takes the responsibility.

Mr. KELSO: The Minister must know that, when a pool is formed, the Council of Agriculture has nothing to do with it. The Council can recommend it, and it can be recommended by an organisation; but once a pool is in existence it conducts its own business in its own way, except that, under section 4 of the principal Act, the Governor in Council appoints a Board of such number of elected representatives of the growers of the commodity as prescribed, and shall appoint one of them to be chairman. We find that, if there is a poll taken of the producers and it is agreed to form a compulsory pool, those men elect certain men in that particular line to represent them. I would remind the hon. gentleman that that was one of the promises made at the time the Council of Agriculture was formed, by the Premier himself, who stressed the point that each particular industry should look after its own business and not allow politics to come in.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hear, hear!

Mr. KELSO: There is another proposal to the effect that the recommendation of the Council of Agriculture as to who shall be the chairman of the pool is to be sent to the Minister. It stands to reason that it is a very large organisation. First of all, we have at the head of it the Secretary for Agriculture, and he is a politician. I am against the appointment of any Minister, whether he be a Labour or a Tory member, at the head of this Council, which is supposed to be run by the people in the industry for their own good. Then we come to the Director of Agriculture, who apparently has a little bit of power. He has been called by one gentleman the "Dictator of Agriculture." You can see the whole scheme developing bit by bit. The web is being drawn round the farmers, who are invited to organise themselves. As we have heard from hon. members opposite, when the proper time comes the Government will carry out the socialisation of industry, and the farmers will have done all the organising for them. It will only require a stroke of the pen for the Government to complete the work of socialism. The farmers are not ready for that at the present time.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why all this hostility to the Council of Agriculture?

Mr. KELSO: When anybody differs from the Secretary for Agriculture he looks upon him as hostile. Surely the hon. gentleman has had enough experience to be able to listen to criticism!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why not trust the Council of Agriculture? They are a body of farmers.

Mr. KELSO: From what I have heard of it, I do not think the standing of the Council of Agriculture is as high now as when it was formed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Because of the propaganda of your party.

Mr. KELSO: Not because of the propaganda of our party. The farmer is beginning to ask what is the value of the Council of Agriculture. The farmers say it has cost £30,000 already, and they have not got to the end of it. Before this session is over we shall probably have one or two other agricultural measures—all key measures—fitting in with the scheme I have suggested.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KELSO: I wish to refer to the principle of advertising which is contained in the Bill. I quite agree with other hon. members when they say that advertising should not be confined to the official organ of the Council of Agriculture.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must confine himself to the question of the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. KELSO: I am talking about the principle in this Bill of altering the method of advertising when a notice is given that a pool is to be formed. In my opinion, the alteration of the method of advertising as outlined in the Bill is wrong. Subsection (2) of section 3 of the principal Act says—

> "Notice of the intention to make such order shall be published by the Minister in the 'Gazette,' and in at least two newspapers circulating in the district or locality to which the Order in Council is intended to apply, at least thirty days before the making of such order."

I think that the present Act should stand as

it is in that regard. I do not think the proposal in the Bill will give nearly the publicity which is given under the section I have quoted, which requires publication in two papers. Of course, we do not take any notice of the "Gazette," because it is an official organ; but what is the object of burying the advertisement in the "Queensland Producer," the official organ of the Council of Agriculture?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Where would you bury it?

Mr. KELSO: I would not bury it at all; I would have the fullest publicity given to it so that every farmer could see what was going on. It practically means burying it to advertise it in this paper, because there is ample evidence that the farmers are not reading it. On the top of that we have an announcement that the circulation of this paper is 20,000 a week.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Who said the farmers are not reading it?

Mr. KELSO: The farmers themselves say it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What farmers?

Mr. KELSO: Does the hon. gentleman think that we do not speak for the farmers? He must give us credit for keeping in touch with the farmers. He is not the only pebble on the beach. I think that the alteration with regard to advertising is wrong. There is plenty of room for alteration in the Bill, and I trust that the objectionable principles I have referred to will be eliminated in Committee.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I think that one could divide the Bill into three parts. I gathered from an interjection by the Minister that this is a recommendation from the Council of Agriculture. I am quite satisfied that, if the Council of Agriculture can only propose these slight amendments to the Primary Products Pools Act, it is not doing the best of work. The three parts I refer to are, firstly, the definition of some of the primary products, secondly, a levy on the producer, and, thirdly, making the Bill retrospective to 1st January, 1923; the levy, of course, will be made retrospective, and will apply to some of the pools which are in existence at the present time.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What levy are you talking about?

Mr. KERR: The hon. gentleman does not understand his own Bill. There is a levy in connection with the taking of a poll. That is to apply from 1st January, 1923.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Polls have already been taken.

Mr. KERR: A poll has been taken since that date. I will accept the Minister's word that there is no levy to be made with respect to these polls.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in discussing the details of the Bill.

Mr. KERR: Retrospectivity is a principle of the Bill, not a detail.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Bill is mainly to protect the Egg Pool.

Mr. KERR: It is a pity that the Minister has not done the right thing by the Egg Pool and given the advance recommended by the Council of Agriculture. Until the Primary Products Pools Act makes provision for advances to a new pool, it is not going to get a fair "go." When I saw that it was proposed to introduce a Bill to amend the Primary Products Pools Act, I firmly believed that we would get something better than this.

Now I should like to deal with the aspect of the expense of these pools. Earlier in the session I asked a question of the Minister as to whether he would consult with the Council of Agriculture and ascertain if it were not possible to co-ordinate the activities of the Primary Producers' Organisation with the provisions of the Primary Products Pools Act. I meant that at present it was necessary to create a new organisation for each pool, and I thought it might be worth while considering whether we could not utilise the Primary Producers' Organisation, which was costing so much money. The Minister said that the matter would receive consideration. If we could utilise that machinery, there would be no necessity to provide in an amending Bill for the expenses of a pool, and I fully expected to see in this measure some co-ordination of the two Acts. I am sorry that it is not being done.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KERR: Some alteration is made by this Bill in the definition of "commodity." The question whether eggs were a commodity under the principal Act was submitted to the Solicitor-General by the Minister, as a result of the deputation, and he gave an opinion that eggs were not a commodity within the meaning of the principal Act, and therefore the poultry farmers who desired to form a pool were turned down.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There was some doubt.

Mr. KERR: The hon. member for Dalby has referred to rush legislation. If the hon. gentleman will turn up "Hansard," he will find that I said at the time that the definition would not include this particular commodity, but he would not specially include it, for what reason I cannot understand. Then I took another deputation to the Minister. I give the Minister his due—and I pointed out in "Hansard" that he had said eggs were a commodity—he overrode the first opinion of the Solicitor-General and subsequently declared eggs to be a commodity under the Act. But there was an instance where the Opposition went to a good deal of trouble to make a Bill a better Bill, but the Minister in his irritating way—in his way of very often considering himself as affected personally rather than of looking at the matters that come before this House in a large way——

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You will have a hard job to make the Committee believe that.

Mr. KERR: At any rate, it seems to be an easy matter to raise the ire of the hon. gentleman. But I do not want to deal with that. The Council of Agriculture should have given us something better than the Bill before us when it had the opportunity of amending the Primary Products Pools Act.

Mr. COLLINS: What do you suggest?

Mr. KERR: I would make it a complete Bill by including the necessary provision for a guarantee to give the pools a start.

Mr. Kerr.]

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I should have thought that, when the Government did set out to amend the Act, they would have given us something worth while, and have gone back and retrieved the mistakes they made last session. It is not much use passing a Primary Products Pools Act if you are going to neglect the main thing which is necesary to make every pool a success—finance. The pool last formed is in serious difficulties and is not able to pay for the eggs it has got, and will not be able to do so for some time. Any pool in the same position would not be able to do any better.

Mr. KIRWAN: Can they not sell the eggs?

Mr. DEACON: It is not a matter of selling them. It is a matter of paying for them. A certain amount of time has to elapse to the poultry farmer. When private commission agents sell eggs they advance the money themselves; but, when a pool is created, it cannot do that unless it has some funds.

Mr. W. COOPER: What about the co-operative butter factories?

Mr. DEACON: They are financed by their selling agents. They could not pay the monthly cheques if they were not financed. Any of these small pools should be able to get an advance from the Government to enable them to carry on, but they are unable to do so. It is not a bit of use passing legislation to create pools unless you finance them. You are not making the condition of the producer better in any way.

I disagree altogether with the principle of the alteration in advertising, but perhaps we may be able to get some amendment in Committee. When we are making any change in regard to marketing products, we ought to make sure that every grower knows exactly what is proposed. For the sake of economy it is not worth while risking it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you say that they do not read the "Queensland Producer"?

Mr. DEACON: I do not say that they do not, but I say that they are not going to have the opportunity of reading it. It will not even put in members' speeches or mention them. (Laughter.) What is the use of talking about relying on the local Press to give free advertising? They will not insert matter unless they are paid for it. I hope that, when we get into Committee, this matter of curtailing small expenses will be remedied.

Then there is an entire change of principle in appointing a member of the Council of Agriculture on a Pool Board. I object to the Council being overloaded with duties. It has enough to do in the way of giving advice in all matters affecting agriculture to the Government, to the farmers, and to everybody connected with agriculture. The work of a Pool Board should be carried out by business men. If a member of the Council of Agriculture was appointed to that Board, it would, to a great extent, break up the Council and spoil its work. Even if we do not place an elected member of the Council on the Board but place a permanent official there, it would mean that all these Boards would become Government institutions. The Primary Producers' Organisation Act should not be interfered with by a small Bill like this. If that Act is to be affected in any way, we should deal with it direct. I am quite sure that, if somebody were appointed on any Board or Council to represent the wheatgrowers who was not elected by the wheatgrowers, they would resent it very much. I hope that when the Bill is in Committee the defects I have mentioned will be remedied.

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

COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 1—"*Short title and construction of Act*"—put and passed.

Clause 2—"*Amendment of section 2—Interpretation*"—put and passed.

Clause 3—"*Amendment of section 3—Power to declare commodity and extend Act to same*"—

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I beg to move the insertion after the words "Gazette," on line 8, page 2, of the words—

> "and in one newspaper circulating in the district or locality to which the Order in Council is intended to apply."

While there is a desire to curtail expense wherever possible, hon. members will agree that it is essential that we must not do away with efficiency. It is necessary to enable local producers to have this notification that it should appear in at least one paper circulating in the locality. We know that there is one paper that goes to all farmers throughout the State, but it is difficult to say whether the farmers read that paper. It is a fair thing to expect that we should at least advertise in one local paper. That has always been the case, and I do not think we should like to create a monopoly in this regard, or that any particular organ should have a monopoly in the distribution of such information.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I have no desire to have any pool formed without the fullest publicity being given, but I think hon. members will be surprised to know that pools so far have cost over £600 to advertise, and the object of the Bill is to curtail those expenses. If the hon. member for Burnett is prepared to omit the words "and in" from his amendment, and insert the words, "or in at least," making the clause read—

> "Notice of intention to make such Order shall be published in the 'Gazette' and in the 'Queensland Producer' or other official organ of the Council of Agriculture, or in at least one newspaper circulating in the district or locality to which the Order in Council is intended to apply,"

I am prepared to meet him. If it appears in some paper circulating in the district, there is no necessity for it to appear in the "Queensland Producer" and vice versâ. If it is circulated in one organ, it will be quite sufficient.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): The Minister's suggestion does not altogether meet my wishes, but, as half a loaf is better than no bread, I am prepared to agree to his suggestion, and I accordingly ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I have an amendment to move on line 3, if I may be permitted to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. gentleman is in order in moving the amendment.

Mr. MORGAN: I beg to move the insertion, after the word "eggs," on line 3, of the words "or cattle." The object of the amendment is to allow the formation of a Cattle Pool. At the present time a scheme is on foot for the formation of a pool for cattle or beef, but there seems to be some doubt as to whether "cattle" or "beef" is a primary product, just the same as there was a doubt as to whether butter, cheese, or eggs came within the definition of "commodity."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I cannot accept the amendment now. "Cattle" do not come within the definition clause either in the principal Act or in the Bill. I cannot see how we could give effect to it.

Mr. MORGAN: Do "eggs" come within the definition clause in the principal Act?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No, but they come in in clause 2 of this Bill. That is where "cattle" should be inserted. I am afraid that I cannot now accept the amendment. I would not have [8.30 p.m.] had very much objection to it, because there is nothing binding on the Government. The great difficulty in dealing with cattle or any other commodity, as the hon. member knows, is section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution. A Commonwealth Cattle Pool would, in my opinion, be effective, but I am afraid very little good would come out of forming a cattle pool in Queensland. A great difficulty that confronts me is that we have passed clause 2, which is the interpretation clause.

Amendment (*Mr. Morgan*) negatived.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I move the insertion, after the word "Agriculture," on line 9, page 2, of the words—

> "or in at least one newspaper circulating in the district or locality to which the Order in Council is intended to apply."

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I do not know whether the Minister desires to lead the Committee to think that the advertisement will be inserted in the "Government Gazette," the "Queensland Producer," and one of the papers circulating in the district.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Not in all of them.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is what I am afraid of. Who is going to control the advertisement? The people who are going to control the advertisements will see every time that they are inserted in the "Queensland Producer." I unhesitatingly say that the "Queensland Producer" is practically a Government organ.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not so.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is a matter of opinion. Any man who reads the "Queensland Producer" must come to that conclusion. If this matter is left in the direction which the Minister indicates in trying to soothe the hon. member for Burnett, we know where the advertisement will be published.

Mr. CORSER: It does not soothe me very much.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am glad to hear that, because the Minister is skilfully attempting to sidetrack the intention of the hon. member. The amendment is not worth the paper it is written on.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is quite honest.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am not saying that it is not honest, but its effect is that the discretion in regard to publishing the advertisement is left to those associated with the "Queensland Producer." Who is going to be the Pooh Bah of the whole business? Take this Bill and the other Bill associated with it. Who is going to be the Pooh Bah of both of them? The Director of Agriculture!

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has no right to deal with the Director of Agriculture. He must confine himself to the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He ought to be asked to withdraw the expression.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I pity the poor country paper that expects to get any share of the advertisements under this amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Minister is prepared to trust the Council of Agriculture, whose members are elected by the farmers.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Minister does not always accept their advice.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You do not follow it at all.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I read the paper carefully, and find that at every turn it is assisting the Government.

Mr. CORSER: In every way it can.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not think so.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Minister must be colour blind. There is nothing in the amendment; it is simply camouflage.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You ought to produce some evidence to show that the "Queensland Producer" supports the Government.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): The fullest publicity possible should be given to the creation of new pools. The Minister has talked of £600 as being a large sum to expend in advertising, but in view of the large sums—running I suppose into millions of pounds—which have been the turnover of these pools, the sum is but a very small percentage. It is necessary for everyone interested to know what the pools do. It is entirely optional under the amendment whether the advertising shall be done in the local newspaper or the official organ. If the amendment is carried, the official organ will get the choice, and the amendment will not count for anything. In busy times, such as the sugar crushing season, the farmers have not time to read other than the newspaper of the district, which publishes matters concerning everyday life. If the advertisement is published in the local newspaper they will see it. The "Queensland Producer" at such busy times is put aside to be read on Sundays. When Sunday arrives the farmer often goes visiting and delays reading the "Queensland Producer" until another Sunday. It perhaps may happen that, when a wet Sunday comes and the farmer cannot go visiting, he will read a whole batch of these journals,

and it is quite probable that he will then find that a certain pool has been formed without his knowing anything about it. It is only sound business that the fact of these pools being formed should be advertised as widely as possible, and it should be mandatory that the advertisement should appear in the local newspaper.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I am not satisfied with the amendment, but I recognise that half a loaf is better than no loaf. Discretion is left to the Council of Agriculture, and it is possible for the local papers to secure an advertisement. The amendment does not say that the local papers cannot secure an advertisement, and we know that the "Queensland Producer" is the organ that is going to receive the advertisement. Up to the present time, it has been an organ in the interests of the Government, no matter how much some people wish to deceive others on that point.

Mr. COLLINS: 98 per cent. of the newspapers in the country support the Opposition.

Mr. CORSER: The Director of Agriculture——

The CHAIRMAN: There is nothing in this amendment dealing with the Director of Agriculture.

Mr. CORSER: We know that the "Queensland Producer" has been used as an advertisement for the Government and the Director of Agriculture, no matter how that fact may be disguised, or how certain members of the Council of Agriculture may close their teeth against it. The "Queensland Producer" is printed at the office of the "Daily Standard," and it might just as well be printed in red ink. (Laughter.) The "Queensland Producer" has secured practically a monopoly of these advertisements, and it is becoming recognised that the Director of Agriculture is an agent for the Government, to the detriment of the interests of the country. We want to give the Council of Agriculture a fair "go," but we are not in the pay of the Council of Agriculture or of the Director of Agriculture, and we say that, if the Government are going to be honest, they must be honest in the wording of their statements.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must deal with the advertisement.

Mr. CORSER: This advertising of the Government goes on day after day, and we are not blind enough to think that the Government have brought a man from Western Australia unless it was for the purpose of advertising them.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I should like to point out to the hon. member, if I may be permitted to do so, that this amendment deals with an advertisement in connection with pools. I hope that the hon. gentleman will direct his remarks to it.

Mr. CORSER: I will, Mr. Kirwan. In regard to the pools or any opposition we may have to any such thing, we are not going to allow a payee of the Government to say that we are agents in the pay of exploiters.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Who said that?

Mr. CORSER: Those are the sentiments expressed by the Director of Agriculture, and printed at a cost to the State and the Council of Agriculture.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman will confine himself to the amendment.

Mr. CORSER: We are going to fight against that sort of thing.

Mr. BRUCE: A guilty conscience!

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman may express it so if he desires. That is the reason why we are not going to be subservient to anyone the Government may put into a position under the blind of being something else. This amendment makes it possible for the Council of Agriculture to place an advertisement in a local paper if it so desires.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I think the Minister would be well advised now not to make his amendment. We have had a speech from the hon. member for Burnett, in which he claims that the "Queensland Producer" is the official organ or the mouthpiece of the Government. Everyone who has anything to do with this Government knows that fully 90 per cent. of our Queensland newspapers are champions of hon. gentlemen opposite. The Minister proposes to put an advertisement in the local papers, which will practically be subsidising the papers of hon. members opposite There is no objection to the State spending money on papers owned by or advocating the platform of hon. members opposite, but I have yet to learn that the "Queensland Producer" is an official organ of the Queensland Labour party. If it is, some of the articles appearing in it can be much improved upon. I understand that it is an organ to develop agriculture in general. In view of the speeches of hon. members opposite, it would be as well to pass the clause as it appears in the Bill and confine the advertisements to the "Gazette" and the "Queensland Producer."

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): It seems to me a very reasonable request that the advertisements should go into the local papers. Everything from which a result is desired is advertised in the local papers. Very few people in the country find any time to read the city papers. Unfortunately I am saying this seriously, as I am one of the farmer class myself. I regret that there are so many people in Queensland who are unable, on account of having so little time, to read anything else but the local rag, and very often there is not much in it. The channel of advertising should be the paper read by the majority of the people in the district. Some of our city papers do not get out to our farmers. Even in the vicinity of our city centres people only get their mail once a week. I know that within 50 miles of Brisbane there are places where people only get their mail once a week, and those people do not as a rule read the daily papers. Without decrying the "Queensland Producer," I say that it is up to the people to have these advertisements inserted in a decent paper in which they are interested—that is, in one of the local papers. The Minister, instead of being badly advised in moving the amendment, would be very well advised from a business point of view. The man who cannot give in to a certain extent is no good to himself or to anyone else. Is it a fair thing that these things should be imposed on people wthout giving a fair warning? How will they get fair warning if the advertisement is placed in a paper which is to a certain extent uninteresting? I think that the Minister would be very well advised in proceeding with the amendment

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I hope that the Minister will meet us by inserting the

advertisement in two newspapers. In section 13 of the principal Act there is this proviso requiring growers of any commodity to make a return—

> "The Board may from time to time, by notice in the 'Gazette' and two newspapers published in the State, require holders of the commodity to furnish a return in the form specified in such notice, showing the quantity of the commodity held at any time specified in such notice, and setting forth such other particulars (if any) as may be specified therein."

That is being left alone. It seems that, when you are compulsorily making growers render a return, the advertisement to that effect is put in the best papers. When it comes to forming a pool it is proposed to cut down the advertising. What is good enough in one case should be good enough in the other. Surely it is more important to circulate the notice of the formation of the pool properly than to circulate the notice regarding the return?

Amendment (*Mr. Gillies*) agreed to.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I beg to move the insertion, after the word "Order," on line 10, of the following new paragraph:—

> "Secretaries of District Councils, in the district or districts concerned, must be notified in writing at least thirty days before the making of such Order, with instructions to notify secretaries of Local Producers' Associations in their districts."

It will mean that before the Order is made, about the time the advertisement appears, notification will be sent to the District Councils, and the District Councils will then notify the secretaries of the Local Producers' Associations. By that means the members of the Local Producers' Associations will, without doubt, receive the information that an advertisement appeared in the "Queensland Producer" or in a paper circulating in the district to the effect that it is the intention of the Council to proceed with the formation of a pool. I think the Minister should accept the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I see no objection to this amendment, as we want all the publicity we can get. The only thing is that the Act provides that notice of the intention to make such Order shall be published in the "Gazette" at least thirty days before the making of such Order, and this may delay the formation of the pool, though I do not think it will.

Amendment (*Mr. Morgan*) agreed to.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I beg to move the insertion, after the word "and," on line 14, of the words—

> "if an Order in Council is made pursuant to such poll."

The paragraph will then read—

> "The expenses of such poll shall be borne by the Council of Agriculture in the first instance, and, if an Order in Council is made pursuant to such poll, such Council shall be reimbursed such expenses by means of a levy or levies, as prescribed, made in respect of the commodity with respect to which the poll has been taken."

If the pool is denied, there is no reason why persons who are not interested should be asked to find the money.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Who would pay for it in that instance?

Mr. CORSER: Who is going to pay for it now? Those who are not concerned should not have something forced on them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I think there is some justification for the amendment because in the first instance, as I explained, the Council of Agriculture has to recommend the pool, and, if it is satisfied the pool is needed, it will be a success. I take it that it will be satisfied that the people want the pool, and if it does that and then the people turn down the pool, it may be a fair thing that the Council of Agriculture should pay for the cost of the poll.

Amendment (*Mr. Corser*) agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 4—"*Amendment of section 4—Commodity Board*"—

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): We are at a loss to know why a member of the Council of Agriculture should be a member of the Commodity Board. When we consented to the principle of a Council of Agriculture, we determined what the functions of the members of the Council were to be, and certainly we never intended the members to carry out the functions of members of a Commodity Board. They are functions that might occupy their time for a considerable portion of the season. Take for instance, the Wheat Pool and the amount of work required of a member of that Board, and the same thing would apply on a minor scale to every other pool. If it is necessary to have some person on these Commodity Boards to represent the Government or the public generally, it should be an accountant who is in the position at any time to give the persons concerned a statement of the true position of the pool. One of the vexatious things in connection with the Wheat Pool was that the producers were living in a state of anxiety as to their position merely from the fact that they could get no information. I would like to know what is the reason for appointing a member of the Council of Agriculture to a Commodity Board. If it is not part of a big scheme—if it is not a cog in the wheel of the Council of Agriculture which may be part of the big machine that eventually is going to bring about their ideal of socialism—why should a member of the Council of Agriculture be appointed to one of these boards? What good can he do there more than the ordinary individual, and what good can he do there better than the representatives of the persons who are producing the commodity in regard to which the pool is formed? I would like to know what special function he is going to carry out.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): The Council of Agriculture is and should be the mouthpiece of the farmers of Queensland, or the Farmers' Parliament. The Local Producers' Associations are composed of farmers; they elect District Councils, and the District Councils in turn elect the Council of Agriculture, and they send to that Council what are supposed to be the best brains in Queensland so far as the farmers are concerned. The Council of Agriculture takes the responsibility

of recommending all pools to the Governor in Council, and under this amending Bill it has greater powers and greater responsibilities, because it is called upon by the amendment I have just accepted to pay the cost of certain polls. It is thought that the Council of Agriculture should also nominate one member of every Commodity Board. He will be a man who will specialise in pool work; and he will be able to advise the men comprising the Board and be of great assistance to them and be a connecting link between the various pools and the Council of Agriculture The Commodity Boards look to the Council of Agriculture for all kinds of advice and assistance, and it is the very thing that the Council of Agriculture should have one man on every Commodity Board that is created. The Council of Agriculture takes the responsibility of advising the Government that a pool should be created in the first instance, and when the pool is created it is a good thing for the Council to have an eye over that Board to see that the Board is a success, and the best way to do that is to have one of its members on the Board. The Council of Agriculture cannot dominate the Commodity Board, which will probably be composed of five or seven members, while the Council of Agriculture will only have one member on the Board. As time goes on that man will gain experience of one pool and another, and in my opinion the suggestion is a very good one.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): The reasons given by the Minister in support of this person representing the Council of Agriculture on the Pool Board are very
[9 p.m.] lame. The Council of Agriculture is becoming, to my mind, a parasite, and I am prepared to face my farmers after making that statement.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are a little bit indiscreet in disclosing this hostility.

Mr. WARREN: I have publicly stated my views already, so far as this matter is concerned.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Is that the general view of your party?

Mr. WARREN: I am speaking for myself, and not for the party. The hon. gentleman is the only man on the Treasury benches who gets nasty when he is hit. No matter how lightly you throw the pebble the hon. gentleman gets angry. I am fighting for an interest, and the hon. gentleman is fighting for something that he is building up in order to destroy. I am of opinion that the hon. gentleman is building up the farmer to destroy him—not to help him. If the hon. gentleman is speaking with the same voice as the hon. member for Fitzroy, he is going to destroy the farmer. He is building up to socialise the producer, and he must own that he is doing so. It is no use the hon. gentleman speaking with one voice and his party speaking with another. The hon. member for Toowoomba definitely stated that this was a communistic scheme, and that the whole thing would link up with communism. Which are we to believe? Do we believe in our industries becoming communistic industries? Where do we stand? Are the Government prepared to give us a living wage as farmers? No; the Government are making us hewers of wood and drawers of water; and the Minister is talking with his tongue in his cheek. He knows that he is giving nothing—that he is representing the consumer, and wants to put the food on the market as cheaply as he possibly can.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The question before the Committee is as to whether or not a member of the Council of Agriculture shall be on the Pool Board.

Mr. WARREN: I want to show that it is not advisable for him to be there. I am showing what will be the effect of the Council of Agriculture coming into all our industries and governing them. The hon. gentleman is plausibly talking about the Farmers' Parliament. This is the Farmers' Parliament, and as representatives of the people we are going to govern every act of the producer. It is all very well for the hon. gentleman to talk about what he is doing for the farmer. All the dragnet clauses and little pinpricks in these Bills show clearly that the Minister is out exactly for what the hon. member for Fitzroy said—to make a grand communistic scheme of the whole venture. Have the people ever asked for a member of the Council to be put on their Pool Board? Do the producers in connection with the Egg Pool, the Wheat Pool, or the Milk Pool think of such a thing? They do not ask for it, but the Council of Agriculture is hankering for power, and the Minister—who is supple and willing to be moulded up to a certain point so long as he is bringing about his grand scheme—is willing to do it. As one who has been organising the producers in the State and who can conscientiously say that he has had nothing out of the Primary Producers' Organisation, I say that the hon. gentleman is going the wrong way. What we want is not to have imposed upon us something that is not welcomed. We want to educate our producers to manage their own concerns. The weak part in connection with the producers to-day is that they are not putting their best men forward. Is this proposal going to solve the problem? It will not solve it one iota. It is going to put a man into a position with five or six others in which he will either dominate the position or cause serious friction. He will get into the sheepfold in some other way than through the door. He will get in by some other way than by the election of the people who are responsible. The very method of putting these men on the Boards is going to cause friction. If I was on a Board, such a member would have a very unpleasant time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You would cause friction.

Mr. WARREN: I would not sit with a man who was put on the Board in that way. If the farmers were allowed to work out their own destiny, they would proceed on true co-operative lines, which have turned out so successfully. In connection with the co-operative principle, the farmers gradually brought their best men forward and educated them, and made a success of the scheme. The butter factories, which are now handling £1,000,000 worth of butter a year, were not a success at first, and they did not become successful by the Government sticking someone on the Board. They succeeded because the growers were educated up to the necessity of putting their best men forward. The Minister would be wise to cut out this clause altogether. It is a foreign growth on the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is very vital to the scheme.

Mr. WARREN: I presume that there is something in the Bill which will affect the fruitgrowers of Queensland in the near future, and these men would be the very first to protest against this sort of thing.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I would advise the Minister, as one who is friendly to pools and not an opponent, to cut out this clause. I think there is a necessity for pools.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you not think the clause will be beneficial in connection with the pools?

Mr. MORGAN: No: I think it is going to work in the opposite direction. I think that a good many people who favour pools, if this clause is inserted, will perhaps vote against the pool, and it will mean the defeat of the proposal to form the pool. The producer is not prepared to hand over his rights.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He is not handing them over. The representative of the Council of Agriculture will only have one vote.

Mr. MORGAN: I would advise the Minister to delete the clause. If he will not do so, I will move that the man who is appointed by the Council of Agriculture must be a producer of the product in connection with which the pool is being formed. It is wrong for the Government to appoint a man who, perhaps, knows nothing about the commodity with which the pool is dealing. We provide for the formation of pools so that the producer may control his own commodity, but here the Government are going to destroy that principle. In the case of the Wheat Pool the men who form the Board, with the exception of the manager, Mr. Morgan, are producers of wheat, and the same thing applies to other pools. Why depart from a principle which has been working satisfactorily? We on this side, and I think the people generally, are afraid that the Government are introducing this clause for the purpose of making the Director of Agriculture chairman of every pool which is to be formed in the future.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. MORGAN: If so, it will be the end of pools. I do not know the Director of Agriculture, but I am told he is a dictator.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are quite wrong.

Mr. MORGAN: I am told that the great bulk of the men connected with the Council of Agriculture are afraid to open their mouths in his presence. If that is the sort of men we have on the Council, the sooner we get rid of them the better. No man has the right to dominate the representatives of the producers, and, if we have a man like that as Director, the sooner we get rid of him the better. When we elect members to represent us, the fact that the farmers have chosen them as men having sufficient ability to represent them should be recognised by the Director. The Director of Agriculture has no right to dominate the Council and practically take the control into his own hands. If he has done it, he is wrong, and I blame the men who are sitting with him for allowing him to do it. I do not blame the Director altogether. If he is able to dominate them, they deserve all they get. It has been said that we are against compulsory pools. I am not, because I say a pool is no good at all unless it is compulsory. If the farmer is not organised, he will be robbed right and left, either by the consumer who gets an article at less than what it can be grown for or by somebody else who is out to make huge profits by passing the article on from the producer to the consumer. I am not in favour of either. I am in favour of fair profits only being made. Every class of person in Brisbane to-day has its organisation. The Licensed Victuallers' Association is formed to keep up the price of board and drink and fleece the public. There are rings and combines in every undertaking.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot make those remarks on this clause.

Mr. MORGAN: Even imported articles cannot be sold under a fixed price, and the producer has the right to fix the price of the article he produces. That is why I am in favour of compulsory pools, because, if they are not compulsory, men can crush out the producers, because amongst the producers—as amongst all other sections of the community—are men who will not be true or loyal to their union or association or the rest of the growers. I advise the Minister to withdraw the Bill altogether. It seems to me that there is something behind it, and that he wants more control than he has already. Do you think that the producers of butter or meat have not sufficient intelligence to elect men capable of handling their produce? The Council of Agriculture should cease to have anything to do with a pool the moment it has put the machinery in operation. That system has proved successful in the case of the Wheat Board.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Government appointed the chairman.

Mr. MORGAN: Exactly; but the producers of wheat appointed those who control the Board. Apparently the Minister wants a representative of the Government on every pool.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No—a representative of the Farmers' Parliament.

Mr. MORGAN: I have been a keen supporter of the Primary Producers' Organisation, but I am getting disgusted with what is happening—I am sorry to have to say it—because I see political influence no matter where I turn. We made a mistake in appointing the Minister as chairman of the Council of Agriculture, because he will always be a politician, and now we are practically going to allow the Council to appoint the chairman of every Pool Board, who may be a political appointee. I advise the Minister to withdraw the clause, so that there will be no possibility of political influence entering into the matter.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): It seems to me that this is an absolute provision that the chairman of the pool is to be a person appointed by the Council of Agriculture.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Council of Agriculture will recommend the chairman.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I certainly understood the hon. gentleman earlier to say that such would be the case. Granting that that is not likely to be so, what is going to be the effect of the present representatives on the Council of Agriculture. Not only will they be represented on one pool, but they will be on every pool, and will represent the

Minister and be directly in touch with him, because it is only natural to suppose that when anything crops up the Minister will be consulted. In this case the Government are only carrying out what the hon. member for Fitzroy suggested last night, and that is a certain objective which they have in view. It seems to me that these pools are to be made instruments in the direction of bringing about the socialisation of industries.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You surely do not say that seriously.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do, because I believe it. It is a part of the Government's policy, and they are going along adroitly bit by bit. An attempt is now being made through the Council of Agriculture to pull the strings in a certain direction. I think, with the hon. member for Murilla, that the clause should be negatived.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I object to this clause because it introduces a vicious principle affecting the Act under which the Council of Agriculture was formed. At the time that Act was passed strong exception was taken to anything savouring of political influence, and it was pointed out that the fact that the Council was presided over by a Cabinet Minister gave it political colour. It has already been proved that the Council is limited in its sphere, because it appears that in the discussion of matters in which farmers are interested they fear to deal with anything that is at variance or in conflict with the policy of the gentleman in the chair. We find that the same thing will happen in connection with this Bill. It has been pointed out by nearly every hon. member on this side that, if pools are properly managed, they are good institutions; still there is no getting away from the fact that with a socialistic Government, who are pledged as honest men to carry out their platform, they are in duty bound to lose no opportunity of doing so. It surprises me to find that they disavow their intention. They must think that people are very foolish if they think that we for one moment believe that they will not take advantage of every opportunity. It is only honest for them to do so. When we find anything of that kind creeping into these Bills, it is necessary to divest them entirely of anything appertaining to politics. Some of the members of the Council of Agriculture are elected by the producers. We believe in the principle of the farmers electing their own representatives. At the present time there is a motion on the business-paper which, if carried, will limit the membership of that Council entirely to elected members. That is the policy of our party. However, there is a member of the Government at the head of the Council, and, such being the case, it follows that we are opposed to an extension of that principle in the matter of pools. As showing the tendency in this direction, I would like to quote the utterance of the Assistant Home Secretary from "Hansard" for 1922—

> "The hon. member for Aubigny objects to the One Big Union, yet he supports the Primary Producers' Organisation Act, which is the greatest communistic Act ever placed on the statute-book."

It does not follow that that Act is a communistic Act. It all depends on who are carrying it out. So long as you have politicians controlling it, it is only natural that they will do what is in the best interests of their policy and their school of political thought. Most certainly it is desirable to keep the political element out of these pools. It has been proved over and over again in Queensland that amongst the farmers there are men who are capable of handling any business. Look at the success of the sugar-mills that were established in the '90's, and were controlled and managed by Boards constituted by farmers from the very beginning. There were many hundreds of thousands of pounds involved in those mills. Just in the same way these pools can be successfully run by boards of management composed entirely of men elected by the contributors to the pools.

The fact that the success of the pool means everything to those who contribute to it will ensure that they will take every precaution to place on the board men who are fit for the purpose. There are men among the farmers who are fit for such purposes. There is no need for this House to exercise political influence over the Council of Agriculture. If it was constituted entirely with elected members, I would not have the same objection, but it is dominated by political influence. The chairman is a politician and a member of the Cabinet for the time being, and one-fourth of its members are Government officials. No matter what their own private convictions are, they cannot help being influenced by those who control their departments. It would make for the greater success of the measure, and certainly instil greater confidence into the public, if this clause, which means the introduction of politics into the management of the pools, were withdrawn.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I am not a primary producer, but as the representative of consumers I am in a position to form a very fair estimate of what will result from [9.30 p.m.] this clause. I do not agree with some hon. members that there is any reason to be surprised at this proposition being placed before the House. There is no reason for surprise at all. It is a part of the policy of the Government, and it is a policy that has been expounded in this Chamber from time to time by various members sitting behind the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: And also by other people.

Mr. FRY: This is a means of gradually perfecting the organisation which is under the direct control of the Secretary for Agriculture, and under the lesser executive control of the Director of Agriculture. I wish to outline what appears to me to be the organisation that the Government are attempting to set up. There is first of all the Minister, then the Director of Agriculture—his next officer—then the Council of Agriculture, then the representatives of the Council of Agriculture on the Pool Board, and then the Pool Board. Why is this organisation being perfected in this way and in this order? It is purely a question of the policy of the Government. That policy aims at putting a fence around the primary producer with the ultimate object of the socialisation of industry.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A barbed wire fence?

Mr. FRY: A fence worse than a barbed wire fence, because there is some chance of escape from a barbed wire fence. The fence

that the Government are enclosing around the primary producer gives him no possible chance of escape. The policy of the Government is ultimately to enclose him in a fence which will bind him body and soul, and not allow him to exercise his own will or conscience. We know that the Director of Agriculture is carrying out the will of the Government. Nobody can dispute that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! I hope that the hon. member will connect his remarks up with the clause, which provides for a representative of the Council of Agriculture being a member of the Pool Board.

Mr. FRY: I am doing that by showing how it is linked up with the policy of the Government so as to allay the expressions of surprise of hon. members on this side and the people who have the voting power at election times. The representative of the Council of Agriculture on the Board will be the direct representative of the Minister and the Director of Agriculture. This man, as stated by the Minister, will be a capable man. He will be the most capable man that it is possible for the Government to secure—a man who is capable of domination and persuasion. He will be a man who will seize every opportunity to wield an influence over these pools and direct their actions in a way that is going to suit the policy of the Government. Who can say but what this representative of the Council on the Board will not some day be a candidate at election time in the interests of the Government? Is it not a fact that organisers appointed in connection with the agricultural scheme propounded by the Government were candidates in the interests of the Government at the last election?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope that the hon. member will deal with the question of appointing a representative on the Pool Board.

Mr. FRY: I am doing so. I say that, if the representative of the Council of Agriculture is placed there for political purposes, this House should refuse to endorse the clause. We have much to fear, from the consumer's standpoint, if this appointment is going to be a political one. The pool should enable the producer to market his products, not only with advantage to himself, but with advantage to the consumer. If it is made a political idea it will merely mean "Go hang the consumer! Go hang the producer!" and the only object served will be to retain hon. members on the Government benches to wield the whip of socialism and thrash those who are unable to defend themselves.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I beg to move the insertion, after the word "Agriculture," on line 22, page 2, of the words—

> "who must be a grower of the commodity for which the pool is constituted."

This clause not only provides for the appointment of a chairman by the Council of Agriculture but also for the appointment of a representative, really meaning that the Council of Agriculture will elect two members of the Board. I think that is too great a power to give to the Council of Agriculture. I desire that the person appointed as a representative shall be a grower of the commodity for which the pool is constituted. That would take away a great deal of the sting in the clause. Personally I would like the Minister to withdraw the clause altogether. Of course if he does that I will withdraw my amendment, which speaks for itself.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I regret that I cannot accept the amendment. To do so would be to devitalise the clause. It would be as well to allow the producers to elect the whole Pool Board as to put in a clause of this kind. For instance, take a man like Mr. Morgan, the chairman of the Wheat Board and a member of the Council of Agriculture. Such a man would not be a producer of butter or fruit, but he would be a most useful man on any pool because of his experience on the Wheat Board. Various pools have expressed the wish that the Council of Agriculture should advise, assist, and guide them.

Mr. MORGAN: You have power to elect the chairman, who would be a man of that description.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I want the power to be vested in the Council of Agriculture to make the recommendation of the chairman. The Council of Agriculture is the Farmers' Parliament, elected in the most direct way by the farmers. The farmers have an executive through which they may articulate their wishes.

Mr. MORGAN: The Council of Agriculture might recommend a man who is not a producer. That would be all right in the matter of the chairman; but the Bill goes further and gives the right to nominate a member of the Board in addition to the chairman. Why not provide that the members of the Board shall be producers?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are suggesting that the Council of Agriculture should nominate two men.

Mr. MORGAN: The clause provides for that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It provides that, after the Board has been elected, the Council of Agriculture shall nominate a representative, and then the Council will nominate one of them as chairman. The Council of Agriculture will not select another man as chairman.

Mr. MORGAN: That is one and the same thing.

Mr. CORSER: How many nominees will the Council of Agriculture have on the Board?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: First of all it will nominate a man as representative on the Board. After the Board has been elected one of its five members will be chosen to be chairman.

Mr. CORSER: Then the Council of Agriculture will only nominate one member.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Only one. I want to take this opportunity of expressing my surprise that the hon. member for Murilla—the one man on the other side of the House who I believe did advocate and support the Council of Agriculture, and who is a believer in compulsory pools—should have gone out of his way to-night to make an attack on one of the most gentlemanly men in Queensland and call him an autocrat. If any term can be applied to Mr. McGregor it is certainly not that of autocrat. I am perfectly satisfied that the members of the Council of Agriculture who work with Mr. McGregor will tell the hon.

gentleman that. I am satisfied that, if the hon. member introduces himself to Mr. McGregor, he will find that that gentleman is anything but an autocrat. He is not the agent of this Government. He came here from Western Australia to make a success of this Council of Agriculture, and will do so if he gets the support he deserves.

I am also surprised at the statement that the official organ of the Council of Agriculture is the official organ of the Labour Government. I have read that journal pretty closely, and I have never seen anything in it yet that indicates any leaning in favour of the Labour party. There is a peculiar kink in some members of the Opposition, and they think any man or newspaper that is fair to the Labour Government must be the out and out agent of the Labour party. Such speeches as have been delivered to-night are not calculated to benefit agriculture in this State or to make a success of the Council of Agriculture; and they are not calculated to encourage a man who left a good position in Western Australia to come here and do his very best for the people of Queensland. I am very sorry that the hon. member for Murilla, who has been an advocate of compulsory pools, has been so misled —he must have been misled—as to suggest that Mr. McGregor is an autocrat or that he is doing anything in the nature of taking sides in party politics.

I regard this as the most important clause in the Bill. Here again the Government are advised by the Council of Agriculture. The Council of Agriculture has to take the responsibility of recommending all pools, and, having taken that responsibility, it has an interest in seeing that the pools are a success. The difference between the creation of a co-operative company and the formation of a pool is a very vital one. The day the pool is gazetted the members of the Board—although they have had no experience in the handling of the crop, they may be very good farmers—have to take full responsibility of that crop for the whole of the people of Queensland. Is that not a sound argument why the Council of Agriculture should be represented on every pool that is created in Queensland? The principle put forward in this clause is a sound one, and I cannot accept the amendment, nor can I consider for a moment the suggestion that the clause should be deleted. I think we are taking up altogether too much time on a Bill of this kind, because it is simply a machinery Bill to give effect to the Primary Products Pools Act, which has been approved in principle by the Government and by the people of Queensland.

Amendment (*Mr. Morgan*) negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—"*Amendment of section* 5—*Powers of Board*"—

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I stated in the debate on the second reading that I considered this to be one of the vital clauses of the Bill. The Minister stated that, in connection with the Milk Pool, for instance, it may be necessary to make purchases of property. I want to ask the Minister if there is not something or other behind this particular clause. It may not be correct, but it was stated freely in the city to-day that the Government are out to perfect the system which their party believes in, and that an attempt is going to be made to acquire some of the markets in the city in order to carry out this clause of the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: This is the first I have heard of it.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I accept the statement of the Minister, but we know what the Government policy is. The hon. member for Fitzroy said last night that everything is going in a certain direction.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What did the hon. member for Fitzroy say?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman must know what he said. He stated that the object in view was in a certain direction—that everything should be controlled in one way.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is very vague.

HON. W. H. BARNES: What does a Bill with clauses like this mean? What has been the result of the control of the Government in connection with their undertakings—leaving on one side the State Insurance Department? This clause opens the door for the Government without any difficulty, at any stage they like, to carry out their Emu Park programme in connection with the socialisation of industry.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you notice the words "The Board may . . from time to time"?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Board "may from time to time," and the Government "may from time to time" do certain things. We know that the Minister practically is the Director of Agriculture—he is the chairman of the Council of Agriculture.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am the chairman, but I am not the Director.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Who is the Director, if the chairman is not?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I have only got a casting vote.

HON. W. H. BARNES: What are the duties of a chairman?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will not discuss the Council of Agriculture under this clause, which deals with the Board appointed to control pools. The hon. member may discuss their composition as much as he wishes.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I was just about to lead up to the fact that the composition of a pool on these particular lines and with the Minister as chairman means that there is an open door in a certain direction. It is part of the policy which the Government are quietly bringing into operation in Queensland.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I look on this clause in quite a different light to what the hon. member for Wynnum does. We must recognise that there is a certain amount of danger in connection with men who have no business ability. I objected on a previous clause to a nominee of the Government being on the Board. If these Government nominees have backbone, they will be a force on the Board, and they will be able to make levies on the farmer. No matter what individual is handling other people's money, there is always extravagance—whether it is the Government of Queensland or someone else. The military organisation was the most extravagant body which ever existed, largely because it was handling money which had not been acquired by the

individuals spending it, and I see a similar danger in the expenditure of the money of the poor, unfortunate farmers. I question whether this power needs to be included at all, but I maintain that the Minister must admit that it is part and parcel of the big scheme of the Government and of their objective—the socialisation of industry. Let me quote what the hon. member for Gympie said in 1915, which is to be found on page 270 of "Hansard" of that year—

> "The strange thing about the farmer, I regret to say, is that while he is asking in practice for all the State socialism he can get, he is continually denouncing the principle of national enterprise . . . I hold that, if the farmer is going to get all the State socialism he wants—and I hope he does get it—it is only fair to this Government that the National Legislature and the National Administration should have some power in controlling that industry in the interests of every other section of the State."

That is the point. It is control by the Government we object to—the ulterior motive behind these Bills—because on every hand we have members of the Government party expressing similar opinions. We naturally feel shy about passing a measure which we believe is dangerous to an industry, and I think the Minister would do well to put some brake on the use of the power he is proposing to give. It would be better for the industry, and better for the man directing the scheme.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I object to the principle contained in this clause. It says that the Board may—

> "purchase, contract for the use of, or otherwise provide and hold any land——"

If we substituted "take" for "provide," it would coincide with the objective of the I.W.W. and the O.B.U. It goes on to say that the Board may purchase, contract for the use of, or otherwise provide and hold—

> "any personal property whatsoever."

That means a man's pocket-knife, the shilling in his pocket, the cutlery on his table. If that is the extent to which the Government are prepared to go in their policy of the socialisation of industry, I am going to object.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6—"*Retrospective effect of amendments*"—

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I move the insertion, after the word "accordingly," on line 47, page 2, of the following proviso:—

> "Provided that the expenses of any poll taken under the principal Act prior to the passing of this Act shall not be collected by means of a levy or levies as herein provided."

The amendment really provides that the producers shall not be called upon to pay for any pool established prior to the passing of the Act.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I have already given the Committee my assurance that these charges will not be made retrospective. The Department of Agriculture has paid the expense of all the polls that have been taken. I have also stated that the main object of this retrospective provision is to make the position of the Egg Pool Board quite safe. I am prepared to accept the amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. Corser*) agreed to.

Clause, as amended, 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.

HOSPITALS BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I beg to move—

> "That it is desirable to introduce a Bill to make better provision for the maintenance, management, and regulation of hospitals, and for other purposes."

I would like to mention, for the information of members, two principles embodied in the proposed Bill. The measure is somewhat similar to the one which was introduced in 1917, and provides for the formation of district hospitals throughout the State. No power is taken to district any hospital other than the Brisbane and South Coast district hospitals. Other districts may be created by Order in Council if the occasion arises. There is no desire to create districts unless it is proved that the time has become necessary to do so. The history of the Brisbane General Hospital is well known to hon. members. I can enlarge upon its history on the second reading.

[10 p.m.]

The second main principle is in relation to finance. It is proposed that hospitals which are districted may obtain loans for the purpose of building and may spread the repayment of the loan over the life of the asset created by the expenditure of the money.

Mr. MORGAN: Who will pay the interest and redemption?

The HOME SECRETARY: The second proviso is that the old system of finance in respect to those hospitals which are districted will disappear. The Board controlling the districts will forecast the expenditure for the year, and the financing will be upon those lines. If the voluntary subscriptions do not meet the expenditure, the repayments will be based on the contributions of the local authorities in the area and the Government. The local authorities will contribute 40 per cent. of the expenditure needed and the Government 60 per cent. Power is also taken in the Bill to amalgamate, if necessary, ambulance brigades in the hospital scheme in the district.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): Does this districting provide for the establishment of base hospitals, or what was known previously as the creation of base hospitals?

The HOME SECRETARY: The idea is to have a properly equipped base hospital in each district, and a board of control will control the erection of other hospitals throughout the district.

Mr. CORSER: Will it mean that all the hospitals at present established will be under the one standard, or that some of them will be controlled by a general committee of the whole?

The HOME SECRETARY: No; each district will have its own board, and all hospitals

in the district will be under the control of that board, which will have power to deal with local conditions.

Mr. CORSER: Will each hospital in a district be under one board?

The HOME SECRETARY: That is a matter for the Board.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): Will the local authorities who have to find the 40 per cent. of the unsubscribed expenditure have representation on the board?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes; they will have equal representation with the Government.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I take it that the constitution of the Board in the metropolitan area will be on similar lines to other bodies?

The HOME SECRETARY: The same as the Tramway Trust.

Mr. BARNES: I feel quite sure that this is a matter which should receive very full consideration, which, no doubt, will be given in Committee. It means that local authorities, who are already carrying a very heavy load and finding it a burden, will be burdened with an additional one.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): Will the "Golden Casket" proceeds relieve the Government of their 60 per cent. quota?

The HOME SECRETARY: No. The "Golden Casket" proceeds will be apart from the 60 per cent. quota.

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 HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*) 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.

LAND ACTS (REVIEW OF CATTLE HOLDING RENTS) 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 make provision for the review of the rents due to the Crown by the lessees of certain holdings mainly used for the depasturing of cattle in respect of a period commencing on 1st July, 1921, and ending on the 30th June, 1926; and for other consequential purposes."

There is very little to explain in this Bill. The title really explains it. The proposal is to provide for a slump period commencing on 1st July, 1921, and extending over a period of five years. The lessees, by notice in writing to the Minister, can elect to come under this slump period. The Land Court will then be asked to fix the rental covering that period, and provision is made in the Bill that the Court has to take into consideration and to give due regard to what really is the absence of markets, and the general condition of the cattle industry because of slumps. The cases will be heard in Chambers as far as possible, and the Court will be authorised to use the information it now has available—it has dealt with all these cases from time to time—but the main factor will be the market ruling at the time. The Court in some cases fixed high rentals during the boom period, and in some cases of course the rentals have been fixed since the price of cattle dropped. In those cases where a high rental was fixed during boom period, the lessees are suffering because of bad market conditions. The Minister really will initiate the cases. I will see that the cases come before the Court with as much expedition as possible, because, if we want to give any relief, it must be done quickly. Any person who is paying a higher rental for his holding than is fixed by the Court under this Bill will be credited with the extra amount paid over the remaining portion of the period. There will be no refunds, but the money paid will be used to carry him over the period. There will be no appeal, because there will be no need for an appeal. One judge will constitute the Court in each district, and in the next few months we shall see that the Land Court is relieved of other work to enable it to deal with this work with despatch. After the five-year period a new period will be instituted, and the Court will resume its ordinary functions in dealing with cattle holdings. I hope things will have improved long before 1926—but if at the end of that period conditions still continue bad, we shall then deal with the situation as circumstances suggest.

Mr. MORGAN: There will be no cattle left if the bad conditions continue till then.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is not particularly the drought period that we are considering—it is the slump in prices. There has been some rain on the Downs this evening, and let us hope it will be general over the State. On the second reading I will deal with the Bill at greater length. The statement I made in the Press embodies practically what is in the Bill. It is a Bill to give relief to the Crown lessees of cattle holdings because of the conditions created through the absence of markets.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I am very pleased that the Minister has introduced this measure, which has been asked for by several associations of cattlemen throughout the State and is desired by all. It is a measure of relief, but, whilst it is a measure of relief and the Government deserve some credit for introducing it, we must remember that the errors caused by maladministration by the Government have been responsible to no small extent for the excessive rentals that are paid to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We fixed the rents on a basis.

Mr. CORSER: That is so—on a basis.

The PREMIER: That was done by previous Governments.

Mr. CORSER: I have had to stand up against them. Market conditions were not taken into consideration then. I am pleased we are getting relief under this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You only appeared on behalf of somebody else.

Mr. CORSER: I am pleased to see the Bill.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I quite appreciate what the Minister is doing for the unfortunate cattle-growers of the State, but I would like to know if the Bill also provides relief for holders of occupation licenses. The total area under occupation licenses amounts to 54,079 square miles, the total annual rent to £55,000, and the average rent to £1 0s. 6d. per square mile. The average rent of a pastoral holding in the State is only £1 6s. 9d. That includes good sheep country as well as cattle country, yet country under occupation license, which is inferior country, waterless country, and dense prickly-pear country, is £1 0s. 6d. per square mile. I want to know if there is going to be any relief in that direction under the Bill?

Mr. POLLOCK: What is your authority for those figures?

Mr. MORGAN: The figures have been supplied to me by Mr. Melville, the Under Secretary for Public Lands, under date 17th October instant. I will quote the letter—

> "In regard to the information sought by you at an interview to-day with the officer in charge, Land Settlement Branch, the desired particulars, so far as relate to the lands in the State held under occupation license, are given hereunder.
>
> "I regret, however, being unable to supply similar information respecting the pastoral holdings carrying cattle only, as to separate the areas used exclusively for cattle-raising from those stocked with sheep would necessitate several weeks' work. The average rent per square mile of the whole of the pastoral holdings in the State is £1 6s. 9d.
>
> "OCCUPATION LICENSES.
>
> Total area of square miles—54,079 3/16.
> Total annual rent—£55,423 8s. 9d.
> Average rent per square mile—£1 0s. 6d."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will not go into detail. He will have an opportunity of dealing with this matter on the second reading.

Mr. MORGAN: If I miss the opportunity on this occasion I may not get the chance of moving an amendment in Committee.

The PREMIER: The order of leave is not limited.

Mr. MORGAN: Country was formerly leased under the occupation license at 10s. per square mile, but when cattle rose in price during the war period the Government increased the rent from 10s. to £2 per square mile in many cases.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That can be done without legislation.

Mr. MORGAN: They raised the rent during the good times by 300 per cent. in many cases, and if it was a good thing to raise the rent then it is equally a good thing to reduce the rent during this slump period. The country under occupation license is open to selection at any moment. The Government can notify the owners, and after a period of three weeks take the land from them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are not doing that at the present moment.

Mr. MORGAN: We have now the opportunity to help these people. There are just as many people holding country under occupation license who are down and out as there are on cattle country.

Mr. HARTLEY: Are they not held under an annual tenancy?

Mr. MORGAN: They are opened for application at 10s. a square mile, and if there is no competition, you get them for 10s.; but without putting them up again the Government may increase your rent to £2 a square mile.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You can withdraw from them.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. gentleman must admit that, when a man's rent has been increased from 10s. to £2 a square mile in a time of prosperity, it should be reduced in a bad period.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member will not repeat that statement. He has already said it twice.

Mr. MORGAN: I hope the Minister will see his way clear to include in the resolution the words "occupation licenses."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The words "incidental purposes" cover that.

Mr. MORGAN: That is all I want.

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.

The House adjourned at 10.27 p.m.